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

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Blue to Red Oral History Project

Jay Barth

Interviewed by John C. Davis

April 9, 2021

Little Rock, Arkansas

Objective

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- 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.

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John C. Davis interviewed Jay Barth on April 9, 2021, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

John C. Davis: Here with me today is Dr. Jay Barth, the Chief Education Officer for the city of Little Rock. He's also the M. E. and Ima Graves Peace Distinguished Professor of Politics emeritus at Hendrix College. And Jay, thanks so much for joining me today, and on behalf of the Pryor Center, thank you for taking part in this endeavor where we try to chronicalize and explore and explain the historic partisan shift we've seen in Arkansas, particularly over the last ten, fifteen years. You offer a unique perspective as someone who's been a historian of politics, a practitioner of politics, and you have, certainly, the analytical skills and insights of a political scientist who's focused a great deal on Southern politics, political behavior, as well as Arkansas politics. So again, thank you so much for sitting down with me.

Jay Barth: Yeah. Thanks, John.

[00:00:54] JD: One thing we're doing during this project is we're focusing our attention on the political events between approximately 2005 and 2015, where you really do see a complete 180 in terms of partisanship in the state, at least in

part of who Arkansans are electing and their party status. But we also know that things happened before then that either explain what occurs in the lead-up to between [20]05 and [20]15, or also explain on some—how some of these changes that happened in neighboring states didn't happen here as quickly. And so we know you'll offer just wonderful insights in that. [00:01:35] And so what we've done is we've split up the GOP in Arkansas into approximately three generations, the first one beginning in 1966 with Winthrop Rockefeller's first successful gubernatorial campaign election as a reformer, something of a progressive, somebody who had, really through personal fortune, had revamped and in many ways even created sort of a modern political party organization for the GOP, albeit largely based on his own personal connections and coalition. And that generation would end approximately 1992, mainly with the ascendance of Bill Clinton, a governor, then becoming president of the United States. And during that era, which is a really long time, you have the Republican Party in fits and starts enjoying some short and unsustained successes, such as, of course, Winthrop Rockefeller's reelection in [19]68 followed by Frank White's victory, of course, in 1980. And also in 1966 we don't wanna neglect John Paul Hammerschmidt's election, where

he really is, for decades, the one sort of standard bearer for his party in a district that's largely in Northwest Arkansas. [00:02:51] The second generation, between [19]93 and 2010, is largely framed around the ascendance of President Clinton into the White House—something of maybe an empty vacuum left by the youngest of the Big Three leaving the state. The Huckabee years where, for ten years, we have a Republican governor, all the way up into 2010, where again you see a party that is certainly evolving, that is growing in its ability to field candidates, in some cases win elections, but it's still lagging behind other neighbors in parts of the Midwest and in the South, if we compare Republican successes in the 1990s in particular in other states—to today where we look at 2011, sort of the post-2010 election cycle, to today where we see a dramatic takeover in almost every office in the state of Arkansas going to the Republican Party. So with that long intro, we're trying to frame the historical context around these short, relatively short time periods and particularly focused on that ten-year period between [20]05 and [20]15. [00:03:59] So with that, Jay, you've got roots in Arkansas, you've—course have engaged your—committed your professional career in Arkansas. What's your earliest political memory in the state?

[00:04:13] JB: My earliest political memory is 1972, when I was five. I grew up in Bryant just south of Little Rock, which was a weirdly progressive town. And that progressivism I think was driven by several things. It was a union town with ties—with folks who were tied to the bauxite industry, the aluminum industry. My grandfather himself was not a union member, but everything in that community was really shaped by union politics, either directly or indirectly. And I think that created an atmosphere in which there was a sense that government could be a progressive force. So it was kind of a little bit of a kind of a New Deal Democratic town. [00:05:08] At—in the late [19]60s, Ted Boswell, who was a young progressive who had been very active in the bar association of—excellent trial lawyer—he decided to run for governor after his kind of leadership in the young lawyers part of the bar. He announced. He came up just short of making the runoff in the Democratic primary, and he lost to Virginia Johnson. She beat him by a few hundred votes to make that second spot. I think—you know, we never know what would have happened in a runoff, but a lot of folks, you know, really compare [19]68 to [19]70 and, you know, Dale Bumpers barely making that runoff in [19]70. That if Boswell had made it two years before, he might have been that

progressive change agent within the Democratic Party, and he certainly had that spirit. So he ran in [19]68. I supportly—I was around that campaign, but my memories are faint. [00:06:21] By 1972, though, he ran for the US Senate. He came back and was a candidate in a primary that included John McClellan and David Pryor. He was the third candidate who did not make the runoff. Had a, I think, a poorer-than-expected showing. He ran on an anti-war platform, arguing for universal health care. I mean, it was a progressive campaign. And so that's the politics I grew up around. And that certainly was really important in shaping who I was. [00:06:53] Saline County has a kind of Democratic base of the—a base of the Democratic Party in the state because of all of its union ties. Had a night-before-the-primary event on the county courthouse square where all the candidates from, you know, from JP up to governor or US Senator came and gave their last plea before the vote the next day. And so that was an important part of my coming of age of going to that event, which was one of the kind of premier events because it was close enough to Little Rock that the media could get there easily, and it was kind of the last show. And sometimes the—it would be one of the—the point in the campaign where, you know, some of the tensions had

heightened and—and so I remember going to that event early on, but really in 1978, I was eleven. And so I was at a point where I was—you know, had kind of moved beyond just early memories to some real cognizance of what was going on. [00:08:00] And the 1978 campaign was fascinating on the Democratic side. Obviously, Bill Clinton ultimately was elected governor. And so that was, I guess—I may had—maybe had seen him before, but that was the first time I really remember seeing him. [00:08:17] And then there was this grand US Senate battle between David Pryor, Jim Guy Tucker, and Ray Thornton. And it was a primary that really divided families, neighbors against neighbors, even inside families, you know, through three, you know, varying shades of progressive candidates. And so that was the campaign that I really remember getting engaged in. And I remember that event incredibly well and bringing back piles of, you know, campaign flyers, which I think I still have because I've—my family is a little bit of a pack rat family. And that was a really early memory in terms of my sharpening of my engagement. And then I started working in campaigns as a kid, and that's ki—it kind of went from there.

[00:09:09] JD: And I think you've touched on something, too, that

can sometimes be overlooked in today's—especially in today's politics. But you focused on the primary, right, you focus on primary night results, the day before the primary having a rally, because that was in most cases—in many of the races you certainly cited, those were settled in the primary. I mean, there may have been a Republican opponent, but by and large it was gonna be a Democratic contest among Democrats for that primary. [00:09:36] And so you've touched on this a little bit in just talking about that and just the dominance of the party such that the drama was really left out of the room after the primaries were settled. And even going a few years maybe past, you know, [20]11. [00:09:52] So late [19]70s and the [19]80s, what's the perception that you had at the time of the Democratic Party in the state and the Republican Party in the state?

[00:10:02] JB: You know, the—minimal perception of the Republican Party. It was really, you know, just not a very visible, active party. I mean, there were very few, you know, active county committees, it was, you know, you—[*laughs*] I mean, people were, you know, kind of described as Republicans, but it was like there was a little mystery around it. Everybody I knew was a Democrat in my life. Many of them very active in the Democratic Party, you know, at the Central Committee. And

both of my grandfathers were members of the Central Committee, even though ideologically, they were quite, quite different. And that was—it was a big tent. The Democratic Party was a huge tent. It was, you know, it was—but it was where all the action was. And so that's my perception of the party. My family tended to veer towards the left side of that tent and—but that was kind of where all the action was.

[00:11:15] JD: So you've already talked about two, or dropped two of the names of the Big Three. And so when we think of the Big Three, we're referring to Bumpers, Pryor, and Clinton as these three stalwarts of the party who have national followings as well, but certainly very strong presence in the state of Arkansas that they're able to relate with people. And the late Diane Blair published on this idea, and we'll talk to the—about the book that she wrote, and then the book that you coauthored with her some years later, but tell us about the Big Three.

[00:11:50] JB: So you know, the Big Three are Dale Bumpers, who, as I mentioned earlier, really helped, you know, modernize the Democratic Party and really, in many ways, just bring the Democratic Party back after, you know, the Faubus era of deep conservatism and then, of course, the Rockefeller era where, for the first time since Reconstruction, the party was really—you

know, had lost a statewide—had lost some statewide races. They obviously were still dominant at the state legislative and local level, but they were kind of flailing a little bit in terms of who the party was. And so Dale Bumpers, obviously, modernized the party, really in many ways saved the party, and allowed it to become a meaningful force in the state's life. [00:12:42] You know, David Pryor, who had been a congressman from South Arkansas and had been active in politics really since he was at the University of Arkansas as a student going back to the [19]50s. The most aff—you know, the nicest guy in Arkansas politics, the most popular person in Arkansas politics because of his ability to connect one-on-one with people. Dale Bumpers is arguably the most talented orator of the three, a very effective communicator in a kind of courtroom way, but he had an ability to connect with folks as well. And in particular, you know, Bumpers really used the new media of television so effectively. Again, talking one-on-one, talking directly to a camera, and so he was communicating, but in a cooler fashion. [00:13:38] And then of course, you know, Bill Clinton, who comes along a little bit later after his congressional run in [19]74. He fails in his race against Hammerschmidt, barely, and then wins the governorship in—and

wins attorney general in [19]76, the governorship in [19]78, and of course ultimately goes on to national office. And all three of them ultimately either end up—somewhere in Washington, either in the US Senate or the presidency, and they are all very effective communicators. They were all pragmatic progressives, I think it's fair to say. [00:14:10] They certainly had progressive tendencies, but they were not absolutists, and they showed an awareness that they had to—they couldn't get too disconnected from rank-and-file Arkansans. They had seen other folks like John—J. William Fulbright get disconnected from rank-and-file Arkansans and pay a price. And so they were always very conscious of that. [00:14:38] They had very strong personal organizations. They certainly had ties to the Democratic Party as an institution, and they stayed in touch with the Democratic Party, but when push came to shove, it was their personal organizations that really were the driving force. And they tended—occasionally you would have people who would have ties to both camps, but they had somewhat individualized organizations, and folks really did identify as something of a Bumpers person or a Pryor person or a Clinton person. You still hear people described in that way today in terms of their lineage in the party. Very importantly, they never ran against each

other. So they never put those organizations up against each other, and as a result, together, they kind of created an umbrella of support for the Democratic Party that really protected the party in an era where in surrounding Southern states, you know, the Democratic Party was really collapsing. Slowly, in some cases, collapsing as the Republican Party rose de—through demographic trends and through, I think it's fair to say, attitudes about race on the part of white Arkansans. [00:15:48] I do think that, you know, they also—they differed in some ways in terms of their kind of relationship with Arkansans of color. I think it is Clinton himself who really had the deepest ties to Black Arkansans, but they all had, you know, the ability to connect with Black Arkansans, and really keep together something of a biracial coalition during a period in which Blacks are coming into electoral politics on an ongoing basis. And they kind of had different relationships with the Black community, but they all had some connections there that paid off for them.

[00:16:27] JD: Moving up to that era when Governor Clinton becomes President Clinton—in this project, there seem to be sort of two—and not perfectly sort of competing, but two different ideas that Clinton moving to DC and taking with him some considerable Democratic talent in the state—that that crea—

could have created sort of a power vacuum. On the other hand, there's this other argument that I think is equally compelling, which is that with Clinton at the top of the ticket, in particularly, you know, in [19]96 even, that there is this national Democratic brand that is still very much aligned with Arkansas political values in the same way that President Clinton was maybe able to communicate that to Arkansas voters as Governor Clinton. Any value in either ones that you can see? Is it a little bit of both, a little bit more likely that it hurt or helped Democrats in the state?

[00:17:31] JB: Yeah. I mean, I lean towards the view that it hurt. And you know, I think it—but I think it's also important to amend it a bit in that—you know, it's important to recognize we had some demographic forces that were underway that were certainly propelling the state towards an openness to Republicanism. And you know, that's—of course, the growth of Northwest Arkansas both in terms of sheer population, but also in terms of the political power of Northwest Arkansas with the rise of Walmart and all the other megaindustries that grew up in Northwest Arkansas that really were tilted in a ideologically conservative, anti-tax, anti-regulation direction. I think what, you know—so I think that trend is already happening, and kind

of coming to the fore about the time that the Clinton presidential election happens. [00:18:30] Now I think, you know, one reason that Arkansas doesn't tilt Republican is that, as you mentioned, there is still, you know, a brand that is tied to the Big Three as they retire and leave the state, but they're still around, they're still present, they're still defining in terms of thinking about the Democratic Party. Now I do think that there is, you know, in the summer of 1993, you know, just after the departure of Clinton to Washington, that is kind of a moment where there really is a little bit of a power vacuum. And you have this, you know, incredibly dynamic and personable Republican figure, argu—probably the most dynamic figure that the Republican party has ever seen, Mike Huckabee, who had just run a statewide race, had name recognition that was unique at that moment, was running in a special election, which is, of course, a time and moment where weird things happen, weird outcomes occur. And Bill Clinton was not very popular anywhere in the summer of 1993. And so he couldn't come home and help save the Democratic candidate in that race. [00:19:52] And so I think a lot of things came together. And you know, if that hadn't happened, then Mike Huckabee would have never been governor, and it would have probably delayed, you know,

Republican development just a little bit more. Now that said, Mike Huckabee, really like the Big Three, was a somewhat politically selfish figure. He did not invest in building a Republican Party. He invested in his own brand, in his own organization. [00:20:27] And you know, it was—interestingly it's really Asa Hutchinson who during that period is—while he's running for office and losing a lot of elections, he's really investing a lot of his energy in building a Republican Party. And so the Republican Party that ultimately kind of comes to the forefront when the tide changes in the 2000s is really more of a Hutchinson Republic—built Republican Party, while, you know, Huckabee was kind of the governor who governed through that period.

[00:21:02] JD: And I think it's—something that we sometimes overlook is that Huckabee's little over ten years in office afforded him hundreds of appointment positions, but they were probably largely, at least in the early days, Democrats that were getting them. And so to your point, I don't know that—you know, that party infrastructure wasn't really there. There probably just weren't simply enough co—politically connected Republicans at that era to really sort of grapple with and sort of create something bigger than a personality-based infrastructure. And I

wonder to your question—to your point, I have a question. [00:21:39] Asa Hutchinson in—was it 1991—becomes party cochairman. And do you think that shaped sort of his view in how the party itself could be utilized to lift not only himself, maybe his own political ambitions, but the ambitions of the brand of the party? That's striking to me that he's, unlike the Big Three on the Democratic side or unlike Huckabee, he's, as you said, sort of an organizational guy and becomes one pretty early days in his career after a legal career under the Reagan administration.

[00:22:14] JB: Yeah. I think he's much more of a partisan in the sense of the importance of political parties. He's an institutionalist. I think that's a—he believes in institutions. And I think that's what's been very interesting about the end or what appears to be the close of his career in Arkansas politics at least, where, you know, those institutions are failing him. But he clearly is invested in institutions and the political party being one of those kind of defining institutions. And yeah, I think he's very different as a political leader, really, than any of the others—other big names, whether it's the Big Three, Huckabee, or even Beebe who, I think—there's some—Beebe, I think, believed in the party and believed in institutions, maybe a little bit more

than the others. But I think Hutchinson really does stand out in that respect.

[00:23:13] JD: Jay, you've got the—you coauthored the second edition of a book called *Arkansas Politics and Government*. It was originally published in the late [19]80s with Diane Blair, and then you coauthored the second edition with her in approximately 2005. And so having been involved in the second edition of what I would consider, and I think many would consider, the most important books on Arkansas politics, tell me about some of the key differences between, say, late-[19]80s Arkansas politics and mid-2000s Arkansas politics. Both periods before this dramatic shift that we see, but also very distinct periods in, of course, different decades. Just if you had to think about key reasons why you needed a second edition, right, what would be those reasons today?

[00:24:07] JB: Well, I think one thing is that, you know, there had been partisan change, and at the mass level there was change. There, of course, had—with Huckabee's arrival and service during that period. That was a period in which the Republican Party was beginning to get its act together, although it still lagged dramatically in terms of candidate recruitment and other things. And so we were at a point where, unquestionably, the

general election mattered more than the primary. So that was a big change in terms of electoral politics for a variety of reasons. [00:24:45] Secondly, we had seen just dramatic change in the institutions. I mean, term limits had arrived, the most severe term limits in the country, and they had really limited the legislature's ability to stand up as an institution against the executive branch. And it was a really challenged institution, and the courts had been transformed through the—through Amendment 80, which of course made elections nonpartisan for judges, but then also, you know, moved the date of those elections. And so that was a, you know, a key change as well—also, of course, the court structure from the separated chancery and civil and criminal courts to a combined court structure. [00:25:34] So we had a lot of change going on, really, in the institutions during that period. You know, I think in many ways, those changes left the executive branch, you know, kind of distinctly powerful, you know, in the—in that period. Despite, you know, Huckabee not always caring deeply about the governing process, he still had the ability to just kind of dominate politics during that era. So I think there were a variety of reasons that that change had happened. [00:26:10] You know, the other thing that was not so much a change, but

was even more curious by 2005 was, why is Arkansas still standing out as this Democratic state in this region that seems to be just moving faster and faster towards Republicanism? So you know, that was the, you know, the question you would always get is what's—it's such a weird state, you know, it's such a demo—the legislature was overwhelmingly Democratic, local officials were overwhelmingly Democratic. Yet, you know, you went next door or went a couple of states over, and it was—you know, things were very, very—shifting in a Republican direction. So that was a really interesting thing. Which wasn't so much a change from the [19]80s, but it was more curious, you know, seventeen years or so after Diane wrote the first edition.

[00:27:04] JD: I'm so thankful that they're both there because I do think that offers such a great comparison, and [20]05 really is that period where, looking back—we know a few years later, really a couple of election cycles later, all of that sort of seems to melt away.

JB: Yeah.

JD: I mean, the dam breaks, and we see significant changes. [00:27:21] Moving out a few years from the second edition of that book, you begin work with Roby Brock and Talk Business Poll, the Talk Business and Politics Hendrix Poll, and you all I

think are accurately credited with catching some of those 2010 races on the front end, very early on, and being some of the first people and taking a lot of flack for it, if I recall, by saying, "Hey, there's something going on here," that this GOP gain that we see maybe in other parts of the country seem to also be permeating the Natural State. Could you talk a little about what—just the early stages of the poll? Why the poll? Why then? And then also the reaction from politicos and other observers when you were coming up with your results.

[00:28:11] JB: Yeah. So I had run for the State Senate in the primary in 2010 and got thwacked and was—you know, that wasn't the plan. I was supposed to win that race, I thought I was gonna win that race, and that didn't happen. And so I was flailing around a little bit, trying to figure out what was next. And I started writing columns for the *Arkansas Times*. But around that time Roby came along and said, "You know, I really think there's a space for, you know, an independent pollster in Arkansas." He had done a little bit of polling before that point, but it had been with folks who automatically were conflicted because they were also working for candidates. And so—and of course, you know, an academic tie, you know, brings some credibility with it, or at least I think it did at that point. And so

we—and at that moment, you know, polling had suddenly become much, much cheaper to carry out because of some of the technological changes in terms of robo polling and some other things that were possible then. And that was still a point, especially in Arkansas, where almost everybody was still landline dependent as their primary phone. So it was really, you know, a time where you could really still avoid some of the challenges that have emerged in polling that we've kind of—we've attempted to respond to, I think with some success. [00:29:48] But you know, so we try—we got underway in 2010. You—as you described, some things started popping up in terms of what appeared to be just a—what was gonna be a brutal year for Democrats in Arkansas. And because there had never been a brutal year for Democrats in Arkansas, I think people were disbelieving of it. And we didn't have a track record, so, you know, it was easy for them to say, "These guys don't know what the hell they're doing." And we couldn't exactly respond because we didn't know [*laughter*] if we were—knew what we were doing or not. But we could tell something was up. I mean, it was—you could feel it a little bit in the air. I think I would have probably, you know—the traditional way of knowing what's going on just through conversations and through, you know, just kind

of, you know, knowing how to read the political world, you knew something was up, but it was clear that something bigger was up. [00:30:44] And you know, we started having some early returns that really said—suggested that, you know, aside from Governor Beebe, who actually early on was in a little bit of trouble, but then he got back on track when Jim Keet really got—had some self-inflicted wounds, and then some Beebe-inflicted wounds. But the rest of the ticket was really in some trouble. And then in the fall, in the congressional races, we really started to see—especially in the first district, which was, you know, historically so Democratic dominated. And you know, there was one poll where, you know, Chad Causey, who was the Democratic candidate was shown trailing Rick Crawford by I believe low double digits. And you know, I think we were just like, "This feels really weird." And so we did a replication of it the next day, just to see if we were—and it was the same result. So it was like, "Okay, yeah, we feel confident in this." But I think it also showed the care we gave the endeavor early on in particular, and we still do, but I think, you know, Roby and I did, you know, did—had gained knowledge of the state's politics over the years before we ever got into this business. And so that was—that's kind of how it came to be. And I do think we picked

up on some things and have been fairly—you know, we get yelled at a lot during the lead-up to the election, but—because folks think we're inevitably wrong, but we've generally been right.

[00:32:28] JD: That's very good. Well, I think that you—and you've spoken to—the experience, the context, the understanding of what has been historically a rather peculiar politics in the state of Arkansas goes a long way than just having just the statistical knowledge and background, but also having that other context as well. [00:32:47] Still in that same vein, and you've—in your, certainly in your applied political science, such as the polling, but you've published a great deal on this idea. And you and many others that have been studying Arkansas politics now for decades and looked at public opinion polling and the role of the so-called—I'll use the term Independent voter in Arkansas. And even today we can look at the Arkansas Poll led by Janine Parry, where you still see a sizable number of so-called Independent voters in Arkansas, even in a state where, overwhelmingly, you're seeing voters vote Republican. [00:33:25] Could you speak to, you know, roughly the twenty years or so where we saw this—it may be even longer really. I can go back even further to some of the Ranchino's work where you, for decades,

you see the rise of the Independent voter, but not really yielding any different result in the ballot box. What is that about Arkansas voters that it seemed to hold true at least until recently, certainly?

[00:33:46] JB: Yeah. Well, and you know, I think you're totally right. I mean, it was—Independents were the predominant voter, but they weren't real Independents. And you know, historically they were Democratic-leaning Independents, and you know, when push came to shove, they voted for Democrats more often than not, but not always. I mean, there was some, always some—a little bit of fluidity that was tied to personal connection or the politics of the moment, where they were a little more flexible than true partisans. You know, over time we've just seen that shift in Independents increasingly to leaning Republican. [00:34:27] Now at the same time, we've also seen the growth of Republicans and—just as we've seen the demise of Democrats. To some degree with, you know, just what we—you know, with folks dying. I mean, and other folks coming of—become of age is a lot of it. So I think that's happened for sure. [00:34:55] I do think that, you know, we also saw, you know, kind of this period in which there was—ideologically, these Independents were pretty progressive when it came to the role

of government in their lives. Not Massachusetts liberals, but they were open to an activist government on education, on health care, on those kinds of things. But they were really socially conservative, and a lot of that social conservatism tied back to their religious backgrounds, their Protestant backgrounds. And so I think that that was kind of the, you know, the norm. These Independents, they were, you know, they were everywhere in the state, but they were really heavily, especially in those rural areas, white rural areas, you know, along the—from the southwest corner to the northeast corner. I mean, that's where they really predominated, and that's where they really did swing around from election to election, you know, because of the personalities of the candidates in a given election, but also whether the emphasis was on those economic issues or on those social issues. [00:36:09] And the Big Three, during their period of preeminence, they were really good at keeping the focus on the economic issues. Mike Beebe who came—you know, dominated the state, winning all seventy-five counties in 2006, he was the master of really getting it right. I think he was probably the best at getting it right in terms of the rural swing voters because that's where he was from, that's who he was. I mean, and he was—he just basically—you know, his ads in 2006

were just perfectly scripted for that. Mike Huckabee was pretty durn good at it, you know, when you think about, you know, his embrace of the ARKids program, when you think of his, you know, major investment in public education after the Lake View decision. But the same time, you know, having a major covenant marriage of his own marriage at, you know, an arena in North Little Rock. He was that guy who kind of got it right on those issues. [00:37:12] And you know, clearly there reached a point in 2008 and thereafter where there was no overcoming, you know, the dominance of the racial frame and the way in which Barack Obama's arrival on the scene just overwhelmed anything else that had historically made those voters pretty swingy voters.

[00:37:39] JD: Talk to me more about that, about the election of then Senator Barack Obama in 2008 and how, if at all, that impacted—that perhaps energized something that maybe was coming down the pike anyway in terms of Republican growth and Republican electoral success in the state.

JB: Yeah. So . . .

JD: And the cause. I mean, if you can put your finger on it.

[00:38:04] JB: Yeah, yeah. So I mean, I think most of the kind of the growth of Republicanism, you know, up to that point, you

know, I think was very much driven by economic politics for the most vote, as you had more and more folks who were a little bit wealthier, a little bit more comfortable economically, were more frustrated with paying taxes for programs that they didn't feel they had benefited from. That was just like everything—everyplace else in the South. And I think you saw that in the—in West Little Rock, the suburbs of Little Rock, Northwest Arkansas, that's the kind of driver. You had, of course, also some evangelicalism that had kind of replaced the mainline Protestantism that had historically been in place. And of course, we also see the change in tenor of the Southern Baptist Convention over that period that I think politicizes folks who had historically been, you know, not very political when it came to mixing religion and politics. [00:39:14] But I do think that, you know, Barack Obama's arrival, you know, really shifts things in a new dir—it puts things—puts a new group of voters in play, and basically just transforms them. And you have, you know, white, rural Arkansans, who lived in counties which were really overwhelmingly white, or at least in communities that were overwhelmingly white. There might be a county, a little, you know, hamlet here or there that was more heavily Black, but it was mostly a white politics. And so in their daily lives, they

really didn't have to think about race that much. It just was not part of their daily interaction. And suddenly you have this, you know, incredibly talented guy who is on their TV screens every day. And he is not only a person of color, but he is also out of sync with them in other ways. I mean, I think there were—he is certainly a incredibly cosmopolitan and urbane guy who did not really get rural America in a legitimate way. And then you throw on top his kind of embrace of multiculturalism, including religious diversity. That also is out of sync with their experience. And I think that just, you know, is kind of a game changer in terms of how, you know, white, rural Arkansans, who had been these swing voters historically—you know, where they are as a result of his arrival on the scene. [00:40:56] And you see, you know, shifts at the presidential level at—in 2008. But then, you know, kind of in 2010 with the Tea Party having come in and begun to recruit folks, get folks involved in a much more activist way and begin thinking about running for office themselves, you start to see more and more folks run for office as Republicans. And then by 2012, you see this really conscious and effective campaign to link everything back to Obama, you know. And you know, every vote for any Democrat is a vote for Obama. Any vote for any Republican is a vote against Obama. And that just becomes the,

you know, the definer. And then, you know, after eight years of a presidency in which he's there every day, he is the brand of the Democratic Party. And you know, these rural voters, white, rural voters in particular, just kind of can't go there anymore. And then rather than things kind of reverting to a norm after that, you know, we see Donald Trump come in the scene who has his own magnetic attraction to these same voters who had been pushed away from the Democrats by President Obama.

[00:42:22] JD: If we go back to, say, the mid 2000s, we have a president, a former governor of Texas, elected. He defeats Al Gore, of course, in 2000 in a conte—in a really contested race, heated race. But I think it perhaps gives Arkansas, Arkansans, particularly those that you're referring to that are sort of swing voters, the opportunity to say, "Well, the National Democratic Party might not be something I can relate to, but I don't really see them. I'm not reminded that often of them, except maybe members of Congress on the news. What I can see are my representatives who are Democrats, and perhaps eventually with Mike Beebe, a governor who's a Democrat, and they seem to be more in line with me and my values." And this is more of an intellectual exercise, but let's say John McCain wins in [20]08. Does that prolong—I mean, are we spending another five,

maybe ten years kind of where we were in [20]05 where we're scratching our heads saying, "Why hasn't this happened in Arkansas?" Or do you think it was just gonna be inevitable during, say, the last few years we would've had this dramatic shift? I mean, do you think we can lay it at the feet of not President Obama, but at his ascendance? Is that such a strong correlation, you think?

[00:43:38] JB: Yeah, I mean, I would lay it at the feet of the kind of the core racism of many of the folks who are responding to President Obama. He certainly gets some discredit for not having that natural ability to kind of res—connect with those voters. And I think he—it was hard for him to transform in a way that he could be seen as legitimate, you know, a legitimate president I think in some ways because of his—you know, it's just this urbane guy, you know, and this is rural Arkansas, and the life experiences are just—you know, there's no overlap on the Venn diagram. So I think that was a challenge. [00:44:30] So but yeah, in terms of your intellectual exercise, I think it's delayed. Now ultimately, of course, as it all plays out in the rise of President Trump, who would not have—would have [*laughs*] never been president if Barack Obama had not been elected, then I don't know if you would have begun to see the swing back

towards—or swing to Democrats you know, in suburban voters, Northwest Arkansas voters. It's still at the margins, but it's certainly a push away. And you look at younger voters and, you know, even in Arkansas, you know, there's some problems for Republicans long term, especially in those more suburban and urban areas. [00:45:20] But I think the big point is—which to go back to your 2000 point is, at that point in time, Arkansas politics at the end of the day was ultimately pretty provincial. National elections happened, Arkansans participated in them, but they did not shape the state's politics. By 2010 they are shaping the state's politics. And this historically po—highly provincial place is certainly now nationalized. Now I would say that it is still a personal politics, because I think it is tied back to the personalities of these key national figures. So I think Arkansas hasn't kind of given up on personalism exactly, but that personalism that matters is the relationship with national figures rather than local figures, who just kind of fade a little bit into the background.

[00:46:12] JD: I think that's a really good point. And so you've talked about President Obama's perhaps inability to really connect whether, you know, for concerns of racism from voters, sort of white resentment toward him, or just his nature, just his

inability, perhaps, to do such a thing. And then we enter in—we have Donald Trump, who is a guy from Manhattan who, you know, probably on paper wouldn't relate well to an Arkansas voter. What is it about Donald Trump in 2015, 2016. and even in 2020, in his failed re-election bid where he gains votes in the state of Arkansas, what is it about him that appeals to Arkansas voters at this time?

[00:47:07] JB: Yeah, it's a fantastic question, and it's, I think, incredibly important question, and I don't have the grand answer to it. I think that, you know, the important thing is we have seen this, you know, factionalism in the Republican Party. You see a Republican party grow really quickly, and it is now a party in which a chunk of the folks are institutionalists who have deep and fairly long ties with the Republican Party. And then you have just these new arrivers who don't really care too much about institutions. And Donald Trump is a good example of that. And they are, I think, deeply drawn to the, in essence, the willingness of Trump to say things they are thinking but haven't, don't, have not, never had voice to say. And you know, I think they still—they kind of enjoy his irreverence to institutions and to norms. And I think it's an important part of kind of who they are. The weird thing—so that all makes some sense. The weird

thing is, you know, the tie of religious evangelicals to Trump. That's the part that doesn't quite work because there you do have some kind of respect for institutions, importance of institutions in their weekly, daily lives. And that doesn't fit with the rest of that picture. And I think that's the part that just, you know, I don't have the grand answer to. I'm also not a, you know, religion and politics scholar, and I just can't—and I don't understand that connection. [00:49:13] Now you know, it could be that we're at this moment where, okay, that's uncomfortable to evangelicals, but the Democratic Party and its stances on key issues that are very important are more damning than the irreverence of Trumpism. So I don't know. That's a—I do not have the—I think it's befuddling. I think we're at this moment—and we are probably at a moment where, you know, you're offering voters two options, and they don't particularly love either option. And one is—one option is more problematic than the other.

[00:49:56] JD: At least recently, we look at—and we can—just looking at Republican nominees for president who fell short. Typically, the party wants to move on pretty quickly after a loss. I mean, Bob Dole was not being discussed in 1997. Really, Senator McCain, other than being a real, you know, influential

member of the Senate on certain key issues, particularly, he was no longer nearly as relevant on the scene in [20]09, and we look at Romney in say, [20]13. He's gone, I mean, from the radar for a time. Yet Trump looms large. And so I think that's, again, a puzzling feature to this, particularly in a state who supported him by and large, and by a larger margin than they had previously four years before. But he still—this is a man who's probably been in the state three times, maybe four, maybe, his whole life.

JB: Yeah.

JD: And I think that's just interesting to me. There's just—there's a connection there that . . .

JB: Yeah.

JD: . . . I think, we probably all struggle with.

JB: But it—yeah.

JD: To explain.

[00:51:06] JB: Yeah. That said, it's—you know, and I would love to kind of do a deep dive in terms of where that connection is. I mean, certainly, it's kind of across Republicans, but you know, Republicans are not the same as the—in terms of their political worldview than Republicans from ten years ago, who would have been much more kind of traditional conservatives. And this is

a—this is kind of not inherently a conservative party. It's a much more complicated party. And you see that the deep resonance, I think, is much more clearly seen in rural Arkansas. I mean, you know, where the flags still wave, you know, for Trump and are certainly not going away. And where, you know, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who, you know, comes out of the—out of one governor who worked really well and from a president who resonated with those same voters in a deep way. I mean, I think, you know, he's a defining force.

[00:52:18] JD: So 2010 certainly is sort of the beginning of what we eventually come to as a state in terms of party politics that historically had been dominated by Democrats and then just as quickly became dominated by Republicans. There's very little time period there where we can say there were these two sort of coequal, competing parties. And organizationally they've—neither of them have been terribly strong historically, but we go from straight D to straight R seemingly overnight, it would appear.

JB: Although I would say we go from factionalized D to factionalized R.

JD: Certainly. Yeah, yeah.

JB: So—but yeah, at the mass level, yeah, it's a D-to-R switch. But

I do think we—the constancy is factionalism, which is really kind of a defining force back across electoral politics in Arkansas. We really—we've historically been a one-party state that just is factionalized, and the question is how deeply factionalized?

[00:53:17] JD: Do you think if we had a more competitive two parties that that would not happen? That you—I mean, there seems to be this feeling that if I have—I have to beat up somebody. I'm in politics, and it's competitive, and I don't have anybody on the other side to beat, so who else is in this room that I can be adversarial with? Is there something to that, do you think, just . . .

JB: Yeah.

JD: . . . the history of the state?

[00:53:38] JB: Yeah, I think, you know, there is. Now, you know, interestingly, even—we've probably never had that moment where there was really a true two part—I mean, maybe in the, you know, in the Huckabee years, maybe that's probably the closest we ever got to it, where—you know, I think about his race against, you know, Jimmie Lou Fisher, which was a . . .

JD: A very close race.

JB: . . . a close race, and the—although the Republicans, you know, won. And the ballot was pretty evenly split between the two as

well. So that was a moment where you probably had the g—and it—you blink, and it's gone. Yeah.

[00:54:22] JD: So we have 2010, where we start to see the beginning of the end of the Democratic dominance in the state. And then [20]12 and [20]14 are the ones where we really see, certainly at the state level, signs that there's not going to be any return, that this wasn't sort of a relatively—a short-lived effect of maybe the unpopularity by Arkansans of President Obama or something like that. That this wasn't something that was going to return back to pre-2010 days. Looking back, was there a race, two races in [20]12 and [20]14 where you could point at it and say, especially in hindsight, and say, you know, "Those told me that this was really a new era in Arkansas politics?"

[00:55:06] JB: Well, I think you have to say the Pryor/Cotton race, I mean, was where it looked like a super close race most of the way and then just turned into a shellacking at the end. So I think you—there it's not so much the winner and the loser, but the margin of that and the fact that the, you know, the loser was obviously one of the—someone—a senator, you know, without the political talent of his father, but certainly a carrier of that name and somebody who had, you know, some of the legacy of his dad. So I think that the—I think that race for sure. I think

the—I'm trying to think, you know, if there's—I don't know that there's another individual race. [00:56:01] But I do think just some of the legis—some of the kind of veteran legi—Democratic legislators who got, you know, kind of wiped out in this—real—and you really go from, you know, 2010, where you have a bunch of shocking, you know, outcomes where, you know, folks who are really new to the scene as Republicans, you know, defeat veterans, and then that kind of that tide kind of continues across that—those three cycles. So I don't know if it's so much an individual race as kind of a ser—a set of races at the legislative level in that period. [00:56:48] You know, obviously Blanche Lincoln's loss to—in 2010 to Boozman. That's another, you know, another one that seems to stand out, but that was 2010. I think you're right that—the fact that it was [20]12 and [20]14 is when it really just got locked in. That said, I do think some Democrats still were naively expecting that as soon as Barack Obama was gone, you know, you just kind of flip a switch, and you'd be back to where things were. I think that was—you know, and the expectation that Hillary Clinton could be somebody who can bring Democrat—or bring Arkansans back to the Democratic fold was really, of course, quite naive.

[00:57:37] JD: And you think [20]14 with the election of Asa

Hutchinson as governor, who in [20]06 had run against Mike Beebe, lost pretty handily—and also his opponent in [20]14 is sort of a conservative-to-moderate Democrat in South Arkansas, Mike Ross, who even in 2010 did quite well, won handily for his US House seat. And I do recall a certain optimism among some of the Democrats saying, you know, we're—this is a familiar opponent in Asa Hutchinson, and this is a candidate on the other side that really is not associated with sort of the real progressivism that seemed to be being—it was found distasteful, maybe by a lot of these Independent so-called voters in Arkansas.

[00:58:26] JB: You know, there, you know, again, I think it's more the margin than the—than who won or who lost. And I think in that case, you know, you had the national dynamics just shaping that. I mean, that Mike Ross had really little, very little control over that outcome because I think everything was really being defined by, you know, not just the senate race, but really the underlying attitudes about President Obama that was really shaping everything. So I think even that race—it was down water, but it was a nash—affected by national patterns.

[00:59:00] JD: Explain nationalized politics. It seems that the—in the current state with nationalized sort of party dynamics at play

in this—in the country that the political winds really favor Republicans in this state that is socially conservative, economically moderate on some issues, conservative, perhaps on others. Explain the effect of just a nationalized politics, not just maybe in Arkansas, but just to state politics period.

[00:59:34] JB: Yeah. Well, I think it leads to, you know, an increasingly kind of nationalized governing style, you know, where we see, you know, issues that, you know, pop up in one state, and they very quickly get transferred over to another. I think we see, you know, the rise of model bills really coming out of, you know, national groups like ALEC that just get, you know, spread from legislature to legislature. And so it's not just the kind of attitudinal stuff in terms of who's up, who's down, but I think it really goes all the way down to, you know, what issues are resonating with legislative bodies across the country? [01:00:20] And I think we're even seeing it, you know, oftentimes at some of the county quorum courts, some of those things still—you know, they start to kind of pop around. So you know, I think that's the impact of nationalization on folks' lives is that issues that certainly would have never even been pondered, you know, a few years ago suddenly are not just being, you know, guided by some legislator in Arkansas, but it's really all

part of a national pattern of national debate in those states where, you know, conserv—social conservatism or some other ideology really is dominant.

[01:01:07] JD: What do you say to the person who in, maybe 2014, maybe following the 2014 election says, "Okay, we're gonna have a Republican governor, we're going to have a full slate of Republican constitutional officers, and we're going to have supermajorities in both chambers in the House and the Senate at the General Assembly level that're going to be Republican. Big deal. We've by and large been a pretty moderate to conservative state on a lot of issues. What's the difference going to be?" Knowing what we know now, I mean, what are the policy effects of this historic shift? We get kind of lost in the Ds and the Rs. But as far as outputs from state government, what do you think are the biggest differences you see that you don't think you would have seen had we continued sort of the path that we had had for decades?

[01:02:00] JB: Yeah. Well, I mean, you know, what we tended to see was basically pragmatism, you know, in that, you know, the focus was on getting the job done rather than, you know, ideology. And I think the—you know, what was first the private option, which has, of course, morphed since then into different

names, the expansion of Medicaid—the classic example, right, is that, you know, it was not an—ideologically, there was—of course, there were some ideological opposition to it, but the focus was on, let's overcome that ideological opposition and still get health care for Arkansans. So classic pragmatism. [01:02:48] I think a conjoined aspect of pragmatism was trying to avoid some of those issues that—those—the social issues that really just become a, you know, a distraction from getting the job done on these bread-and-butter issues. And so you know, Arkansas didn't have much immigration legislation that passed on either direction, didn't—you know, rarely had abortion legislation passed. It was often introduced, but it didn't get through. You know, there was, aside from the ban on same sex marriage in the constitution and legislation, there wasn't a lot of legislation. There were things that were introduced that just never got dealt with because they were seen as too distracting from the kind of the bread-and-butter, pragmatic work of the government. [01:03:43] I think we've reached a point where some of this old pragmatism remains and hasn't gone away because now it's just essential to the fundamentals of governance and balancing a budget. But now there's so much more attention, I think, to other issues, which I think really

distract and divert from the core pragmatism of the state that had been in place for decades. And so I think that's the fundamental change. And it's—the question is, do we ever reach a point where the desire to make points on social issues just fundamentally starts to break some of these commitments that have been made through these pragmatic, you know, compromises? And that's the grand question. You know, does ideology ever reach a point—ideological purism in this state ever reach a point where it just completely starts to break government apart? We haven't gotten there yet. It—these things are certainly deeply painful to certain folks who are affected by the legislation but are not at a point where they completely decimate these—some of these kind of core programs on education, on health care, and other things that have been made over the decades.

[01:05:20] JD: We've seen, especially in the 2020 election cycle but even prior to that, we've seen Southern states that, earlier than Arkansas, went from sort of this traditional Southern Democratic structure to Republican conservatism and the Republican brand of conservatism in, say, the 1990s and early 2000s. And we've seen in—more recently the demographics seem to be having a real impact. We can look at Texas, which requires us to look a

little further down the road at demographic shifts seeming to, in that case, favor Democrats. And then we can look in Georgia, where in 2020 we see a critical number of new, perhaps younger, more progressive—some are new, I guess I'd say, new Georgians, some are generationally attached to the state. But we've hit that critical number, it seems, in some of these statewide races in Georgia, where Democrats are being advantaged for the first time in at least a decade, probably two decades or more. [01:06:28] Where are we in Arkansas? What do we look like in twenty years? Demographically, knowing we're different than those states, what do we look like in twenty years?

[01:06:35] JB: Yeah, and you know, I—you know, if I had a nickel for every time I've heard, "We need a Stacey Abrams in Arkansas." Yeah, maybe so. I don't—but that doesn't lead to automatic change because you have to have, you know—Arkansas's demographic fundamentals are just so different. I mean, you know, we have a relatively small percentage of persons of color. That has—that was actually a factor in delaying our shift to Republicanism in the [19]60s and [19]70s. I think that's an important point. But it has not increased. The percentage of Black Arkansans has stayed fairly constant. While

we have seen, you know, increases in Latinx and Asian American populations, they are at the margins rather than, you know, as large as Texas, of course, and even Georgia. But locai—on a localized manner, may make a difference. [01:07:41] You know, the other thing that just is fundamentally different about Arkansas are the low, persistently low percentage of individuals with college degrees, which is just a definer in terms of how folks look at politics now. And you know, it's gone up a bit, just as with generational replacement, but it's not popping up. And so you know, you have all of these variables that really drive, you know, outcome of—our understanding of electoral outcomes, and those are just aren't happening in Arkansas, at least on a statewide level. [01:08:23] Now are there some locales, are there some pockets where Arkansas starts to look more like Northern Virginia or parts of Georgia? Yeah. And I do think Northwest Arkansas is the place that feels the most like that, you know, where you do have the biggest change underway, you do have increases in college-educated individuals who are coming from other states in many cases, and you have enhanced diversification. In that case not, for the most part, Black Arkansans, but other forms of diversity that certainly are more open to the more diversity friendly Democratic Party.

[01:09:10] JD: So I'm going a little out of order, but you brought up a great point, and I don't wanna neglect it. And when they edit this, we'll need to clean up me kind of begging forgiveness here. But I think you touched on something that we had not included in our discussion. And it's—it is important. When we talk about this era between [19]66 and today, we need to focus on that early part in Arkansas political history there and—especially in terms of the Southern Strategy, and in particularly the way in which race was used and racial fear tactics and dog-whistle politics were used in a state that is largely known, sadly, for the Central High crisis in 1957 and Orval Faubus and resistance and Southern Manifesto and this sort of thing. Explain to us this—how—explain to us what—Southern politics terms. What the Southern Strategy—how it unfolded. And then how in some ways Arkansas was resistant to it. And I think you touched on that with demographics.

JB: Yeah.

JD: But could you do that just for the sake of this?

[01:10:23] JB: Yeah, obviously, you know, in the aftermath of the Brown decision, you know, really through the Voting Rights Act, you know, overt, race-based politics, explicit racial appeals in politics, you know, were normalized. And we saw—we see, you

know, governors, including Faubus, in some cases shift from being more moderate on those issues to much more militant on those issues because it has political payoff where you have an atmosphere in which there are relatively few Black voters. It's primarily white voters who are suddenly, you know, deeply agitated about change in the racial order. And we see that period in Arkansas as in other states. However, once African Americans get the vote, while we see backlash against that, I think, persist in other states, even though the racial appeals diminish, in Arkansas, we see a weird thing happen—and those voters in other states tend to go to the Republican Party. [01:11:37] In Arkansas we see a weird thing happen in that we have relatively small numbers of Black Arkansans, so there is not the same racial backlash among whites. Moreover we see a Republican Winthrop Rockefeller actually make appeals, successful appeals, to Black Arkansans to get him over the finish line and allow him to win elections as governor. And so the Republican party in Arkansas actually goes the opposite way on race than the repu—in this key magic moment in the nineteen, late 1960s, when in other states the Republican Party is making those appeals often in implicit ways rather than explicit ways. And it gets more implicit over time. And ultimately, as you said,

turns into dog whistles rather than overt appeals. In Arkansas, you know, at first, that market really isn't there. Dale Bumpers wins the governorship, so the Democrats start—stop doing racial—race-based politics, at least at the state level, as well. And so you know, Arkansas kind of doesn't take race off the table, but it certainly is much more muted and diminished compared to other states. Now you know, fast forward to Barack Obama's arrival on the scene. I think suddenly race pops to the forefront again, and you see a dramatically delayed reaction along the lines you see in other states.

[01:13:08] JD: What have we left out? So what have we forgotten to look at that is particularly important when we look at that time period, [20]05 to [20]15? Or maybe events prior to that that help explain what happens in really just a few election cycles leading to this historic shift?

[01:13:28] JB: I think the one thing we haven't really talked about is, you know, that—you know, we tend to focus so much on the voters. And you know, in some ways, the voters are kind of the customers in the process of buying candida—buying cho—between choices that are kind of sitting up on the political shelf here. But we gotta focus on the products that are being offered. And I think historically, there was such a gap in terms of the

quality of the products. The Democrats just had so much stronger candidates than Republicans. Over time, though, we've really, I think, started to see, you know, a reshaping of that in that, you know, eighteen-, nineteen-, twenty-somethings who say, "I want to be involved in public life now." You know, it is—unless they are in a couple of places in this state, it really makes no sense for them to run as Democrats. [01:14:40] And so they have a choice. If they are ideologically pretty committed to the values of the Democratic Party, you know, they're either gonna move to one of those neighborhoods where they can still win or, you know, they get out of state or they get out—or they just give up on that desire to serve in public life. Or if they are more ideologically malleable, the place to go is the Republican Party. And I think that's the change that has taken place that is really important and is gonna have a generational ramification. So even if we—you know, ten years from now we have another swing back, you know, there's gonna be a candidate quality gap, but the candidate quality gap will not be in the Democrats' favor. Instead I think it'll be in the Republicans' favor. Because you know, if you go into a law school class at Fayetteville fifteen years ago, those folks who were thinking about running for poli—for office, they think they're gonna run as a Democrat. Now I

think you go in that same class, and those same folks, who may not be ideologically that different than that period, now I think they're gonna run as Republicans because that's really gonna be their only option. So I think we need to think about candidate quality and how that change is occurring and how it has lasting ramifications, as we saw for the Democrats. They had a big advantage just over the qu—because of the quality of their candidates being so much stronger for so long.

[01:16:16] JD: So it sounds to me like we're in a period of almost sort of a role reversal. So if we were to go back to the 1970s Republicans, maybe the 1980s Republicans, where occasionally you would see an Ed Bethune, somebody, get into an office—it was not so much a concerted effort, or was not maybe gains realized by a full slate of co-partisans. It was sort of fits and starts of electoral successes and failures. And it sounds like what you're saying is that the future, at least in the foreseeable future, is going to be that but for the Democrats, where occasionally a Democrat might stumble into a victory. It doesn't really mean that her co-partisan fellow Democrats do as well on the ticket. And it doesn't mean that maybe she even gets to sustain that electoral success . . .

JB: Yeah.

JD: . . . for long.

JB: Yeah.

JD: There's a complete role reversal there.

JB: Yeah. Yeah.

JD: That's fascinating.

JB: Yeah.

JD: Well, Jay, I'm . . .

JB: And it's weird to be old enough to have lived through that. So [*laughs*] . . .

[01:17:18] JD: Well, Dr. Jay Barth, on behalf of the Pryor Center, thank you so much for offering your valuable insights and expertise to this endeavor and further illuminating to us this historical shift and the events that led to it. Thank you so much for your time.

JB: Thanks, John.

[End of interview 01:17:50]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]