

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

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Blue to Red Oral History Project

Angie Maxwell
Interviewed by John C. Davis
September 29, 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 Angie Maxwell on September 29, 2021, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

John C. Davis: Here with me is Dr. Angie Maxwell, Associate Professor of Political Science, Director of the Diane D. Blair Center for Southern Politics and Society, and Diane Blair Endowed Chair of Southern Studies at the University of Arkansas.

Angie Maxwell: Hi, nice to be with you.

JD: And, Dr. Maxwell, we know you'll have wonderful insights into this project and what has unfolded, particularly over the last ten or twenty years, but you also will offer a historical perspective that offers us a lens into a broader scope of what has unfolded in the state and the rise of the GOP in Arkansas more recently. Of course, for myself but also on behalf of the Pryor Center, thank you so much for sitting down with me today.

AM: Thank you for having me.

JD: So the scope of the study is really sort of in two parts. One is looking at the dramatic, you know, marked change that we can easily see between particularly [20]05 and [20]15. [Two thousand] oh five is—you know, really about a five-year period there of, if anything, a Democratic Party that is even somehow

strengthening in numbers during that era in Arkansas, while all of the Southern neighbors, virtually all of the Southern neighbors, have gone more or less Republican, or at least are more competitive than we were. The state of Arkansas, as you know, for decades had been dominated by Democratic politics one to—to one extent or another. And then we get closer to 2015, and certainly where we are today in 2021, where Republicans dominate in a similar fashion numerically as to what we had grown accustomed to in seeing from Democrats for decades. And so I—knowing that there's more historical context than just looking at, say, a ten-year period, we've broken up this era in three generations. [00:01:53] The first starts somewhere around 1966 with Rockefeller's election. It's also a time where the Republican Party is changing post-Civil Rights Act of 1964, which I know you'll have more to talk about. And then that first generation ends in 1992. It covers a lot of ground of fits and starts from the Republican Party, sort of the wilderness years, if you will, in the [19]70s, where the party is moving to a more conservative fashion nationally, especially, particularly in the South, and into the 1980s. And then even into the late [19]80s into the early [19]90s, when we see both a dramatic defeat for the Republicans in Arkansas in watching a Democratic

governor in Bill Clinton ascend to the White House, but also seeing an opportunity for the GOP as a lot of political talent was leaving or looking at other opportunities on the Democratic side. And as we know in 1992 also, term limits are voted on and supported by voters and over time play a key role in creating more open seats. [00:02:54] And then the second generation from loosely [19]93 to 2010, where we see a party, particularly in hindsight, in the GOP who was able to capitalize on opportunities in sort of a strategic fashion, benefit from good fortune, and sometimes even benefit from Democratic missteps, both nationally and at the state level. And that brings us to today, right, 2011 to today, where we see a GOP that is—can claim all four US House seats, both Senate seats, supermajorities in the general assembly, and all constitutional offices. Nearly a clean sweep with exception of a few pockets in the state of Arkansas. [00:03:38] So with that, Dr. Maxwell, when you came to Arkansas as a student, do you remember what your perception of the state's politics and especially the parties, at that time?

[00:03:52] AM: Well, I came in the fall of 1996. So everything was, you know, Clinton. You know, that was the kind of feeling and the vibe. It felt very much like Arkansas was national politics

and on that stage. And of course, Fayetteville itself seemed New Democrat. Conservative Democrat, but New Democrat. But I remember distinctly that there are parts of it that felt almost apolitical, and that is—that's what happens when you don't have competition as much is that things kind of get quiet because you're not having all these hotly contested elections. So I feel like not all the competition and the change was—had happened yet in Arkansas, right. We were still—we had little pockets, like you said, but we very much had, you know, Democrats still in such strong control—both the House and the Senate, you know, the State Chambers. And so it just didn't feel like there was a lot of disagreement that maybe an eighteen-year-old would have picked up on, as opposed to Louisiana, where I was from, where there had been a lot of change a little bit earlier than we saw in Arkansas.

[00:05:15] JD: You mentioned [19]96. Course, it's the reelection of Bill Clinton with considerable excitement—from Arkansas, being a native son. It's also—[19]96 marks the year that Tim Hutchinson is the first Republican US Senator popularly elected in the state's history. And he's sort of in that classic mold of someone—he's a one-term individual who loses to Mark Pryor, a Democrat, in [20]02. And so you're riding kind of that cusp of

that era where, in hindsight—and I think there were some things going on that would show a little bit—momentum may be a strong word, but a little bit of movement politically, but still, as you said, a very solidly Democratic state.

[00:05:52] AM: What I saw in [19]96, too, is so much split ticketing, which can sometimes be a sign of independence. People in Arkansas are not letting the national brands define the state. Or it can also be a sign that we're in this purple space and flipping, right. And you couldn't tell in the moment because of the extraordinary circumstances and nuances. Tim Hutchinson is, you know, a known quantity on the radio and has such a popular presence, which is always a smart tactic. He also is able to run up the numbers in his home county to such a degree to overcome kind of the Clinton coattails. And that's because of population changes that were starting to happen, right, in Northwest Arkansas kind of early on. Now I don't know if we'd have seen all of that in the moment, but definitely you can see something building that isn't just pockets. It's now maybe strong enough pockets to affect a statewide election. That's why it's such a, you know, momentous and unique moment that the state of Arkansas votes in its native son for reelection to the presidency at the same time that it, statewide, elects its first

Republican senator since Reconstruction.

[00:07:17] JD: Yeah. So you've published several works on Southern politics specifically.

AM: Mm-hmm.

JD: And recently you coauthored the acclaimed book, *The Long Southern Strategy: How Chasing White Voters in the South Changed American Politics*. Can you briefly explain the Southern Strategy?

AM: Mm-hmm.

JD: Sort of as the way it has been argued and sort of portrayed for some time now, and then go perhaps in more detail on your extension, your contribution to this idea from your book.

[00:07:45] AM: Yeah, I would be happy to. So the—I call it the Short Southern Strategy, but it's the version that we were always told. Why did the South align—you know, switch from solidly Democrat to solidly Republican, right, and realignment theory. And that stra—that Short Southern Strategy said that, you know, after the civil rights movement, you know, Richard Nixon and Republican strategists were able to capitalize on kind of white racial angst and dissatisfaction with the movement of the National Democratic Party in a pro-civil rights direction and convince enough white Southerners to kind of break that

long-held, you know, psychological stronghold they had with the Democratic Party. Nixon plays in a coded language to that angst, trying to get, you know, white Southerners who felt that way to focus on things like law and order, to claim that he was not going to enforce a lot of, you know, civil rights legislation through the executive branch, just an impression that he was gonna slow all the change down. And by doing that, the South turns red. Like that's the story that, you know, we're told—kind of that's how it got simplified. [00:09:10] But for me it was dissatisfying. Because I know that the whole South minus one state flipped back to Jimmy Carter in 1976. And you know, you and I both know the morning after elections, what do we do? We wring our hands and dig into the dough, you know, kind of a postmortem. And I thought strategists, the Republican strategists, must've freaked out that next morning after Carter's elected, going, "Was this a mistake? Was this whole idea that the only way to really create a path to Electoral College victory was going to be to break up this Southern Democratic block?" Which was their—which was the idea. We've got to pick, you know, we've got to pick off some of those states. Then we have so many more combinations that get us to an Electoral College majority. And they must have thought with—"Did those inroads

just get completely washed away?" And there wa—it turns out there was a lot of debate about, "Was that a moment that we captured? You know, right after Civil Rights Act of [19]64 and Voting Rights Act, was that a moment we captured? Or was it something else? Is it something we can build on?" And so understanding that they were debating it made me dig deeper into decisions that were made. And I wanna say very clearly that a lot of these decisions were made by Republican strategists. They were not all agreed to by the majority of the Republican Party. They don't all represent the majority of the Republican Party, and there are candidates that those strategists advised that did not take their advice. So it is not a—this uniform, you know, thing, when I speak in these trends about what the GOP—the choices the national GOP made. None of them were without objection by a lot of people. [00:11:08] So one specific thing that strategists looked at going into the 1980 election is they didn't—they realized they did not do as well with Southern women. So Southern white women had not pulled over to Nixon at the same—to the same degree. And that's in their internal data, right. That's not data that we had access to. And so they polled 40,000 American women to the tune of \$100,000. And they divided them into sixty-four categories like

Helen—they give them names, Helens, Bettys, all this. And they were trying to really do a deep dive—and the Republicans are—always been better at this, honestly—do a deep dive into kind of a psychological profile, early microtargeting, to a degree. And they figured out that the Southern women, white women that they needed to win to maybe shore up those inroads or at least be competitive, were supportive of traditional gender roles and had become pretty politicized against the Equal Rights Amendment. [00:12:27] Now they watched that unfold, really, in 1977. And so it was fresh on their mind. That made sense. It was still really recent. And it was still in flux because the timeline for the ERA had been extended. So it was still a fight. So they capitalized on that wedge issue. And in 1980, the Republican Party dropped the ERA from its platform, which it was the party that put it in in the first place like forty years prior, to the great dismay of a whole bunch of Republican feminists, men and women, in the party. But it was specifically to help capture those Southern white women who either did not vote or had not moved in that direction. And it is one of the major reasons that Reagan picks up, in 1980, so—such a higher percentage of Southern votes and wins, you know, and sweeps the South. So I think that's part of the Southern Strategy.

[00:13:23] But then again, Bill Clinton, 1996, wins some Southern states back. And he starts in [19]96, actually, to gain traction in a couple of others that he doesn't end up winning, but he's—comes close. It seems competitive. And then you see the Republican Party again, you know, kind of go to the maps, go to the data, and figure out that white evangelicals are not voting to the same degree that—like we would see them vote now. And part of that had to do with feeling like maybe elections were kind of a worldly concern, and so much focus not on these worldly things, and because of the—a little bit of the separate sphere that evangelicals had created in private colleges, you know, in private spaces that, you know, is a manifestation of a lot of other history, but they wanted to reach them. And so they, you know, made an issue out of a lot of—and highlighted in their rhetoric a lot of issues about, like, prayer in school, gay marriage. They put gay marriage amendments on the ballots.

[00:14:33] So if you're not interested in politics, if it's been just one party's in charge of everything for so long, but you care about an issue—I mean, this is something Democrats do too, but—and that drew out evangelicals, you know, in much higher numbers. And so the three components, this racial resentment and angst, this support for traditional gender roles, which has

kind of morphed into a distrust of working women, and this kind of Christian nationalism, those three components in 2016 among white voters account for 95 percent of Trump's support, being one of those three. Some people are all three. Some people are two of three. Some people are just one. Even though they're usually all criticized, as, you know, you must be all three of these things, it's really three different kind of populations.

[00:15:40] And so the Short Southern Strategy might've gotten the Republicans there right after in the hot moment of civil rights changes, but I don't think it had staying power unless it was adapted and built on. Just like the long civil rights movement concept, which is civil rights doesn't start when—you know, with Emmett Till or bus boycotts or the March on Washington, it actually starts with court cases and organizing that goes well back into the early twentieth century to 1910-teens. [00:16:16] The Short Southern Strategy was incomplete to me. Not wrong, just incomplete. It was a much longer process. And it—this defi—this vision of a Long Southern Strategy also helps, I think, account for the variation within states and how it developed. Definitely helps explain Arkansas to me, which always kind of didn't fit the Southern Strategy definition as it flipped so much later. So it's not all neat and perfect, you know, and it wasn't

some one person's master plan. I don't mean to imply that, but it was an evolve—it's finding wedge issues that worked for certain populations in the South and adding them to the national brand. And then also—and you know, this is another kind of component of the book, which is that Republicans very much adopted kind of a Southern style of campaigning. And those, the issue positions and that Southern style, really helped break that Democratic, you know, psychological hold on white Southerners, and it also rebranded the party nationally. So it changed everything.

[00:17:41] JD: Well, I'm fascinated by it for many reasons, and it does seem to fit Arkansas better, in part because perhaps our demographics would have made a strictly civil rights focused politics less effective.

AM: Absolutely true.

JD: And certainly in the post, you know, [19]64 world, right. And so I think, you know, that makes more sense. And Arkansas always seems to me to be sort of partly Southern, partly Midwestern in that way, and it's mainly demography and where populations are, and also a relatively small population of African Americans, certainly since the turn of the twentieth century.

AM: That's right.

[00:18:24] JD: Very good. So I wonder what your thoughts are. So Rockefeller creating a party very much in his own image, temporarily, with his own riches—he sort of wrestles away the party apparatus from sort of an old guard, sets up office in his office, and serves two terms, two two-year terms. And I've always gotten the feeling that as he's sort of hitting his political peak in Arkansas, his party is sort of falling out from under him in sort of the post-civil rights era. [00:19:04] And so do you think the Long Southern Strategy not only might explain that going on, that dynamic, but would also explain perhaps why it was so many years later before we see—I mean, really, Mike Huckabee is the first popular, consistently popular Republican governor. I mean Frank White's there, I think, as sort of a reaction to Clinton, sort of a punishment to Clinton, right? Don't do that again. We'll put you back in, but sit and think about what you did.

AM: Youngster. [*Laughs*]

JD: You know, yeah, sit here and think about what you did. Timeout. And so I—it really seems to fit particularly well in Arkansas.

[00:19:39] AM: It does fit. And it's—it—particularly if you know the back history of the Republican Party schism that happens in

1964, which—you actually have to understand the [19]50s in the national Republican Party. So—and I'll keep this brief and get to how it affects Arkansas. The—in the 1950s there was a fight, big fight, in [19]52 for who was going to be the nominee in the Republican Party. After so many terms of Roosevelt and Truman, right, there is just, "This has to be our moment," right, for Republicans. And there's a conservative wing of the party that's Midwestern, Western a little bit. It is strongly anticommunist, and it's very much anti-labor unions, right, anti-union. It really doesn't have much to say about Jim Crow or segregation or any of that. It's really focused. It's not a Southern thing. And that contingent really wanted, you know, Taft of Ohio to get the nomination. And so Eisenhower, who the Democrats wanted to run for them, too, they don't see as a Republican, and that's back in the days when we actually picked the nominee at the convention. [00:21:06] And they feel like they have things really set up for Taft. And Eisenhower's people kind of, you know, have a different strategy, delay some things, make some negotiations, and come kind of out of nowhere and use some party rules to kind of stifle what they feel like's been set up for Taft, and Eisenhower gets the nomination, and they feel robbed. There is literally a stop-the-steal mentality. It was

stolen. They are angry. Now Taft unfortunately passes away, gets cancer after that and passes away. So it kind of dies down in terms of them trying to get him as the nominee, like, four years later, but they go after Eisenhower. Even so far as some people writing a book saying Eisenhower's a communist. I mean, it's really angry. [00:22:04] And they start—that group starts going, "How do we become a bigger player in our party? How do we get more people?" And they start looking for common bedfellows. They even start talking about and having meetings about potentially nominating Faubus. Literally reaching out to Faubus after [19]57 and Central High School to say, "Hey, you defied the—Eisenhower. Ma—you know, ma"—they liked that. "Maybe you're our guy." They wrote a series of books—Phyllis Schlafly, notably, the book *A Choice Not an Echo* that basically says the Republican Party is run by these elites. I mean, it's a conspiracy theory book. It's run by these elites. They manipulate the system. They don't listen to conservatives. They think you're stupid. It's really, you know, powerful. She self publishes it, and it sells like a million copies. I mean, it's crazy. [00:23:04] So that group starts trying to find a candidate and trying to build a bigger base, actively. And they realize that the South might be good breeding ground. Now

they're not as much—like I said, they looked at Faubus. They're not as much, like, trying to get Arkansans. They reach to South Carolina, and they start talking to Strom Thurman early. They participate in a, you know, meeting in the little fledgling Republican convention in South Carolina, and they are trying to shore up these clubs, and they s—then they—then Barry Goldwater, the Senator from Arizona, takes a big stance against Eisenhower on a labor issue dispute, you know. And Goldwater was like, aviators, you know, very charismatic, and they thought, "Now that's our guy." They really abandoned the Faubus idea, and they set up these, you know, Democrats for Goldwater clubs early on, some of them in the South. They're trying to build a base. [00:24:11] Because even though the Southern states are so solidly Democrat at this time, they still send delegates to the Republican National Convention. Now there's not a lot of competition for those seats in some states, but they still have a say, you know, and that's really important because the rules make—you know, that can be a contingency. So if you've got a small little group of Republicans in each Southern state and not a lot of competition for those seats, and somebody is paying attention to those people and trying to say, "Hey, join us," and it has an effect, you know, you're gonna get

a lot more investment and attention from the national party. So in [19]64, you know, it's going to be—you know, Nelson Rockefeller is up against Goldwater, and Nelson Rockefeller has some personal kind of scandals that go on, and you know, Goldwater succeeds, and it is a screaming fight at the convention with the Rockefeller Republicans going, "Hey, we're not gonna take an anti-civil rights stance. We might disagree on how to implement certain things and stuff like that, but we're not doing this." And you know, Goldwater was one of the only Republican senators that voted against the Civil Rights Act. He has reasons that he says have nothing to do with race and have to do with federal overreach, but that is not how his surrogates sell it in the South. [00:25:41] So immediately Strom Thurmond switches his party nomination to Republican, and Goldwater goes on the stump through the South. And Winthrop Rockefeller, that wing of the party, the wing of the party that is upset about Goldwater, is who starts the Republican Party in Arkansas. So it is not gonna be a party that people upset about civil rights changes are gonna flee to. It doesn't matter how crazy the National Democratic Party moves. The Democrats don't see that as an alternative. Does that make sense? They don't see that as an alternative. So that delays it. It becomes an individual—as the

national party's run by Goldwater, it's not gonna build Rockefeller infrastructure in Arkansas. So he is a one-man kind of show. He's a one-man show. And so that is one of the reasons why his celebrity, his resources, people's frustration with Democrats—they're open to the idea of someone else, but it's his, really, his celebrity, his—the fact that he picked Arkansas, that he loved Ark—meant something to people. It really did. And that—but an infrastructure underneath him did not get built. If there's no infrastructure, then when the personality, the figure's gone, it'll fade.

[00:27:10] JD: And I think we see that, really, throughout the state's history, but particularly looking at Republicans who enjoyed success, even Mike Huckabee. Now one thing that I think he was able to contribute significantly—and in a previous interview, he said this, that the biggest contribution he made to the Republican Party in Arkansas was being there for a little over ten years and being able to appoint over three hundred people to boards and commissions, not all diehard Republicans. Kind of like Rockefeller in that way. There are only so many that you can really point out, even in the [19]90s.

AM: Right.

JD: But he was able to convince people that a Republican could

govern, that a Republican could work with other people, and that you could be a Republican and succeed politically in a state that had typically indicated otherwise. But then when Mike Huckabee leaves, Asa Hutchinson comes in in [20]06 with a very stellar background, very impressive CV.

AM: Mm-hmm. Absolutely.

[00:28:10] JD: He was very popular, particularly in Northwest Arkansas, is a House member, goes on to DC, really impressive. A Reagan appointee back in the day in the 1980s. And he loses soundly by Mike Beebe in 2006, another individual who has his own sort of aura about him. And so it does seem like Arkansans, we tend to sort of go back and forth on personality in some ways.

AM: That's what we do.

JD: And for Republicans, it's a hollow victory because they don't have that support.

[00:28:39] AM: Yeah. That's what we do, and there's not an infrastructure. You know, I mean, that is what we did. That's one of the Democrats' problems right now because it wasn't—the Democrats in Arkansas were in power for so long. You know, they didn't tend to their infrastructure. Then they lost a whole generation that went up with the Clintons. Which you know, is

wonderful for them. But it left this—I mean, if you look at the age demographic right now that's running the Democrat party in Arkansas versus Republican Party, it's a generation difference. And that's the reason. And so that's hard, but no matter how talented a candidate you put up, if you don't have the infrastructure, it just can't deliver consistent wins. It just can't. And that just takes time. It takes time for that to happen.

[00:29:32] And I feel like the Republicans did exactly what the Democrats, you know, are doing now. They looked for really talented candidates who could get about as much as you could get barring, you know, having a really well-networked support system, which is why Asa Hutchinson—I mean, yes, he lost in that race against Bumpers, but he performed well, you know. It wasn't a landslide by any means. It really showed some strength. And Huckabee of course, benefits from, you know, a special election, where turnout's kind of everything, in the middle of the summer. And that is a unique circumstance.

[00:30:17] I will say also this, if this doesn't sound so crazy, but when Frank White, you know, the only other kind of really Republican governor with the little two year thing in there—that's usually seen as like a backlash, you know, to Bill Clinton, and I'm sure that's what it was, but do you know how many

votes he got in the Republican primary for that race? So there was a Republican primary. In the state, total, there were about 8,000 ballots cast. He got about five of them. That's it.

JD: And that's before—you know, that's in that era where, before a court case in the [19]90s establishes really equal access to the polls, you've got, in some counties, one Republican polling site.

AM: That's right.

JD: Right. And you really are—I mean, if you're an Arkansas voter or even if you're more conservative and maybe you want to vote for Reagan in [19]80, but down ticket, you didn't want to disenfranchise yourself, right, so you vote in the Democratic primary.

[00:31:18] AM: Correct. But it shows you how little infrastructure there were. To me, of all the statistics out there, that's the one that I go, "Look at that, 1980! Reagan's—you know, they're gonna sweep the South! But there is only s—8,000 people that participate statewide in Republican primary." That just shows you the infrastructure, you know, that's absent and still the very strong psychological Democratic Party hold. The fact that then he was able to win in the general and somehow managed to pick up an additional 430,000 votes from that 5,000 in the primary, you know, is pretty extraordinary and shows where—yes, I know

it was a slap to Clinton, totally, but it's still a big deal for people to go, "I'm going to pick the Republican" in Arkansas in that moment. So it shows the willing—a willingness to split ticket, to have real competition, to have oversight over a Democratic governor, and I think it speaks to that, like—but it shows you when there's an opportunity how much things are changing, but when there's no infrastructure, how limited that can be, right. You have to have both. And I think Republicans seized on the opportunities they found, absolutely. The special election for Huckabee, you know. This—the fact that hardly anybody was running in this Republican primary. Let's at least challenge it. They did do that. They put themselves out there and were willing to lose and lose and lose in a lot of cases. Or win one and then be gone for—and you have to do that to build infrastructure, but it takes time. [00:33:14] I mean, I think about Governor Hutchinson, you know, losing that race to Bumpers. And then how many years later does he wait to run for governor, lose that race, and then run again? I mean, a really long, slow game he has played to get where he is. You know, very much through this kind of process.

[00:33:37] JD: Well, even in [19]90, he loses an attorney general race but gets more votes than any other Republican on the ticket

and then becomes party cochair after the Tommy Robinson primary, and works in that sort of field. Gets ballot access for the party. Tries to draw distinctions. He's on—he knows that the party has to brand more effectively. He does that, and then he goes to the House. And then as you said, he comes back years later, right. And then loses. And then comes back in 2014.

[00:34:11] AM: I'm telling you, he's played a lo—it's a good case study in the branding issue, in being willing to put yourself out there and seize opportunities. He also, you know, steps back to let Huckabee, you know, kind of run from that Republican primary and encourages that. Because if you're smart, you realize that having several, you know, successful Republicans in different act—helps, you know, rise—you know, lift the sinking—lift the sh—not sinking, lift the ship, so to speak. He's—it's not a one-man, you know, game. He starts seeking out other people, and they start building a bench, you know, very much so. And they stick with it. But I mean, it's—that's where you—that's where—that's a—that's where you see it's not just about a candidate's qualifications. 'Cause you're right. I mean, no matter if someone agrees or disagrees with Hutchinson's, you know, views on policies, you can't question the credentials. I

mean, we haven't—someone with that much experience when he comes to run, you know, run for governor—you know, you can't have much more. And yet it's not enough, right. If it were just about credentials and talent, you know, it'd be—that'd be easy, but it is about that deep party structure county by county by county. And that's what Democrats are trying to do now, but it's a long—it's a, you know, it's a long game. [00:35:48] It also is delayed in Arkansas because you don't get that civil rights backlash to—like initial jumpstart with the party with Rockefeller. Even if that—even if an anti—you know, Strom Thurmond type had built the Republican Party, I don't know what would have happened, because you're right, there's only parts of Arkansas where that issue is salient. I'm not saying people don't have certain attitudes, but that it is—that those civil rights changes felt really threatening because the, you know, the lower population of African Americans and the concentration of where it is. Totally different than Mississippi, South Carolina, blah, blah. [00:36:35] But that allows, you know, the Republican ascendancy in Arkansas to really piggyback on kind of the burgeoning relationship between the Republican Party nationally and the Southern Baptist Convention and kind of evangelical voters, which are not something that the Republican Party had a

monopoly on. You know, it's a relationship that actually both groups kind of sought out, leaders from both groups. And that is a high population in Arkansas. So the timing of that makes more sense to me, too. [00:37:15] Then it—the big question in the middle is the whole Equal Rights Amendment, you know, piece of the Long Southern Strategy and what happens here in Arkansas with that. You know, we're one of the—of three Southern states that, you know, pass women's suffrage, the Nineteenth Amendment, us, Texas, and Tennessee by one vote, right. We have Hattie Caraway, you know, first elected female Senator, you know, in the country. So we had some petticoat governments where women ran for city councils after the Nineteenth Amendment and won and were running things. So what happens to that, the ERA, here? And it very much followed the pattern in the rest of the South, but it did not really—and helped Reagan, you know, helped Reagan nationally, but it didn't help build infrastructure in the Republican Party. And I think that's because Arkansas took it—you know, never really took it up.

[00:38:25] JD: When you think, too—you know, Diane Blair's argument of the Big Three, you know. That may not be all of the part of the puzzle, right, it may not be in its entirety, but you

can't ignore the fact that you've got a Republican—you know, if you're looking at the [19]80s, you've got a Republican in the White House, so there's not really an opportunity to market this great distinction between a more liberal Democratic Party when there's no real leader at the top of the national party as if—you know, to most Americans the most powerful political figure in the state—or in the country's Reagan, right, and then H. W. Bush. You've—meanwhile you have pump—Bumpers, Pryor, and Clinton all in very prominent positions in their own right at different levels. But all three, at some point in their careers, enjoy national prominence, either being effective senators, Bumpers being even vetted early on to run for president at a point in the [19]80s, and then of course, Clinton, who ascends to the White House. And again, no non-Southern, liberal Democrat, nationally, that you can point to if you're Asa Hutchinson and say, "Look, they're different. They're different."

AM: Right.

JD: The branding is not working in the favor of the GOP. Now it's not aligned for Arkansas Democrats. Democrats in Arkansas are going to be on average, more conservative, probably more moderate. But there's not a—it's hard to draw a distinction.

AM: That's right.

[00:39:47] JD: So Blair talks about the Big Three. And I almost wonder if there's room for a Big Four in Beebe, in part because George W. Bush is then in the White House, and Arkansas white—conservative voters in Arkansas are continuing their tradition of ticket splitting at the top of the ticket, voting for W, meanwhile giving Democrats, overwhelmingly, their support every two years in election cycles. And so I wonder if, again, the brand alignment just didn't gel yet?

[00:40:16] AM: I think that's true. I also think that the—you know, Bumpers is who appoint—like the women's commissions in [19]77 are, you know, where a lot of this happened on the ground. The women that got involved in Mississippi, in Tennessee, in places—in other Southern states, they were brought into the process to fight the ERA and politicized through those women's commissions specifically saying, "Hey, in a quiet campaign, show up, vote all your friends in, you—and take over the board." And that surprised a lot of feminists who were—who didn't hear the counter-argument and just thought, well, this is the women's commission, and we fought for it. So our people are going to be the ones elected to it. In Arkansas, that person was Diane Blair, who was head of the—she was astute to it. She knew. She kind of saw some of that, you know, coming and did

certain things to kind of temper a backlash, you know, surge of conservative women getting really involved, right, in Arkansas. And so I don't think it became—and that was literally the direct line that was drawn between these conservative women that showed up—you know, being told that, you know, the ERA was gonna make them put their babies in government daycare and they were going to be forced to work and, you know, things that were extreme. And they showed up to protect their families.

[00:41:57] And then they go from those commissions to the national counter convention, run by Phyllis Schlafly, straight into voting for Reagan and becoming Republicans, right. If you didn't have that backlash in Arkansas because it was managed politically by a very astute political-science professor feminist—you know, it kind of kept that from happening. When religion, when Christianity and—through the SBC and through this broader Christian coalition and Moral Majority really starts to connect with the Republican Party and cement that relationship, then you see Southern white women in Arkansas really flood to the Republican Party, right. So we kind of—you're right. The branding doesn't line up easily. And you had astute leadership here that kind of squelched the backlash a little bit, the Big Three, right, but at the same time, I think it's a part of our

history that needs more research.

[00:43:11] JD: Well, and Democrats are the ones who, in part at least, are responsible for the ERA failing in Arkansas, right. I mean, so maybe in a way the Long Southern Strategy was working, and it was even jumping over into this conservative caucus of the general assembly of Democrats.

[00:43:30] AM: Oh, abs—I totally agree with that. I totally agree with that. I think that's really smart. And I think there are some other pockets in the South where we see the same thing, the f—where there wasn't a Republican Party to go to that seemed to be representing these things and building, there were factions within the Democratic Party that still had the power to squash certain things. A lot of those folks are gonna become the folks that end up changing their party label as politicians, being elected, and then turning around and saying, you know, "I'm switching parties." And so that's a really important point. It doesn't mean that the Long Southern Strategy wasn't happening here or those issues weren't important. It just wasn't through the National RNC. It was naturally building.

JD: They were usin' the vehicle they had.

[00:44:26] AM: They're usin' the vehicle they had. But what's so smart about that is that is what the RNC saw early on. I mean,

they saw early on the factions within the Democratic Party. They saw where the National Democratic Party was going, and they thought—now, they saw it on race first. That makes sense. But they saw it on other things too. They paid attention to those factions, you know, and they met them, you know, kind of where they are. And that is—that was no small feat. I mean, I give it credit. It was no small feat.

[00:45:04] JD: So moving on a bit, I would like to know your thoughts on—there's no way to talk about more recent events and the gain of the Republican Party without talking about at least the timing—if not a direct causal argument, at least a correlational argument, between the rise of our first Black president in the United States, Barack Obama—President Obama's election in [20]08 and subsequent election—reelection in 2012 and the gains made in the Republican Party in Arkansas and particularly in Arkansas, where you see—again, it's a story. I think this entire story is a story of white, conservative voters who've gone from a tradition of ticket splitting, to some extent, to straight-ticket, Republican Party voting. So I—what are your thoughts?

AM: Well, we've had . . .

JD: I mean, the Obama effect, if you will?

[00:46:00] AM: Yeah. The Obama effect. I mean, we tested it with data from the Arkansas Poll, and it does absolutely predict—you know, what voters report themselves about their attitudes about race, specifically racial resentment, which is not, you know, some negative stereotype of African Americans, it's just—we're done with, you know, race. Like there's no holdover effects, there's no structural racism. We don't even want to talk about it. Nobody's held back by it. It is kind of a colorblindness that's a little w—I mean, it's a dark side of colorblindness, I guess I would say that. 'Cause there's a good side to colorblindness. So kind of the darker side of it. So people report that themselves, and it's—you know, significantly predicts in Arkansas at such a dramatic level, you know, this realignment with the Republican Party after Obama. [00:47:02] Now what do I think is really going on there psychologically? That I have to go all the way back to Reconstruction, believe it or not. But you know, in a lot of other Southern states during Reconstruction, the period of time after the Civil War, so many Confederate, white Confederates, were disenfranchised, killed, obviously died in the war, disenfranchised, property taken, you know, and Union troops, along with Friedman and Northerners who moved to the South and some poor white Southerners, you know, voted in

African American political leaders. Both the United States Senators from Mississippi, African American, the majority of the South Carolina legislature, state legislature, or House of representatives was African Americans. That memory and that experience kind of being passed down, you know, made some of those states with large Black populations so resistant to voting rights for African Americans in this—even until the [19]60s, because they're like, "This could flip, you know, this could change." Because it had before. It had before. In Arkansas you didn't have much of that. And so I think that there are people for whom the idea of an African American president just was so not possible. They're in such a kind of bubble and enclave. They have never seen Black leadership in their community, in their county, in their—in any government that—and then they have John McCain. They just—there's something about it as a signal, as a cue, or was just so foreign that it made it feel like what they thought the world looked like and what the world must look like are really not the same. Does that make sense? We see the same thing after the gay marriage—the Supreme Court upholds gay marriage.

[00:49:02] JD: I'm reminded of, you know, one of the slogans, right. Hope, and then there was another one, Change. And that

was intended by Democrats in Obama's campaign as a progressive, hopeful, turning-of-the-page modernity. And that same message, in this case, could have shocked, maybe even horrified people who were quite comfortable with the status quo and in the status quo in Arkansas, which was a different sort of status quo than what a lot of other places in the country were accustomed to, even at that point.

[00:49:37] AM: So true. And I think even beyond Obama, you know—I mean, I can get in my own bubble up here in Fayetteville at the university, like what I—and you know, when we don't listen to, like, other voices, you can get shocked by something. You know, multiple times I'm like, you know, "The legislature is doing what? Who supports—oh, a lot of people support. Didn't even"—there is some of that where you—that moment when you realize in such a powerful, symbolic way—not just Obama, but the record numbers at the inauguration, the, you know, the quick way that he won, the just world acclaim to it. They give him the Nobel Prize for literally getting elected, you know, which he knows. That's—and you see how mu—and you just see the praise everywhere, and you realize how off your world is from what's going on in the rest of the world and the country. And that's a cosmological, deep shift that scares people

because they don't know anybody that's, like, pro-Obama in their little community, and they just realize they're outnumbered. And that triggers a defense mechanism that's pretty strong. And that brings out some of the worst, you know, in people, the fear of another, or "This doesn't look like what I thought the world looked like." And then that gets—that brings out some of our worst instincts, unfortunately, about racial competition. And the fact that it was given an outlet by some Republican messengers didn't help. [00:51:42] You know, I think of John McCain, the famous debate, when the, you know, audience member says—accuses Obama being an Arab, and he just shuts it down. He says, you know, "He's a—he's not, he's a good guy, he's a family guy, but like we just disagree on how the country should be run." If that is the message that had been received—but there were too many, you know, leaders that kind of welcomed it a little bit or used it a little bit whether—no matter what they believed themselves, I don't know, but used that fire a little bit, poured a little gasoline on it, unfortunately, that helped it, you know, helped it grow. [00:52:25] And then we see the rise of the Tea Party which, you know, is fascinating. I've done a lot of research on the Tea Party and a lot of, you know, testing on, like, Tea Party members and people who just

thought of the Tea Party favorably, because membership is difficult. There has to be a group in your town, but if you test not only membership, but like, do you identify with them? And then do you have warm feelings about them? You get a much broader piece than the like 9 percent that were like me—you know, called themselves members. And if you look at those attitudes, the racial resentment attitudes, the economic issues—is there, it is real, that's totally real for some people, totally legit. But the bigger piece, particularly among the people who aren't members but just like it and identify that way, was this racial resentment. So it's like it found a home. I'm not even saying the original Tea Party people that's their reasoning, maybe it was, but it became a holding cell for that frustration and animosity. [00:53:38] And I remember writing and saying, "If it's really about economic anxiety, it will survive Obama. When he's gone, it'll still be there, and they'll still be holding the feet to the fire on debt, steel, and all these things." Gone, right? I think there's still a piece, but the vast majority of what it became was a place to put some of this energy. And that energy was, "Make the world look like it used to look." That energy was reactionary, and it went beyond just racial into just "Whoa, the world I live in and the world out there don't match.

Obama's the signal cue for that to me. Make them match again." And that's reactionary. And that can go in a million different directions, you know, policywise. That's what the Tea Party holding became and that—and it—and that had a major influence in Arkansas.

[00:54:37] JD: So if you think of, you know, Arkansas in [20]08, the Republican Party is one that fails to even get a person on the ballot for a US Senate race. They are undergoing structural changes and challenges as a party. Doyle Webb comes on—in in [20]09. They're struggling. The Democratic Party is somehow picking up seats or holding seats that you really wouldn't think they would, or they're maintaining their hold in a relatively easy fashion. And I can't help but think that the ascendance of Barack Obama, as you've said, stood for much more than maybe just race and sort of the race—sort of classical racial, right view, in that he stood for all of these things that were unfamiliar or tapped into these resentment fears. And he was also the first non-Southern Democrat in the White House since Kennedy, who wasn't particularly popular here either. [00:55:43] And so I can't help but think that the branding again is . . .

AM: Oh, totally.

JD: If you're a Republican now, it's so much easier. Finally, you can

say, "Ah-ha."

AM: Oh, it's so easy.

JD: "You know, I've been telling you all for thirty years that Democrats are all liberal. They're all are urbane. They're not really interested in rural issues. They're Ivy League, they're effete, they're"—whatever they could come up.

AM: And Obama didn't need the South to win.

JD: Right.

AM: He won three Southern states, but didn't need them.

JD: Mm-hmm. Right. Right.

AM: He could have won without them.

[00:56:11] JD: And so it's packaged perfectly for a party that has undergone organizational change in relatively short order. They've been recruiting, they've been trying to build up their county systems. They're facing a Democratic Party that's let those stagnate or even wither, if they had them at all, and everything's teed up structurally, environmentally, everything is ready for [20]12 and [20]14 and then what comes after.

[00:56:43] Tell me how does Trump fit into this? And I'll rephrase . . .

AM: Well, I do wanna say . . .

JD: . . . that in a minute because it's two fifteen, so I just wanna

respect your time.

[00:56:50] AM: Okay. I do wanna say this. I don't wanna downplay that the backlash to Obama—like the role race—racism played in it, because it's there. Sometimes it's a race—but sometimes it's a racism that people don't even consciously think they have, you know. There's like direct racism, there's structural racism, there's subconscious racism, there's, you know, racial—feeling racial competition. I mean, there's a lot of elements of it. And it hit all of those. In fact, as political scientists, there's a million ways we measure kind of racial animus. They all lit up after Obama. So that's—that—I do wanna, you know, say that, but I actually do think it's bigger than just that, too. It's a recognition the Democratic Party is very different than our Arkansas Democratic Party, and we don't like that. It's also—when nobody had a home to go to after civil rights, as a Republican Party that starts in Arkansas under Rockefeller as not-a-backlash-to-civil-rights party—that just kind of lingered there for a while, right. And then it picks up some of that, you know, also. That's one of the reasons it happened so swiftly.

[00:58:13] So if you had racially resentful people in the population and voters, they didn't have anywhere to really go. Republicans didn't make it an issue. Obama's election is what

triggered it, right. So if I was saying all those—those are different groups of people. That group just didn't—it didn't get sparked. Does that make sense? And I mean, it had faded so—I mean, it didn't have the same urgency that it would have had right after, you know, the civil rights movement, but it's still there. There's still enough people there with it. [00:58:47] The way Trump fits into this is when I was watching the Republican primaries through twenty—you know, or the debates leading up to the 2016 primaries, all through 2015, I knew it was going to be him. I didn't know he'd win the general election, but I thought he was going to get the nomination. And the reason I thought he was gonna get the nomination is he was hitting those three things. He was hitting racial resentment, he was hitting anti-feminism, and he was hitting some Christian nationalism. I've also watched how those things have developed over time. You know, people who are confused or question, "How do evangelicals gonna vote for him if he's not religious, he's been divorced?" Evangelicals are more astute politically than that. They learned a long time ago—they were disappointed with Reagan. They thought he just paid lip service. They tried to run their own people. They didn't have enough votes. That's when they realized it doesn't matter who the individual is, it matters

what decisions they will make. And if they will enact the decisions that we want, we support them. We don't have to judge them as a person. We saw—we—that we knew in the [19]90s. I just felt like maybe I like didn't catch up with that sometimes. That's why they're able to vote for a Mormon in like super high numbers because they're like, "Mitt Romney, if you will deliver on these things, we don't care what you are." Right. Evangelicals are more astute voters than people give them, you know, credit for. Hitting that—Trump was hitting that, playing to that button, saying, "I'm gonna do these things which you want." You know, and the media is focusing on how clumsy he's saying it or he's quoting the wrong Bible, you know, chapters, using the wrong names and verse. They don't care. They're hearing the policy decisions. [01:00:42] And then obviously the kind of hyper-masculinity, anti-feminist—he's running against, you know, one of the most recognized feminists. And then he played to the racial resentment and othering on—particularly on immigration and has—had a history of that. If those three components—they're everywhere in the country. They're just in higher concentrations in the South. They're in lower concentrations than they used to be, but they're still there in pretty dense populations. And it only takes—if you've got a

crowded field, and most Republican primaries are winner take most, and the South gets bonus delegates because it's gonna go red in the general. The primary gives them bonus delegates. It only takes getting in the thirties of the vote, when everyone else is splitting the vote, with that many candidates on the ballot, for Trump to win most of the delegates in the South. So he won in most Southern states in the thirties, you know, and yet was able to get the overwhelming majority of those. I mean, the disconnect between the percent of population won and the number of delegates he gets is dramatic 'cause he gets—'cause of the way the system's set up. And so I saw he's hitting those three things. That's gonna give him—it's not enough to get a majority, but if there's sixteen other people running, you know. I've always said, if Republicans got behind one other candidate, it'd been Trump and one other candidate in the Republican primary, this person can win, right. But I—so I don't say that to like condemn, I'm just saying—or to say, "Oh, all these white Southern Republicans are, you know, Christian nationalists or racist." No. We can measure. We know. But it's enough. It's enough of them in that situation with that many candidates and a celebrity candidate that's hitting all three and playin' to it hard, it's enough for them to win, you know. [01:02:47] And so I see

Trump as absolutely following that playbook. I will say that when he hired Paul Manafort, my hairs on the back of my neck stood up because I knew Paul Manafort had gone—had left the country, was in the Ukraine doing, you know, politics there in much the same way he had done previously, but he ran Reagan's Southern field campaign. He's the one who got Reagan to give the speech at the Neshoba County Fair and talk about states' rights. He understands those components in the South. And I see—even though he's, you know, no connection really to the South, I see him as the one who was the architect of some of those—or at least saw it upfront, you know, that it would—some things that would work in kind of the modern era of building those Southern inroads. And I thought, "That is going to help him, you know, figure out what to say to these Southern voters that will make them go, 'He's our guy.'"

JD: Despite the fact that on paper he kind of loses . . .

AM: On paper makes no sense whatsoever.

JD: . . . he's, you know, from the Northeast, presumably wealthy businessman, you know, not—nothing about him speaks really to—on paper, right, to the Southern voter. And when we say Southern voter, really in this case—you know, the white Southern voter, right?

[01:04:13] AM: Oh, I 100 percent mean that. That's just math.

JD: Yeah. Right.

AM: I mean, there's tiny, tiny percentage. So yes, I do mean that. I also think there's things about Trump we can't measure in that celebrity and that effect. Running against a female, you know, first one at the top of a major ticket, we can't underestimate the role that that plays. We do underestimate the role that that plays. I think our estimates cost her six points in general election. That's the election. That's not the only thing. There were lots of things. It's one of the things, but it's a big deal.

[01:04:52] But Trump's ability to cap—you know, if you capture the South—remember Arkansas was one of the states that moved up their primary. That made him a bigger player to the national ticket too, right. And you know, with those bonus delegates, the delegates from the South carry more weight in the National Republican Party, in their convention. You know, in their early on, who's a front runner, who's getting the media attention, what happens to donors? You know, it's—the Southern states do that. And so playing to them is—which like, you contrast to a candidate like Kasich, right. And so at home politicians that are getting on that bandwagon and playing to those things, right—it's not the majority of Arkansans. It's not

even necessarily—it's a fraction that, you know, hear those appeals. For a presidential candidate, that's a big faction. Unfortunately, it's not what—it's not what you govern if you're here in Arkansas, which is why we have seen some disconnect between like what voters will support and what the legislature will support, you know. There's appealing to that section of the electorate that, if you're Trump, looks—is a smart thing to do to get the nomination, but it is not the majority of Arkansans, right. That's why someone like Asa Hutchinson wins by such, you know, such big numbers is because he sits kind of in the middle. But on the legislative side, we saw more and more people appealing to that element and willing to out primary each other, the Republican Party, and then got big national money to do it, right. It used to be that ideology, being conservative, you know, was the more important factor in Arkansas, so if you're conservative Democratic or conservative re—right. Or this, a new conservative Republican, it wasn't just the party ID label. That changes with Trump. That changes into this demonization of the Democratic label. [01:07:20] And then of course our generations removed—we're—now from Beebe and from that—the Big Four, right. It's really hard to demonize the Democratic label when one of those Big Four was so popular and in charge.

After that, it becomes a lot easier. And that is what Trump did nationally at a whole different level. And that is what happened. You know, unfortunately what galvanized some, you know, further-right, even, Republicans from getting—from, you know, running and successfully—or signing up, if nobody ran against them, for the legislature here. And so now we've got this tension within the dominant party again, right. [01:08:11] I will say this, too, to kind of wrap up—it's important—you know, Arkansas does not have a history of two-party cooperation in the legislature. It was all Democrats. We had one session where there was parity. If you ask most legislators that were there, they say that was the best session they ever had. They didn't know why. They didn't kind of understand why, but now you can look at it and go—like, I've even—I've had a conversation with Davey Carter, who was Speaker of the House then. He goes, "We didn't know what we had in the moment." I said, "You couldn't have. You couldn't have known that you were gonna have this one session where you have to work together across party lines to get anything done, and then it was going to go so extreme into supermajorities of the other party."

[01:08:55] JD: And there is a period too where Republicans of that sort of generation—and I know Davey doesn't necessarily fit this

mold, but he comes up in a Republican politics in this state—you know, being younger than Asa, but still, he can relate to Republicans losing.

AM: Totally.

JD: Republicans struggling on brand, not necessarily having a real strong foothold, knowing they should, being frustrated . . .

AM: Yeah.

JD: . . . by, "Why are you voting Democratic on the general assembly? You're supporting Bush, right? Why are you doing this?" And yet what I've seen now is this third generation who don't know what it's like to lose.

AM: They do not.

[01:09:34] JD: And whereas Asa in, you know, General Assembly in [20]15 and Carter you know coming nar—by narrowest of margins, having a majority Republican in the General Assembly following the 2012 election—they know they've gotta govern. They know that there's high stakes. They probably don't know, to your point, right, and to his point, that this is gonna be a landslide. I mean . . .

AM: Yeah. Yeah.

JD: . . . in hindsight, it probably didn't matter that they delivered major policy wins.

AM: I don't think they dreamed that. I think they were like, "We're slowly getting more. We're slowly getting more. Wow."

JD: We've gotta deliver what we can.

AM: And like, it's probably gonna backslide. Like I think they thought like . . .

JD: We've got a governor.

AM: They did not think it was gonna go over here. They just didn't. And part of the reason it goes over there is because of Democrats who had been so used to being on—in the majority that when they're not anymore and they're in the minority, the whole slew of them switched their party labels. It's hard to be in the minority. [01:10:33] Democrats didn't know how to do it. How do you do it? How do you consolidate your power and have an influence where you can? How do you not? Like, where do you work together? Where do you—you know, that—if you—if it's not something your party's done, it's like you've been on offense, and all of a sudden you're thrown into the defense. If you've never done it, it's not easy. Same for Republicans. They've been on offense so long just object—now you gotta govern. I mean, I'm watching redistricting and stuff right now—they've never done it. Never done it since Reconstruction. Never done it. It's not easy. It's complicated, you know. And

there's things coming that people don't see, and there's consequences, there's all this, and it's because they've never done it. It's not because they're dumb or not paying attention. It's because they have never done it. That is strange.

[01:11:21] A lot of the other Southern states, they flipped, but they had a back and forth for a while. They had a period of time where they could w—they had to work together, or they had oversight like they want. They couldn't go spike the football because they lost the next cycle. That's not what happened in Arkansas. It just went flip and totally flipped so dramatically we didn't get that middle period. We don't have best practices for how to do that. And we have some executives that have, but we don't have a legislature that has, and that is our challenge right now. That is a huge challenge right now. And it's unique to Arkansas, and it's part of that effect of the long-term—you know, the Long Southern Strategy and where—why it delayed in Arkansas, why when it came, it's like the floodwaters were held back. Why it's—you know, was in sync with the national moment, right. And so why it happened so fast and why now we're going, "Whoa, we got to build a bench on the Democrat side and build infrastructure on the Republican side." We gotta learn cooperation and like party, you know, priorities and not

just this crazy infighting "we'll sue the governor, you know, we run everything, compromise is a dirty word." Like that happens when you assume the majority super fast and it's all you've ever known, you know. And the national brand is supporting it, you know. It—all those factors lined up in Arkansas. And I think there's a whole lot of people somewhere in the middle that, you know, are kind of conservative to moderate, have been both parties that, you know, need the extremes to kind of find this common ground in the middle. But we'll see what happens. You know, we'll see what happens. [01:13:28] But you're right about the generation. The generation of Republicans that lost know what oversight is. They know elections have consequences. They don't take the moment for granted. We have like one of the highest rates of Republican legislators that literally sign up for the seat. They go unopposed. There's no oversight there at all. That, you know, that is not a good system no matter which party has it. You know, two-party competition is when you get the contest of ideas. And so we'll hope for a future of that, you know, more of that in Arkansas. It's what gets us our best stuff, I think.

JD: Well, Dr. Angie Maxwell, thank you so much . . .

AM: Thank you.

JD: . . . for sitting down with me and for contributing to this project.

AM: It's really important. It's a really important thing to document 'cause it's unique, you know, in the South, and it's instructive, I think, in a state that's had one party dominant so long. There's a lot we have to learn, you know.

JD: Thank you so much, Angie.

AM: Thank you.

[End of interview 01:14:33]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]