

Gazette Project

Interview with

Thomas Hamburger,
Little Rock, Arkansas
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Interviewer: Anne Farris

[Note from Cheri Pearce, the transcriber: There is a lot of static “white noise” on the tape, as if they’re driving in a car as the interview is being conducted. This makes it difficult to hear all the words. Thus, the gaps in conversation. Also, it seems the first part of the interview is missing.]

Anne Farris: Yes, yes. Right.

Thomas Hamburger: They were local people.

AF: Yes. These were all local people.

TH: Was Dillard’s [] a lot?

AF: It [] a lot. I don’t know whether they had a presence at that time. I don’t know. That’s interesting.

TH: And to mention [Cohen and Bass?]. And there was a third.

AF: So were they willing to back him?

TH: They said, “We will back him.” [].

AF: That’s interesting.

TH: He willingly stopped that sort of Jewish merchants of Little Rock [stolen by?] the *Gazette*, and he was telling me it didn’t occur until after he made the decision.

But once he did that, he knew that 70% of his base was secure.

AF: Right.

TH: And they were also family owned — this sort of extends the story — these are family-owned corporations, where the heads of the family is — like [Hugh] Patterson and [J.N.] Heiskell — are making decisions. So they could decide — “We’ll take a hit.” They knew they would take a hit, too, if they continued to advertise in the *Gazette*. They said, “Damn it, we’re going to do it. We’ll take the hit.”

AF: Oh, that’s interesting.

TH: So you had — the newspapers were leading a mobilization of the community, which is important. The newspaper took the lead, and these other merchants stood by them. So Hugh had a kind of base from which he was operating so that his decision wasn’t entirely one of going into the wilderness.

AF: And a lot of those corporate department stores today had not been family.

TH: Right.

AF: They might not have called up and say, “We’re supporting you.” That’s interesting.

TH: Yes. So as we corporatize it — it gets into sort of rich questions about what happens to the [early?] individuals to make a difference.

AF: Yes. Well, you know what? I cannot find the — I could have sworn — I thought I looked at it the other day — a list of what we still hadn’t gone over.

TH: [].

AF: Oh, wait. Maybe it is in this.

TH: Why don't I just go through these and we'll start talking.

AF: Yes. Let's do.

TH: And you can ask me . . .

AF: Yes. And I'm sure if you start mentioning things that we talked about before, I'll know and I'll cut you off. I'll remember once you say it.

TH: Would it be helpful to talk about the tradition of the Washington bureau and what that was about? Did we talk about that?

AF: Yes. We talked a little bit about the kinds of stories you would cover, and that they would be interested in or that they wouldn't be interested in. But we didn't talk about the tradition of the Washington bureau. I don't even know the [history] [].

TH: Well, the bureau was opened by — I'll have to go back and look up the name — someone who's associated with the [Lyndon B.] Johnson Administration in the press operation.

AF: Really?

TH: It was a bureau for a bunch of regional papers in the South. Someone had a connection to the Patterson family, and maybe it was Lady Bird's [] who was — I think there was a woman involved. It might have been Lady Bird's press secretary or something like that. *[Note from Cheri the transcriber: I transcribed an interview of Liz Carpenter. I think this is the woman TH is talking about.]*

AF: Oh.

TH: This was before Roy Boody took over. And Boody is someone who [].

AF: Right.

TH: I don't know quite how they came up with Roy. He was a great character — very well known around town. I don't know if we talked about him. I think we did a little bit.

AF: A little bit.

TH: He was [*sounds like bondy bonds?*] and quite a good journalist. His interest — I remember when I came there, one of the things he wanted to do was to get the *Gazette's* name around town. One of the ways he would do that — he had made fast friends with the [Jimmy] Carter Administration folks — Jody Powell and [Sam Caradin?], who used to drink and carry on. They'd show up in the gossip columns all the time.

AF: And he wanted to cover those stories of national interest, and the *Arkansas Gazette* probably wasn't interested at all in what Jody Powell was doing.

TH: Right. And I remember that “Tiger” [Matilda Tuohey] used to ask for [] because he used to file his stories early. He wasn't from Arkansas and hadn't worked in the newsroom, so they weren't quite what [] to meet the demanding standards of Tiger. She always had follow-up questions to ask about any story filed by any journalists.

AF: Yes.

TH: But Boody's particularly raised questions. And as soon as he filed, he was out the door to go hit the bar.

AF: Yes. Where he'd get his real stories.

TH: Yes. Well, sometimes he wouldn't file them. He did develop very good sources. I don't know how much we got. Anyway, I remember Matilda sitting on that state desk and saying, "Boody?" "I can't hear you." "Boody? Where are you? Get to a decent phone and call back."

AF: [Laughs] Great!

TH: And she was the sort of person who would even — the rule was — when I first came to the paper, she wouldn't speak to me — [] state desk. It was so hard to test her. And then once you won her favor, she was a friend for life. She cooked marvelous meals at her home. She had one of those houses way up high overlooking the Arkansas River.

AF: Right.

TH: And Boody did not make [laughs] — he never made the list.

AF: Did he ever visit Arkansas even?

TH: Infrequently.

AF: How long was he in Washington?

TH: I think he was there through most of — let's see, Carter served from 1976 to 1980, and he was there, I guess — I think he was there for four or five years. I can't remember [].

AF: Right.

TH: And Roy had gone over to be Washington bureau chief for the *Dallas Times Herald*, I think. He was later their managing editor.

AF: Oh.

TH: And he was hired by Hugh, I think, and had some — Hugh would know the history of that bureau.

AF: Yes — and how it started.

TH: Yes. I [] remember []. Anyone who worked in the Johnson era would remember this. His first name was Lee or Lynn, and his last name starts with a C, but I've forgotten. But what was — and I think we talked about this before — what was impressive about that bureau — the *Gazette* didn't know it was — maybe sort of carrying on what Heiskell had [], a paper that knew what it wanted.

AF: Right.

TH: And it was really — a blanket coverage of the congressional [interrogation?] and the news about []. It was suggested, to Boody's frustration, that they didn't want things that the wires would have. [Some were pretty] strong.

AF: Well, they probably thought they were really being [energized?] and just having a Washington reporter reporting back about the Arkansas [delegation?].

TH: I think part of the theory was, too, that they knew there was this tradition with the *Gazette* — Pat Carruthers as the wire editor, world editor, and title editor . . .

AF: Yes.

TH: The *Gazette* subscribed to so many wire services, and they did play [] Heiskell's philosophy. They paid a lot of attention to national and international news.

AF: Right.

TH: And used the wires at the []. We had our world editor who put them together.

AF: Yes.

TH: And we didn't really need to duplicate that effort.

AF: Well, did the *Democrat* have a Washington person?

TH: It did. [Haskins'?), who was married — was getting a divorce at the time from Richard Arnold.

AF: Right. It was a very messy divorce.

TH: Yes. Was it Kay Arnold?

AF: Yes. As a matter of fact, when Richard was being considered as a Supreme Court nominee for — appointed by Clinton in 1997, I was working for *The New York Times* — one thing we had to do was go out and dig up in the Arkansas courthouse that old divorce case of Richard Arnold. And it was pretty gritty stuff [laughs] because there was always the question of whether this would come up as a strike against him. It was more his leukemia that became a question that eliminated from consideration. Anyway, that's a whole other story.

TH: I'm not sure Richard didn't come up here then. He took Archie [Schaeffer's (sp)?] place as chief of staff to Bumpers.

AF: Right.

TH: But I think that Richard may have been in Arkansas, and maybe after their divorce did she move here? I don't know.

AF: I don't know what the chronology was.

TH: But the perception, or what I was told when I was indoctrinated was that Kay [] to beat the *Democrat* would be pretty hard to do. Kay sort of had the job that was more of a social position, as something to do.

AF: Oh. And is that true? Did you find as much competition as . . . ?

TH: I don't think that there was much, but I'm not sure she approached it that much differently. She would work down in the press gallery when [no one?] in the gallery was there, but not frequently.

AF: Yes.

TH: But I'd run into her. But I remember it took me a couple of months before I even met her. And I don't think she worked too hard. And she did do a lot of social reporting.

AF: Yes.

TH: And then Richard came to town as Bumpers's chief of staff [].

AF: Yes.

TH: He replaced Archie, and so [here?] it was more [] of a [] than [sending it out?]. [].

AF: Yes.

TH: So there wasn't a lot of competition []. I think that [Walter] Hussman, if can I remember what I heard through the gossip chain, actually fired his sister because they wanted more competition with the *Gazette* in Washington.

AF: Yes.

TH: So probably about a year after I was here, Gail Hussman — that was her name,

wasn't it?

AF: Right.

TH: Anyway, Hussman's sister was gone — I think, fired by her brother.

AF: Yes. Isn't she the one who filed the lawsuit against him years later?

TH: I think that is the one — who was married to Richard Arnold. Yes, because the one that . . .

AF: Kay Arnold is the . . .

TH: Kay Arnold is his current wife.

AF: His current wife. [].

TH: She worked for the [*Tiller?*].

AF: Yes. Poor women, we got them all mixed up — [] and divorces [laughs].

TH: Don't just publish this! [Laughs]

AF: We'll make sure we get the names all right. Gail was the sister. You're right.

TH: Gail. So Gail was replaced by — there were two people who had done it, but they [didn't?] want to pursue this []. First, I think, wasn't [Don?] called Don Johnson?

AF: Oh, yes.

TH: Did she work for the *Gazette* for a while?

AF: I don't know, but I know who worked for the *Democrat*.

TH: He is now a managing editor for one of the McClatchey papers.

AF: Oh.

TH: Maybe Modesto or Fresno [California]. I had a couple of []. He's a good

guy and a good journalist. He was, as I was at the time, in his twenties, and Hussman, and I guess, [John Robert] Starr, at that point, would have given him the rain dance about what he should do while he was here.

AF: Yes.

TH: And then there was a [], and then a woman who later married the *Gazette* reporter, David Terrell — David came with her. [Bennett?] knows who []. She was great. A really good reporter, or at least provided them some competition. [Note from Cheri the transcriber: I was the one who transcribed the David Terrell interview. I looked up her name in that interview. Terrell married Pam Murphy.]

AF: Well, was it unusual for papers the size of the *Gazette* and the *Democrat* to have Washington bureaus? Did that stem from the competition — they felt like they had to?

TH: I think they . . .

AF: I'm just wondering if other papers [] that size had bureaus at that time.

TH: Well, the [] was [] the *Gazette* was part of it.

AF: Yes.

TH: And I don't know which came first. It would make sense that it was the *Gazette*, and that Gail wanted something to do after the divorce and came up and did it.

AF: Right.

TH: And my sense from reading both papers at the time was that the *Gazette* was much more interested in Washington and national news than the *Democrat*.

AF: Yes. Well, that's . . .

TH: So there was Gail, Don and [Han?] [], and Meredith Oakley was here for a while, briefly. Very briefly. In fact, she covered a lot of — anything that involved the members of the delegation and the [] scandal [] news sometimes.

AF: Oh.

TH: And Meredith was always sort of [elbows up?] []. []. When I first came here it was the last year — shortly after I got here, John McClellan died.

AF: Oh.

TH: That was one of the biggest stories I had then.

AF: Right.

TH: That was six months after I got here.

AF: Who was in the delegation while you were here?

TH: McClellan, and then he was replaced by David Pryor, who was governor, and [] Kaneaster Hodges, a wonderful country lawyer from Newport.

AF: I remember him. Oh, I had forgotten about him.

TH: It was 1978 — the Panama Canal Treaty was being considered. It was a huge issue, and in a place like Arkansas, giving away the canal was really a tough thing. Kaneaster had just landed here and didn't know what he was going to do. He was a terrific appointment for Pryor. He impressed his colleagues so much, they didn't know what this guy could do, being from a small town in Arkansas.

No one at the *Gazette* – he wasn't that well known at the *Gazette* then.

AF: Was he out of Little Rock?

TH: No, he was out of Newport. He had maybe served as a state legislator, but only briefly — he'd had a very brief legislative career. He was going to remember.

AF: Now I remember.

TH: There were some family reasons that he was in Little Rock and went back to Newport. But Pryor knew him, and he was really a brilliant guy, who was a lay-preacher, as well as — I think he may have had an Ivy League education, but he was one of the gems out of Arkansas. In some ways, he was in that [J. William] Fulbright tradition — he had [candle power?], and intellectually, he [] good job.

AF: Right.

TH: Just a charming guy. He had a sense of humor and could give a terrific speech. I think it was a little unnerving for Bumpers to have — Bumpers was always jealous [].

AF: Right.

TH: Bumpers was always jealous if others would get attention.

AF: Right.

TH: And Hodges could give one of his sort-of Southern [], in the Bumpers tradition.

AF: Oh, really?

TH: Oh. But I remember he became best friends with Ted Kennedy.

AF: Oh, really?

TH: Ted Kennedy, to this day — he still goes duck hunting with Kaneaster.

AF: I didn't realize that he had made such an impact in his term.

TH: He did. Yes, he was only here for a year or two. I think Pryor ran for the open — that was when Pryor and Tucker [full name?] and Ray Thornton ran for the open seat at the [U of A?], whenever the term was up.

AF: Yes. That's right.

TH: So the *Gazette* did a lot in reporting on the transition on the [] — I got my assignment. It was kind of an appropriate beginning of my Washington [term of employment], to work on this sort of end of the primary stories, because my very last assignment before I left the *Gazette* in Little Rock had been to write the [advance obituary?].

AF: Oh, it was very appropriate, then, for []. [Laughs]

TH: And I had one of these stories — I see that Roy [Reed] wants the wastebasket fires — my wastebasket fire occurred on my last day there. We had just gone over to the computer system from cold type. We had used the typewriters to write the stories — and we had these newfangled computers in that year, 1977, and they were attempting to do . . .

AF: They were [].

TH: Yes. There were things you could do with them []. My friend from [] was there, Eric Black. He was kind of a whiz at those computers. I could do things, like spell-check and search and replace if you had a problem.

AF: You could move a word around . . .

TH: Yes.

AF: [Laughs] . . . without retyping the whole thing.

TH: At Jimmie Jones's instruction — I mean, here I was, [] who had worked hard at the *Gazette* and I was leaving, and Jimmie said, "I've got one last thing for you to do. Write McClellan's obituary." It was to be about 150 inches [] since the [Plasticine?] era. So I wrote his obituary, which started out — I remember the lead was "John McClelland, Arkansas's [do-er?], conservative senator, died _____." So Eric was showing me — I think I was concerned, and when I went through it, I hadn't spelled McClellan right, or something. He showed me how you could do a search and replace. Eric came over to my computer as I was just about to turn it in. It was 100 inches. I had it done and I was doing the spell-check and just a final — to make sure all the McClellans were spelled right. So Eric said, "This is what you do if you want to replace." He took the copy and wrote, and the top, "McClelland = asshole," and hit enter, and suddenly it went through the whole thing. It said, "John L. Asshole, Arkansas's conservative senator — Asshole, as a little boy — Asshole was raised by his parents — Asshole, Asshole." So I was gassed. I was supposed to be driving out of town in my Gremlin, and Jimmie Jones was waiting for the copy. I said, "Eric, you fix that right now!" [Laughter]

AF: You didn't know it was easy to fix [] mess up. [Laughs]

TH: [Ernie turned] — he thought you could fix it — he'd just write the shorthand, so it

would just replace it really fast. “Ass = McClellan.” So then it disappeared from the screen for a while, and it came back up and said, “John L. McClellanhole.” [Laughter] But it didn’t just change the Assholes, it changed everything. So “His first committee [ass]ignments — ” every time there was an “ass” in this long story, it changed it to “McClellan.” So I made Eric stay late. We were there until — I was supposed to leave that afternoon, but I ended up staying until 9:30 at night replacing all the McClellanholes and committee.

AF: And taking all the . . . [laughs]

TH: [] gotten on that level — to that degree of comfort with computers ever since.

AF: Oh, yes. I [].

TH: Yes.

AF: Visually, I [], and I write [].

TH: Yes. So I have with these devices that are electronic and are supposed to save me []. I need to read it on paper and see the pages.

AF: Yes. I’d think differently whenever I wrote on paper.

TH: And I would paste the pages together. []

AF: [] [Laughs]

TH: [] Yes.

AF: Well, how much coverage of Fulbright do you remember? I know he wasn’t there . . .

TH: He had left the senate.

AF: Right, but he was still was around town. He was head of the Fulbright organization. I just didn't — it seems like he would have been a great contact.

TH: Fulbright had — the Fulbright era was definitely over by the time I got here. Bumpers was elected in 1974? I can't remember when it was — but several years before, and there was no love lost between Bumpers and Fulbright.

AF: Right.

TH: So Fulbright was a figure who was still around town. The Fulbright organization, of course, bore his name, and he was involved in those events. He was practicing law at, I think, Hogan and Hart's [building?], and I did try to seek him out — his former staff people were around town, around the Hill, and [] lobbying community as well.

AF: Right

TH: None of them were inherited by Bumpers because there was no love lost between them. But Fulbright was in town, and was at Hogan and Hart's [] then, at 17th and [I?] Streets, and I went and interviewed him there. He was an older guy by then. I remember talking about the Southern Manifesto, and his position, and what it was like to be a Southern [man?].

AF: Right. And a lone Southerner.

TH: Well, he voted in favor of the [South?] — of the Manifesto.

AF: Yes.

TH: And he found it — he did not do what — was it Keefauver or Gore? Gore, down in Tennessee — Gore rejected it, at some political risk.

AF: Right.

TH: Fulbright was, at that point — he didn't repent, but what he said [] survival. Do some serving in the senate, do [] opposition, this was what you had to do.

AF: Really.

TH: And it was [not a question?].

AF: So he had no qualms about []?

TH: He explained it as a matter of political survival. He didn't

AF: Right.

TH: He didn't defend the merits of [] resistance to desegregation.

AF: Right. But I bet that's something I've learned [], he really did abandon this region [] other conservative Republican [problem?].

TH: Yes.

AF: But he wasn't []. [].

TH: But why wasn't I — I mean, isn't this the question about Fulbright, a guy who was willing to take such risks and be brave when it came to [formative?] foreign policy question [] this very powerful president, and to survive in Washington, you [].

AF: Right.

TH: But he took that on and raised fundamental questions about foreign policy. He was on that Foreign Relations Committee . . .

AF: Yes, during all of Vietnam.

TH: It's never been as powerful since he left, or as important. So if he's willing to take risks there, and risk political survival in Washington, but not on that race issue.

AF: Well, maybe [] truly was — I don't know. I want [] got it all or gave any indication [].

TH: But I remember from the interview, and I was struck by it — really, he was kind of a remote guy. It's hard to get him to talk about himself or [].

AF: Yes. I only met him twice, but he seemed aloof.

TH: Yes.

AF: Not in a snobby way.

TH: I remember thinking that [].

AF: Right.

TH: I don't think the questions were that brief and [] that I was asking. I'm a *Gazette* man []. [] features section.

AF: Oh, yes.

TH: Anyway, they had a big picture of him []. It was sort of a [].

AF: Was it about features?

TH: Whatever they call features. Anyway, we ran it with [] because it was off the news and it was what a retired senator []. He had a pretty nice office. I thought it was a little out of [].

AF: Yes. And running his foreign scholarship program — the Fulbright . . .

TH: Yes. I don't think he ran it.

AF: Yes, or at least started it.

TH: Or at least promoted it in various ways. So that was a huge interest of his. He did talk about that. That's [].

AF: Right.

TH: That legacy is so important.

AF: [Laughs] I met him at one of these occasions — “Yes, I don't know what's wrong with the media. The only coverage I can get about my scholarship program is sexy parts.” And someone said, “Sexy parts?” And he said, “Yes, we keep having Fellows who end up getting married at the end of their terms.” [Laughter] That was the only media coverage he could get about it. [Laughs]

TH: He loved that. He loved talking about how his prospects were. He was also [] a lot in various grants and programs with international education.

AF: Yes, because he had a real interest.

TH: And that was his legacy. Civil rights, I had a feeling he'd rather not discuss that. I don't know how passionately he believed in it. And it didn't do what some — [Johns Dennis?] was in the senate and lived long enough to talk about how [] talk about the Civil Rights Movement . . .

AF: Right. Well, and Mississippi [] had so much more [] than Arkansas, in some ways.

TH: Yes.

AF: And Mississippi takes the cake on all of that as far as the other states, probably.

TH: [] was that I was derided by my old friend and former editor, Paul

Greenberg, after [].

AF: Oh.

TH: He despised Fulbright.

AF: Oh, really? I didn't know that.

TH: It was largely because Fulbright stood up for []. [] of Israel by at least []. Greenberg thought it and . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Beginning of Tape 1, Side 2]

TH: [] that much harder.

AF: And that's what []?

TH: Yes, in effect.

AF: Yes.

TH: But you could never write a piece with Greenberg [].

AF: Oh, really?

TH: So Fulbright was kind of a vestige of []. Wilbur Mills had also retired about that time.

AF: And was he still around?

TH: He was around town. He became, in great Washington tradition, [] and him doing tax law [].

AF: That revolving door.

TH: Yes. And what he most wanted to talk about was recovery programs for alcoholics.

AF: Oh.

TH: And I had come to town after this [].

AF: Yes, something in the title they heard.

TH: And that's sort of what they did . . .

AF: You missed that story! [Laughs]

TH: Boody — that was Boody's last story.

AF: Yes.

TH: He broke his only national story that I remember was when Bill [] retired.

AF: Oh.

TH: So when I got to the delegation, it changed from [].

AF: Yes, and to think . . .

TH: It was an extraordinary change if you think of — Arkansas arguably had two of the most powerful people in town that day [] house delegation was Mills, and [] McClellan who was dead. I think it [] chair on appropriations. He was either on appropriations or judiciary. I mean, these were very powerful senior people. They could get things done, like these locks and dams on the Arkansas River.

AF: So was there suddenly a vacuum?

TH: I don't think that there was any sort of an odd little outpost, like John McClellan had established the National Center for Toxicological Research, because he was on that appropriations committee [] and that's where FDA [Food and Drug Administration] had put its facility, at the old Pine Bluff [Arsenal?]. Do you

remember this place?

AF: Yes.

TH: He [] manufactured nerve gas in the middle of the jungles of Arkansas.

AF: Yes. They're still cleaning up after that.

TH: Jefferson County. He wanted it to be in a place where the FDA would send its top scientists to look at the danger of toxic substances [] biggest FDA research [lab?] was set up in Jefferson County, Arkansas.

AF: Yes.

TH: And the FDA commissioner said, "Now, how are you going to get great scientists to move to — it's not even Little Rock. It's Pine Bluff. It's Redfield."

AF: The armpit of . . . [Laughs]

TH: [] was in charge of that appropriation said, "I don't care. That's where it's going to be."

AF: Yes.

TH: So they rebuilt the Pine Bluff Arsenal and brought in all the scientists [] track [] death. I don't know if it's still there. I guess it is still there.

AF: Yes. Well, I don't know. When I was there, it was still there, but it was a while ago. It may have been part of the [].

TH: But that was a [].

AF: Yes. []

TH: They made a national park out of caves in northwest Arkansas.

AF: Yes.

TH: I can't think of it. Brenda Tirey tells a wonderful story about watching the opening [] cave. I wasn't there for it, but I may have come to the Washington bureau. McClellan was still alive. I think it was before I got there. Brenda was assigned to go up to the hills, wherever that was. McClellan was there outfitted with hiking boots and a windbreaker.

AF: No flight jacket? [Laughs]

TH: No, he was going to go down with the park service. McClellan was making sure everything was quiet and []. There were these boo-hoos from the state legislature there. [], and the director of the park service was there []. [Laughs]

AF: Right.

TH: And it was all McClellan who — of course, you take these caves — I don't if they were [] cabins [], but it was McClellan — he had [] national park service was almost [] fancy elevator that []. Did you ever go there?

AF: Yes, I did. I can't remember the name of it, though. [Laughs]

TH: I mean, it was all McClellan. They had this [] and they had these park rangers who [] caves, and they lectured about how “these stalactites were formed over millions and millions of years. This is nature's jewel case. They are valuable [].” And Brenda was walking along, and [Boyce] — she'll have to tell you []. Anyway, we just happened to register that night. [Popping sound] “Here, Brenda, want one?” [Laughs]

AF: Oh, gosh! []. Oh, my gosh!

TH: []. Another thing about the *Gazette*. They were just — what major characters they had. [] state legislature, [] Fulbright, and Kaneaster.

AF: Right, and they weren't all just [harbors?] of Arkansas. They'd been in places like Washington, D.C. Independent statesmen. I mean, some were, I think, ridiculed for being silly hillbillies, but most of them were — they may have had the presence of a silly hillbilly, but they were smart and they were [dogging?] and []. And they were effective.

TH: And they were all really trying to cover — even the delegations that lost its stature [] interesting people.

AF: Right.

TH: Will's [reference to Wilbur Mills?] replacement was Ed Bethune.

AF: Yes. [Laughs] And he was interesting.

TH: He was!

AF: In his own bland way.

TH: And he became one of the first — this was before I got here, but I learned all about it — McClellan and Bumpers were []. And he [] nominated Republicans for judgeships — there were a couple []. And McClellan had proposed Bethune, who was a moderate Republican [] had political connections with Bethune [] had some connections who wanted the [] — a very young guy in the judgeship. [] Bumpers [].

AF: Why?

TH: It really stood . . .

AF: He could get at [].

TH: Mostly, he wanted to stand up to [].

AF: Right. He had [] Bethune.

TH: Yes, he had — when he ran for office, Bumpers had run against — let's see, he ran against Fulbright and he was a [Young Turk?] challenging his [] — I think he talked about doing something about the power of committee chairs. []. So when Bumpers arrived, they were taking on the seniority system. His first committee assignment was the Space Committee. Bumpers had no interest. He said it didn't do anything interesting as far as he could admit, but McClellan just kept him [there?] in [Hazen?]. He said this was the opportunity shortly after [] through Ed Bethune, a moderate Republican []. He told Bethune it was a done deal. []. They blocked it. He lost the judgeship [race?].

AF: Oh. People back home loved to read the scenarios.

TH: Yes.

AF: They were almost like soap operas.

TH: Oh, they were such great stories!

AF: Yes. Arkansas readers knew who their delegation was. I mean, a lot of people don't know who they send to Washington. But these were people who they probably needed for [] and loved to follow . . .

TH: And their granddaddy would [vote?] because they'd been in office so long that no

one ever challenges them.

AF: Exactly. Right.

TH: So Bethune [] judgeship [] election, and he comes to Washington. One of the questions was “How am I going to deal with Bumpers? I just hate Bumpers.” It killed his chance for elevation to []. And it was at the [Monocle?] restaurant, I think, when he did that. I was following Bethune around on his first days in Washington. Anyway, I was there for his first encounter. Bumpers was having lunch in the [Monocle?]. Bethune was [] table []. “What’s he going to say? What’s this going to be like?”

AF: Right.

TH: And Bumpers sees Bethune coming, and stands up, and says, “Well, if it’s not Judge Bethune!” [Laughter]

AF: Oh, beat him to the punch! [Laughs] Oh, my gosh! Did you report this, or is the sort of thing that you . . . ?

TH: I think so. We had a Washington — Arkansans in Washington. I remember Matilda [Tuohey] called. That’s really the most important [], because — just what you’re saying — these are people who have . . .

AF: People want to know.

TH: Yes. People are interested in these folks and what they are doing — what they’re like personally, what they’re doing up there, and how they’re getting along with each other.

AF: Yes. How they’re surviving [].

TH: Right. So we'd put a lot of staff notes in, but we'd also put in things like the thing with Bumpers.

AF: Right. But it's a nice forum to put in all those little tidbits that might not ever see copy otherwise. It may not be relevant to the story or stand alone in a story.

TH: Right. And Jim Guy Tucker had just been elected to [].

AF: Oh.

TH: No, wait a minute. Tucker took — I'm sorry, I got it wrong. Tucker took the place of []. Then Tucker ran for the senate, and Bethune won that seat.

AF: After Tucker left?

TH: Yes. So there's a two-year []. That's why I was — I was with Bethune when he had his first day in office. I was following him around.

AF: Right. It was after.

TH: It was two years after.

AF: So you've had a [].

TH: That was really one thing we were supposed to [].

AF: Right.

TH: And that was []. Once you lost a [], you had access to a lot of interesting stories. [].

AF: Yes, but you just became more localized once you [].

TH: Yes. I was kind of interesting in investigating stuff. And I think there's a lot of [].

AF: [].

TH: [] probably. I remember it because I look back on it [] Bill Alexander representing eastern Arkansas.

AF: Right.

TH: []. He was older than I, but []. Bill was a young movie star [] congressman. He divorced. He used to use [], but it wasn't [].

AF: Right.

TH: He would buy a lot of stuff out of a commercial stationery store, a lot of supplies. And they sold them in [], but []. [] going out the door. He used to send \$15 or \$20 [dop?] kit to every high school graduate in his district that would have the seal of the Congress of the United States on it.

[Laughs]

AF: So that's how you win constituent support.

TH: Yes! Everyone gets one.

AF: Every mother and father in that house is going to vote for him.

TH: Yes. And every high school graduate. And I can't remember — if I remember this story correctly, Bill had the highest office expense account, and it never []. It was a pretty good story, I think. We sort of wrote it [] hard-edged [], and made it five parts or something like that. [Laughs] But I had quite a good time with that. Alexander was upset . . .

AF: I was going to say — what was his reaction?

TH: . . . when it came out, and stopped talking to me for quite a while.

AF: Yes.

TH: And [] covering [].

AF: Five or four?

TH: Four or five.

AF: Yes.

TH: There aren't that many people you can [] [laughs].

AF: Yes. You can't alienate to many . . .

TH: He was on the Agriculture Committee, and he and his staff were []. They never [] after that.

AF: Yes.

TH: Alexander said of [Whitman Adams?] [] he did stop giving out the [dop?] kits.

AF: Oh.

TH: I guess Blanche Lambert defeated him.

AF: Right.

TH: That was the district that just kept re-electing [] what the tradition was, once you had the seat, you had it for life.

AF: Right. Well, and Alexander did it for a good long time.

TH: Yes. He was [].

AF: Yes. And that may be another reason . . .

TH: [].

AF: Yes. That may be another reason why they gained seniority in the House and the

Senate because people seem [] to re-elect someone — keep them in there for a while. Or maybe no one challenged them or something. I don't know what.

TH: It's a Southern tradition. First of all, [] one party.

AF: Right. Right. [Laughs]

TH: And second, it's — somebody said it was related to kind of European notions of aristocracy. Once someone had the job, they were royalty.

AF: Yes. Well, that's how they treat them. Yes.

TH: That whole crew was [].

AF: Yes. But why get rid of them? The longer they stayed, the more [] they got. You don't want to break off a good source [] people back home.

TH: When I left the *Gazette* [] a couple of years after that story [].
[Laughs]

AF: Oh. That's good. [Laughs] Well, I wonder if there were any other stories when you worked — you know, interesting, or big stories or breaking news . . .

TH: The story that I would like [], and I think it's representative of what we were really looking for from the *Gazette* bureau was one that [] had to do with the nature of the Southern lawmakers who controlled the [House?] and the nature of the []. The states would [] corrupt [] in defense spending, often in public works projects, but here's the [].

AF: Right.

TH: But were last in education and social services []. Part of it was the way the distribution was treated. It was also the nature of the [] support [

]. So the thesis was the South, including Arkansas, was short-changed in distribution of federal funds for [human services?].

AF: Right.

TH: And the formula was that []. And it was a combination [] population [] senators in the House and [] legislators.

AF: Right. [] problems []. [] “Well, we’re not going to get it through that way, so we’ll just go through the other appropriation, whether it was military [] FDA headquarters.” Or was it just because they were on the committee?

TH: I think it was a combination of all of those things.

AF: Yes.

TH: It was a pretty good []. It was a sociological []. But I remember at the time [Stan S. Thurman] [], and I think Bob Zellner made the [] Appropriations, too. There was a [].

AF: Yes.

TH: [] public works and []. [] agriculture [] business.

AF: Yes. And maybe they had a trickle-down theory. They thought, “Well, we’ll pump some money in there, and then [] eventually [] good jobs.”

TH: Well, I think some of that aristocratic tradition applied to some of these []. They [] really close to the power structure of [].

AF: []

TH: [] utilities.

AF: Do you think they'd run that kind of story today, the one you described? Would they analyze it and [] delegation — how they operate []?

TH: The story — just to finish, what happened — the story was called “Sunbelt [],” and it was about — and it sort of looked at regional differences in [] and how much better — I know that one part of it was a typical community in Massachusetts that was [] close to [], and one [] Arkansas [].

AF: []. Yes.

TH: And the person — [] remembers []. But the person who really [] was [Bill] Clinton, who was always interested in [], always interested in [], and [] question and []. And he was opening up — I think he was opening [] Washington [].

AF: Oh.

TH: Pryor may have been [] bit of that, but Clinton really []. And it annoyed the hell out of the delegation by coming [].

AF: Yes, for a governor to come [] in Washington.

TH: Clinton was here all the time. He loved this [] — he loved the national stage. He loved Washington.

AF: What bureau []?

TH: Well, let's see, when he was first elected governor in my first year, 1978 — that would be Frank White? No, no. [Clinton] was elected to his first term in 1978,

then he lost to Frank White in 1980.

AF: Frank White in 1980, and then he went back in 1982.

TH: 1982. Yes.

AF: There was a two-year term, and they switched it to four years [].

TH: Yes. And I can't remember whether it was pre-Frank White or post-Frank White when we ran this story. I think it was the first term.

AF: Well, that was really — []

TH: It was . . .

AF: [] attorney general [].

TH: Right. I think the story probably ran in early 1980 — in April of 1980.

AF: Yes.

TH: And Clinton sent copies of it all [] place and called a press conference. He came to Washington. He was gigging, professionally.

AF: Yes.

TH: But it was fun working at the *Gazette* while this was going on. The stories were []. [].

AF: Right. Right.

TH: I think this is sort of what regional newspapers do.

AF: Yes.

TH: []. [].

AF: Right now you have people do it for you.

TH: Yes.

AF: People are tracking that thing. [Laughs]

TH: But I think that was kind of [].

AF: Looking at the bigger story.

TH: Bigger stories []. They knew that they were an Arkansas paper, [].

AF: Yes.

TH: There was lots of encouragement in the [].

AF: Yes.

TH: Jimmie Jones and Hugh — that was one of the rare stories where Hugh [got quite amused?].

AF: Oh, really? [] an awful lot.

TH: That part about — I know we talked about this in the other part about the Washington bureau operation [].

AF: Right.

TH: [].

AF: [] Harry Ashmore at some point. Had he already gone out to California? Did he pop his head in periodically?

TH: He would come to town occasionally for — when his book, *Hearts and Minds*, maybe?

AF: Yes.

TH: He would come to — would be [] book party. I think he made comment [] gridiron [], and he was also [] Fulbright as a star kind of

[].

AF: Yes.

TH: And there was some [] who was very social with []. I would go do one of these dinners, and I was seated next to Harry's wife.

AF: Oh, really?

TH: They loved that []. [].

AF: I know. He would come out of that environment he lived in every once in a while, and he always seemed like he came out kicking and screaming. He didn't want to leave California [laughs] to even come to Washington for a weekend.

TH: Yes. So do you know him?

AF: No, not a lot, but we crossed paths just [] conferences or — but, no, I didn't know him.

TH: Yes. It seemed to me that he had rolled into this wonderful existence out in Santa Barbara.

AF: Yes. Yes. He would make comments [laughs] about how he “really didn't want to be in this stinking city. If I was out in California today, the sun would be shining.” [Laughs]

TH: Yes. Yes. He would talk about how perfect it was.

AF: Yes.

TH: So Harry was [more of a figure of historical importance?]. When he came with his book for the book tour, and there was a reception — I remember []. Hugh had flown in town for it. Those two were close, and [].

AF: Yes.

TH: And he'd lend some support when [] Hugh [] that it was he and Harry who were sort of the co-conspirators in the 1957 []. Hugh, even by his description, let Harry [].

AF: Yes. It's his claim, given that [].

TH: No.

AF: [].

TH: And I think I told you when we talked before, or maybe it was just on the phone, that I talked to [Ernest] Dumas about his [], and Hugh [] Ashmore had given him credit [].

AF: [] corroborated.

TH: Yes, so there was some corroboration.

AF: Yes. Well, I don't know if I asked you last time if you — I know you weren't with the *Gazette* when Gannett bought or sold the paper, but I don't know whether you had any knowledge through other people at the time of any of those proceedings or — I mean, I'm sure you have your own opinion about it, too, but I didn't know if you were talking to people at that time — heard any accounts.

You know, was there any motivation [] Gannett [] people up there in Washington, as you were, were Gannett people. You may not have even known [] Gannett.

TH: [].

AF: Yes.

TH: There had already been all sorts of problems [] newspaper. It started out [] . But it was unbelievable [] out of business [] news out to the *Democrat*. [] .

AF: Yes, but wasn't it already losing money at that point?

TH: No, I don't think the *Gazette* was losing money, but Hugh was aware it was [] . [] very [] by the *Democrat's* use of its — the power of a chain newspaper.

AF: Right. Its growing power.

TH: And them giving the free ads in the classifieds.

AF: Yes

TH: That started it. It was much more aggressive [] . And Hugh hired a Washington law firm to pursue a [Justice Department] [] against the Hussmans.

AF: Right. I didn't realize it was a Washington firm.

TH: That's what I remember.

AF: Yes.

TH: That I think that [] — that was [] Carol [last name: Griffiee?] succeeded me.

AF: Right.

TH: And I think that Carol went to [] was here, and that would have been Carol. We were trying to report on this [] , and for some reason there was a [] .

AF: And that was reported?

TH: Yes. []. That's why I remember Hugh shouted [] the survival of the paper [].

AF: Yes.

TH: []. Patterson has [] suspicious figure. I mean, you just didn't — you weren't sure of his cop-outs.

AF: Yes.

TH: And it just seemed unbelievable to us that a paper as smart and powerful as the *Gazette* []. That was out of the question.

AF: Right.

TH: And that's when I knew they were getting nervous, when Hugh []. There were rumors about a possible sale. While I was there [] St. Louis [] — Ingersoll Chambers based in St. Louis.

AF: Yes.

TH: [] over there. But I think . . .

AF: I remember the billboard [] newspaper [].

TH: [].

AF: Yes.

TH: There were some conversations that Hugh was []. I can't quite remember how it was worded, but I'd get calls from Dumas and sometimes [Ann Henry?] would talk about it. [] call and pass along the rumors [] Washington []. [] sell, that the

newspaper was in some jeopardy. [].

AF: So what was it like writing articles about [] newspaper []?

TH: Well, it was awful, partly because Hugh . . .

AF: Hugh [] he said that the salvation of the paper [] in []. I don't know.

TH: What I'm — [] track some of the early discussions, and he was not especially forthcoming. You'd have to ask Carol about the coverage of this []. She was here []. I remember trying to track down information about [], and that deal ended up [].

AF: Right. But it was still [].

TH: I don't think we wrote it. I don't think we wrote it because . . .

AF: Did someone suppress your coverage?

TH: I remember that there was an issue about whether that was going to happen, particularly [] the Justice Department. I don't think you could say that it was suppressed. It was awkward. The [Patterson] family didn't want [], got the story []. I think it was mostly through Little Rock.

AF: Yes.

TH: That's the point of the investigation [] . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[Beginning of Tape 2, Side 1]

AF: I don't know how much more time you have. All right, is there anything else that you want to follow up on — on the purchase or the sale?

TH: Well, there are some things because I then had a conversation with Hugh, which I'll get you the tape — I think this should be on it. One of the things that we wanted — that Hugh had tipped me to — he didn't know this personally, but he — at the time of the sale, I think a lot of negotiations involved Al Neuharth, who was then the publisher of Gannett or CEO [Chief Executive Officer].

AF: I think he was CEO.

TH: And he was []ing the sale. He knew the *Gazette's* history, and he knew of its importance in American journalism. What Hugh told me, and I haven't followed up on this yet, is that Neuharth was very bitter about what Gannett did to the *Gazette*, and ultimately started letting go instead of continuing to fight.

AF: Right.

TH: That it was really — that it was a dishonorable thing to do. He had heard that Neuharth was [sending this to people?] — for this history, it would be worth someone checking it out.

AF: Right. Well, that would be interesting because Neuharth was so loyal to Gannett otherwise. He was the ultimate Gannett boy.

TH: With Gannett. Yes.

AF: So for him to say anything to bring its failure.

TH: But it was after he retired that they shut it down, and the purchase of the *Gazette* was one of those — maybe his last major acquisitions.

AF: Right. Yes, it was. Right. In fact, he wasn't there in that same position when they . . .

TH: Shut it down. Yes. He had already retired by then. [].

AF: Yes.

TH: And he thought that was wrong. He knew the *Gazette's* history []. He was [] and he was quite pleased about the [].

AF: Yes. []

TH: []

AF: Yes. You [].

TH: No.

AF: He was from [Wynne?] [] as Neuharth manned []. []

TH: Yes. I know people [].

AF: Yes.

TH: And Hugh would talk about []. He was []. And he talked some about it on tape.

AF: His taping was great.

TH: Oh, I hope so!

AF: Oh, yes! You better! [Laughs]

TH: He talked about his — isn't all []. We ended up at a luncheon [] driving around Little Rock.

AF: Right. Well, that's why you're [], too, of your conversation with him. It's great.

TH: She said, "I don't want [], but he knew all these families []," — [].

AF: Yes.

TH: []

AF: [] Is that right?

TH: Kay's husband.

AF: Yes.

TH: []

AF: I don't know.

TH: [] Anyway, whoever it is, Kay's husband — and they used to joke about what it was like to be at a club — I can't remember who else was in it — of men who had married into newspaper families.

AF: [Laughs] [] This is not happening!

TH: And he felt himself very much a piece — a part of this sort of [] group of individual [].

AF: Right.

TH: [] Graham Daniels []. He talked about [] and Graham knew [].

AF: That was an interesting comment — you always wondered how he felt about marrying into the empire and [].

TH: He always looked refined.

AF: Oh, he did! He was the most aristocratic Southern man I ever knew. [] white glowing hair and his accent was that very genteel Southern [].

TH: Yes. He had that rich baritone . . .

AF: And even the [].

TH: Yes. []

AF: Mint juleps.

TH: Yes, there's a great comment made about mint juleps. I saw [].

AF: Really? [Laughs]

TH: [] drinking [] [laughs] []

AF: You start looking old young, and then when you start getting older, you don't get any older. [Laughs]

TH: [] And he was very — he was as sharp as he ever was. I asked him — I was very interested in his decision in 1957, and where did it come from that Heiskell, who was more schooled in the traditions of Southern — he came from kind of a middle-class Southern background. []. I tried to look for what inspired Hugh in that background.

AF: Yes.

TH: I asked about his father. He said, "Well, my father was a great []." He said that what he recognized was that this was an opportunity [].

AF: But sometimes people don't recognize [] changes. They just don't see it.

TH: I think he said that . . .

AF: You have to look outside yourself. You have to look outside your environment. I wonder if part of his motivation was that he wanted to elevate Arkansas to a higher level and he saw what the rest of the nation was saying. I don't know.

TH: Yes.

AF: Go ahead. I didn't mean to interrupt you.

TH: He was [] of the group that wanted to do that, but one of the things that's interesting is that he dismissed high-blown notions of either doing this as a matter of great — first of all, he said it wasn't as courageous as [] because he had early on the reassurance that the advertising [].

AF: Right

TH: Second, it didn't take a great deal of thought on his part, nor was it that hard to persuade the others — the family.

AF: Because the views were so blatant?

TH: Yes, and it was just — it was an obvious thing to do. And it was — if you had a newspaper, it was the right thing to do. The other thing that he reminds me of, and if you read these — I have the editorials that he gave me in this file [] . . .

AF: I don't think I've ever read the editorials.

TH: Well, it's important to look at them because they don't advocate desegregation.

AF: Yes.

TH: They advocate [] of law, and the editor was against lawlessness.

AF: Yes.

TH: So they're actually — Hugh points out that — Heiskell was quite a traditionalist []. One way you could [] Heiskell was to talk about his [] on law.

AF: Law and order.

TH: And that they shouldn't have to sue under civil [] was not there. The courts []. So it was that — and these were not editorials that advocated integration of schools.

AF: How did the editorials speak to the question of state and federal rights? When you he nationalized the Arkansas [militia?] — was there anything on that?

TH: You know, it's a book of editorials that Harry Ashmore was writing every day. And their strongest interest came after the Supreme Court decision — let's see, they came right along — and there were compromises, but it was the rule of the law. But there was a — certainly, with the federal courts, then the Supreme Court had the authority to do this. It was [] Faubus [].

AF: Right.

TH: Anyway, [] police department [].

AF: Right. And there were other efforts going on in other Southern cities around at the same time. It was very plotted and planned, that they would go into certain cities, but the others didn't get quite as much attention as what Nashville was going through with desegregation. I remember hearing Walter Cronkite say that — there were a couple of cities where this was happening, and they didn't know where the news would be. But he was going to go to Nashville, and he missed his plane. So the next plane he could get was going to Little Rock. He said, "Well, one city is just the same as the other. We don't even know where the story []." So he flew to Little Rock, and you could say that either his arrival prompted more news in Little Rock, or somehow that the news was there and he just got

lucky. But he ended up — he said “it was pure, dumb luck that I was in Little Rock for that story.” [Laughs] It’s interesting how things turn out sometimes.

TH: Your father covered a lot of these things.

AF: He did. Yes. He didn’t cover the Little Rock desegregation, but he covered everything from [Emmett Till?] all the way to the assassination of Bobby Kennedy.

TH: He covered [Emmett Till?]? When was that?

AF: 1953 or 1954.

TH: Wow.

AF: Yes. He was working in [] UPI. Very early on.

TH: Till was the guy that whistled at a white girl?

AF: Yes.

TH: And then [] — I did some work on [Pat Brown?].

AF: []

TH: Didn’t you cover some of him []?

AF: Yes, I covered him, too. Yes, boy . . .

TH: []

AF: Oh, he was fascinating. I loved to talk — and he . . .

TH: Did he cover Little Rock?

AF: No, he didn’t cover Little Rock. He was still in Mississippi — regional coverage up there.

TH: For the wire?

AF: Yes. He had a handful [] — but *The New York Times* recently — I guess p[] paper more, and they sent him this giant box of all his articles from when he first started working here — and it was two weeks before Kennedy was shot, [Note: Which Kennedy?], so it went from that point all the way up until the 1980s when he retired. I'd love to get into that box. It's just fascinating.

[Laughs] It's like a history of the Civil Rights Movement, the [Richard] Nixon White House, the [Gerald] Ford White House. It's just a variety of stories []. But we can []. Erase all that. [Laughs]

TH: No, that's all right. You know, you've [], and I think we talked about this last time, too, that it's [] — that 1957 — and Hugh talked about this as well, and I'm as struck by it here as I was recently in conversation — how much the leadership [] decisions that were made [] influence of character [].

AF: Of the community. Right. Oh, you mean . . . ?

TH: Of the community, but I'm also talking about the individual.

AF: Oh, the individual.

TH: And Hugh talked about this, too, how this was the sense of purpose and the pride in staff motivated [].

AF: Right.

TH: That they were attacked from outside the [] and came together and []. It was a symbol of pride [].

AF: Oh. Almost like being like public servants and working for the public good —

sometimes you don't get anything [].

TH: Yes. And you're part of an honorable working class that []. I felt that that was — that came about twenty years after this, and that sense of identity was still there — that sense of purpose.

AF: Right.

TH: And you [] about Heiskell [].

AF: Yes. Well, and the Pulitzer medal that's in the case in the front hallway when you first walk in the door, until it closed it sat there. It had gotten dusty and there hadn't been one since then, but . . .

TH: Yes, there was a — it provided a sense of identity [] but it's part of why it was special.

AF: Right. I can't remember if I asked you if you thought that it brought people from other parts of the nation to work on it, too — outsiders [] more experience, which always helps.

TH: You know, in that era when Dumas was starting out [], people were coming — big names [] children [].

AF: Yes.

TH: In fact, Elia's son, Chris Kazan . . .

AF: Yes.

TH: I don't know — at the time, I was this Yankee who showed up for a number of years [].

AF: Yes.

TH: [] my friend or Carol's friends []. I remember telling one [] the *Gazette's* editorials on litigations [] — those people [] they remembered the *Gazette's* Pulitzer — people of my parents' generation. But this person knew about the *Gazette's* sort of [repressive?] reporting completely.

AF: Really?

TH: It sure surprised me because []. [Laughs]

AF: Yes. Right. And it wasn't a big pro-labor statement [].

TH: No, not at all. I think that it might have been a post-right-to-work [law?].

AF: Yes, because those came up — I mean, they were . . .

TH: And I knew there was something else — I'm trying to think — there were a couple of things that occurred about [] people [].

AF: Yes.

TH: One sort of surprised me that he had a reputation — [] Arkansas []?

AF: Well . . .

TH: I can't remember, but the *Gazette* played some role that got the attention of some of these neighboring [].

AF: Yes.

TH: And the second was for a paper in the South at that time — it sort of [] tradition of [] editorial stance it was taking.

AF: Yes.

TH: It was one of the first papers to endorse for governor — maybe it was for the

nomination, or something.

AF: Wow! That's really going out there.

TH: But it's not what you'd expect from the *Gazette*. []. It was one of the first papers to endorse [].

AF: Yes.

TH: So I feel it was a paper when we were casting about for places to go to work, it was one of the outstanding places.

AF: Yes.

TH: And I got there [] through Roy.

AF: Yes.

TH: His daughter went to [], and he got this whole crew from Pine Bluff.

AF: Yes. Well, you were talking about the workers of the *Gazette* — were you there during any sort of attempt to unionize the *Gazette*? Or in anywhere in your history was anyone trying to . . .

TH: We tried to organize an employees — [] association. Steele Hays [] . . .

AF: Oh, yes.

TH: I think he could have lead the organization. I remember he asked us who supported it. I don't think we ever — okay, there are a couple of things I remember. One was there an employment association — it was mostly to get information — maybe [] press for a couple of months []. That was the first effort to organize after the sort of infamous strike or near-strike in the

early 1970s.

AF: Oh?

TH: Did you know about that?

AF: No.

TH: There was a union organizing effort that turned generally the cohesive *Gazette* newsroom [] out of control.

AF: Oh!

TH: []. I don't remember whether there were actually pickets or a strike. I don't think that it actually got that far. I think it was an attempt to [] — very, very bitter, and they just barely lost. I remember the union [].

AF: Yes.

TH: Ginger Shires was a big part of it. She [] and Matilda, and they were — Matilda and Ginger had [].

AF: Yes.

TH: And I came — I think it was probably 1972. I [] after that. The animosity associated with that [] organizing [].

AF: Still lingering? Wow.

TH: It was still lingering. There was a woman from []. Do you remember her?

AF: Oh, yes. I only met her once [].

TH: She was living in the Middle East for a while.

AF: Oh.

TH: But she was a really smart person to come into the courts [] foreign services. []. And the union effort had just failed, and I'm not sure exactly what the circumstances were.

AF: Yes.

TH: I think the members were picky, so there [] a strike.

AF: I don't know. I never heard about that.

TH: []. And then Hugh [had been lost?], but Bob Douglas was the managing editor who pushed for a big salary increase for the whole staff and got it shortly after [I arrived?].

AF: Oh.

TH: It was something like \$50 a week or something.

AF: That's a lot. [Laughs]

TH: It was huge! Huge!

AF: It was doubling your salary! [Laughs]

TH: [].

AF: Yes.

TH: Yes. I think I told you about this party at []'s house, where Doug was after this [] still the union animosities. Douglas, the managing editor, came to [] Heights. And for a kid it was just a wild thing. We still talk about it. Well, anyway, do you want to hear this story?

AF: Yes, I didn't hear it the first time.

TH: Well, yes.

AF: It sounds new.

TH: Hugh used to have such great *Gazette* parties.

AF: Oh, yes.

TH: The first one I went to was at [Leslie Mitchell's?] house. And I remember just all the drinks — the beer cans stored in a big, industrial garbage can. And all the furniture had been cleared out from the living room. God, what a great group of people they were. And people would work until 11:00 and would go to this party, and we'd stay there until 4:30 or 5:00.

AF: Yes.

TH: It was such a great group of folks. I remember meeting [Libby?] the *Gazette* [crowder?] [] fire department [] who was just such a bitch.

AF: The sources. [Laughs]

TH: Yes, I think so.

AF: Yes, sure.

TH: It's Little Rock.

AF: Also, it's not a big city. Everyone gets off at 11:00 at night [] the same place. [Laughs]

TH: It was so much fun. And there were sort of [era?] people that I came []. Anyway, Brenda Spillman was my [nanny?] in Little Rock, and she had this apartment. I think her husband was [] for a new apartment in the Heights. [] on Lee Avenue and []. So we got there and everybody was drinking beer. Douglas came in with sort of an entourage. [].

[Tape Stopped]

[Note: At this point, the recording device has been moved closer to the subjects. Thank you!]

TH: there was a party at Brenda Spillman's house in the Heights — her new apartment. Well, she had baked cookies and we were all drinking beer. Douglas came in and wanted to know what the room — there was some discussion about the raises that had just been given out. And Gerald Drury, the [] news editor, did some grousing about the raise, and called how much more they would have gotten if there had been a union.

AF: Oh.

TH: And Douglas quieted everybody in the room, and he had his big-stomached editors around him. I remember sitting down like it was a class, and Douglas was up at the front of the room, still with his coat on, saying, "Who else believes that they didn't do enough with this raise?" And he called for a show of hands. And Drury started cat-calling him from where he was seated near me. Douglas said, "Let's have it out right here!" Drury got to his feet and was trying to slug Douglas. Douglas was ready to fight back, and Jimmie Jones and someone else, maybe Tucker Steinmetz, escorted Douglas to the door — kind of whisked him out of the apartment, holding him back. We heard some scuffling out in the hallway, and then the door kicks open, and Douglas's voice shouting at Drury: "I'm still here, [card]!" And some of us from the freshman class at the *Gazette* still use that — the "I'm still here" part.

AF: [Laughs] But they never had it out.

TH: They didn't have it out. Jimmie successfully restrained Douglas. But it was a memorable moment for all of us.

AF: To watch your managing editor walk into . . .

TH: My managing editor escorted by my immediate boss, Jimmie Jones, who was a young guy himself.

AF: Oh! [Laughs]

TH: And then Douglas — when I came to the Washington bureau, Douglas would sometimes want — one of the obligations was that you'd go for a drink with him at the Golden Arrow or the Flaming Arrow.

AF: I think it was the Flaming Arrow. It was one of the bottom-of-the-club hotels.

TH: Yes.

AF: Where Genifer Flowers later entertained.

TH: I know Douglas must have known Genifer Flowers. Anyway, what I remember . . .

AF: She sang at the Flaming Arrow.

TH: But what I remember was that Bob would order, I think, bourbon or scotch and water. I ordered the same. And I think we went there at a time they were serving doubles, and I had barely made it through a couple of sips, and Bob was ordering another one. And at some point I was lurching up to go to the men's room and realizing that Bob just kept ordering. And every time he ordered one, he'd order another one for me. And I had a line of them. There were about six of them.

AF: Oh, gosh! [Laughs] Did you drink them?

TH: I think I did, because this was part of having the job. This was the managing editor!

AF: Right. [Laughter]

TH: I don't remember what we discussed. [] well. Maybe it was that Bill Alexander series. [Laughter]

AF: Well, once you came to Washington, how often would you go back? Did they say "Come on back once a year to check in and talk to us," or . . . ?

TH: No, it was for stories that we'd go back. Generally, it was to help out — you know, the *Gazette* was always serious about election coverage.

AF: Yes.

TH: And they wanted the Washington bureau to help out.

AF: Oh, you would go back to . . . ?

TH: Yes.

AF: Well, especially, I guess, if the delegation is back there campaigning.

TH: Yes. They were all down there campaigning and there was no news out of Washington, so it made some economic sense, actually, I guess.

AF: Yes.

TH: But then I'd always stay with Dumas or [first name?] Heinbockel or some of the . . .

AF: You didn't stay at hotels.

TH: No. I stayed with family.

AF: Yes. [Laughs]

TH: And I loved being back there. I just had a blast. We'd go back for a couple of months of the campaign because the Congress was gone.

AF: Right.

TH: And I had been on the state desk, and it was a great way to get reincarnated. It was a great journalistic decision. And I got to do that wonderful Arkansas political circuit — the Mount Nebo chicken fry . . .

AF: Pressing the flesh.

TH: Oh, it was fabulous! And there were so many great stories on everyone. Most of them were the ones not in the paper, but told in Ernie Dumas's living room.

AF: Yes.

TH: There were always these crazy people who were running for office along with — we had this fleet of blow-dried, sophisticated [calls?] — Bill Clinton, Jim Guy [Tucker], [David] Pryor, all about the same age — [Dale] Bumpers . . .

AF: Yes.

TH: But there's a generation of them who were all competing for these few top jobs.

AF: Right.

TH: And then there would be someone running against them, like that race for the senate. We had [Ray] Thornton, Tucker, and Pryor, and Monroe Schwartzlose. Do you remember Monroe?

AF: No.

TH: Oh, my God, that was [] because these guys were so [earnest?].

AF: And it was so [] because every election has a Monroe. I don't know anything about him, but I know exactly what he's . . .

TH: He was from Rison.

AF: They're populists — they're these populist guys who just — they're schoolteachers or farmers or something, and they just get a wild hair one day that they're going to run for office.

TH: Monroe used to give out Grandma Schwartzlosse's brownie recipes. His campaign platform was mostly about legalizing gambling in Arkansas, and they used the [] "So we can take the money away from the people of Oklahoma." [Laughter] Take money from the people of Oklahoma.

AF: And they would, too.

TH: And Monroe used to — he was a turkey farmer from Rison, and he'd get off on these tangents. He was really kind of crazy. And he would follow Jim Guy, who was so overly earnest and self-important.

AF: Well, yes.

TH: And Monroe always wore his overalls. And he'd stand up there, and Jim Guy would talk about Social Security and what he had done on Ways and Means — and Monroe said, "I want to talk about — you gotta do like when you have a sick turkey. You get the turkey, and you've got to do it with an old eyedropper. You take the eyedropper and you fill it up, and you hold the turkey like this." And the crowd would start roaring. And then the timekeeper — you know, the guys got ten minutes to speak — I think this was at Mount Nebo — they guy said, "Time."

And Monroe said, “I’m not finished yet!” He said, “I’m sorry, Mr. Schwartzlose, your time is up.” He’d say, “I’m not quittin’!” And the crowd starts clapping and carrying on.

AF: This is the thing like Jim [Lehrer?] and Al Gore. [Laughs]

TH: So the crowd is going, and he says, “See, they’re with me!” [Laughs] “Do you want me to finish this story?” [Laughs] And the people shouted, “Yes!” And all the press corps shouted “Yes!” too, of course. And Monroe says, “Now, where was I?” So we shouted, “Doctoring turkeys!” [Laughs] And he goes back to cradling the turkey’s neck in his arm and showing the eyedropper. [Laughs] You’d just laugh [and you’d have these railings?], and tears would be rolling down your cheeks.

AF: And you’re thinking, “How did I get to be so lucky to be the journalist covering this? This is priceless!”

TH: Yes.

AF: You couldn’t stage that kind of stuff.

TH: No. And you think nothing could have occurred like this before.

AF: And then it went over again. And then it kept happening. [Laughs]

TH: Yes. And then Ernie Dumas had told me the story [laughs] — as the junior reporter, often we were assigned to these wacko candidates, too.

AF: Yes.

TH: There was the guy, Ed Cox of Weiner. [Laughter]

AF: And every time you’d write it in the copy, you’d howl.

TH: Yes. [Laughter] But he [] [laughs] — he said, “Pardon the mess.” It was just okay. “I’m used to that.” And the guy [] [laughs] take that tractor motor apart in the living room.” [Laughter]

AF: Oh, gosh! Oh, my! [Laughter] And you just don’t find that kind of politicking anymore.

TH: No.

AF: I guess maybe you still do in Arkansas, but . . .

TH: It is retail.

AF: It is!

TH: It’s wholesale. [Laughs]

AF: Yes! And it’s — oh!

TH: There was a guy — let’s see, Toughy Chambers was a guy who ran for governor.

AF: That was amazing [] [laughs].

TH: I remember being with Dumas. I think I had been over at the state house with him the last day. Some guy some Springdale or Hogeye or somewhere, up where Roy [Reed] is from, had [final promise?]. So Dumas says, “We’ve got to find out who this guy is and what [].” Mrs. Chambers []. He says, “Well, we see here . . .

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

[Beginning of Tape 2, Side 2]

TH: And Toughy had been to the clerk at the courthouse. She says, “No, he didn’t file for governor! You’ve got the wrong number, sir.” [Laughs] So Dumas looks at

again, and called back, “Mrs. Chambers, this is Ernest Dumas. There is a Toughy Chambers. You live at this address, right?” She says, “Just a second.” [Spoken to someone in the room with her]: “Toughy, this man says you’ve filed for governor.” And then you hear her say, “Well, did you do that?” [Laughter] “When you told me you were going to the store, you went to the state house and filed for governor?” [Laughs] And so we listened to this thing.

AF: [Laughter] He hadn’t even told his wife!

TH: And then there were these debates that were always well times. And Toughy used to show up — I think he was a schoolteacher, and he had these file cards. He would go up to the podium and he would like at these file cards like this. He only had a minute to speak, you know, because they had these lines — there was everyone from county clerk and coroner and dog catcher and everything — they had to speak. And so Toughy [] [laughs] — the timekeeper would say there was one minute left, and he had used up that time. And, finally, he’s about to finish — “I’m disturbed!” [Laughter] That’s all he said. “I’m disturbed!”

AF: [Laughter] That’s all he had time to say?

TH: [Laughter] And he used to shout — they’d sort of bring him off [the stage] with a cane because he’d always shout. “Toughy Chambers WILL GET VOTES!”

AF: [Laughs] And it’s always one guy who didn’t have a campaign, he didn’t have any money, he wasn’t going to spend any money — all he could do was show up at key things and speak, and he would file to run. There was one [running] for governor every time. It was great! And they were always outlandish characters

with these outlandish names. [Laughs]

TH: I remember Dumas — we'd go back to Dumas's house. You'd always drive back to Little Rock at day's end, and we'd show up at Ernie's house. And Doug Smith was over there — oh, a crowd of people had driven in and were drinking Ernie's bourbon. And he had such a . . .

AF: Elaine's bourbon.

TH: Yes, I guess. And I've never laughed so hard in my life. And heard so many stories. These stories were from twenty-five years ago or something.

AF: Yes. They still remembered.

TH: Ernie told about Ed Cox of Weiner, who was running against [Orval] Faubus, I think. And then [Thomas?] came back, and they had one — it had been hard to get to all the candidates — some issues had come up, and it was the last joint appearance of all the candidates. And they gave the last question to some student journalist. The question to all the candidates was, "What would your advice be to the young people of this state?" So Faubus gives a flowery speech about the promise and the prospects, and maybe Winthrop [Rockefeller] was running, and he talks about how this state is going to grow economically, and the young people are our future, and stuff. And Ed Cox gets to the microphone. "My advice — Arkansas — she's a low-wage-payin' state. Get out while you can!" [Laughter]

AF: That's the best advice you could give anybody!

TH: "Get out while you can!" [Laughter]

AF: Oh, gosh!

TH: It was the greatest place to work. It was so much fun, and there were more characters per square inch in and out of the newsroom.

AF: I wonder if the young journalists today working in Arkansas who, twenty years from now, will say the same. It's just a place, or — I mean, I know there was that unusual combination of two newspapers, but I don't know. You just keep wondering if that was an isolated incident or if it's . . .

TH: Well, David Pryor used to say — I hope I said this before, because [] and someone should ask David about this. But he used to say that in talking with *Gazette* people in interviews and in all sorts of public places that if not — that the *Gazette* was the reason Arkansas isn't Mississippi.

AF: They were the leader of . . .

TH: Yes. It was [] edited [] natural life.

AF: Which I believe it does happen.

TH: And this broadening — as you said, this ability to see the moment.

AF: Yes.

TH: And take it out of the context — maybe it was that Hugh Patterson traveled, or whatever.

AF: Right.

TH: [] and any place with this emphasis on national and international news — they had a world editor and it was an important part of the job.

AF: Yes.

TH: It has changed the place.

AF: Yes.

TH: I always liked that idea.

AF: I know. It's always a good idea. A newspaper is a voice for a community. When the voice is parochial, the community tends to be parochial. And it sorts of feeds on itself, and vice versa. If you have a broader outlook, people tend to . . .

TH: Yes.

AF: Even though they still have a loyalty to their own community, they each put it in perspective somehow.

TH: Ann Henry had a friend — it was somebody [] there she wanted us to meet who had influenced her when she was a little girl. I don't quite remember where. She grew up in Texarkana.

AF: Oh.

TH: [] She lived outside Little Rock in a log cabin.

AF: Really?

TH: Overlooking Cantrell and someplace. It was out there. It was weird.

AF: Wow.

TH: You'd take a dirt road up through the hills. There were shopping centers down below it, but the cabin had been there []. Anyway, she had worked for the *Gazette* long, long ago []. Anyway, she had come from Mississippi, and she remembered thinking when she was growing up — Little Rock was kind of a literary center. It was a place where writers wanted to be. There were two newspapers, there were little publishing houses. It was just a sophisticated city.

AF: Yes. Well, that's interest. Unlike Jackson, she was from Mississippi — she wasn't back in Jackson for that sort of . . .

TH: Oh, I remember that was a distinction she might get out of part of it, and a big part of her positive feelings about Little Rock was related to the *Gazette*.

AF: Right.

TH: But I'm sure Anna Norville [] on the list.

AF: Yes, I'm sure they are.

TH: And there were so many *Gazette* []fications that are [] in Arkansas. When Anna Norville married — she was a sports editor — they got married in Dumas's back yard underneath the basketball hoop. It was so symbolic. David Pryor officiated. I don't know — could a senator officiate? Why would that be?

AF: Was he ever a judge? I don't know.

TH: Maybe he was a justice of the peace. I don't know why. I know that we had — see, there were all the people from the newsroom there, and some political types and sports figures, and Anne refused to have Frank Broyles [there].

AF: Oh, really? [Laughs]

TH: She couldn't stand him.

AF: She didn't like him? He's God, though, in Arkansas.

TH: Oh, she did this, too — when I was there, she was the homes editor, and she went out to do a cover story out at Broyles's office, which included []. “Come in, little lady.” He had this rosewood-veneered office, and you could push a button on the desk and the wood would mechanically — the motor would [] to the

side, and there would be a big TV screen. And he'd do it again, and there would be a blackboard. And he'd do it again, and it would be a "Go Hogs" sign.

AF: Yes. The ultimate coach's office.

TH: Anyway, he was showing her all the awards. He asked, "Have any questions, little lady?" She said, "Yes. How do you spell 'Broyles'?" [Laughter]

AF: I love it! She tried to bring him down to earth.

TH: Yes.

AF: I think that would have been difficult for her to do.

TH: But we all stood — I was one of the *Gazette* reporters at that wedding, and the junior reporters were sort of the attendants. We stood at the back waiting until Pryor pronounced them man and wife. And then we all had — instead of muskets, we had champagne bottles and we let the corks all blow. And everybody drank champagne under the basketball hoop. [Laughter]

AF: Oh, my! Dumas's house must have been sort of the annex — you know, the home away from home — for a lot of people.

TH: I was so thrilled to be there. I just couldn't believe my good fortune that I was kind of excited that I was at the best place to be.

AF: Yes;

TH: And people were older than I at the time. You know, I was just starting out. I was just a kid.

AF: Right. You were a cub. Yes.

TH: And so to be in the same room with these people was a thrill.

AF: Yes. Well, to this day, to be in the same room with Ernie Dumas is a thrill. I mean, that's — [laughs].

TH: Yes. []

AF: Yes, I know.

TH: And there was always this — you know, the *Gazette* was a serious newspaper, but in the newsroom we had fun, and there was a sense of fun and playfulness.

AF: And adventure, too.

TH: Yes. Well, Dumas would take me — when I was doing these state stories for a while, and Ernie got me in terrible trouble, to his great delight. There was a Judge Means whom I had reported on who was up for some kind of — I think he had embezzled some money, or there was some investigation by the state senate of this judge. And his sister, I think, not his wife — his sister or sister-in-law, Fritzzy, was the official nurse for the state capitol. She was just an old bat who was rather senile. I don't think she had really graduated from any nursing school, and if she did, she had forgotten it. I remember she used to love talking about treating people's "boo-boos" and sort of telling stories. But she had been there forever, and she was sort of an adored figure by the legislature, and completely harmless, except when you got on the subject of her brother. When he was in trouble, she would lobby everybody and go nutty-crazy, and she didn't want anyone — you weren't supposed to talk about him. If you said anything offensive to her brother, she'd whoop and holler. So I'm going over to the capitol — I didn't go over there very often, at this point. Dumas says for this story there's

one person you want to interview, and that 's the nurse over there. She knows a lot about this. [].

AF: Who would have thought that a nurse . . . ?

TH: “Really?” He said, “Yes. She knows about the case.” And he’s completely poker-faced as he describes this. So I go in and there. I say, “I want to ask you what you might know about anything.” And she starts hollering, and she’s treating some legislator while I’m in there. He had a “boo-boo,” as she called it. He had a blister, and she was putting a Band-Aid on his blister. And she starts raving as she gets the Band-Aid on him.

AF: [Laughs] Inflicting pain on him.

TH: And she is shouting and carrying on. And I remember Dumas was out in the hallway. He was listening, because he knows that this stuff is going to echo.

AF: Right.

TH: And the legislator comes out and says, “Ernie, you gotta stop that boy!” [Laughs] Ernie says, “I can’t stop him. He’s a real ankle-biter!” [Laughter]

AF: Oh, I bet he loved it! [Laughs]

TH: But I probably ought to pretend to work here.

AF: I know. I was just going to say, did we get — I mean, we could go on so — anyway . . .

TH: This is the best project. Yes.

[End of Interview]

