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

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Arkansas Memories Project

Justice Robert L. Brown

Interviewed by Tom W. Dillard and Scott Lunsford

April 21, 2009

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Objective

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Transcript Methodology

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

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

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

- Brackets enclose
  - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
  - annotations for clarification and identification; and
  - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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Tom W. Dillard and Scott Lunsford interviewed Justice Robert L. Brown on April 21, 2009, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Tom Dillard: Okay, this is Tom Dillard, and I am interviewing Judge Robert "Bob" Brown. Today is April the twenty-first, 2009, and we are conducting this interview in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Judge Brown, are you agreeable to this interview and to—uh—donating—uh—the interview to the Pryor Center?

Robert Brown: I am.

TD: Good. Um—I appreciate your taking time to be here with us today, and I wanna—uh—start off by asking you—uh—we're gonna talk about your career and the various things you've been involved with through the years. And I'm gonna take it in somewhat chronological order. I'd like to talk with you about—uh—when you were deputy prosecuting attorney back in 1971–[19]72. That was in Little Rock. And the prosecutor was Jim Guy Tucker.

RB: That's correct.

TD: So that was your first association with him as far as working with him is concerned.

RB: That—that's exactly right.

[00:00:57] TD: Why don't you talk about—uh—[*RB clears throat*] how you got to know—uh—Mr. Tucker and—uh—and your association with him?

RB: All right. Well, Jim Guy Tucker is a young pup. I mean, he was two years younger than I was, and I had known him slightly—not that well. But I had gone to—uh—law school after flirting with the idea of being a—an English professor.

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: I had gotten a master's in English literature but then decided to go to law school and—and came back to Little Rock to practice. And I was practicing with a fairly stodgy law firm. I mean, it was good work. It was a good job, but—but by the same token . . .

[00:01:32] TD: What was the name of that firm?

RB: Uh—Chowning, Mitchell, Hamilton, and Burrow.

TD: Uh—an old, highly regarded firm.

RB: That's exactly right. Will Mitchell probably being the—uh—my mentor . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . more than anyone else although . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . "Dub" Hamilton certainly was, too. But it was a traditional—uh—law firm, and it was kind of hanging in the balance because

Will Mitchell had gotten involved in some of the Little Rock crisis activities. And when you did something like that, you—uh—had a tendency to lose business, and some of the clients that had traditionally been with the Chowning firm, as I call it—uh—had left and gone elsewhere. But I joined and—uh—as an associate, and John Selig was there, and it was a very traditional firm. And I enjoyed it, but I was kinda being tugged to do some different things. I'd—I remember going to Frank Chowning, who was a very conservative man, and I said—uh—"Mr. Chowning—uh—would you mind if I did some work for the ACLU?" And—uh—uh—he said, "No, I don't think that's a [*laughs*] very good idea." [*Laughs*] And then later, there was a [*TD clicks pen*] situation where they brought the musical, *Hair*, to—to Little Rock, and—uh—that was—that was stopped. We had something called a censorship board that was part of the city board at that time, or at least a—an offshoot of the board. And they said, "No, *Hair* cannot come in." So I got involved in a little litigation on that, but that—that—I'm mentioning all that because it shows that I was kind of interested in doing some other things than—than being a—a traditional lawyer. [00:03:04] So—uh—Jim Guy Tucker, at the age of twenty-seven—uh—came back from—uh—Vietnam. He had not been a marine, but he had been a

correspondent. His—uh—health issues were such that he couldn't fight, and—uh—he came back. He had gone to—to Harvard and then to Fayetteville for University of Arkansas Law School and had come back and joined a traditional firm, too—the Rose Law Firm. And obviously, this was a—a situation where he was not completely comfortable. And—uh—Jim Guy, to me, knowing him now the way I do, had always wanted to be involved in politics. And his mentor probably more than anyone else was Sid McMath—or at least his model. So Jim Guy, at the age of twenty-seven, says, "I'm gonna run for prosecuting attorney," and runs against and old Establishment man, Allen Dishongh.

TD: Mh-hmm.

[00:03:54] RB: And—uh—it—it really—uh—no one thought Jim Guy had a chance—you know, this young—young pup. And—uh—Jim Guy's manner was such that—uh—you know, he was appealing to some people, not appealing to—to others. And Jim Guy never worked that well with the Establishment, and so—anyway, Allen Dishongh was the odds-on favorite because he had kicked around in—in politics for a period of time. And Jim Guy somehow—and I wasn't involved with him at this point, but he—uh—it—it came into his possession a letter that suggested that

Allen Dishongh had some connection with gambling. And I've forgotten exactly what the language was to that effect. But Jim Guy called a press conference and blew up this letter and redacted parts of it, but—uh—after holding that press conference, he won—won the election and became prosecutor. So I was—uh—I was enthralled by the idea that he could pull this off at such a young age. You—you gotta remember, this is pre-Bill Clinton, so . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: You know, but at age twenty-seven and doing this, I thought was very, very exciting.

[00:04:57] TD: Do you think his—um—[*clears throat*] his striking good looks played a role? I remember his campaign poster when he ran for prosecuting attorney . . .

Trey Marley: Excuse me, Tom. We've got a . . .

Kris Katrosh: Let me just straighten his tie.

[Tape stopped]

[00:05:09] TD: Judge Brown, do you think that Jim Guy Tucker's good looks—his striking appearance in his campaign posters—I re—I can recall those posters so clearly—had his picture on them—uh—do you think that perhaps had a—played a role in his—um—success at such a young age?

RB: Oh, I—I think absolutely. No question about that. And—uh—Jim Guy—he's been compared to Robert Redford . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . in—in kinda comparable—uh—looks, but—but ruggedly handsome—was obviously very attractive to—uh—uh—one gender, anyway. And I remember the poster, too, that he had, where he had the hand on his hip and . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . was kind of poised as a dynamic law-enforcement type, which he would've been as prosecutor. So his campaign—I'd—I don't know who managed it at that stage, but it was well run. And again, he—he won the election, and he came in, and he brought with him some deputies that, with one exception—maybe two—had long hair or were African American or wore bell-bottom pants. Now this was not the thing to do, you know, in 1970. So I mean, he was a—at least with respect to law enforcement. So here you have this—this prosecutor, and his chief deputy would give instructions to the sheriff on how to testify as a witness, which the sheriff took great umbrage at, [*laughs*] you know. Didn't like this young pup telling him what to do. But Jim Guy was—was unafraid, and he brought in—uh—his contemporaries and people who he thought would do the job

well. But again, there was a—a bit of a problem because of the youth and—and . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . the—the culture [*clunking sound*] that the deputies represented [RB edit: resented] and their ability to interact with law enforcement—and even with some of the judges because the—the two judges of that time were very traditional.

[00:06:57] TD: We saw that—uh—occurrence repeated—uh—to some degree, during Bill Clinton's first administration . . .

RB: Absolutely.

TD: . . . when he brought in—uh—a number of young assistants and so on who did not mix well with the politics of the day.

RB: Very—very similar. And when you don't—when you detach yourselves—when you're kind of isolated—uh—there's a tendency to view either the Clinton staff or the Tucker staff as being arrogant . . .

TD: Hmm.

RB: . . . and not—not part of the team. And—uh . . .

[00:07:25] TD: Do you remember who some of his deputies were . . .

RB: Um . . .

TD: . . . in addition to yourself?

RB: Um—well, Les Hollingsworth was one.

TD: Uh-huh.

RB: Uh—Art Anderson was one. Uh—Mark Vehik was one. Uh—John Jacobs was one, but more the traditional—uh—type. Ralph Hamner was one, and John Butt was one. Uh—John Butt died—uh—while I was in the prosecutor's office with Jim Guy. He fell off a mountain up here . . .

TD: Hmm.

RB: . . . and—I think not too far away. But a tragic, tragic situation. Of course, that was investigated because John had been a prosecutor at the time he died. But—uh—and then Bud Brown—the other Bob Brown, as we called him . . .

TD: Right.

RB: . . . was the chief—chief deputy. Um—I signed on as a special prosecutor because Jim Guy took it on as a project to clear out the county jail. At that time, there were something like sixty inmates in the county jail waiting for trial, and I remember at one point Jim Guy brought this list of who the inmates were to me, and they had *S*—a lot of 'em had *S* by their names. And I said, "What does *S* stand for?" And he said, "Suspicion." So [*laughs*]—suspicion is not a—a good charge. [*Laughs*]

TD: Uh-huh.

[00:08:35] RB: But anyway, these people were being held in the jail on various and sundry things, and Jim Guy correctly thought, "We need to clear out the—the county jail and have—uh—speedy trials." And he brought judges from all over the state, including Bill Enfield—uh—from Bentonville—uh—down to Little Rock to sit in a special division of the circuit court. And I signed on as a special prosecutor in that division, so I practiced primarily in front of Bill Enfield and judges from all over the state who came in. A very, very exciting—uh—time to be there and very educational for me as a lawyer. Uh—backing up a bit—uh—when Jim Guy made the offer to me to do this—uh—I said, "Of course. I'd—I'd really enjoy doing that." And I told the law firm and—and they understood, and I—I went off and—and did it. So—but it was the excitement of the whole process and—and doing good and a lot of investigations taking place. [*Clears throat*] For example—uh—Casey Laman in North Little Rock—uh—corruption in some of the police agencies—that sorta thing was going on, so . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . that made—that made it very dynamic.

[00:09:50] TD: You mentioned earlier your—uh—the censorship board. Uh—was this before you came onto the—uh—prosecutor

staff?

RB: Yes, yes.

TD: This was while you were with the law firm.

RB: That's—that's exactly right. Uh—and eventually, the—uh—the federal district court, I believe, ruled the censorship board and—uh—a prior restraint or the thwarting of *Hair* comin' to Little Rock as being unconstitutional. So that was just a—a project. Phil Kaplan really took the lead in that and I was—uh . . .

TD: Hmm.

RB: . . . kind of involved tangentially, but I was in the process of moving over to Jim Guy's office when—when the trial was actually—uh—had.

[00:10:29] TD: You also mentioned earlier—um—during your—uh—tenure at the law firm—um—your desire to do some work on behalf of the ACLU. Was—uh—was the American Civil Liberties Union in Arkansas—had it—had a branch officially been established here at that point?

RB: It—it was here in some form or fashion because I—I was doing some legal aid work, and there were lawsuits—uh—such as—and this is a little bit comparable to—to the *Hair* situation, but I think they had a performance at something like the Murry dinner theater, where there was a—a flashing by a woman of, you

know, maybe the upper body parts. And the question was whether this was free expression or—or whether this was obscenity. So that type of issue was—uh—was coming down.

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: So yes, that—it was—it was in existence at that time.

[00:11:17] TD: You—uh—later on witnessed, as we all did, the development of a—of a real ACLU in Arkansas. Uh—did you ever—uh—have—have you been associated with the ACLU before your election to the court?

RB: I have not been a member of the ACLU. I—I've respected what they've done . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . because they stand up for individual rights when—um—I won't say few people do, but they certainly do.

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: And you need an entity like the ACLU. It kinda keeps us all honest. And as a judge now, just having the ACLU come in and present a point of view can be very, very helpful.

[00:11:55] TD: As you were working with Jim Guy Tucker—uh—did you notice him—uh—building—working on a statewide constituency—political constituency?

RB: I never—uh—imagined Jim Guy staying just as a prosecutor, and

it was pretty early on that I was aware of the fact that he wanted to run for attorney general. And I had been with him for, really, half a year when he made that decision. And—uh—basically, what I did is I—I took a trip with Charlotte, and we came back, and he said, "I'm running for attorney general," and—uh—I said, "I'll manage your campaign." And I managed his campaign for attorney general.

TD: Hmm.

[00:12:33] RB: And—uh—it was fascinating. He ran against a fellow named Bill Thompson, who was a prosecutor over in Fort Smith and the son of a very well-known legislator—uh—with a couple of brothers who were very well liked—well known. And so it's a very, very difficult campaign. But no, I never thought that Jim Guy would just—uh—remain as a prosecutor, and again, I think he—I remember his saying one time, "I talked to Sid McMath, and Sid McMath said, 'If you're gonna run, you need to run.'" So—uh—after, really, a short period of time as prosecutor, he—he made the jump for the AG's office.

[00:13:06] TD: Um—I don't remember if he served one or two terms. It seems like one.

RB: As—as a—as a—as a prosecutor . . .

TD: As a prosecutor.

RB: I think that's right. I think it was basically one term. Yeah.

[00:13:14] TD: Can you tell me what drew you to—uh—Jim Guy Tucker?

RB: [*Sighs*] You know, I was thinking about this because I—I have to confess, I—my fiftieth high school reunion is happening this week, and I'm a member of the lost class of—of [19]59, when they closed the schools . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . in Little Rock. And I think that probably—that, and the fact that my father [the Right Reverend Robert R. Brown] was involved in per—uh—public service, in a sense, by virtue of being an Episcopal bishop. I think that kinda drew me into a public service, in—in a sense. And I was thinking about the reunion this weekend and—and how this could happen, that the schools would be closed. And my thought at the time—and this was kind of a—just a suggestion to me. I—I was not—uh—on the barricades, and I was pretty naïve—raised in the segregated South, of course.

TD: Mh-hmm.

[00:14:02] RB: But I thought at the time, you know, [*TD clears throat*] "The adults have failed us in this." You know, the institutions certainly had failed us—Governor Faubus—the

General Assembly.

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: But the adults had failed us because the—the people of Little Rock, as you well know, conducted a referendum in late September of 1958 as to whether—"Will we keep the schools open, or will we close them rather than integrate?" And the vote was 2–1 to close the schools. And that was a real failure, and I think that probably laid the—the seeds—uh—for me getting involved in—in politics where I could do somethin'—make a difference.

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: That, and just the pure [*TD clears throat*] excitement—uh—of the personalities. And I always chose good people to work with. I mean, i.e., Jim Guy Tucker and Dale Bumpers being the—the primary—uh—examples of that. But I think—I think it was the—the excitement, but—plus, realizing that the only way you're gonna be effective in get somethin' done is to—through the political—uh—venue.

[00:14:59] TD: Mh-hmm. Describe Jim Guy Tucker's personality—when—when you got to know him. Did you—did you get to know him in school—in—in—in high school?

RB: I—I knew him slightly.

TD: He went to Hall High School, I believe.

RB: He was two years behind me, and . . .

TD: Oh, okay.

RB: . . . and—and this—this was a period of time—I moved here in 1955 from Richmond, Virginia, and I moved in the ninth grade. And . . .

[00:15:21] TD: That's because your father came here as bishop?

RB: As the Episcopal bishop. That's right. And Jim Guy was two years behind me. I sort of knew him. But then I went to Central High in my sophomore year—tenth grade year—and he wasn't in that school. And my junior year I was at Hall, but his being two years behind me, he was still at Forest Heights. So we really didn't have that much of a relationship, but I knew of him, and—and he was certainly—uh—uh—someone you recognized as a comer. And he went to Harvard, and you know, that got my attention, and then was in the military. I think his—his basic intelligence—uh—nobody's a quicker study than Jim Guy Tucker. Uh—he can understand and take on an issue very quickly, and—uh—wax eloquent about that—that issue. Uh—I think his confidence—uh—and his aggressiveness—all of those things were very appealing. I—I saw this—this man as somebody who could really do things. And we haven't gotten to his

congressional career, but . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . that was probably the best example of—his working on the House Ways and Means Committee, where he was very adroit, very articulate, and really, was able to—to make a difference in a very short period of time. And then, of course, he ran for the Senate, and that ended his career in that venue.

[00:16:38] TD: Mh-hmm. It's interesting to speculate about—uh—Jim Guy Tucker being—uh—a member of the big three—um—the political triumvirate of the post-Faubus years of Dale Bumpers—uh—David Pryor, and Bill Clinton. Um—Jim Guy Tucker had many of the characteristics—uh—common to all three of these men—particularly—uh—I think, Bill Clinton. Um—if he had not run for the Senate—and I—I realize I'm asking you to speculate here . . .

RB: Sure.

TD: . . . but if he had not run for the Senate but had—uh—taken a little bit more of a slow approach, do you think he could have possibly been—ended up being—uh—the one who really—uh—uh—took Arkansas out of the old ways and into the new?

[00:17:31] RB: Uh—without question. He was probably more progressive, in a way, than Bill Clinton was. Uh—Bill Clinton is

a—in a—in a sense, very moderated in the way he proceeded—especially when he was governor of the state and when he was attorney general. Uh—moderate in the sense that he did not want to alienate certain factions, and if he did, he would do his best to try to ameliorate the situation. Uh—Jim Guy, I think, was more aggressive and probably not as political. You know, he didn't soften the—the rough edges as much. I never thought that Jim Guy—and I—I managed his campaign for the US Senate against Ray Thornton and—and David Pryor—uh—I never thought that he really had a base with the political party, the Establishment—uh—certainly, the—uh—commercial interests and business interests in the state. And I thought that was unfortunate because I thought it would've behooved him much better to have courted those interests more than it [RB edit: he] did. But my sense of Jim Guy was that—uh—he would not do that. He would . . .

[00:18:39] TD: Do you think—you know, there've been a—there's been a lot of people criticize him for being too—uh—brusque, for not being—um—uh—for not being deliberative enough, perhaps—uh—willing to jump into the fray—uh—maybe a little sooner than he should have—maybe not having—uh—Bill Clinton's ameliorating skills that you were speaking of. Um—did

you—obviously, you did not necessarily share those opinions of Jim Guy Tucker. Uh—you were very loyal to him and worked with him for a long time. But did you pick up on this?

[00:19:14] RB: I—I think there is—there was a tendency to—to rush into the breach—uh—maybe where a bit of—of thought might've stood him in better stead. Uh—again, I think that's just part of his personality—a very aggressive personality. Uh—the idea—and I'm jumping ahead here—but the idea of serving one term—uh—in the House of Representatives and then immediately running for the Senate—um—in—in hindsight—uh—was probably the—not the best thing to do. Uh—his thought at the time, and I can speak to this because he told me this—he's a—he said, "Typically, in Arkansas a senator gets into power—whether McClellan, who is one of the senators, or Fulbright—and they're there forever. And if there's an opening, you've gotta go for it." And that was his—his thought process. [*Someone knocks on door*] The problem was that he—he ran against two of the most popular people in—in the . . .

KK: Hold on. Excuse me. There's somebody at the door.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:08] TD: I'm going to ask you to finish your comment there about Jim Guy's personality and perhaps rushing into the breach

because we were interrupted.

RB: Kay. Well, my thought—and this is probably best illustrated at least as—as far as what I think history will look at—by his campaign to run for the Senate after serving just two years in the House of Representatives. Jim Guy was probably good, you know, having a solid seat in the House of Representatives for as long as he wanted to stay there as the congressman from central Arkansas, but his thought was, as I have already stated, that the Senate seats opened up once in a blue moon, and when the opportunity is there, you needed to go for it. Was that aggressiveness? Was it too aggressive? In hindsight, maybe so. At the time, he was going for something that he thought might dissipate if he didn't seize the day.

[00:21:06] TD: Do you know if Sid McMath urged him to run?

RB: I'm sure he talked to Sid McMath because Sid McMath had kinda the same career. I mean, he had been prosecutor and then ran for governor pretty quickly thereafter. And I think Sid McMath had some of the same personality traits. There's a little bit of—well, a whole lot of the Marine about Sid McMath and a little bit of the Marine about Jim Guy Tucker. And Jim Guy's father, of course, had been a veteran and whatnot, so I think that's—that was part of that in both of those men's personalities, and I think

Jim Guy did look to Sid as a mentor.

[00:21:43] TD: Do you know if Jim Guy felt some sort of, perhaps, obligation to public service because he came from an old political family?

RB: I'm not sure about obligation. I know that Jim Guy really loved the game. He loved politics, and he really liked the idea of public service and being able to get into a position of power and get things done. And he used to comment—he said, "This means more to me than money. Making money, I think, is a fairly easy proposition. What I really enjoy is the political life and helping people and serving." And yes, he certainly had that in his background. I mean, I think his, what, maternal grandfather was the county judge down in . . .

TD: Union County.

RB: . . . Union County. Yeah. Mr. White, I think, is that side, and then the Tucker side of the family. So he had it on both sides, and I think, sure, that was an inspiration. And Jim Guy had a—and not—this is "Dr. Brown" talking, of course. But he had a very strong mother, and I think the mother really guided him in certain respects, and I think that was a good thing. Good thing.

[00:22:54] TD: Many people during Jim Guy Tucker's tenure as governor found him difficult to work with—found him to be

brusque and dismissive at times. Did you hear that? Did you see that?

RB: You know, it's interesting. I didn't. I can see how people would see that in his personality because Jim Guy makes decisions. He's not a ditherer. I love Dale Bumpers, but Dale Bumpers might have a tendency to cogitate about an idea and probably Bill Clinton, to some extent. Jim Guy, you come in with a particular piece of legislation, and he says, "Well, that makes sense. I'll do it." You know, that's his personality. Dismissive? I can see how Jim Guy would not suffer fools gladly. What I heard for the most part was that Jim Guy Tucker up until Mike Beebe was the best governor we had in the sense that he was able to make decisions. He would make decisions and move on. He had some monumental failures, too. I think the road tax immediately comes to mind and, you know, the inability to get that done. That, of course, as I recall, went down to tremendous defeat.

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: So . . .

[00:24:15] TD: Of course, later on, Jim Guy Tucker's career would be destroyed by an indictment by being caught up in the Whitewater investigations. You've been associated with Jim Guy

probably as much as anybody. Did—how did you react to that indictment? And did you see anything in his background that would lead you to expect something like this?

RB: Well, that's a hard question. My reaction to the indictment and to the subsequent unrollings in the criminal justice process was just being very sad about the situation. And there's a real loss. Jim Guy Tucker—and I think there's unanimity on this point, whether you liked his personality or not, he's a very talented, effective person. And to lose that talent in any sense because of what happened to him with the Whitewater situation was just a tragedy. A tragedy for him, obviously, and his family, but also for the state. So I was saddened to see it. As far as seeing somethin' in his personality that would lead to Whitewater, no, I can't say that. I think it was more a situation where we tried to—Charlotte, in particular—with Charlotte, my wife, and Betty Tucker, Jim Guy's wife—Charlotte was there to really hold her hand and be a shoulder to cry on.

[00:25:50] TD: Betty Tucker is a very highly regarded individual. I believe she was beloved by many people and considered to be a very fine first lady. This must have been a horrible thing for her . . .

RB: Well . . .

TD: . . . but their marriage survived.

RB: Yes. Absolutely. I think they're both very strong people, and I think Betty is a very wise and strong person—wonderful mother. We had a—we went to India about two months ago and came back and had a dinner party and had the Tuckers over, and I gave them each a Hindu god, and the god I gave to Betty was the god of wisdom, which she is. And experience, of course, teaches wisdom, and I think she is a wonderful, wonderful person.

[00:26:35] TD: Jim Guy Tucker had a bout of serious medical challenge. Can you talk about that? I'm not sure—you know, there was a discussion in the newspaper, but I'm not sure that people really had a very good handle on that.

RB: I can give kinda my sense of things, and I'm not an expert on this on this subject, but Jim Guy, from the time I first met him, had a problem with an ulcerated colon. And I'm not sure if that was stress related or what, but it was always something—a condition that he had—and really, ever since I've known Jim [Guy]. And that's the reason, by the way, he wasn't able to fight as a Marine.

TD: Oh.

RB: He was in Vietnam, but he couldn't pass the physical because of

this condition. So he was really over there as a correspondent, writing about Arkine—Arkansans, like John Butt, who were fighting in Vietnam.

[00:27:29] TD: And later did a book [Editor's note: *Arkansas Men at War*] on the subject.

RB: And later did a book on the subject and a fascinating book. But in any case, I think the book was dedicated to Jim McDougal, and they were friendly at the time because Jim Guy had a natural relationship with J. William Fulbright, who McDougal was working with at the time. So a lot of Jim Guy's friends and helpers in the [RB edit: his] political life were people who had worked for Fulbright, including Jim McDougal. But yeah, it was a fascinating book, and Jim Guy was very much in harm's way because of that. Ulcerated colon evolved into something that was much more serious. Jim Guy's had a condition of one sort or another since I've known him. And of course, it developed into a liver condition, and he had to have a liver transplant. And you know, you ask about Jim Guy. You see him, and he seems to be healthy. By the same token, he's making continuous trips up to Mayo's for evaluation and whatnot. So it's the type of thing you always sense that he's just walking on eggshells, in a sense, as far as his health.

[00:28:43] TD: You evolved over time. You left Jim Guy Tucker's employment, I guess, about the time he ran for the Senate, and—excuse me—for attorney general. And you went to work with Dale Bumpers. He had been elected governor of Arkansas in 1970, and I believe you joined him as a legal aide in 1972.

RB: That . . .

TD: Let's talk about Governor Dale Bumpers and your association with him.

RB: Well, it's interesting because, yes, I had managed Jim Guy's campaign for attorney general, but I told him I did not wanna go back to the prosecutor's office, and I did not wanna go to the attorney general's office. And at the same time, I told him I had been interviewing with Dale Bumpers about going over and being his legal aide. Tom McRae was Dale Bumpers's administrative assistant. We never—he never had the title chief of staff, but he, in effect, was, although it was really kind of a joint partnership between Tom McRae and Archie Shaffer. Archie Schaffer pretty much did the political end of things in the General Assembly and that type of thing. Tom McRae did the planning—the bureaucracy—trying to organize state government. So—and I say partnership. It was probably not an ideal partnership because they had the separate bailiwicks and

were completely different personalities. Having said all that, I had worked for Rockefeller. I think one of the reasons I came back to Arkansas was that Win Rockefeller was governor. And he was doing exciting things, and I voted for him. I don't think I woulda come back here if Faubus had still been the governor. [*Airplane flies overhead*] Rockefeller instituted a new day, and it was very exciting what he was doing, aside from his particular problems, but particularly in the sense of race relations. I think one of the bravest things that I've seen a politician do is what Win Rockefeller did after the Martin Luther King assassination—standing on the steps of the state capitol with black representatives and leaders and singing "We Shall Overcome" in front of God and everybody. Not only was it courageous and brave politically, but as far as his own safety, it was a very courageous thing to do. So I was a fan of Win Rockefeller's. I knew some of his people, and he's one of the reasons I came back. And I worked for him against, I guess, Marion Crank. When he ran against Jim Johnson, I was still in Charlottesville at law school, but the Crank election . . .

TD: Nineteen sixty-eight.

RB: . . . [Nineteen] sixty-eight. I was back in Arkansas, and I worked for Rockefeller. I say worked for him—I think Brownie

Ledbetter had me do my precinct, so I [*laughs*] did my precinct.

[00:31:40] TD: Well, certainly, there were a lot of Democrats for Rockefeller.

RB: Absolutely.

TD: And there was an organization, Democrats for Rockefeller . . .

RB: That's right.

TD: . . . which I think Frank Lambright headed up . . .

RB: Frank Lambright headed it up. That's exactly right.

TD: So it wasn't as if—for ardent Democrats or for people with a Democratic heritage, working for Winthrop Rockefeller was not a terribly wrenching decision because there were so many other progressives working with him.

[00:32:10] RB: That's exactly right. No, I—it wasn't brave on my part. I thought it was brave there—that Rockefeller had did the Martin Luther King memorial service. But no, you're exactly right. It was almost accepted in my quarters to be more of a Rockefeller person than, certainly, a Faubus person. And Jim Johnson just was too much of the old South—had that about him too much. And Marion Crank was a—probably a decent enough person and a capable state senator but not the type of person that you thought could lead us out of where we had been.

TD: And tied . . .

RB: The so-called "New South."

TD: . . . tied to Orval Faubus.

RB: Tied to Faubus and to the Faubus machine and to the Faubus people in the General Assembly and state government. That's exactly right. So Rockefeller was an exciting person to be working for. And his administration the last two years of the [19]60s was exciting, although Rockefeller could not get things done. One of the reasons was that the General Assembly was pretty much—especially the Senate still had a lotta Faubus people. And Rockefeller did not work the Senate in the best manner and nor did his people. And it was a little bit like Jim Guy Tucker and his deputy prosecutors, and Bill Clinton with his first staff—the Rockefeller people were not necessarily good ol' boys, and they were Republicans to boot. So it was very difficult for him to implement things, although he had terrific proposals and ideas, many of which Dale Bumpers took, as you well know, and got implemented his first year in office. So . . .

[00:33:47] TD: When Dale Bumpers ran against Rockefeller in 1970, the Democratic Party came back together as a cohesive unit. There wasn't the split that there had been with Jim Johnson and Marion Crank, and Bumpers quite easily deposed Rockefeller. In 1970, there was also, at the same election, a vote on a new

Constitution for Arkansas. Rockefeller supported it big-time—put a lotta money into it. Dale Bumpers did not. Do you remember any discussions within the Bumpers camp as to why he did not support—did not get behind that?

RB: It was really—it was a little bit before my time as to why he made that decision. I suspect the new constitution—the judicial article, for example—would have merged the courts of law and equity. Well, that sounds good and sounds much more efficient, but you're trampling on a lot of fiefdoms when you talk in those terms, and we didn't get that done until the year 2000—what, some thirty years later. So you had probably some of the brainiest people in Arkansas—Richard Arnold. I think Tom Eisele was involved in it. I think Ray Thornton may have been involved in it. He may have been in Congress. I—it may have been the next Constitutional Convention that he was involved in. But you had some very brainy people involved coming up with these solutions. But some, I think, it was a situation where maybe too much was bitten off at the same time, too many changes, and for that reason, I think, Bumpers—very cautious politician—right-thinking, great philosophy, but very cautious—especially in his first race. And you know, the idea that Dale Bumpers could come outta the hills of Arkansas and win the Democratic

nomination was just a—it couldn't've been. It was—it was fanciful, kinda like Jim Guy getting elected prosecuting attorney but even more so. And . . .

[00:35:57] TD: Had you ever heard of Dale Bumpers when he announced for governor?

RB: Absolutely not. I—you know, Ted Boswell had run, of course, two years before, and Dale, to his credit, credits Ted Boswell for kind of paving the way for him as a progressive, as a liberal, somebody who represents the New South, someone who wants the new way of doing things, not the old Establishment. And I think there's a lot to that. So he said, "I would've run in 1968." This is Dale talking. "But Boswell did, and he did an excellent job, and he came pretty close to getting in the run-off for the nomination." But he also said, "I didn't have Martin Borchert," and I don't know how people real—how people realize how much Martin Borchert meant to Dale Bumpers as an organizer, as a fund-raiser, as somebody who could talk to the Establishment. And Martin was available for Dale Bumpers in 1970. So that was the key. Bumpers—if you listen to some of the Deloss Walker interviews back in 1970, when Dale was running, and they were fabulous. They were these five-minute interviews. "Well, Dale, what do you think about busing?" "Well, I don't approve of

discrimination in any form or fashion, but I don't know if busing is the right thing to do." You know, that type of thing where he just walked right down the narrow path, not going one way or the other and just had these homespun references like "I need—my father was somebody I could tie to." You know. And all of these sit-on-the-front-porch-of-the-general-store stories that he could tell. I mean, he's the best politician I've ever seen. He was wonderful—but, again, very cautious about social issues, very cautious about Vietnam. You know, Archie would urge him to get out, and we're talking 1970, after the Tet Offensive. But no, he would not take on that issue. He would not—he was not someone who charged the barricades on race, but he had been on the first school board in Charleston that integrated a public school in the state of Arkansas, so—and took some heat in his locality for doing that. So I mean, he was a—he was courageous, but he was also very adroit as far as what he thought would be meaningful—a meaningful position or something that might come back to haunt him. And as you remember, one of the burning issues [*laughs*] in that first campaign was the fact that he had apparently taught Sunday school at the Methodist church and talked about dividing the Red Sea and that maybe it was a natural something that happened.

At least this is the accusation. I don't know if he said it or not. You know, maybe there was a windstorm and maybe we're not talking about a huge sea. We're talking about a swampland and all of that, most of which was probably true. But he got caught up with a fundamentalist attack. So I mean, he was cautious. He was very good about, you know, drawing his positions. And Deloss Walker, at that particular time, was one of the best political consultants in the South. And he had guided Bill Alexander through his campaigns in [*cell phone rings*] east Arkansas in the first congressional district and guided Dale through his. But those five-minute tapes that they would do—the question-and-answer sessions that—they just exploded on the radio. They were just very, very effective.

[00:39:30] TD: Governor Bumpers might have been reluctant to jump out front during the campaign, but once he got elected, he was actually a very aggressive reformer, made a lot of proposals. He got—actually got through a lot of Winthrop Rockefeller plans, as you mentioned earlier. Do you think he planned that all along or decided that once he got elected that, "You know, this is my opportunity. Maybe I better take a chance."

[00:39:59] RB: Well you know, the—two things—well, there a lotta

things that guide Dale Bumpers, but two things that guide Dale Bumpers are education, number one; health care, number two, because of his daughter Brooke's situation. He called in Roger Bost to head up what we called Social and Rehabilitative Services. SRS back then. And Roger Bost developed UAMS, the AHEC program with satellite hospitals throughout the state. That program probably came more from Roger Bost and UAMS than from Rockefeller, but it was a reform-minded program, and the session of 1973 in particular, we had the money to do that. We had the money to give UAMS $30 million, which was a tremendous sum back then. Education—same session. I'm talking bout [19]73, not [19]71, which I'll go back to. Kindergarten. Funding kindergarten for schoolchildren. Funding free textbooks for schoolchildren. Community colleges—controversial, but all, I think, have served the state tremendously well. Now going back to 1971, and that's really the Rockefeller plan. That's reorganization of state government. You had all of these fiefdoms and bailiwicks and this commissioner here and this director there, and Rockefeller had a very good plan to bring 'em under umbrellas—individual umbrellas—and then have a cabinet that—comparable to the federal government and the president's cabinet whom the

governor could meet with. And yes, Dale got that done. It worked in a lot of respects. In some respects, it didn't work because you just couldn't bring certain agencies and commissions under a single umbrella—maybe the Department of Public Safety being a good example of that. But the income tax is probably the most controversial thing that Dale Bumpers did, and that was a Rockefeller proposal.

[00:42:00] TD: Getting a raise in the income tax.

RB: Yeah, that's exactly right. I think he increased the income tax 5 percent—something like that. But it made all the difference with respect to the revenues that eventually came in to fund the programs I've already alluded to, which, basically, were UAMS and the education programs.

[00:42:20] TD: Dale Bumpers is also noted for rescuing the Arkansas State Parks program.

RB: Yes. Very good.

TD: We—today we are noted for having one of the best parks programs in the nation, and many parks authorities say that that goes back to Dale Bumpers's era. Do you recall that?

RB: Yes, absolutely, and I should've mentioned that because that is something that was very, very close to his heart. He's a preservationist. And probably the greatest work he did in

Washington as a Senator had to do with preserving lands. You know, the national forests but also the outer banks.

TD: Right.

RB: So I mean, he took that with him—that mindset—to Washington.

But yes, here in the state, he did an amazing job. And one of the most interesting, I guess, crises we had when I was working with him was the Cache River Bayou DeView situation, where the Corps of Engineers was trying to, as we said, "ditch" [*laughs*]—channel the Cache River, so that there'd be better irrigation for the rice farmers, et cetera, et cetera. And of course, the rice farmers loved the idea, and the Corps loved the idea. You know, you remember the—Fisher cam—cartoons, "Keep busy" and but anyway, the conservationists and the duck hunters did not, and Rex Hankins, who was a dentist in Stut . . .

TD: Rex Hancock.

RB: Hancock—was a dentist in Stuttgart, and he, of course, came to see Bumpers, and he had his coalition of people. But Dale, with the help of Richard Arnold, stopped that, and that was back during the period of time where the governor of the state could stop a federal project like that. And Dale did it. He had to be convinced. You know, and again, very deliberate and weighing both sides. "This is where my heart is, but you know, is this

really the best thing for the state? What are the economic ramifications with agriculture? You know, and the ripple effect from that?" So it was not a situation that he rushed into where maybe someone else might have. But he deliberated over it, and then when he made his decision, he did it, and he saved the Cache—just as Orval Faubus, really, saved the Buffalo River. And that's something I don't think people remember about Faubus. His legacy is so questionable in so many other areas, but he did.

[00:44:44] TD: Yes, he pulled the plug on the proposal to build the dams on the Buffalo . . .

RB: That's exactly right.

TD: . . . and—which, in turn, allowed it to later become a nat—the first national river in the United States.

RB: Yeah.

[00:44:56] TD: As Dale Bumpers moved along in his political career in Arkansas, he developed a reputation as being perhaps kind of haughty—maybe difficult to deal with. I know the *Arkansas Democrat* often would portray him in their cartoons as being aloof and not necessarily in touch with the common fellow. He didn't start out with that image. I guess he didn't start out with an image at all since so few people knew him. But where do you

think that reputation came from? [*Train horn blows*]

RB: Well, number one, I don't agree with it.

TD: Yeah, of course.

RB: Yeah, I think it's misguided because I don't think Dale is aloof. I think if anyone has the common touch, he does. Having said that, he's not David Pryor. David Pryor is what is good and best about Arkansas. He embodies it, and he has that courtliness and that natural bent about him. And he loves people. I think Dale has associates and people that he enjoys. He has a—apparently, a very dynamic coffee group that he meets with every morning up in Bethesda or DC. I do understand, by the way, he's gonna move back to Little Rock, which is good.

TD: Yes, they've already bought a home.

[00:46:19] RB: Good. But in any case, I think that as far as going out and just loving everyone that he met, that was not Dale's tendency. Plus, he could be erudite in his speeches, and he could invoke principles that—lofty principles. And I think that probably—to some extent, I think there was a natural antagonism to some of that, especially if you were on the other side of the position. Probably the bravest thing he did was that vote on the Panama Canal in 1980, and as you recall, that's the year that Ronald Reagan was elected president, and there were

a lotta Democrats who were really caught up in that kind of fervor—the neo—new conservatism. And Dale had voted for the Panama Canal, which was very controversial here in this state.

TD: Called a giveaway.

RB: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Unpatriotic. Treason. All of that.

[00:47:14] TD: Turning it over to the Communists.

RB: To the Communists and Noriega and all of that. [*TD laughs*] But you know, he ran against a guy named Brock, as I recall. Is that right? Clark?

TD: Clark. William—yes. I don't remember what his first name was.

RB: But anyway. . .

TD: He was the Republican nominee.

RB: . . . he was the Republican. And Dale won by something like, maybe, 55 percent of the vote, but I mean, running against—when he had been in the Senate as long as he had been . . .

[00:47:38] TD: And Clark was not well known at all.

RB: Not known at all. [*Train horn blows*] So I mean, that was an antagonism, and that was a situation that I think really got Dale Bumpers's attention. But having said that, there was nobody better at coming back and explaining an unpopular issue like the Panama Canal. He could walk into a room of good ol' boys, and everyone in that room would be opposed to what he did on the

Panama Canal. And he could explain what he did and do it in a very candid and frank manner, and by the end of the speech, have everybody eating under [RB edit: out of] his hands. I'm sure you've seen that, but that was one of the most endearing and probably the—one of the greatest facets to his personality and his political skills, that he could do that.

TD: He almost . . .

RB: And it wasn't only that. He did it on a variety of issues.

[00:48:26] TD: He almost ran for president in—was it eight—what—1984 or [19]88?

RB: I think [19]88, but [19]86 is the campaign that I remember after the Clark campaign because he ran against Asa Hutchinson. And that was a very, very difficult campaign for Dale. And as it turned out, it wasn't as close as people thought it was going to be. But I remember going to—and I wasn't working with him at that time—I remember going to an event where Asa and Dale—live—it was a live event. They were debating, and Dale looked tired. I mean, really beaten up, almost. And I thought, "If this campaign could wear you out as much as it's done, what would a national campaign do to you?" Now the truth of the matter is when we went to Washington—when I went up with him in 1974—Archie, Richard Arnold, and myself—he was being bruited

about as a potential candidate for president then. And there was a *Time* magazine cover with Dale and Jimmy Carter and probably Gary Hart and some of the other people—new "Young Turks." But he was being considered as a candidate then, but Jimmy Carter had a two-year head start. He'd been out working and had, frankly, much better organization and better political skills. Hamilton Jordan, Jody Powell . . .

TD: Yeah, Jody—I can't remember his name.

RB: Yeah. But anyway, those two guys were really the mainstays for Jimmy Carter. Dale had me and Archie and [*laughs*] Richard, so that wasn't enough. And plus, they'd been working on it for two years, so my point is that he never got started. And then he had the Clark campaign in 1980—very difficult. Had another campaign against Asa Hutchinson six years later—very difficult. [Nineteen] eighty-eight—yes, he was one of the seven that would go around the country, and everyone said he was the best orator, and no question about that. No one gives a better speech than Dale Bumpers. No one. I mean, Bill Clinton—I mean—and to my way of thinking, doesn't come close.

[00:50:29] TD: Well, he wasn't chosen to give Bill Clinton's defense in the impeachment for nothing.

RB: No. That's exactly right.

TD: He's a great communicator.

RB: Great communicator, and again, I've—I would not say that Dale was the most popular member of the Senate—this is my supposition—because he didn't try to be. I mean, when we first went up to Washington—and of course, having just beaten a Washington icon, J. William Fulbright, who was befriended by a large majority in the Senate, Dale had a rough row to hoe to begin with. But Robert Byrd was running for—you know, head of the Democratic Party, president of the Senate—whatnot—and Dale didn't support him. And you know, he's got that rugged individualism that if he doesn't agree with a particular situation, he's not gonna do it. And I think that's a very attractive feature to the man, but it didn't make him the best-loved person in Washington because he didn't play the game, to some extent. But having said that, everybody acknowledged his oratorical skills. And even though, you know, Dale and Bill Clinton have always been close—I think Bill Clinton has looked at him as a mentor and, certainly, a role model and somebody to emulate as far as political skills. But I don't think they're as simpatico as David Pryor and Bill Clinton have been, just because of the personalities. Having said that, Clinton was smart enough to recognize that Dale Bumpers could make the closing argument in

the impeachment, and it's a wonderful speech. And I wrote Dale after the speech because *The New York Times* had compared it to Pericles' Funeral Oration, and I wrote down—I said, "Pericles? 'Question mark, question mark.'" [*Laughter*] But you know, if you analyze that speech, which I had to do on one occasion, and analyze some other speeches, like the Gettysburg Address, you see where that writer was coming from. I mean, Dale knew exactly what he was doing in the way he just guided the Senate through the process. Whether he convinced a single person, I don't know. He certainly convinced public opinion. Anyone who saw that speech was enamored of it.

[00:52:47] TD: Mh-hmm. Dale Bumpers—excuse me—he left the governor's office in 1974, when he ran against J. W. Fulbright, who had been in office for a great long while. That forced Arkansans to make choices between two candidates who had—who were well known and respected in the Democratic Party. Perhaps Bumpers was, by this point, a bit—known as a bit more of a progressive than Fulbright. But this must've been a very wrenching experience. Can you talk about that?

RB: Yeah. Well, that's one thing that I did live through. And Dale was gonna do something. I mean, back then, the mystique was you—we had two-year terms for governor—the mystique was it

was very difficult to win a third term. He was into the—I guess, the—his third year as governor in 1973, and he began making speeches around the state, and I was the speechwriter. So I would go with him, and I'd write some of the speeches. And—I say I was the speechwriter. You know, I'd put down words on paper. Dale made his own speeches, but sometimes I'd give him some thoughts. But it was an orchestrated effort. So I mean, as Bumpers would say if he was sitting here before you, you don't have to be broke out with brilliance to know what was happening here. Now of course, the newspapers and political families and whatnot were all speculating, "Is he running for a third term, or is he gonna take on J. William Fulbright?" I don't think there was any question from the get-go that Dale was gonna run against Senator Fulbright. And . . .

[00:54:36] TD: You think he had already made that decision?

RB: I think if he hadn't absolutely made it, he was certainly tilting that way, and I think Deloss was guiding him in that regard. And one of the motivations was, candidly—Bill Fulbright had beaten Jim Johnson but not by much—as I recall, maybe thirty thousand votes—somethin' like that. It was a close campaign. And because of Vietnam and the situation and the courageous stand that Fulbright had taken, and some of Fulbright's other

stands on the Middle East, and you talk about somebody who was perceived as arrogant. You know, rightly or wrongly, the professorial Bill Fulbright image was something that was certainly out there among the people of Arkansas and the fact that he would come home and put on the plaid shirt. And you know, a little bit of the idea—"Well you know, he's just putting us on. He's not the good ol' boy he pretends to be when he's here. When he goes back up to Washington, he's very much an elitist." And to a large extent, that was probably—there was probably something to that—all of which is to say that Dale knew, correctly, that Fulbright was vulnerable. Now the question—his mindset was, "If I hadn't run against Bill Fulbright, someone less professional with less ability would've taken on the man, and that would've been bad for Arkansas." So that was the rationale. Talking about political families—my goodness, it was fratricide. I mean, husbands and wives divided on the issue. It was dynamic, and I'd—I was involved in that campaign. I really worked for Dale in central Arkansas—did the second congressional district. But just seeing the way the families and how it fell in that regard was illuminating. I am told—what was the final result? Was it 55–45 or more than that?

TD: I don't recall.

[00:56:35] RB: I think it was more—I think it was, like, 2–1, almost. I mean, it was a . . .

TD: It was a substantial majority, as I recall.

RB: . . . substantial majority. I am told—and I didn't know this, and we think of polling, and you know, polls being done every day now. Back then—and we're talking about 1974—polling was something that was fairly unique. I mean, you had polls, but you certainly didn't track on a daily basis. And I am told that whatever the end result was—2–1—let's say 65–35—that that was what the original poll showed. So everything we did for lo those many months, just working so hard to get Dale elected, you know, was—probably didn't change many votes, but course, the big issue in that campaign was things like was Dale a duck hunter, you know? [*Laughs*] And it was a—was he soft on guns? You know, issues like that, but . . .

TD: Right. Talk to me about . . .

Trey Marley: Excuse me, Tom. I need to change tapes.

[Tape stopped]

[00:57:28] TD: Dale Bumpers gets elected to the United States Senate, defeating J. W. Fulbright, a great icon of Arkansas history. And now he faces setting up his office in Washington and getting his staff together, getting on appropriate committees

and all sorts of things. Talk with me about what it was like for this new contingent to head to Washington.

RB: Well, it was very interesting. We were excited.

TD: You went with him from the beginning.

RB: I went with him from the beginning. There were essentially three of us who went—Richard Arnold, Archie Shaffer, and myself. And it was like saddling up and going north, in a sense. Charlotte, my wife, cried when we left Little Rock and then cried when we left Washington, but [*laughs*] it was a new day, and it couldn't've been more challenging and exciting. And you got there, and you were in the—we started off in the Russell Building in Fulbright's chambers in kind of dark, you know, mahogany walls and whatnot. You're looking around—"What in the world are we doing here?" And then you drive by the White House, and it's snowing. The—we'd moved up in December. It's snowing, and you know, couldn't've been more enchanting. I had a great house to move into. So I mean, it really, really was an exciting time. Now as far as the staff, it was just kind of like Richard and Archie and the senator and I sitting down and just saying, "Okay, you take Armed Services, and you take the Department of Interior," which was Dale's first love—the parks and whatnot. "You take Aeronautical and Space Sciences. You

take Foreign Affairs," and just kinda divvying up. And then Archie would do all the day-to-day operation.

TD: Politics.

[00:59:08] RB: Politics. Yeah, yeah. And also working—being the driver of the senator, going with the senator—that sorta thing. So that's the way it was basically set up. Did people come over in droves to see Dale? I think there was a little bit of iciness, to tell you the truth. I've already mentioned the situation with Robert Byrd and the fact that Dale did not support his candidacy. He supported Fritz Hollings, as I recall, who was the senator from South Carolina. So that didn't help smooth over some of the rough edges or rough spots. So it was a situation where Dale really had to find his own. He wanted two important committees. He got appointed to the Interior Committee, which was a big-time committee, and he got appointed to Aeronautical and Space Sciences, which basically was the space program and, you know, the Landsat with the satellites and whatnot. Very exciting, but Dale took that as a snub. He said, "Now they gave me a—basically a"—this isn't his adjective—mine—"a dinky committee." And he thought it was a slap in the face, you know, and somewhat of a retaliation because of the Fulbright thing. And Fulbright was still in Washington, you know. And I . . .

[01:00:25] TD: And really never left.

RB: And really never left and really had nothing—I don't think Bumpers and Fulbright really communicated for several years. And I don't know when they picked up. They did, of course, towards the end of his life. But early on, no. Fulbright's staff, with a couple of exceptions, were very gracious to us. Lee Williams couldn't have been more of a gentleman, and he didn't have to be. Hoyt Purvis—some of the others were just, you know, very kind—helpful to us, where again, they didn't have to be. I mean, we'd basically defeated their man, and they'd lost a—the job they had because of it. It's interesting—when I got to wa—and this is kind of a sideline—when I got to Washington, here I was with this giant killer. You know, the man who had defeated Rockefeller and Faubus and now Fulbright, who is being bruited about as a presidential contender. You know, the New South and all of that. And I would go out to a park—you know, not on the Hill, but maybe in the area that I lived in, and I'd be talkin' to people, and they'd say, "You're from Arkansas." I said, "Yeah." They say, "Do you know David Pryor?" [*Laughs*] And that's the person that people wanted to talk about, and it goes back to the time that he had been in Congress and gone undercover into the nursing homes and had come out and filed a

report about what nursing homes [*laughs*] were really like, which were terrible situations. No surprise there. And then set up his special committee in a double-wide trailer, as I recall, to hold hearings. So that—he had captured Washington's imagination. Of course, then he ran for the Senate against McClellan and was defeated, but he was the man that people really were more enamored of—more so than Bumpers or McClellan or Wilbur Mills, the real powerhouses. And that's a little bit of an exaggeration but not much. I thought it was curious.

[01:02:23] TD: Wilbur Mills was chairman of Ways and Means, considered the great tax authority in the country. Do you recall having any interchanges with him while you were in Senator Bumpers's office?

RB: Not many. I think the Fanne Foxe—you know, his troubles began right before we went up there—I'm thinking in [19]74 that the first episode occurred with Fanne Foxe. My relationship with Wilbur Mills really developed more when Jim Guy took over his position as congressman, and I met with the chairman, as we called him back then, because he was chair of Ways and Means. But I met with him several times, and it was a very revealing meeting. I mean, he kind of liked Jim Guy, you know, and respected him and was happy with the idea that Jim Guy was

coming to Washington and the idea—and I don't know if this apocryphal or not, but the idea was that Jim Guy was assured a seat on Ways and Means and in Congress as long as he wanted to stay in Congress, so long as he didn't run for the Senate. That was a word that I—whether it's apocryphal, I don't know, but that's certainly something I heard. Wilbur Mills did not tell me that. But when I met with Wilbur Mills, what he wanted to talk about was alcoholism.

TD: Really?

RB: Yes, and . . .

[01:03:50] TD: Did you—did he betray his own alcoholism at—to you?

RB: Yes. Well, this was after a couple of . . .

TD: Oh, this was after Fanne Foxe.

RB: After Fanne Foxe and after he had—you know, he hadn't run. I mean, that's how Jim Guy was able to run for a vacant seat for Congress.

TD: Yes, after that scandal.

RB: After . . .

TD: . . . or during that scandal, he was running for reelection, and I believe he promised during that campaign that he would not run again.

[01:04:15] RB: I think that's right, and he was reelected for that reason. I mean, [*TD clears throat*] otherwise he probably woulda been very vulnerable. But he was—Wilbur Mills—very defensive, looked kind of nose in the air, at the same time, very humble. And he said, "I want you to know that alcoholism is a disease, and I want you to know that I've always appreciated what your father did with some of my friends who were alcoholics," Wythe Walker being the man he specifically mentioned. And he said, "Your father was big in AA, and that has salvaged my life." And that's what he wanted to talk about. And he said, "Oh, by the way, you know, you can—this room is good for this, and this piece of equipment is good for that, and talk to so-and-so about this other thing." But he really wanted to talk about the—what he was going through, which I appreciated. I appreciated his candor. And of course, that's one of the beauties of AA. You are candid about your condition.

[01:05:15] TD: And when he was talking about your father, he meant your father.

RB: My father.

TD: Bishop Brown.

RB: Bishop Brown. Yes. Who had . . .

TD: Who had been involved in some—among his many activities,

some alcohol-recovery programs, I'm sure.

RB: That's exactly right—and specifically, with a common friend with Wilbur Mills.

[01:05:32] TD: Mh-hmm. Dale Bumpers tilted at many windmills during his tenure. I'm thinking, in particular, the battles he fought against the western mining interests and the big agricultural interests out west. How did this come to his attention? How did he pick this as an area that he was really interested in? How did that come to the forefront?

RB: I think his heart. His love for the outdoors. The fact that he was from the mountains, not too far from where we're sitting here in Fayetteville. He appreciated the beauty—you know, the flowing streams. It sounds a little bit as a—something that's superficial, but it's not. It wasn't to him. And I think preservation of natural beauty in the Teddy Roosevelt mold for people to enjoy. People—the government could provide. And you've gotta remember that Dale was born in the mountains, raised in the mountains. He wasn't dirt poor. I mean, his father had a hardware store, and they survived, but I think in the early days, there was not indoor plumbing. There certainly was not electricity. Roosevelt brought that in, of course, and Dale always said they'd pray to Roosevelt every night together with Jesus

and [*laughs*] God and whoever. But I mean, that was the case. So I mean, he came from not wealthy means. By the way, his brother, Carroll, just died this last week.

TD: I saw that in the paper.

[01:07:11] RB: Yeah, yeah. But it was a very, very strong family that was spawned by the parents, who, as you know, were killed in a automobile accident by a drunken driver. But the brother and the sister, Maggie, were very accomplished people in their own right, so the parents had really raised the kids well. But Dale, I think, just appreciated some of the more basic things of life, like the outdoors—like the appreciation of nature—and what it could do to individuals. You know, the American people who did not have great means who needed something like the Buffalo River, the state parks, and the national parks. And I think he carried that to the Senate. And he always had a suspicion of great wealth. I mean, Dale is comfortable and coulda been a very—and was a very accomplished attorney. I don't know if he ever lost a case, but he certainly was dynamite over in Fort Smith, apparently, in jury trials. Yeah, no surprise there, right? But he carried those skills with him to Washington, but he also had a real suspicion of great wealth, I think, in his heart of hearts. So it wasn't unusual, to my way of thinking, for him to

be taking on major agricultural and timber and mining issues to preserve something. It may be for safety reasons, but also for the great outdoors for the American people. And there—it's his legacy. I mean, that's probably his legacy in the Senate as much as anything else. I don't think he ever chaired a major committee. He chaired major subcommittees. But what he accomplished was with what you've already mentioned—that is taking on mining interests and some of the offshore drilling interests and that type of thing—preserving these areas. And that's a great legacy to have.

[01:09:00] TD: Mh-hmm. Richard Arnold was a course—of course, is known in Arkansas history as a federal judge, but he was a young lawyer back in the [19]60s—ran for Congress himself and was very much an environmentalist himself.

RB: Yes.

TD: Unfortunately, Richard Arnold—Judge Arnold died not too long ago, but he left quite a legacy. Could you talk about him and your association with Richard Arnold?

RB: Well, Richard Arnold was one of the better friends I had. We—I knew him by reputation, of course. I knew him first when he ran against David Pryor in 1966 for the 4th Congressional District seat.

[01:09:54] TD: Right. David Pryor, being from Camden, and Richard, being from Texarkana.

RB: Texarkana. Exactly. And I was—I guess I was still in law school at that particular time, but I remember people in Arkansas talking about that campaign and saying, "You've got this tremendous fella. You know, he went to Harvard. He was first in his class at the Harvard Law School. He went to Yale undergraduate. He was first in his class at Yale. He went to Exeter. He was first in his class at Exeter. He had practiced law at Covington & Burling, one of the stellar law firms in Washington, DC. He had clerked for Justice William "Bill" Brennan, and here this man is giving it all up to come back to Arkansas to run for Congress." And Richard Arnold always wanted to be a senator, and I think the reason he wanted to be a senator was that his maternal grandfather was Senator Sheppard from Texas. And Richard was very close to his mother. I never heard him talk much about his dad, although his dad was a very accomplished attorney and—I think a railroad attorney, primarily, in Texarkana. But Richard was one of the most unusual people you could meet. Again like David Pryor, very courtly. Very gentlemanly but very much an academic. And he had one of these photographic memories. Never forgot

anything. And was a classicist, had the ability to speak Latin. Speak Latin, not read Latin. [*Laughs*] Speak Latin.

[01:11:26] TD: I have heard—I—I've heard that when he was a child, that he and his brother, Morris "Buzz" Arnold, who later also became a prominent judge, that if they didn't want their mother to understand what they were talking about, they would converse in Latin.

RB: I think that's true, although I suspect the mother did understand what [*laughs*] they were talking about. [*Laughter*] But I've always heard the story that there was a celebrated July 4 party, in Texarkana, and Richard Arnold would get up and speak Latin and greet—do an oration in Latin to the gathering. Of course, everybody was three sheets to the wind, and [*TD laughs*] probably he coulda gotten up and said, "*res ipsa loquitur habeus corpus*," and everybody would say, "Well, that's wonderful." [*TD laughs*] "He's speaking Latin." But the truth of the matter is Richard actually did it and could do it. And that's just an unusual feature about the man. But he always wanted to be a United States senator, and to get to be a United States senator, you ran for Congress first. He married Gale, what, Hussman?

TD: Hussman.

[01:12:32] RB: And she was the daughter of the Palmer—the

newspaper family. And so he had several newspapers that were gonna endorse him whatever—one, I think, in Camden. I suspect the Camden paper probably endorsed Richard. But anyway, David Pryor, on the other side, was this Young Turk who had gone through the General Assembly; who had been, I think, a student leader up here at Fayetteville; and had taken on ol' Orval Faubus when he was in the General Assembly. So he had that reputation for being somebody who was not afraid of controversy. And David Pryor—I talk about Bumpers's ability as an orator—Clinton's pragmatism—the whole package—David Pryor is probably the best politician Arkansas has produced, just because of his manner and his ability to meet people and to genuinely like people. He likes people. And it comes across. Anyway, that's what Richard had to contend with. Ri—[*laughs*]—I remember reading—this was sent to me when I was in law school. I was still in Charlottesville during this campaign, or maybe I was home for the summer—but I remember seeing this question-and-answer that was posed—kind of a questionnaire sent to the two candidates. And I remember David Pryor's answer was, like, two or three paragraphs long about this particular question. It coulda been on busing or something like that. And Richard's answer was, "Yes, no." [*Laughter*] So just

a difference, you know, in the way the—the two men operated. Richard was not a very good campaigner. In fact, I would venture to say he was a terrible campaigner. More often than not, he would stand off to the side. His handshake was not a firm handshake, and you know, as—you know, that sounds to be something that's insignificant. It's not insignificant when you're out meeting the folks. And he didn't like to do the bromides that you say in your speeches, and his voice did not lend itself to a good political voice, you know, where you're trying to convince people or cajole people or . . .

[01:14:34] TD: Which is one of David Pryor's strengths.

RB: And that's David Pryor's strengths. And the thing about—Richard probably never mispronounced a word in his life and always spoke in complete sentences and very formal. David Pryor—I mean, and I don't say this disparagingly, but he might stumble every two or three sentences, and that was an endearing quality—and still is an endearing quality about the man. People could identify with that and empathize with that. And he was an excellent politician and knew how to do it. Knew it from Fayetteville days. Knew it from his newspaper work in Camden. I think he did work for a paper, or maybe he had his own paper.

[01:15:09] TD: He had—he started his own paper.

RB: Yeah. So you know, he had all that talent about him, and everyone said, "Well, this is gonna be a very close election. You know, Richard Arnold versus David Pryor." It wasn't that close, you know. Now Richard ran again—I guess, was it [19]72? And I think he ran against Ray Thornton that time. And Richard always maintained that "I ran against ten people and beat eight of 'em." Well yeah, but he lost to Ray Thornton and [*laughter*] David Pryor, and they were the two who were elected. But again, that's what he aspired to. That's what Richard aspired to. He really wanted to be a senator. And by the time he went to Washington with Dale Bumpers—he began working with Dale Bumpers in 1973 as a legislative aide. And they developed a strong bond, and Richard helped Dale on a couple of important pieces of legislation as governor, one of which was when two of the old political—and I'm gonna use the term "hack"—that's probably a little bit—not very generous, but Paul Van Dalsem and Marlin Hawkins and Russell Roberts were trying to put together a judicial district where they could control things in three or four counties here in Arkansas. And Dale was talking about this—you may have heard him if you were down for the Dale Bumpers/David Pryor/Bill Clinton/Mack McLarty thing the

other night at the Clinton School. But Dale alluded to this as one of the most significant decisions he made as governor, and I know that Richard guided him through that process, and it was a very courageous thing for Dale to do at the time—to veto that bill and stop what was really a reestablishment of some of the Faubus ideals. But Richard helped Dale—you've already alluded to this—significantly with respect to environmental issues and saving the Cache River. And Richard was a naturalist himself. And that was very close to his heart, so they had a very natural partnership when they got to Washington on the Interior Committee and what they were trying to do in that regard. Richard paid his dues. There's a new book—a new biography [Editor's note: *Judge Richard S. Arnold: A Legacy of Justice on the Federal Bench*] that's just come out on Richard by a woman named Polly Price.

TD: Oh.

[01:17:21] RB: And in that book, I told her, and she quoted it, but I said, "Richard paid his dues. The way you get appointed to the federal bench is you work for a senator or become very close to a senator." Now I said, "This wasn't Machiavellian on Richard's part. You know, he was not doin' this just because—just—the end justifies the means." He really appreciated and liked Dale

Bumpers. By the same token, he knew what he wanted. And at that time, I think the idea of being elected to the Senate was something that was beyond his reach, so the next alternative would be a federal judgeship—and the Supreme Court. That's what he aspired to.

[01:18:01] TD: And of course, was spoken of publicly—nationally—as a possible appointee to the Supreme Court. Do you think Bill Clinton's rapid—the rapid deterioration of his administration jinxed it as far as appointing Richard to the bench?

RB: I don't know. The—there's no question that Richard had cancer, and that was known before Clinton made the decision to appoint Stephen Breyer. Bill Clinton's political capital at that particular time was not that good. I mean, he was going through a series of defeats. I don't think Bill Clinton really began to emerge until the Oklahoma City situation, and he handled that so beautifully, in my estimation—going over to Oklahoma City, talking to the aggrieved parents and family members and whatnot—just being on the spot and just doing a tremendous job in that regard. I think that was kind of a watershed event for Bill Clinton. But I think the Richard Arnold/Stephen Breyer situation was prior [to] all of that, and Bill Clinton was kind of at a low ebb. So yes, did he have the political capital? Probably not. And there were

people inside the White House who did not want Richard Arnold. Now Bill Clinton wanted Richard Arnold, but Lloyd Cutler, who was his legal aide at that time—Teddy Kennedy wanted Stephen Breyer. I mean, Stephen Breyer was really a Ted Kennedy protégé. Richard Arnold had the medical health issue. There was some question—I remember hearing Nina Totenberg, who was the reporter for National Public Radio, make this statement as I was driving home one day, and she said, "Richard Arnold is being talked about as a possible candidate for the United States Supreme Court, but he has a woman problem." And she meant woman problem in the sense that he aspired to be a Roman Catholic, which Richard did. And—which suggested right to life. He had written a—an opinion for the Jaycees, saying the Jaycees could still be all male. And there was a certain sentiment among some of the women's groups that Richard was not the most viable candidate, which was unfounded. But still, that was kinda percolating out there. So you had these forces that were not aligned in his favor. I campaigned for Richard. You know, I called, especially, women judges—female judges—around the country who knew Richard. And I said, "Will you contact Bill Clinton on his behalf?" And a lot of other people did the same thing. You know, we talk about the election of judges, and

[*laughs*] you know, how political that is. Nothing's more political than federal judgeships and getting appointments. And I don't care if it's a district judge or Court of Appeals or whatever—it's just political as it can be. But I got involved in that fray because Richard was obviously the best person for the job. And he got it, and the fact that—I'm talking about district judge in the 8th Circuit—the fact that he didn't get appointed to the United States Supreme Court, I think, is a real tragedy. And I know he called Dale Bumpers ten years—it was before he died, but I think it was ten years out from the time that he was denied the appointment and said, "Dale, I'm still alive." And so I guess the question is ten good years of Richard Arnold—is that something that Bill Clinton should've weighed versus the fact that if Bill Clinton were succeeded by a Republican, which he was, and the Republican president had the opportunity to appoint somebody to the Supreme Court who could be in there for thirty years, was that the trade-off? And that's a decision I kinda wished Bill—Richard Arnold had gotten on the Supreme Court, myself.

[01:22:00] TD: You mentioned that—at least there was a perception—that Richard Arnold became more conservative over time—or if not conservative, at least maybe perhaps more traditional. You've mentioned his conversion—I—did he leave

the Episcopal Church and become . . .

RB: Well, he couldn't, because Gale—he'd been divorced.

TD: Oh, okay.

RB: And Gale was fighting any kind of, you know, Roman Catholic annulment of the marriage. It's something that the Vatican handles, as you know, and you get your own counsel and this, that, and the other. The bottom line was that the annulment was not going to come through, so Richard could not be received into the Roman Catholic Church. That what—that's what he aspired to be, in my judgment. He was Anglo-Catholic, in any event, and I—Richard was a member of something called St. Paul's on K Street in Washington, and we drove to work every morning, by the way, and drove home most days when I worked for Bumpers. So I mean, that was a lotta time together. So when Richard was doing things like performing, and that's as an acolyte or as a master of ceremonies, they call it, in a high church, I'd go see Richard perform. And he'd be the incense-bearer, or the [*laughs*] thurifer, or you know—but he—that was very much—that was very important to Richard Arnold. His faith was very important to him. And he was a man of discipline and probably Catholic discipline in the sense of doing morning prayer, evening prayer, having a spiritual adviser. And of

course, his health issue played into that, and I think it became more religious. You talk about whether he became more conservative. I think it was either Buzz or Richard—the two brothers, of course, have the same sense of humor . . .

[01:23:54] TD: But are politically [*RB laughs*] quite different in many ways.

RB: Well, that's the point I'm about to make. One of 'em told me—I suspect it was Buzz—he said, "You know, Richard's not as liberal as [*cell phone rings*] people think he is, and I'm not as conservative as people think I am. So I mean, I think there's a lot to that.

[Tape stopped]

[01:24:11] TD: Richard Arnold—Judge Arnold—brother, Buzz Arnold—two very different people. One Republican, one Democrat. Perhaps both conservative in some ways, but certainly, Buzz Arnold much more conservative, I suspect, than Richard. They—they're two interesting brothers, and I suspect that you had some opportunity to see them work together and relate to each other.

RB: Well, the—absolutely, and they're very similar in a lot of respects, too. Not surprisingly. They're brothers. And they would talk in kind of a coded language, and I'm not talking Latin

here. [*Laughs*] No, they had certain phrases they'd use. They never referred to the president. It was always the "presivelt." You know, things like that. But one point that Buzz Arnold, I believe, made when he was talkin' bout their political philosophies—he says, "You know, people think that Richard is a lot more liberal than he really is." And he said, "I'm a lot more progressive than people think I am." But I think it was a situation where it was a opportunity for Buzz to go a different way. And Buzz was more of an academic in the sense that he chose an academic path more so than Richard did. Richard from the get-go, you know, clerked for Brennan, then came down after Covington and Burling and practiced law. Buzz was in academics for a long time.

[01:25:36] TD: He was dean of—wasn't he dean or assistant dean of the law school at UALR?

RB: He was, and I think he was dean of the law school in Indiana. So I mean, he's had a very, very reputable path as far as his academics. And of course, he's a noted writer. His history, which you appreciate . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . is very, very thorough. I've read one of his books, anyway, and every line could be footnoted. I mean, it's thorough, and it's

well done. And I've accused him, since he's taken senior status, now, as a federal judge, of wanting to go back and write. And he says, "Oh no. I'm not gonna do that." But you know he will. [*Laughs*]

[01:26:14] TD: Buzz Arnold created the field of Arkansas Colonial history from scratch.

RB: No question. I don't doubt that for a minute.

TD: He—it went from being one of our most poorly-defined periods of our history to being one of the very best studied because of his work.

RB: Yeah.

TD: It's really quite remarkable.

RB: Yeah.

[01:26:36] TD: They had very different personalities, too. Richard was quiet and introspective. Buzz was outgoing and still is, to a large degree.

RB: Well, it's interesting you say that, and I think that's probably the public persona. If you scratch the surface of Richard Arnold—and, of course, I knew Richard a lot better than I know Buzz—you found a lot of the good ol' boy there. I mentioned the fact that he was a terrible campaigner, which he was, but Richard was bad to get out and maybe act out on occasion and wasn't

adverse to getting up on a table and dancing from time to time, and [*laughter*] so he had, really, a very engaging side to him that was fun loving. And I think—I've mentioned his first wife, Gale Hussman. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Kay Arnold, his second wife who—they had a wonderful partnership.

TD: Kay Kelley Arnold.

RB: Kay Kelley Arnold—exactly—and who is still a—you know, very much on the scene here in Arkansas as a lobbyist for the Entergy Corporation. But she and Richard had a very, very, I think, wonderful partnership—especially towards the end.

[01:27:43] TD: Mh-hmm. Let's talk a little bit about Tom McRae. We've passed over him. But Tom McRae played an important role in Dale Bumpers's administration and later on, of course, became well known throughout Arkansas as head of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. And I guess, before Dale Bumpers, he had been down at Texarkana with the Model Cities program.

RB: That's exactly right. Tom McRae was a very interesting person. Tom McRae always wanted to be governor himself. I think it was his paternal grandfather who was governor of the state. Tom McRae, the governor.

TD: Right. Thomas C.—Thomas Chipman McRae.

RB: Yeah. And Tom had been in the Peace Corps. I think he was educated here at the university—Fayetteville, been in the Peace Corps, met Christine, from England, and they married and moved to Texarkana, where he did, indeed, head up the Model Citels—Cities program. And I think Jack Meriwether at the time was maybe the city manager down in Texarkana. And anyway—any rate, I think it was Jack Meriwether who touted Tom McRae to Dale Bumpers and said, "This is somebody who can put together an organization. You've got a lot of loose ends in your administration." I think our first executive secretary—I say "our"—Dale Bumpers's first executive secretary—was a man named Gene Kelley, who's a lawyer up here in Rogers. Very, very good attorney. But he was not an administrator, and you needed somebody to come in and put all the loose ends together. Now in a political office, that sounds a lot more reasonable than the reality [*laughs*] is. I don't think anybody can really orchestrate a political office, although it sounds like the thing you oughta be doing. So basically, what Tom came in and did was orchestrate the department side of things—lend an organizational system to it where each person on the governor's staff would be responsible for certain departments—that type of thing. And be the liaison to those departments and brief the

governor on issues in those departments, where Archie Shaffer really handled the General Assembly and working with the people who would come in and help on the Senate floor and the House floor. But Tom, even though he wanted to be governor, was more of a planner, more of a thinker. He had ideas that he wanted to implement. He was not a pragmatist. He didn't like the General Assembly. I mean, I'll just be brutally frank. He just didn't like dealing with the General [*laughs*] Assembly. And of course, that's the lifeblood of a governor.

TD: That's right.

[01:30:18] RB: So it's a [*laughs*]—that was the downside of Tom. He was a planner, but he just didn't have this political affinity, and he did come across as a little bit elitist and scholarly and whatnot. And it was difficult for him, I think, to relate to certain people. He related well to Roger Bost and some—to some of the political people, he didn't relate that well to. And you could kind of see this when Tom stepped out eventually, after his Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation days, and ran for office himself.

TD: He ran against Bill Clinton in 1990, I believe it was.

RB: He did. He did, indeed. And I think that was the campaign where Hillary [Rodham Clinton] ambushed him. Dale had a—or, excuse me—Tom had a situation where he was talkin' about the

environment, I believe it was, and talkin' bout what the Clintons had not done in this respect and that respect. And Hillary, the wife of Bill Clinton, appears on the scene and says, "Tom, you know that's not true." And Tom, I think, was completely undone by that, and the problem was, for both Tom and Clinton, the next day in the coffee shops, half the people sided with Tom and said, "This was an ambush." And you know, "Clinton sent his wife to do his dirty work." And the other half would say, "Well, Tom McRae was flustered by this. He shouldn't've been flustered by Hillary. He should've answered it better." Anyway, Tom, I think, as a candidate suffered from his not having the common touch or not exuding the common touch. And . . .

TD: Having a wife who spoke with a British accent, for example.

RB: Having a wife who really didn't like the political game too much, either. I think Tom wanted to be governor. I know he wanted to be governor, you know. He ran, what, twice, I believe. Once, anyway. Maybe once for lieutenant governor. But anyway, he ran once. And—but he didn't wanna—he couldn't pay the price for it. He couldn't get out and do the—make the associations, do the handshaking.

TD: Raise the money.

RB: Raise the money. You know, this was just something that was

foreign to him. And to have the mindset that you could reach this pinnacle without paying that kinda price and those dues was very, very naïve on his part, I think.

[01:32:37] TD: I want to change the subject to your own election to the Supreme Court. You defeated a woman by the name of Judith Rogers. Many people saw her as the incumbent because she was—I believe she was serving as a judge . . .

RB: She was on the Court of Appeals.

TD: . . . on the Court of Appeals. And many people assumed that she would be elected, a pretty well-known individual—yet you challenged her and won. Let's talk about that campaign. How did you come to make that decision, and how did you think it through and think that you could pull it off?

RB: Well, that's interesting. I—the timing was right. I think that's number one. I can't say that there was a groundswell of public opinion coming to me and saying, "Bob Brown, you need to be on the Arkansas Supreme Court," because that wasn't the case. I do remember Steele Hays mentioning it at one affair. He said, "Bob, you know, there're gonna be three seats opening up, mine included." As it turned out, Steele did run again, but at first, he thought he wasn't going to. He said, "You need to run for the Supreme Court." But that was just kind of a casual

conversation. Nobody was really pushin' me in that direction. But I had been back from Washington for about ten years—eleven years—and I wanted to do somethin' different. And I—you can see in my career there's been change involved. And I wanted to do something different. And my son was ten or eleven by that time. Charlotte had a job, but she could take time off, and she's a vital campaigner—very good campaigner. And I talked to some people, and the question was who I was gonna run against because there were two seats that were open, and I knew that Don Corbin was gonna run for one, and Judith Rogers was gonna for the other. So the question was, "who would I take on?" [*Crackling sounds*] Now one of the beauties of—or maybe the [*laughs*] negatives in running for judgeships in Arkansas is if you don't have "Judge" in front of your name, that's probably—you're at a twenty-point disadvantage just gettin' outta the gate.

[01:34:48] TD: And as a member of the appeals court, Judith Rogers would have "Judge" in front of her name.

RB: She would have "Judge" in front of her name.

TD: On the ballot.

RB: On—she would have "Judge" in front of her name, and if she lost the election, she could go back to the Court of Appeals. So that

would have a chilling effect on lawyers who stepped out and supported me knowing that this woman, even if she loses, will be on the Court of Appeals, and they'll have to appear before her and argue cases. So . . .

TD: And she was not the kind of person—her personality was such that you would not want to have Judith Rogers on your bad side.

RB: Well, I think that's a fair assessment. I think Judith—we were always friends—still are friendly—but she did have that reputation. And the truth of the matter is she and Igot along before I ran against her, and I'm not naïve enough to think that she thinks I'm the best guy in the world [*laughs*] after I defeated her. But we still are cordial to one another. But I think in the campaign she was the issue. She was the issue because she had this track record, and I used the track record in some respects against her in my political ads, for example. There was an issue of absenteeism, where she had missed a hundred, two hundred—I've forgotten the number—plus days on the court because she had been doin' other things, and that was a gravitating issue because, of course, you want your judges [*laughs*] there doin' judges—justice, and she had not been. So that was a—that was probably the most significant issue that I raised against her. But she was more the issue—people who

knew me, and there weren't many of 'em, liked me. But more people knew Judith, and they had an opinion one way or the other about her. And again, I didn't have "Judge" in front of my name on the ballot, so I put Robert L. quote "Bob" Brown on the ballot just to have a longer name, which might be more of an eye-catcher. You know, the things you do in politics.

[01:36:47] TD: Mh-hmm. [*RB laughs*] How did the vote fall out that year? Did—could you see patterns—rural versus urban?

RB: Well, I . . .

TD: Regional patterns or that sorta thing?

RB: . . . I missed it. I thought Judith would run strong in central Arkansas, because she was better known, and I thought I'd run stronger out in the state. As it turned out, I ran much stronger in central Arkansas. I won the election in central Arkansas. And I'm talkin' bout a pretty wide circle—you know, really, the television market for Little Rock, which was more limited back then than it is now. But—and Judith did better out in the hinterlands, and I think she had the Democratic Party organization more behind her, and I'd say even the Clinton organization behind her more than I did.

[01:37:34] TD: She had been a Democratic Party activist . . .

RB: Absolutely.

TD: . . . in the past.

RB: And had worked with the General Assembly and had worked on juvenile matters. And she had a reputation, so you know, she was known, and she had some friends. But I—like Jimmy Carter running for president, I got out and worked for about two years and developed the contacts out in the state. One of the real interesting things about Arkansas politics is the Delta and how the Delta operates. And we talked about Win Rockefeller and his winning against Jim Johnson. One of the ways he did that was to organize the Delta—the votes in the Arkansas Delta, which is largely African American. And he did that and won the election. After Win Rockefeller, that vote shifted over to the Democratic Party.

TD: Right.

RB: So it's a significant factor in Arkansas elections. And Judith had a lot more inroads into the Delta organization than I did, although when I had strong support in certain counties like Ashley County, I would carry that county. But it was something to overcome, for sure.

[01:38:39] TD: Did you run up against—in that campaign did you run up against any residual bossism around the state? You know, at one time—fifty years ago, for example—the Delta—

much of the political power over there would've been wielded by a few very powerful individuals. By the time you ran, had those pretty well disappeared?

RB: I think pretty well disappeared. There were always some counties that you questioned. I mean, you've got one up here—and I don't know if it's viable or not or legitimate or not—but Madison County has always been a question that you thought about in that regard, and of course, when Marlon Hawkins was around, Conway County was one. But you know, for the most part, they're few and far between. I could probably mention a couple of others where the boxes come in late, and you always [*laughs*]—"How many votes do you need?" You know, that sorta thing—type thing. And I—I'm sure that still goes on to some extent and probably went on some in my campaign. You know, my election wasn't decided on election night.

TD: Is that right?

RB: The next morning, I was behind thirty-six votes [*sounds in background*], and as the vote trickled in, I got ahead by about a hundred and thirty votes, and I held a press conference, and I claimed the victory because I was ahead. Out of about half a million votes, I was ahead by a hundred and thirty. And—but there was a recount that Judith was threatening, so we had to

amass all our forces to do a legitimate recount—not to mention having people down at Democratic headquarters watchin' the vote as it came in to make sure that shenanigans didn't happen on election night and the next day or so.

[01:40:20] TD: Who were your—some of your main supporters and workers during your campaign?

RB: Well, let's see. I had Mark Grobmyer—well, as far as my actual staff, Libby Smith was [*train horn blows*] the office director. Someone who may not be familiar to you as well as to me—Mary Dillard was [*TD laughs*] my campaign consultant and did the planning. Mary guided me through the process, and she got the man for me—Mike Shannon was his name—who did my political ads. And it's the best political ad that's ever been done in Arkansas that he crafted for me, and it played on the fact that Judith had been absent from her office. And I would go out in the state, and people would say, "A hundred and fifty-six days." Well, that was the number that was mentioned in the ad that Judith had missed. And . . .

[01:41:15] TD: I remember the ad on television showed spider webs over her chair and that sorta thing.

RB: Well, it—the ad, just to describe it briefly, was there had been an article in the newspaper that Judith had bought some very

expensive furniture—Chippendale furniture—and this story about Chippendale that I'll relate [*laughs*] later, but anyway—that she had bought some very expensive furniture. So the ad started out with that, and then the tagline was to the effect—"But even though this was expensive furniture, at the rate Judith Rogers uses the furniture, it probably will last forever." And she had justified the expense, saying, "Well, this is good stuff, but it will last forever." And it said, "Well, the rate she uses it, it will last forever." And then you open her office door, and it's all cobwebs, and the voiceover is saying, "Judith Rogers has missed a hundred and fifty days at work," and in the background, they're doing that Honolulu music—vacation music. I mean, it was a devastating ad. I justified it on the basis that it was accurate—I mean, that she had—we had documented the fact that she had missed this time in office—so legitimate campaign issue. As far as everything I did to win the campaign—getting round the state—that was important. But that ad really, really won the election. And . . .

[01:42:42] TD: Did you have regional chairs? County chairs?

RB: I had—I tried to have somebody in every county, and we certainly had a lawyer list. You know, people throughout the state who had endorsed me and come out publically for me.

Unhappily, I remember listing one person who was deceased, and that was just not the political [*laughs*] thing to do. But I had a—you know, the word was that I had the Bar. I had the lawyers in the state, by and large, and Judith had a lotta the business community. That was kinda the breakdown.

[01:43:12] TD: Mh-hmm. In looking back over your career to this point—you're still very much—still very active and on the court. What are some of the lessons that you've learned and some of the, perhaps, changes that have occurred in your life that have been important and meaningful to you?

RB: Good question. I always knew the job on the Supreme Court would come easily to me as far as the research and the writing. My previous career was as a writer. I did profiles in the 1980s, and I'm visiting with the University Press about doing a book [Editor's note: *Defining Moments: Historic Decisions By Governors from McMath to Huckabee*] on our last five [RB edit: ten] Arkansas governors and their defining moments. Moments that really defined them. So I knew the writing would come easy to me, and the research would. The trick on any body where you have to get four votes is the personalities. And that's something that you never really do get a handle on. I mean, it's [*laughs*] a—but you cannot get anything done unless you have

four votes. I mean, that's the majority on a seven-person court. So that was probably the lesson to learn. And when I first got on the court, I was sensitive to some extent for about a year or two, and I had to overcome that. And one day I woke up, and I said, "You know, this other person—this other justice is getting to me. I'm gonna stop this. [*Laughs*] He's winning the battle." And after that, I woke up, and I kinda grew up. So that was a lesson learned, but . . .

[01:44:45] TD: How did—how does the court—or at least during your tenure, how do the judges carry on their discussions and their deliberations and their exchange of ideas and so on? Is it done primarily through writing or through spoken discussions?

RB: Well, for example . . .

TD: Or both?

RB: Well, for example, today what we're doin' is we're distributing our opinions. We had a conference—a decisional conference last week—on the five or six cases that were submitted to us. We went around the table—each judge had one of the cases—and briefed the rest of the court on that case, although every justice had already read the case and gotten memos on the case. But one justice was a presenter on a particular case—gave the recommendation—then you went around the table, and

everybody spoke his or her mind, and then you tallied up the votes. You had four votes or more—you wrote the majority opinion. So after that conference last week, the opinions have been written in the interim, and they're being distributed today, and tomorrow morning we'll have the opinion conference, where we go in—and again, somebody will say, "I don't like the way this is written. I'm gonna hold it. I may dissent" or "you need to change it in this respect." So that's—that's basically the way the process works. And yeah, two conferences each week that are very important—one making the decisions on the cases, the other talking about the opinions themselves. And it's a—it's an exchange of ideas, but it's really both. I mean, you read the written word. I read what my law clerks prepare for me on the case, and I'll read the case itself. But their ideas are very important to me. And then I'll hear what other people say in conference and then we have oral arguments. And I change my mind in oral arguments. I think it's very important to have as many oral arguments as we can. But you know, probably the—working on the major cases is probably the most in—exciting part of the job. And early on, I worked on the term-limits case, and as you know, that was—that caused a bit of an uproar, because what the Arkansas constitutional amendment had done

was limit not only the terms of the governor and the General Assembly but also the terms of the US senators and congressmen. And so that issue came before us, and we had to decide that case. And I wrote that opinion saying that it was unconstitutional with respect to the senators and representatives but constitutional with respect to the governor and the General Assembly. And we still can have fierce debates about whether term limits is a good thing or a bad thing. And I mean, I'll talk to people, and they will have changed their minds on a daily basis [*laughs*] as to whether it's good or bad. But anyway, that and the Lakeview decision are probably the two major opinions that I've worked on.

[01:47:36] TD: The Lakeview decision being one that held—that the state has to—had to put a great deal more money into the educational system.

RB: That was the net result. It basically said that the state Constitution—unlike the United States Constitution, the state Constitution makes education a fundamental right. And every child in this state is entitled to an adequate education and a substantially equal education. That means that—that does not mean that people in the Delta necessarily have to have third-year calculus, but they have to have something that's

substantially equal to what is being prepared [RB edit: offered] in the rest of the state. And of course, that bled into the issue, although we didn't attack this in our opinions, about consolidation of school districts and whether—if you're gonna an effective, adequate educational systrate—system—educational system—don't you have to have unified school districts where you can go to one central location and take the more advanced courses.

[01:48:34] TD: The Lake View decision is one which points out that elected judges can often pay a heavy price for their decisions. I believe one member of the court was defeated since that decision, and many people attributed it to that decision.

RB: Not of the court. Collins Kilgore ran for the Supreme Court, and he wrote the Lakeview decision as a trial judge, and he was not . . .

TD: Oh.

RB: . . . elected to the Supreme Court.

TD: As a circuit judge, he wrote that . . .

RB: As . . .

TD: . . . opinion.

RB: He wrote that opinion, and that was appealed to us, and that's the decision that we reviewed.

[01:49:10] TD: And then when he ran for a higher office, he was defeated and . . .

RB: He was defeated.

TD: . . . and that was—that defeat was to some degree attributed to Lake . . .

RB: I think that's exactly right.

TD: . . . Lakeside.

RB: I think his political ads, for example, said, "This is the man who wrote [*rustling sound*] Lake View and—as a circuit judge," and it had a school classroom and that sorta thing. I don't know if that was the most strategic way to run for the Supreme Court, because Lake View was very controversial. And when I wrote several Lake View decisions, I fully anticipated getting an opponent, and people were gunning for me, really, the last time I ran. But we staved 'em off by putting together an organization with the help of Mary Dillard and others [*TD laughs*] and were able to stave it off. And people aimed at me and shot at Donny Corbin, and he got an opponent. But I'm sure that was Lake View related.

[01:50:07] TD: Mh-hmm. Looking to the future, what do you see for yourself?

RB: Well, I've got about five—a little more than five years left on my

term, and after that I'll be over the age of seventy. And you forfeit part of your retirement if you run over the age of seventy.

TD: Oh.

RB: So I don't wanna do that. And it's kind of a built-in mechanism to convince people over the age of seventy not to run again. What I see for myself and what I see for the state of Arkansas is gonna be something very dramatic, and that is we're gonna have four or five seats on the Supreme Court open up. You probably know about Courtney Henry, who is from this area, and she's announced that she's gonna run for a seat that will be contested in 2010. Two thousand and fourteen, there're gonna be three seats, I think, open. And then after that, two seats. So there's gonna be a complete turnover on the Supreme Court. Now Arkansas has been very fortunate because we haven't had the vitriolic and highly expensive campaigns that Texas and Mississippi and Alabama and Illinois have had for the Supreme Court. But I'm afraid, unless we don't build in some kinda protections that these Supreme Court races—because there are competing special interests now that everyone's aware of—that these Supreme Court races are really gonna be, number one—very expensive, number two—very controversial. And again, we've withstood that. So that's not looking at me in particular,

but that's something I'm gonna write about and something I'm concerned about.

[01:51:36] TD: Are we going to see books coming from you in the future?

RB: Well, I'm gonna write an article about some of the protections I just mentioned. I think we have to do something to withstand—campaigns that are being run these days in other states—I think Wisconsin or Minnesota is a good example—where one candidate accused another candidate of being soft on pedophilia, and the other was soft on the death penalty and that sorta thing. But they're really getting outta hand, so—and we need to have some protections built in—kind of a "truth squad" to call people's hands for some of these ads that are just over the top. But I'm gonna write about that, but I would like to write a book about defining moments for Arkansas governors. Starting with Rockefeller and probably going through Beebe, although I'm not really sure what Mike Beebe's defining moment is yet, but [*laughs*]—and just talk about moments of crisis where these men—there are no women involved—these men have conducted themselves very appropriately and very courageously, and I think . . .

TD: And during their gubernatorial term.

RB: During their gubernatorial term. And a good example is something I've already alluded to, and that is when Win Rockefeller stood up on the state capitol steps and did the Martin Luther King memorial service . . .

[01:52:48] TD: Would that be your choice as the Rockefeller defining moment of . . .

RB: Yes.

TD: . . . great note?

RB: Yes.

TD: What about Huckabee?

[01:52:55] RB: I think Huckabee's stand on consolidation. I'm not sure—we certainly didn't consider that in the—in our decision—our Lake View decisions. You could argue that that was the natural consequence of what was said in the decisions. But I think he was, I think, standing up and fighting that fight, which he did not ultimately prevail in, and at one point, he kind of turned again—against what the court had said in Lake View in our later decisions. But at another point, he said, "Consolidation is the future of Arkansas." And he and Senator [*TD sniffs*] Jim Argue really fought that battle, and I thought that was a courageous battle to fight.

TD: And we have seen some consolidation coming from it.

RB: We have indeed.

TD: Not . . .

RB: We have indeed.

TD: Not a tremendous amount but several districts.

RB: No, but they're still holding the line at, what, three hundred and fifty students, I think, and you know, that sorta thing. And there was a—an argument that that should probably be done away with or at least minimalized, but it wasn't at this past session. So yeah, I think that was Mike Huckabee's best moment.

[01:53:57] TD: He also protected the tobacco money settlement.

RB: Well, he did do that, and I think he did a good job. I don't know if we're mortgaged to the hilt—I suspect we are, but what else is new [*TD laughs*] on the road program. I mean, again, referring to Jim Guy Tucker—Jim Guy could not get the road program through. Huckabee got it through. Again, what we're gonna pay in the future is a—another issue. Maybe with some of the stimulus money that's coming into the state, we can use that, and I'm sure we will, actually. I'm sure Mike Beebe is considering some of the highway program for—as shovel-ready projects.

[01:54:31] TD: Well, Bob, thank you very much for . . .

RB: Well, thank you, Tom.

TD: . . . visiting with us. And you're not quite finished yet. They're gonna talk with you about your early years here in a few minutes—perhaps after lunch, I guess. Thank you very much.

RB: Well, thank you, Tom. I enjoyed it.

TD: It was great.

TM: Yeah, it was really wonderful.

RB: Good program.

[Tape stopped]

[01:54:48] Scott Lunsford: Today's date is April 21, 2009. We're at the Sandy Edwards residence in Fayetteville, Arkansas. My name is Scott Lunsford, and we're going to be talking with Robert—Justice Robert Brown from the state supremes court—Supreme Court of Arkansas. And this recording—this videotape recording is going to be housed in the Special Collections Department in Mullins Library at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville campus. And, Bob, I need to ask you [*loud thump*] right now if it's all right with you that we're videotaping this and that it be archived there at the University of Arkansas?

RB: Oh, that is fine.

[01:55:31] SL: Okay. Great. [*TM clears throat*] Well, we're gonna talk—first of all, Bob, when and where were you born?

RB: I was born in Houston, Texas, in 1941, and lived there

approximately three months. [*SL laughs*] I'm a preacher's kid—actually, as I'll tell you in a few minutes, my dad became the Episcopal bishop of Arkansas, but back then he was an Episcopal priest. So he was moving from location to location in Texas, which is where [*papers shuffle*] he was basically raised and where he went into the ministry. But Houston for the first three months and then moved to Waco, Texas, and I was in Waco for six years. And then to Richmond, Virginia, and that's where I really grew up before up before I moved to Arkansas at the age of fourteen.

[01:56:19] SL: Now is Robert Brown your full name? Is . . .

RB: It's Robert Laidlaw Brown.

SL: Laidlaw?

RB: Laidlaw.

SL: How do you spell that?

RB: *L-A-I-D-L-A-W*.

SL: Thank you.

RB: And my maternal grandfather and my grandmother both had Laidlaw in their name, but it's a—it's an English name—a family name.

[01:56:40] SL: Well, let's talk a little bit about your grandparents and your great-grandparents. Do you remember much about

your grandparents?

RB: Certainly, my grandparents. Yeah, I've [*laughs*]—you know the movie *Giant*?

SL: Sure.

RB: And you know Rock Hudson goes and courts Elizabeth Taylor in Virginia. Well, my family is a little bit like *Giant* although I wish we had the money [*SL laughs*] that Rock Hudson, who, I think, was based on the King Ranch family had. But my father was basically—he was born in Kansas, but he was raised in San Antonio. And he was raised in San Antonio because his father was an aviator, and he flew one of the first biwing planes—open-cockpit planes back during the early—turn of the century—turn of the twentieth century. So Kelly Field is where he was stationed, and he was a dentist by profession, but he had met his wife in Pittsburg, Kansas, and her father was an itinerant Episcopal minister—actually, Anglican minister from Britain. And he had been raised in Ceylon—Sri Lanka now—and educated at Oxford University and then come to the States and moved west, I guess, to seek his fortune, to some extent, but to spread the Word, primarily. So that was my grandmother's family—this itinerant Episcopal Anglican minister. And my grandfather, as I say, was an aviator, but his family—his mother had come from

Virginia in a covered wagon—also moving West as a settler—and his father had been a drummer boy in the Civil War, so had a lotta connections like that on my father's side. On my mother's side, it was old Virginia. You know, my maternal grandmother was basically a—an old Virginia family in Warrenton, Virginia. And my grandfather was a state senator and part of the Harry Byrd machine. Now [*SL clears throat*] Harry Byrd was a great senator from Virginia. And very much, I think, in the segregationist Dixiecrat sphere of things but a very powerful senator in the United States Senator. But my grandfather was a state senator and pretty much aligned with him. And he was a say—self-made man. He was raised in the Shenandoah Valley. His father had fought in the Civil War on the Confederate side, and he had moved to Fairfax—the story—the family lore is—with twenty dollars in his pocket and became a very successful farmer, landowner, lawyer, and then politician. And he married a woman who was a very gracious woman from Warrenton, Virginia. So you have kinda that Elizabeth Taylor side of things in Virginia. Then you have . . .

SL: Yeah.

RB: . . . Dad over here in Texas kind of fighting the mesquite and the huisache. [*Laughs*]

[01:59:33] SL: Well, let's talk about your father's side now. Do you—did you ever have any conversations with your grandparents on your father's side?

RB: Oh, sure. Oh, sure. They were alive. My grandmother on my father's side was not alive much beyond the age of my—I was twelve, I think, at the time. I would see her more when I was in Texas, but after we moved to Richmond, it was a fer piece, and I really didn't see her much after that. She died, and then [*SL clears throat*] after she died, my grandfather would live with us from time to time—especially when we lived in Little Rock, and we had the room for him to, you know, have a separate bedroom and accommodations of his own. So that was fascinating just to hear him talk and hear some of the stories.

SL: Now he was the aviator.

RB: He was the aviator at Kelly Field. That's right.

[02:00:22] SL: Uh-huh. Well, can you remember any particular conversation you may have had with him?

RB: Well, he was a very interesting man in the sense that he had sought his fortune at an early age, but he had lost a lot of his money prefatory to the Depression. And both my parents [grandparents] were really—ah, they were twenty at the time the Depression really hit, so in the [19]30s they were scrambling

like the rest of the country. But my grandfather had had some good times and some bad times, and I think by the time I got to know him, he had had a minor stroke, and we always attributed that to the early aircraft days when he was flying at high altitudes in an open cockpit—nothing to protect the inner ear and that sorta thing. And I—we believe he had a stroke, and he was never quite the same when I knew him, so I didn't glean a whole lot of information although he would tell tales—you just didn't know if they were correct or not [*laughs*]—about growing up. But I do know from my parents [grandparents] that he and my grandmother had really lived very well for a while, and then lost a lot of it prefatory to the Depression.

[02:01:28] SL: Hmm. Well, what about your father's mother? Do you remember much about her at all before you moved?

RB: Well, she was—yes. She was a very, very strong personality, and my father was the firstborn. So you have the strong mother—again, "Dr. Brown" talking—and the firstborn son, and she was the major influence, I think, in my father's life and held great aspirations for him, which he really met throughout his career. But she was the guiding force, and she was the force that said, "You need to do this. You need to do that." And you know, he was just devastated—I recall that—when she died.

SL: So it was her father that was the Anglican . . .

RB: Was the Anglican priest.

SL: Yes.

RB: That's right—in Kansas. Which had to be a rough existence. You're riding the circuit in Kansas back in the—what, the latter part of the nineteenth century. That's rough duty.

[02:02:29] SL: Any cowboys and Indians stories?

RB: Well, the Brown side of the family—I've always said that my—seven-eighths of my family is probably pretty reputable and—and, you know, upstanding. [*SL laughs*] The one eighth is James Brown, who was the drummer boy, supposedly, in the Civil War. He may well have been a gunslinger. Who knows? But he was a—he was certainly someone who I think did enjoy the rough-and-ready days of Kansas.

SL: Now what makes you say that?

RB: Oh, just family lore more than anything else, and the pictures may kinda suggest that that's what he was. [*Laughs*] [*Chair squeaks*] No, I think it's more family lore than anything.

[02:03:05] SL: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Well, did you ever hear any recounting Civil war stories from . . .

RB: More from the mother's side of the family because . . .

SL: Okay.

RB . . . her grandfather was also—Captain Rust, as we called him—John Rust—and he fought with the Army of Northern Virginia, and he had—family lore—six horses shot out from under him, but he was very much in the midst of things. In the—in Lee's army and probably with Jubilee Early, too—General Early in the Shenandoah Valley. Both campaigns.

[02:03:38] SL: Well okay, let's shift over to your mother's side of the family. Now let's—so was it Fairfax . . .

RB: Fairfax, Virginia.

SL: And Warrenton. And Warrenton.

RB: All right. Well, my grandmother was from Warrenton, but my grandfather moved from the Shenandoah Valley to Fairfax. And by that time, he was established and met my grandmother, who was in Warrenton, and brought her to Fairfax.

SL: And what about—did you ever have any conversations with either one of them—those grandparents?

RB: I'd say probably of the grandparents—my grandfather on my mother's side, the state senator, had more influence on me than anybody else because . . .

SL: Oh. Well, let's talk about him for a while now.

RB: Well, he was wonderful. He was a [*SL clears throat*] self-made man, and he was kinda the *pater familias*—the head of the

family—and made no bones about it. And had very traditional views on things like race and society in general. He kept a penny bowl with all the pennies he could amass, and the reason was he wouldn't spend anything with Abraham Lincoln's visage on it. I mean, he was very much a reactionary and very much a product of the Civil War. But that's not what I respected him for. I respected him for the fact that he was such a dynamic personality. He had a—I won't even call it a truck garden. It was a major garden in the back of his house where he grew corn and tomatoes and lima beans, and you know, it was just wonderful seeing him every afternoon going out and plowing through his garden, which he would do. It was by hand. He didn't have anything else to do it with. And that was his exercise. And then we'd have these fabulous vegetable dinners, as you can imagine, as a result. But just a very, very colorful personality. Repeated everything twice but a colorful personality. And he was kinda—you know, he was kinda the prince of that fiefdom. So, I mean, it was good to kind of wander in his train and see how people reacted to him. And, again, I liked the political aspect.

[02:05:43] SL: Now what kind of house did he have?

RB: Had a nice house.

SL: I mean, was it in town or was . . .

RB: It was . . .

SL: . . . it outside of town or . . .

RB: I saw it about a year ago. It's completely surrounded by a subdivision, [*laughs*] but it—at that time, it was on about fifteen acres and a two- to three-story stucco house with columns in the front and boxwood bushes going down to the Chain Bridge Road, which is the road that goes through Fairfax.

[02:06:10] SL: Well, did he have hands with—that helped with the fifteen acres or—it sounds like a . . .

RB: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

SL: Yeah.

RB: He had fields and whatnot. Yes, and he had people come in—African Americans, for the most part, who worked in the kitchen and also worked on some of the land around the house. But then he had farms outside of Fairfax, too. So he grew crops and, you know, that sorta thing and got into banking. I mean, he was one of these multiple-business types who was successful in a lotta different areas.

[02:06:40] SL: Well, that sounds very interesting. And your grandmother—his wife, then—what was she like?

RB: Well, she was a—when I knew her, she kind of stayed in the

kitchen a lot. It was a [*laughs*]—you know, she was a lady from Warrenton. Her family was very prominent. She married my grandfather, who was a very—I won't say overbearing, but—or domineering but quite a personality. And I think there was a certain subservience on her part. But she had the kinda the kinky wit and personality about her, too, when you got her away from the kitchen. And that's a—and she was just wonderful. Very pleasant.

SL: So she ran the house, then?

RB: She ran the house. Yeah. That—I think that's the way it was done back then.

SL: Yes, yes. So were you ever in that house?

RB: Oh yeah. Yeah, see, I lived in Richmond for eight years, and so Fairfax was—at that time it took two hours. It probably takes an hour now, if that, to get from Fairfax to Richmond. But we would drive up to Fairfax and spend holidays, and they would come down to see us, and so there was a lotta interplay. Yeah, those were the happy times. I loved goin' to Fairfax.

[02:07:47] SL: And let's see now. What—about what years would that have been that you were able to visit that place?

RB: Well, we—well, even when I was livin' in Waco, we would get on the train and go to Fairfax and spend a month, and that was

wonderful. I mean, you go up there and just be taken care of. But I remember those train rides—I mean, goin' from, like, Waco to Fairfax, Virginia. And you would go through Tuscaloosa and all of these towns. It took forever to do it. But they were very memorable. But we spent a lotta time in Fairfax, even when I was in Texas. And part of the problem was Dad—when he went into the ministry, he went into the ministry because he was basically a very good athlete and was a star in a lotta sports in San Antonio. And he went into coaching. He did some semiprofessional stuff—football, and he was a boxer. Went into coaching in San Antonio and decided that he wanted to work in Christianity—the ministry—with his coaching of some of the high school boys that he was involved with. So he talked to the bishop, and the bishop said, "All right. You're a candidate for the ministry. I'll send you to Virginia Theological Seminary," which is in Alexandria, which is about seven miles from Fairfax. So Dad gets up there, and he goes through seminary, and he meets my mother, who was teaching at a private school, and my dad was teaching part time at that private school, and that's how they got together and met—all of which is to say that my dad was a very proud man. Obviously, my mother's family had money. Dad—I think the bishop wanted to teach him humility

[*SL laughs*]—sent him to his first church down in Harlingen, Texas. Now that's at the tip of Texas in the valley—the Rio Grande Valley, right across the border from Laredo. And this is 1937—heart of the Depression—a impoverished area anyway, and he's expected to survive down there with my mother, who's this Virginia lady. So [*laughs*], I mean, it was just—it was terrible. But he wouldn't receive any money, and I'm prefacing all this as the reason we would go to Fairfax for a month during the summer. That was one way to save money and to take advantage of my mother's family.

[02:10:01] SL: Let's talk about that train ride . . .

RB: Whoa.

SL: . . . from Waco to Fairfax.

RB: Well, it took a day or two. And as I say, I remember wakin' up in the middle of the night, and we'd be in Tuscaloosa or someplace, you know, and just kind of making progress.

SL: Is that—what—about what year would that have been?

RB: Well, this woulda been—I was in Waco from, like, [19]41 to [19]47. And we moved to Richmond in [19]47, and I was in Richmond from [19]47 to [19]55.

[02:10:30] SL: [*Sighs and clears throat*] So that was kind of the heyday for railroad . . .

RB: Yes, it was. Absolutely.

SL: . . . travel then. I mean, that was . . .

RB: I mean, I . . .

SL: The roads—the interstate system was not there yet, and when people traveled great distances . . .

RB: That's exactly right.

SL: . . . the train was the way to go.

RB: Thats right. And you were on the—you didn't have four-lane highways, for the most part. They were two-lane, and even when we drove—and sometimes we would drive to Virginia, especially when we got to Little Rock—that would take forever. And you stayed at the—you'd try to stay at the AAA motels [*laughs*] if you could.

SL: That's right. That's right.

RB: Look for 'em. But—interesting way of traveling back then for sure. But the trains—I don't think I flew on an airplane until I was late teens. Probably nineteen, twenty. Somethin' like that.

SL: Let's see. So there was a dining car . . .

RB: Yeah.

SL: And did you—and then the cars are—were all sleeper cars where . . .

RB: That's right.

SL: . . . where you stayed.

RB: That's right.

SL: And staff on a train was mostly African American, I would assume.

RB: Oh, I'd say totally. Yeah.

SL: Totally?

RB: Yeah. And the dining cars were just wonderful because you'd go in there—you'd have that heavy silverware and the sugar and all that. You remember that type of . . .

SL: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

RB: . . . accoutrements. And that was just fascinating to me as a young boy. And of course, the food was pretty good.

SL: Yeah.

RB: Food was pretty good. But it was an adventure, but you know, from time to time that [*imitating sound of train*] ka-chung, ka-chung, ka-chung, ka-chung could really get to you and make you a little bit sick after a while. But anyway . . .

[02:12:09] SL: So this would be a summer month that you would be in Virginia.

RB: Yes, yes. Usually [*telephone rings*] something like the month of August.

SL: And so there would be different things being harvested then.

RB: That's right.

SL: You'd miss the planting, but you . . .

RB: That's right.

SL: . . . got in on the harvest.

RB: And I really—my firsthand experience was really with the [*telephone rings*] garden in the back of the house, which was probably a—I don't know—quarter of an acre—somethin' like that—but a good-size garden. And he worked it and had multiple vegetables, as I've indicated. It was fun to see him out there. And he had his vegetable garden. My grandmother had a flower garden, so . . .

[02:12:41] SL: [*Laughs*] Were there any livestock?

RB: Not on the property. I mean, he had some livestock. He had some horses, but I never really took advantage of that. They were outside the city limits, so I never participated in riding or whatever, but it was available.

SL: Uh-huh. So they didn't raise chickens or hogs or any of that out at the . . .

RB: He had a ham house in the back of the—you know, a separate house behind his house before you got to the vegetable [*laughs*] garden, but—smokehouse, basically. So he used to cure and smoke his own hams and always thought they were preferable—

course, we're talkin' bout Virginia hams, so . . .

SL: Yeah.

RB: . . . preferable to the Gwaltney and the Smithfield hams that you buy today, but . . .

SL: Right.

RB: My grandmother used to say that they're inferior hams, so [*laughter*]—not to me, but . . .

[02:13:27] SL: Well, now was Virginia back then as well-developed horse country as it is now?

RB: Well, certainly, Warrenton, you know. And you had the steeplechases. When I went to law school, I went to law school at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and we would go to—the Camptown Races was the old name of one of the steeplechase races. But the Gold Cup in Warrenton and several famous steeplechases, we would go and watch and participated in. And some of the grass derbies, you know, where they would run the derby—as they call it, the darby [*SL laughs*] on grass rather than on the track that we're familiar with.

[02:14:02] SL: So what about the social life? I mean, were there lots of outdoor gatherings—picnics . . .

RB: Well, the social life for me was usually the family. My mother had, what, two sisters and a brother, and they had children—my

first cousins. And we would all gather around a picnic table in the back of the house and have the vegetables, or if it was Thanksgiving or something like that, my grandfather would carve up the turkey and, you know, great feast and pomp and circumstance. And you know, my father and my grandfather—a little bit at odds. They were so different, you know. My father, just kinda wild and woolly Texan, and my grandfather was just a Shenandoah roustabout so . . .

SL: [*Laughter*] Well, I get the idea that he may have been a Virginia gentleman as well. Is that . . .

RB: Oh, he was. Absolutely. He was.

SL: Yeah.

RB: For sure.

[02:14:57] SL: And—but your father had it in his mind that he was gonna end up being a preacher.

RB: My father went to seminary, and when he got to seminary, he decided that he wanted to do more than just coach and work in religion with the boys. And Virginia Theological Seminary adjoins Episcopal High School, which is a prominent boarding school in Alexandria. So he would coach over there while he was at seminary. And he also taught some at St. Agnes, and that's where he met my mother. But you're exactly right—he decided,

"Yes, I want to become a full-time minister."

SL: Well, that—surely that kinda toned down his wild Texas . . .

RB: Well, I think that's right. I think my mother, when she first met him, he was running across the campus at the seminary doing a Texas yell, which [*SL laughs*] I won't demonstrate for purposes of this tape, but it's very loud and boisterous. And she thought, "My gosh, I like this guy." [*Laughter*]

SL: Oh.

RB: And that's kind of a theme, frankly, throughout my—my family. Some of the women marrying people who were maybe not as mannered but a lot more exciting in a variety of ways, so—and my mother certainly fell into that camp, and I think her mother was more to the manor born than the senator—the grandfather who I respected so much who was prominent in the Shenandoah Valley but you know, a little bit rough hewn, too.

[02:16:22] SL: Well, let's back to Texas and your mom and dad. First of all, let me ask this about your grandparents. Did they have any formal education beyond junior high school or grade school? Did they . . .

RB: Well, in—I'm not sure. You know, that's a good question about the senator. My mother, of course, went to Sweetbriar [College, Sweetbriar, Virginia], and my memory is that my grandmother

was educated through high school, but it was more of a finishing school situation back then. My grandfather was a lawyer, so you know, he obviously had to have higher education. And back then you read for the Bar.

SL: Right.

RB: You didn't go to law school, and you didn't take a Bar exam. You just went in, and you were interviewed by some lawyers, and they said, "Well, he's qualified," or "He's not qualified." So that's the way he became a lawyer. As far as my paternal grandfather, he was a dentist, and he had higher education, and so did my grandmother. But again, her education was more finishing school than going to a school like Sweetbriar, which is where my mother went—a more formal education.

SL: Mh-hmm. And your father—what—how much education did he have?

RB: He went to St. Mary's—graduated from St. Mary's University in San Antonio and then got his doctor of divinity at Virginia theological institute.

[02:17:43] SL: So really, there was quite a education lineage, then, in your family.

RB: Yes. Oh yeah. For sure.

SL: Both sides of your family.

RB: Right. Right.

SL: That's a little unusual 'cause back then in those great-grandfather and grandfather days, there was really quite a bit of time spent surviving and . . .

RB: Yeah, I think my maternal—or my paternal grandmother and grandfather—the fact that he was from Oxford University—had been educated there—I mean, that told you something. I think he brought that literary and academic heritage with him to the States and passed it on to my grandmother, and I think that was part of the heritage on that side of the family. And then on the other side, you just had these wonderful libraries. I mean, my—the senator, my grandfather, really enjoyed reading—voracious—and history, for the most part. And you know, books by Douglas Southall Freeman on Robert E. Lee. That sorta thing. Very prominent in the bookshelves. I remember that.

[02:18:47] SL: So back in Texas, it—I almost feel like you had a really dynamic early childhood going on here. You were kind of in a desolate area—the huge expanses of nothingness, really, in Texas, and then you'd be in the middle of a very—I wouldn't say elite but certainly a—an ur—more of an urban East Coast experience.

RB: No question about that. And really, what I first remember was

Waco because I moved to Waco when I was three months old, but I remember it was hot. [*Laughs*] And we had a field beside us and, really, all around the house. And the church that my dad was the minister at in Waco was a very prominent Episcopal Church, St. Paul's. And this is right in the middle of the war, you know, because it's 1941.

SL: Right.

RB: And Dad was not—even though he was educated at a military institute before he went to St. Mary's University, he was not called up, and the reason he was not called up is, he says, I kept him outta the war 'cause I was the second child—and the fact that he was a minister. So that was important for consoling families and that sorta thing. So he was not called up, but he was there as the bodies were shipped home, and he said that was even worse. But I remember the red stamps and the rationing and all of that. I mean, that was very much a part of those six years. So it was more that memory than the fact that I was out in the middle of the King Ranch, you know, with wide-open spaces—although the mesquite was all around, and the heat was terrible. [*Laughs*] Texas is hot. Waco, in particular.

[02:20:32] SL: Well, now even though your mom came from a well-to-do family, you mentioned earlier that your father was a pretty

proud man, and he would not . . .

RB: That's exactly right.

SL: . . . he didn't want to live off someone else's . . .

RB: That's right.

SL: . . . generosity.

RB: That's right.

[02:20:49] SL: So how did that affect—what kinda house did you have, then, when you were in Waco?

RB: Well, the good thing about being a minister back then—it's not so good now—is you had a rectory. And if you were at a church of any size, the parish provided a rectory for the minister and the family. So I can recall in Waco, we had a very nice house. We had—two houses we lived in, but one was very nice that I remember. And in Richmond, we had a fabulous house. So—and then when we moved to Arkansas, we lived in something called Bishopsted in Little Rock, which was a wonderful house. So I mean, that's—that just kind of goes with the association of being a pastor or a bishop. So the housing was good. The salary, not necessarily so good, but there were fringe benefits. For example, in Richmond I was sent to the best private school, you know, in Richmond. So was my—so were my sisters.

[02:21:45] SL: Were the houses fully—I mean, did they have

running water and electricity and . . .

RB: Absolutely.

SL: . . . natural gas or however you heated?

RB: Oh, I don't know about natural gas. [*Laughs*] I know we had a furnace in Richmond. You know, an oil-burning furnace in Richmond, and I don't remember what we had in Texas. We didn't need a whole lot of heating in Texas. [*Laughs*] We needed some air-conditioning, but . . .

SL: Right.

RB: Probably had some fans, but that was about it.

[02:22:10] SL: What about—I—being associated with the church, what were your groceries like? I mean, did y'all have to raise any of your own vegetables or . . .

RB: Oh, we didn't do it. We didn't do it. But we lived on a very, very strict budget. When we'd go out to eat, you know, we'd be limited. The meals—every meal was around the dining room table back then, so breakfast—we weren't there for lunch, but supper was certainly around the dining room table. And you had at least two courses. You had your meat and the vegetables. Then you had a dessert. I don't think salad was such a big item back then [*laughs*] like it is now, but you know, you'd sit around the dining room table and talk about the day. But my mother—

she was basically a—even though she was an Episcopalian, she had some Scotch Presbyterian aspects about her because her father, the senator, was initially a Presbyterian. So she was not stingy but very strict with the money and had to be—had to keep us on a budget. You know, three children, not much of a salary. The house was provided, but still, she had to really keep close tabs on how the money was spent. So we did not live lavishly as far as what we ate and that sorta thing.

[02:23:26] SL: So your mother prepared all the meals?

RB: Yes, she did. And we had a—in Richmond—even in Waco, I'm sure we had some help in Waco. In Richmond, we had a live-in servant—black, most of the time, as I recall, who would live on the third floor and would help with the cleaning and babysitting and that sorta thing.

[02:23:47] SL: Mh-hmm. Now you're one of three children.

RB: Yes.

SL: And were—where are you in the line?

RB: The middle child.

SL: You're the middle child.

RB: Right.

SL: And you had an older . . .

RB: Older sister . . .

SL: Older sister.

RB: . . . and a younger sister.

SL: And a younger sister. So how—what were the age differences? What—how far . . .

RB: Three years between us. I think that was probably well managed, although I'm not sure a third child was one of the things that had been planned for, but [*laughs*] there you are.

SL: Yeah.

RB: But no, three years between us. And being the second-born child in a minister's house, you quickly learned to be the peacemaker. So I think that was my role.

[02:24:31] SL: Well, so your mother prepared the meals—and who did the dishes?

RB: The truth of the matter is I think we cleared the table, and she did the dishes.

SL: Okay.

RB: We probably dried but no washing machines that I recall. And she basically did the dishes, and we dried. And I don't remember putting up that much. I know Dad didn't participate. I mean, that was not the man's role back then. I mean, it just wasn't. So Mom pretty much prepared the meals and cleaned up after with the help of the children.

[02:25:04] SL: And what about the laundry?

RB: She did that with the help of the live-in person.

SL: Mh-hmm. But you didn't have a live-in person in Waco, right?

RB: Not that I recall, but we could've had somebody. I know in Harlingen—that's where Dad learned his humility, down in the Rio Grande Valley—I know that they had a Hispanic—a Mexican American come in and help. But I don't recall in Waco. We probably did have some help. I just don't remember it. I—actually, I do. I remember a servant named Charlesetta, and that was in Waco, so we had to have had some help.

SL: Was that another Hispanic?

RB: No, no, that—African American.

SL: African American.

RB: Yeah.

SL: Well . . .

RB: I remember in Waco goin' down to the Brazos River, I think it was, and seeing baptisms with the African American population. It wasn't that numerous, but it went on. And it was an event.

[02:26:02] SL: Well, maybe we should talk a little bit about Waco if—what you can remember of Waco. It wasn't—how large a place was that?

RB: [*Sighs*] You know, Baylor University is there, but they kind of

kept us away from the Baylor college students. Even though it was a Baptist school, it was supposed to be kinda wild, so you know, we kept on the other side. And as I say, Dad had a major church there, and I grew up with friends in the neighborhood. My oldest sister was kind of a ringleader, and she always had something going on. I would go out and ride with my dad. That's where I did horseback riding, and I enjoyed that. And I went to a school called Sanger, and it's interesting to me Steve Martin was in Waco at the same time, and I've been curious as to whether he was at Sanger with me or not, but [*laughs*] anyway, by the time I left Waco, it was, like, my first-grade year, and you know, if he was there, we overlapped just one year.

SL: One year. Yeah.

RB: Yeah.

[02:26:59] SL: So it was probably a little bit too early for you to be aware, but what about segregation and the races and that mix there in Waco?

RB: You know, it's interesting. It was obviously aware—a way of life, and even coming to Little Rock—I mean, everything I'd known in Richmond and in Little Rock was segregation with the live-in servants, et cetera. By the same token, you sensed that

[*laughs*]—even as a young child—that something's not right about this system. And now I can't say I was sensitive to it at Waco—in Waco at the age of six. Certainly by the time I was twelve and thirteen in Richmond, I was sensitive to it. And you had heard the stories about Emmett Till, for example, and the situation with the—I don't know if you know, the story, but the—Emmett Till was a young boy in Mississippi—Greenwood, Mississippi, or outside of Greenwood, who supposedly whistled at a white woman and was lynched as a result. And they finally found the body, and the body—there was an open casket and a huge African American service and that sorta thing, and it was in *Life* magazine and historic photographs. So you kind of—even at the age—this is, like, 1951, [19]52—somethin' like that. You—you'd heard that story, and you said, "You know, what's goin' on?" [02:28:27] And then I can remember—and this is, I'm sure, a result of Martin Luther King in Montgomery and the bus boycott. But I was riding home from church one night, and you could do that back in those days. You know, you could ride at the age of twelve, thirteen on a bus and go across town and not worry about it. But I remember one incident where a African American was on the bus, and the bus driver said, "Go to the back of the bus." He said, "I'm not gonna do it." And the bus

driver said, "I'm not movin' the bus." So all the passengers—there were probably twelve of us on it, you know, kinda looking around. [*Laughs*] "What's goin' on here?" "I'm not movin' the bus." And the African American said, "All right. I'm gonna write down your name and your number." And he went up there, and he wrote it down, and then he got off the bus, and we moved. But I mean, that was telling me, you know, something's going on here. And there was—even in my peer group, though we were not [*laughs*] by any stretch of the imagination manning the barricades for civil rights 'cause we were just naïve. But even in the peer group, we were discussing things like integration and segregation because you knew it—something was happening. You know, "Are you for integration?" You know, that type of question would leap up in church, for example—Sunday school. [02:29:42] So this is all before I moved to Little Rock in 1955. And I got to Little Rock, and Little Rock—it was kind of—no suggestion that anything was amiss. I mean, Ninth Street was kinda the black area of the business community for Little Rock. But, again, it was separate communities. Completely separate. And then you heard my sophomore year at Central High School that integration was gonna start. They had built a new high school in west Little Rock that was not gonna be integrated that

first year. Only Central was going to be. And that, of course, is when everything developed into a turmoil. Sure. I mean, by that time, you are aware—well aware of the situation that the system wasn't working. Something was wrong here. I mean, with the lynchings—in particular with Emmett Till, with the boycotts, and that sorta thing. But again, we were seventeen-year-olds. We—I can't say that we were causal in any sense of the word without some sense that this is wrong. Now when it came down to closing the schools, you know, that's when my peer group said, "No, no, we want—we'll go to school with blacks. You know, let's just keep the schools opened," and several of us said that. But you know, again, as far as manning the barricades, we weren't doin' that at that time. It was a segregated system. It was a horrendous system. And as I said earlier in the integ—interview, when they closed the schools, I really—I faulted Governor Faubus. I faulted the General Assembly, but I really faulted the adults because the adults had voted to close the schools rather than integrate. And I thought they had done a disservice to the children. It was just this vague sense that the institutions and our parents—although my parents had taken a stand in favor of keeping things open, there was a sense that the adults had failed us. And I think with all

the peer group—not just me.

[02:31:42] SL: So did all the schools close in Little Rock?

RB: The three schools did. The black school was Horace Mann, Central High School, and Hall High School. All three were closed.

SL: And how long were they closed?

RB: A year.

SL: And so what did the students do?

RB: Well, we scrambled. By the second—we were doin' it day-by-day. You know, "Are the schools gonna open?" This is, like, September 3, 4, 5. "Are the schools gonna open?" "Well, they may. Don't know." But everybody started making—everybody who could afford it and had contact started making contingency plans, and my contingency plan was to go back to Texas. My dad was friendly with the bishop of Texas, and I went to school in Austin, Texas, at a boarding school down there with another friend of mine from Little Rock. And so that's where we finished up. And we—I was lucky. You know, I was privileged. I was able to do it. A lotta kids went to the neighboring communities—Jacksonville, Pine Bluff, Forrest City, Arkadelphia, Harrison, Fort Smith. I mean, there was a diaspora throughout the state. And African Americans—they probably had a harder time of it. But

they went down to Pine Bluff and, again, to black schools in Forrest City and whatnot, so it was just spread out. You did what you could, and a lotta people didn't get high school degrees because of it.

[02:32:59] SL: Didn't you say that the sporting events continued?

RB: Well, that was [*laughs*] the ironic and even the travesty of the whole situation, that while the schools closed, the football teams continued to practice. I don't know bout Horace Mann, but I know Central and Hall did. And the big football game—and I came home from Texas to see it—was Thanksgiving, when Hall played Central. And you know, they were ongoing, and the football players would take correspondence courses or not take any kind of courses. But they finished the high school season—football season—and then probably did something that second semester, more formal. It was bizarre. I mean, it was Byzantine.

[02:33:42] SL: Well, when you were growing up in Texas and then in Virginia, did you ever see any signs—"colored" water fountain or . . .

RB: Oh sure. Oh yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, sure. You know, "whites," "colored," restrooms—the same thing. You did not see blacks in motels, restaurants, public accommodations,

you know. And that really didn't happen in Little Rock. Central High—that crisis was, like, [19]57 through [19]59. The sit-ins really began in Little Rock in the early [19]60s. I'd say [19]60, [19]61. And some of the people who are gonna be on this panel discussion that we're having this weekend for the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of the schools participated in those sit-ins. So that was the next basic move. And then when Johnson and Kennedy got the public accommodations bill passed where blacks could, as part of the Civil Rights, go into all public restaurants, motels, whatever—that changed the rule of the game. But before then it—yeah, it was completely segregated in the South, without question.

[02:34:55] SL: What about your friends, growing up? Were they—I mean, did they feel like segregation was the way to go or was—what was it like among the kids?

RB: It was a way of life where you were curious about what the blacks were doin', but you knew that there were barriers, and the barriers were not crossed. And it really didn't come up other than speculating about the black culture, and I'm sure the blacks were speculating about the white culture. But there wasn't a lot of transfer between the two camps.

[02:35:31] SL: You mentioned your father was athletic.

RB: Yeah.

SL: Did that play a part in your life, growing up? Were you interested in athletics at all?

RB: Well, I was a football player, and I enjoyed football, and that was my one sport. He was probably a better pure shooter as a basketball player than I was. I was not a basketball player, but I certainly enjoyed football and played sports when I was in high school.

SL: What position did you . . .

RB: Defensive end. Weighed in at a hundred and forty-five.

SL: Yeah.

RB: That was big.

SL: Yeah. [*RB laughs*] Headhunter.

RB: Headhunter. That's right. I liked to hit. I liked to hit.

SL: That's good. That's good.

RB: And that's what you have—you know, you play football, you have to like to hit.

RB: So that was in Virginia.

RB: And at Hall. You know, I played football at Hall and Forest Heights. Yeah.

[02:36:14] SL: No baseball?

RB: Played a little baseball at St. Stephen's, which the school I went

to in Austin, Texas. I enjoyed that. But football is what I really enjoyed. You didn't have to be super-coordinated at football. You just liked to get out there and mix it up, and that's what I enjoyed doin'.

[02:36:30] SL: Well, let's talk about your schools, growin' up. Did you have any favorite teachers, elementarywise, or was there any activity that kinda grabbed your fancy, growin' up in grade school?

RB: You know, I mentioned the fact that I went to a good school in Richmond, Virginia. And it was a—an Episcopal school. It was a day school, for the most part, and basically it was on the old British model. I mean, memorization. You learned by rote. You learned how to spell by rote. You parsed sentences. You memorized Victorian poetry. You know, I can quote to you "Invictus" today because that's what you had to do. You had to memorize poems. And then you had declamation contests. It was the old British model. And that was wonderful. I mean, I learned more about math—you know, algebra, the Roman emperors—when I was in the fifth grade. And, again, my grammar has always been very good, and my spelling's very good because I learned it by rote, you know. And some people today say that's not a good way to learn because it kind of locks

you into a box rather than letting you think creatively outside the box. But I disagree with that—especially in the early years, where it's important to get the foundation and the basics. So I was very lucky in that regard. And yes, I had a [*SL makes rustling sounds*] teacher who was my teacher in the fifth grade—we called it form—fifth form—who was very good, and she was kinda the matronly, unmarried principal of the lower school—Roman nose—the whole thing. And she was just very much a presence. Yes.

[02:38:09] SL: What was it about her that—or what subject was it—was there any particular subject that you kinda latched onto under her tutelage?

RB: Yeah, I liked the Roman emperors, you know, the Roman history and that sorta thing, and [she] taught us that, and she also taught us math. And she gave us moral lessons about, you know, your life is a—I remember one time she gave us a talk about the fact that, you know, Southerners—she was talkin' bout the Southern mentality, and she said, "You know, the battle of First Manassas, First Bull Run, where the South won—the Army of Northern Virginia won the first major battle." And routed the Union troops and how everybody would laugh about that in the South. "Oh, look at the Yankees running," and that sorta thing.

And yet, then you get to Appomattox, and everybody's crying, you know, and "What is this all about?" You know. [*Laughs*] Come on, you know. So show me—she was very realistic about things and took on some heavy issues, I thought, for the time. You know, the—"This Southern-ness is something we need to put behind us, and let's move on." Kinda a radical notion, you know, in the heart of the Confederacy, like Richmond was.

[02:39:20] SL: What about—let's talk a little bit about your sisters now. Are they all still alive? Are they both still alive?

RB: One is in Baltimore—actually, Owings Mills, Maryland, married to a lawyer. The other is in Seattle, married to a minister. And they're both alive. Yeah.

[02:39:36] SL: And were they—let's talk a little bit about life at home. You would have breakfast in the morning, everyone around the dining table.

RB: Right.

SL: Everyone together.

RB: Right.

SL: I would assume that your father probably said grace.

RB: I'm sure he did.

SL: And . . .

RB: We always said grace in a preacher's home, you know.

SL: And—but did y'all ever take turns?

RB: No, not really—not that I recall. I think Dad pretty much did that.

[02:40:06] SL: Okay. And then you would have lunch at school. Is that right?

RB: Yes.

SL: Or would you come . . .

RB: That's correct.

SL: . . . back home?

RB: I would take my lunch with me.

SL: Uh-huh. And then everyone would be on time and at the dinner table at dinnertime. That's . . .

RB: Yes, that's correct.

SL: . . . very formal.

RB: Yes.

[02:40:25] SL: Did your sisters help your mother around the house? I mean, was there a real division of labor—guys versus girls—in the household or . . .

RB: I know I would mow the grass. I know that was one of my details. As far as—I don't remember my makin' the beds that much. [*Laughs*] I don't—just don't recall. I suspect I didn't. But I would do probably more of the outdoor stuff, and maybe

my sisters did more of the indoor stuff. But again, we had some help, so I think that took some of the burden off Mother in that regard.

[02:40:58] SL: What about allowances? Were y'all given allowances?

RB: Not much. I know I was a big fan of the Saturday movies, so I would go to the Saturday afternoon Westerns, you know, and see all the John Wayne, Roy Rogers—that stuff. And they were wonderful films, so I thoroughly enjoyed that. And I'm sure I had money to spend on that. As far as being on a strict allowance, I don't recall that, but I always had a little bit of money. And I lived in a very nice area, and I had a good friend who lived across the way from me, and I would go vacation with him and do some things. His father was head of something called the Virginia Museum of—the Virginia Fine Arts Museum. And he was a very creative personality in that regard, so they were always getting art exhibits and European exhibits—that sorta thing—into Richmond. That was fun. Then of course, all the Civil War memorabilia. I mean, I grew up playing in Richmond in the federal trenches—the trenches that the Union soldiers dug [*rustling sounds*] when they surrounded Richmond and eventually burned Richmond, as you recall. But that was

part of my growing up was playing in those trenches. I mean, that was within the subdivision, so . . .

[02:42:09] SL: That's interesting that they're—I wonder, are they still there? Are those . . .

RB: Oh yeah. Yeah, you can go to a place called Windsor Farms, which is not too far from the center of town—the federal trenches. Sure, they're still there. And one of the interesting things about my grandfather's garden in the back of his house—it was right next to the Fairfax County Courthouse, and the Union soldiers bivouacked around the courthouse during the war. So forever my grandfather was digging up belt buckles and midi balls and that sorta thing and just that we had cartons of this stuff. I wish I had 'em now 'cause [*laughs*] they're valuable. But all these midi balls and belt buckles—US, you know, belt buckles. Memorabilia. And I do have a musket I got—Civil War musket—but great memorabilia.

[02:42:56] SL: What about the technology? Did—how did technology interface with your home? I mean, do you remember any—did you—do you remember having a radio in Waco?

RB: We always had radio, and I listened to the radio programs, you know, growin' up, like *Jack Benny* and, you know, that sorta thing. And the—gosh, what were some of those—*Sky King* and

Sergeant Preston and some of the mysteries. *The Green Hornet*.

SL: *The Shadow*.

RB: *The Shadow*. Yeah, that sorta thing. But television came on the scene, and we were lucky. One of the things my grand—my father did accept was a television set from my grandfather. So we had a television set, I'm guessing, by [19]48 or [19]49. So that was . . .

SL: That's early.

RB: . . . good. And that became major entertainment, and then color TV came in in, like, [19]52 and air-conditioning came in about [19]54, so that was the technology. But otherwise, it was a Corona—I think that was the typewriter and, you know, nothing as far as technology. And you would sometimes dial, but more often than not pick up the telephone and say, "Five-two-six-three-six," which was my telephone number, and you know, the operator would connect you. So [*laughs*] that was the technology.

SL: Well I mean, that's significant, you know, that it was like that.

RB: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[02:44:14] SL: What about—I guess you always had electricity everywhere you lived.

RB: Yes, always had a electricity. Fortunate in that regard, unlike

Dale Bumpers.

SL: [*Laughs*] Well, I'm tryin' to think if—when did—at the house, were there programs that you couldn't listen to on the radio? Was there any—were there any restrictions that—any things that were forbidden in the house, growing up?

RB: Well [*laughs*], we—there was a show called [*The Adventures of*] *Boston Blackie*, and it was a detective show, and it was on Sundays. And my mother didn't think it was appropriate to watch a shoot-'em-up, as we called 'em—murder mystery-type television show on Sunday. So we couldn't do that. We couldn't go to movies on Sundays. We couldn't wear blue jeans on Sundays, so in that sense I don't think it was very unlike a lot of southern towns. I mean, restrictions on what you could do on Sundays. But they were enforced until—I remember it was broken when a movie called *The Robe* came to Richmond. That was with Richard Burton. It had to do with the crucifixion of Christ. So we could go see that on Sunday, but that [*laughs*] was about the only exception. But it was a very strict—it was a strict situation, and course, our—my parents didn't drink, so there was no alcohol around the house. My father smoked, and that's eventually what killed him. And you know, I had secondary smoke all my life when I was living with him, of

course, because he smoked more than a pack a day. Lucky Strikes. Great cigarette. [*Laughter*] And I smoked. I smoked a little bit, but I stopped when I was about twenty-five, twenty-six.

[02:45:56] SL: What about music in the house?

RB: My dad played the piano, and my grandmother, to earn money—used to play the box-top piano for the silent films. You know, that—those . . .

SL: Yeah.

RB: . . . the reels and whatnot. I mean, she would—she could do that—the riffs on the piano. And she was very accomplished in that regard. But my father could pay—play Beethoven, Brahms—that sorta thing, and really enjoyed classical music, and I enjoy classical music, too—in addition to rockabilly and rhythms—rhythm and blues, but the classical music I enjoy.

SL: What about hymns?

RB: You know, it's interesting. I—I've been raised in the Episcopal Church and the—kinda the Wesleyan—most of our hymns are John Wesley or Charles Wesley—you know, the Methodist hymns. If I—probably shouldn't repeat this. My father's turning over in his grave even as I speak, but I really like the Baptist hymns. I do. But yes, I was raised in a household where we

would sing hymns and that sorta thing—not only at church, but you know, we'd be in the car driving somewhere, and we'd sing the hymns and the "Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia" and that sorta thing.

[02:47:04] SL: So would your father play the piano, and you'd gather round and sing around the piano?

RB: No, I think it was more of a tension release for him. My dad was—had a very stressful job. Even as a minister, he had a stressful job. And he would play the piano—bang out the tunes really, I think, as a way of releasing tension. It'd be Beethoven or "St. Louis Blues" or something like that. And—so it was just a presence. I mean, you could tell Dad was playing the piano. But you know, it was kind of his deal. I mean, it were—we didn't have our arms around one another singing Christmas hymns or anything.

[02:47:40] SL: What about records?

RB: We had records and both my parents liked classical music, and they liked opera. So we had some Caruso and that type of thing that I grew up with—Ravel, Rachmaninov, Beethoven again, not so much Bach and that type of thing. More of the classicists, and I don't even think Mozart, but opera in particular. They both liked opera. And Dad liked Civil War music—you know, not only

"Dixie" and that sorta thing but "The Bonnie Blue Flag" and some of the Civil raw—Civil War songs. So we had records—albums—of that type of music, so a lot of that around the house. And I'll have to tell you, the church Dad had in Richmond was the church of Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. Right across from the state capitol is St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and that's where Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis attended church during the Civil War. And you go into the church, and there's a pew that's marked for both men, and then there's the Lee window, which is a beautiful stained-glass window in the church. But it's a historic church—downtown Richmond—and that's where Lee was sitting when they came in to tell him that the Union forces had broken through the lines and that Richmond was falling. And the story goes that Lee was walking—as he got up to walk out of the church, everybody in the congregation knew what was happening, and they all stood up, you know, in respect for him, and he walked out. But I—they all knew the war was lost. My point is that Dad was at the historic church in Richmond, which was kinda the center of the old South, so [*SL sighs*]—and at one point, because of the prominence of the church, he asked Dwight Eisenhower to come to the church, and that was a big happening, and I think it was about 1954. And Eisenhower and

Mamie came into the—and I've got a photograph of that, and you'll see in the background a couple of Boy Scouts, and I'm one of the Boy Scouts standing up there [*SL laughs*] and guarding President Eisenhower as he walks into [*laughs*] the church. But anyway, it was a fun thing.

[02:49:57] SL: Boy Scouts?

RB: Boy Scout.

SL: When did you start that?

RB: Probably at about twelve—something like that. And I lasted through about the Star stage, and then I got interested in social life and stopped scouting.

SL: By social life, you mean girls?

RB: Mh-hmm. And partying.

SL: And partying.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: And . . .

RB: To the extent we partied at that age, but we did.

[02:50:20] SL: Well, now what was it like being in the—in a preacher's house and being interested in girls and the social life and partying? I mean . . .

RB: Well, I—now I'm sure it was like any other home back then, but I mean, from time to time, we'd hear stories about how some of

our older friends had gotten in trouble with various shenanigans, so those were lessons in life that were told us. But we certainly had parties, and we certainly went to—there was a coterie of people—friends—in my neighborhood, probably a three- or four-block area. Boys and girls, and we'd get together and have parties, turn out the lights. All that stuff. Just like everybody did back then.

SL: Oh yeah. Uh-huh. [*RB laughs*] Yeah.

RB: So—but that was a—that was very much in competition with scouting at that particular time.

SL: Yes.

RB: But yes, we . . .

SL: Probably . . .

RB: . . . we had our own parties, so—turning out the lights and everything. So in that respect, I guess my parents were very emancipated.

[02:51:17] SL: What kinda grades did you make, growin' up?

RB: Pretty good student.

SL: Yeah.

RB: Pretty good student. I was not top of the class but pretty good.

SL: What—by the time you got to high school, did you have a favorite area that you liked more than others?

RB: Well, my—probably, I liked the history, and I liked literature. My mother was very literary. Fine arts. And I think that passed down through me. And my dad was a historian, so I liked those two subjects. When I came to Little Rock, I was way ahead academically, and I started off in junior high, and I'd already had two years of Latin, and they were just starting Latin. So—and algebra I'd had, so I would—I was way ahead, which was interesting, but to some extent, it kind of, I guess, slowed me down because I regressed over a three-year period even though Hall High was a great high school. But, still, the school in Richmond was better. But then I went down to St. Stephen's and was probably a solid B student at St. Stephen's, but St. Stephen's was a very difficult school, so I had to scramble there. But I like—I liked literature, and I liked history. Math was something I had to work at a bit and put up with, but . . .

[02:52:30] SL: Yeah. So when you graduated from St. Stephen's, what happened? What—where did you go next?

RB: I went to Sewanee: The University of the South, in Sewanee, Tennessee.

SL: And that's an Episcopal school.

RB: That's right. And at the time, it was all male, and I did the typical thing—I partied for—we would go to Nashville and

Chattanooga—I partied for—again, the first year at Sewanee, I coasted. I'd had all the courses at St. Stephen's, so I didn't—and I was, like, top of the class there, but I'd already taken it all. And the next year, I regressed a bit and had a good time partyin', and then my junior and senior year, I worked very hard and finished very well and then went to graduate school. And—but I'd—I worked very hard, and I was a—an English major at Sewanee.

[02:53:19] SL: Well, let's talk about Sewanee for a little bit. Let's see. Now where is that located?

RB: That's in the Cumberland Plateau, about midway between Nashville and Chattanooga—foothills of Tennessee. Appalachia.

SL: And I'm just assuming you chose that school because of your religious affiliation with the family?

RB: That helped. And I was a preacher's kid, so I got a scholarship to some extent because of that. And there were seven students from St. Stephen's who went to Sewanee, which was amazing.

SL: Yeah.

RB: So it was, like, a third of the class moving to Sewanee. So that was a comfort factor. And Sewanee was a great school. I mean, we had a wonderful time even though it was a little bit Byzantine as far as not having girls there. You partied on the

weekends. And you didn't have the distractions during the week. [*SL laughs*] And you know, you worked hard.

SL: Where did you have to go to party on the weekends?

RB: Vanderbilt.

SL: Vanderbilt.

RB: Nashville.

SL: [*Laughs*] You said that very quickly. [*Laughter*]

RB: Well, that's where the action was, and I had a lotta friends at Vanderbilt, too, so that was good.

[02:54:26] SL: So let's see. What year would that be?

RB: I was there from [19]59 to [19]63.

SL: Okay. So I guess rock and roll was firing up pretty heavy back then.

RB: Oh my goodness. You know, I'd—I was in the era of the honky tonks, you know, I mean, here in Arkansas. I mean, Elvis came to Little Rock in [19]56, and he'd just put out "Hound Dog," and "Heartbreak Hotel" was the first RCA recording I think he did, and he came out—he was about an hour late for the concert. I went to it. I was in the ninth grade—came about an hour late and does the thurs—first thing on "Heartbreak Hotel," and everybody goes crazy. And then at the end of the concert, he does "Hound Dog." He says, "I just recorded a new song. I

want y'all to hear it." And [*laughter*] so it was a memorable event, but gosh, I could—Beverly Gardens was one of the honky tonks outside of Little Rock. Plantation Inn outside of West Memphis. What's the one up in Newport? They had a very famous . . .

SL: Silver Moon?

RB: Yeah, that's right. That's right. That's—I'm sure—Ronnie Hawkins played there, and I'm sure Elvis did, and "The Killer", and you know, so all of that was my era of music. And even though I didn't go to the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, I certainly went to all the rush parties. And prominent people like Jerry Lee Lewis and whatnot and Hawkins—I mean, they would come in and play those rush parties, and they were just wonderful affairs. So yeah, I participated in that. But very much a child of rock and roll and rockabilly.

[02:56:00] SL: So did rock records ever hit your parents' house? Did they . . .

RB: I had the 45s.

SL: Yeah.

RB: You know, where you had the spindle, and you put the 45s and . . .

SL: Yes. Uh-huh.

RB: . . . I really always kinda cottoned to rock and roll, but I also cottoned to the—Little Richard and that sorta thing. "Shake, Rattle, and Roll."

SL: Yes.

RB: You know, just the—kinda the original black music that was hitting the scene.

SL: How did that fit with the opera and classical music that was dominant in your house?

RB: Oh, I think very well. [*Laughter*] I mean, a little bit . . .

SL: Parents were tolerant and they—did they enjoy it?

RB: Yeah, they didn't understand it, but I hear my father was playing "St. Louis Blues" all his life. And I liked to dance. I liked to rock and roll. I enjoyed it. Still do. Still do. So nothin' better to dance to than rock and roll, as you know.

SL: So alcohol was forbidden but . . .

TM: Excuse me, Scott.

SL: . . . but dancing was . . .

TM: We need to change tapes.

SL: Oh, okay.

[Tape stopped]

[02:56:52] SL: Well, before we get back to your college years and the rock-and-roll era . . .

RB: Yeah.

SL: . . . was there anything in Waco—all the way back in Waco—you know, I often start an interview with what is your earliest memory? What is the very first thing that you can remember?

RB: Yeah. I think—and you mentioned helping around the house—I do remember as a young boy helping around the house—I guess, probably three, four years old—kinda following after my mother, whatever she was doin'. And then I'd go outside, and you know, "You have to go outside, you know, because of the sunlight," and that sorta thing. And just the war and the fact that there was stress in the air because of the red stamps. And I remember getting *Time* magazine and seeing Hitler on the cover and then a red *X* over Hitler—all of that. It was just—it was a very sobering time, and tail end of the Depression. That was still kind of uppermost in most people's minds, so you kinda sensed that, you know, that things were not completely comfortable. But they became comfortable in the [19]50s, without question, but then it was a little bit . . .

[02:58:03] SL: So tell me about red stamps. Exactly [*RB laughs*] what were red stamps?

RB: You got rationing stamps. I should've explained that. You got rationing stamps, and you could only get so much meat, so

much milk, so much gasoline. You know, it was rationed. And you got stamps to kind of apportion what you could actually buy. And you would go into the stores with the red stamps, and you can buy this much meat—you know, that sorta thing.

SL: So how were these red stamps delivered?

RB: I'm sure . . .

SL: Or how were they . . .

RB: I—I'm sure the government, and frankly, I don't know. I just know we had 'em, and we lived by 'em.

SL: Oh, I wonder if they picked them up at the bank or the post office or . . .

RB: I would suspect the post office. You know, government related.

SL: Mh-hmm. Do you remember anything about banks, early on?

RB: Boy, that's a good question. I remember a newspaperman. I remember a doctor. Banker—not in particular. It was more—I remember the ranchers because being a big rancher was a big deal, but I don't remember bankers as such.

SL: Mh-hmm. Did the doctor ever come to your house?

RB: Absolutely. Sure. That's why I remember him.

SL: See, and that doesn't . . .

RB: Yeah.

SL: . . . happen now.

RB: No, no, no. He would come, and he had the—you know, the black satchel that you opened up, [*laughs*] and everything under the sun was in there. Yeah.

SL: Start with the stethoscope and . . .

RB: Stethoscope and . . .

SL: . . . look . . .

RB: . . . probably aspirin and laxatives and, you know, whatever you needed. No, that—that's certainly—you know, the thing for your tongue.

SL: And [*laughs*] I'm tryin' to—do—were there lines? Do you remember lines during those red stamp days?

RB: I—you know, I don't. I do remember going to the store with Mother and her going in. There may have been two or three people doing the same thing, but nothing where it was like the early [19]70s, when we were trying to get gasoline. You remember that. Nothing like that that I recall. It probably happened. I just don't remember it.

SL: Now you mentioned your father being exempt from the war.

RB: Right.

SL: But seeing the kids come home in the boxes. Do you . . .

RB: Yeah, he always maintained that was harder to bury the kids as they came home.

[03:00:28] SL: Do you remember anything about . . .

RB: Not . . .

SL: . . . the war or—other than the newspaper or the . . .

RB: Well, my uncle did go. My father's brother. Now he was a minister, too, and he was a chaplain. And he did Casino. He did the Italian campaign. So he worked his way up the coast—Casino and Anzio and, you know, those campaigns. So he saw—he was the real deal. And I remember when he came back he brought me a helmet, you know, with a dent in it. So we all, of course, thought that was a bullet and infra—a flashlight—red flashlight and a—I think he brought me a canteen, I believe. But of course, all this stuff I lost immediately or traded away for something, but it's sad but true. But yeah, I mean, that was a very early remembrance, and that would've been before I moved to Richmond. You know, I had all that.

SL: Did you . . .

RB: But he was decorated, but back then, chaplains didn't carry weapons. So he was just naked out there, you know. I mean, I think it'd be a terrible role. I mean, if I were a chaplain, even though I didn't believe in death, I'd think I'd carry a weapon. But they didn't issue 'em to chaplains back then.

[03:01:43] SL: Did he ever talk about the war at all?

RB: He—not much. He didn't like it. He was decorated, but he didn't talk about it. It ruined his stomach. He couldn't eat certain foods when he came back—you know, like Spam and tomatoes and things like that, so . . .

SL: He couldn't eat those.

RB: Couldn't eat those.

SL: Is that because that's what he lived on during the war or . . .

RB: I don't know. That, I just assu—I think he developed a reaction to those types of food because of the K rations and whatnot. Yeah.

SL: It's not unusual for veterans not to talk about their experiences.

RB: That's right, and he wouldn't. He was a very jovial man, but he had kind of a—I think a little bit of bitterness underneath it all. And I think the war had to affect him in that regard.

[03:02:27] SL: Did he continue his ministry after the war?

RB: Yeah. Yeah, he was an excellent minister. And he was in Richmond with us for a while at a companion church and then went back to San Antonio. And he started two churches in San Antonio and was in Corpus Christi for a long period of time—had a church there. So he was a excellent minister and very, as I say, upbeat, humorous, witty guy.

SL: And was he Episcopalian as well?

RB: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. See, my grandmother spawned two Episcopal priests.

SL: Well, [*RB laughs*] it is interesting isn't it? That . . .

RB: Yeah. Yeah. It is. It is.

SL: Now your . . .

RB: And it goes back to some extent . . .

SL: Now wait a minute. Now on your—it was your father's side that had the Episcopal . . .

RB: That's right.

SL: Your mother—your grandmother on your. . .

RB: Yeah, my grandmother spawned two Episcopal priests.. . .

SL: Yeah. Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

RB: Yeah. On my father's side. That's right. That's right. And I think it goes back to Grampy Swann, who was the Episcopalian Anglican circuit rider in Kansas.

SL: Sure. I'm sure it does.

RB: Yeah.

SL: [*Sighs*] [*Papers ruffle*] You are—you're active, though, with the Episcopal Church now, aren't you?

RB: I am active. It's a—I've been involved with a church called St. Margaret's in Little Rock, and I've been on the vestry and been the senior warden and, fact, we selected a new bishop for the

state, what, two or three years ago, and I chaired that committee. They had a priest from Fayetteville on the committee with me named Lowell Grisham . . .

SL: Yes.

RB: . . . who I bet you know. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yes, I do.

RB: Who was a—I enjoy Lowell. He's a good person to work with. But yes, I was involved in that process. And then I've stayed active, and it's a—it's part of my personality. I mean, it's just part of my lifeblood. I just do it.

[03:04:18] SL: Mh-hmm. Well you know, in talking with folks, faith is a common thread . . .

RB: Sure.

SL: . . . in all these stories.

RB: Sure.

SL: And . . .

RB: Sure.

SL: . . . it played a role in the household.

RB: Right.

SL: And continues to play a role in folks' lives to this day.

RB: That's right.

SL: I don't know how the next generations—I don't know how—it—

for some reason, I feel like there's a lessening of that, or it's not the same sort of upbringing that we—you got to experience in your growing up.

RB: I think my son, who is now—we only have one child who is now thirty-two, thirty-three—he's starting to edge back into it—goin' to church. He lives in New York, and we were with him over Easter, and we went to services together. And he enjoys the tradition. And he's got a nine-month-old girl, and he had her in church. So you know, some of the seeds have been planted, so we'll see.

[03:05:15] SL: I've always felt like the Episcopals—Episcopalians were—there was a more romantic experience, for some reason, in their services. I . . .

RB: Well, the liturgical side of the Episcopal Church is wonderful—the service. It's not everybody's cup of tea, but it's a wonderful service and, you know, the language—the old English—even though we've upgraded it in recent years where it's more, I hate to say, pedestrian, but it is, [*laughs*] than it used to be. But it's a very effective liturgy, I think, and then the hymns and the service and the communion-service aspect is all, I think, very effective—very well done. But again, it doesn't appeal to everybody.

SL: Yeah.

RB: And parts of it don't appeal to me. That's why I say my favorite hymns are the Baptist hymns. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well, now . . .

RB: But my wife doesn't believe me, but when I, at some point, lay out what I want at my funeral, it's gonna be primarily Baptist hymns. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well, I bet they'll let you get away with that. [*Laughter*]

RB: I don't think after you've gone to your reward you're in control of things. [*Laughs*]

[03:06:22] SL: That's right. Well, who knows? [*RB laughs*] You might be. So I'm trying to—we've got to, at some point, talk about your love life . . .

RB: Right.

SL: . . . and how that matured over the years. I mean, when you went on a—what was your first date? [*Chair squeaks*]

RB: Oh my goodness. That's a good question. It was a—I remember my first romantic experiences were in Richmond, so that would've been twelve, thirteen. Pretty young, but still, you know, these parties that I talked about. And you know, I'd say that I've—you know, I had several infatuations back during that period. And then, of course, I fell in love here in Little Rock and

went through that process—couple of people, as a matter of fact. But it was interesting—my senior year in high school, I saw a newspaper [column] in the *Arkansas Gazette*, and it was this young woman who had been at Briarcliffe College in New York, and she was from Fordyce, and she had been—and her picture was in the paper—said she had been selected the best all-around student at Briarcliffe College in Briarcliffe, New York—very attractive woman. And I clipped the picture, out and I took it to a fraternity brother of mine, who was not a very romantic type, shall we say. He was more interested in more graphic stuff. And I said, "Look, this is the woman I'm gonna marry." He said, "Ahh"—you know, he kinda tossed it aside. But that's who I married. And I hadn't met her at that time. So I came home, and I did meet her, and she was in Little Rock for some parties. And then we didn't have a date. We—she dated a friend of mine, and I had a date with another woman, and we went out together spring vacation my senior year, and I found out she was gonna be in New York, and I was goin' to Columbia University to get a master's in English literature. So I was gonna be in New York. [*Chair squeaks*] So I said, "Well, let's see each other," and we started dating in New York, and it took us—I did—we didn't really bond, shall we say, the first year because I

had been at Sewanee, and New York was—man, that [*laughter*] was different. And I'd been to—I'd done the grand tour that summer, kinda hitchhiking around Europe on my own, which was really a great experience for me because it taught me how to survive. And if I hadn't done that, coming from Sewanee—isolated Sewanee—and goin' to New York City, I wouldn't have made it. But I learned how to survive doing the grand tour on my own in Europe for about three months.

[03:09:05] SL: Well, we better talk about that [*RB laughs*] little trip right now while we're there. So you graduate from Sewanee. What degree did you have?

RB: I got a B.A. in—well, bachelor of arts, and English was my major.

SL: Okay. And so you decide to do a solo tour of Europe.

RB: Well, I got a scholarship to go—Woodrow Wilson scholarship—and that's where you're contemplating being a college professor. You don't have to actually become a college professor. You just have to think about it. And they pay for your graduate program. So I got this scholarship, and I chose Columbia University to go and study graduate work in English literature. So I had a free ride in New York for a year. And I went to Europe during the three months before goin' to Columbia. A friend of mine and I

sailed over on a Cunard Line ship together, and he was gonna study at Oxford University, so we did London and then Oxford together, and then I bid him adieu and went back to London and crossed over to Paris and was on my own. [*Chair squeaks*]

[03:10:10] SL: What was that like?

RB: I tell you, it was an experience. It really was. Again, I learned to survive, and I met some people. I met some great—I hitchhiked. So, you know, back then, you learned that the British are great people 'cause they'll pick you up on the road. It's probably changed since then. I don't think back then I would've hitchhiked in America. I did a little bit from Sewanee. But the British were great. The French were terrible. The French would not pick you up. I'd dress in coat and tie and stand on the highway, and they would not pick me up. So I had to take trains in France. I got down to Italy—they were marginally better than the French but still pretty bad as far as picking me up. Then you got back to Austria and to Germany, and they were terrific. They just picked you up in a New York minute. And one of the most interesting rides I had was on the back of a motorcycle goin' down the autobahn, and here I am—I was scared to death. I hitchhiked with a backpack. I had a backpack. So I had this old backpack on my back and was

leaned over on this guy's back, and he was goin' ninety to a minute, and he had this scarf that kept flapping in my face, you know, as we went down the autobahn, and I was just visualizing hitting a pebble or a rock in the autobahn and just goin', you know, every which-a-way. But somehow, we made it through, and I did that for about an hour, and I said, "Never again. [*Laughter*] Never gettin' on a motorcycle." [*Laughter*] But it was the hitchhiking. It was meeting people. [*Chair squeaks*] I didn't stay in youth hostels. I stayed in grade D hotels. You know, back then you had Frommer's *Europe on 5 Dollars a Day*, and that was kinda my Bible, and I just basically did it. And I did the grand tour, came back around to Paris, met up with my buddies, and we just had a party like—it was a major party in my life. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well, what did you guys do?

RB: Oh, we went down to Montmartre, and you know, the Moulin Rouge and that sorta thing and just, you know, talked about what we had done and, you know, did stupid things like you do at that age.

[03:12:11] SL: Good. Good. Well, that's interesting. You know, I would've thought that in France, if you'd had anything American on, that they just would've done anything for you.

RB: Well, I think they were enthralled by Americans. Don't get me wrong. But they were just not willing to pick you up. And it—it's not only my experience, it's other people's experience, so I can't blame it on the fact that I looked threatening in any regard. They're just not a hitchhiking country. Now I don't know if it's, what, north of a certain line, Anglo-Saxon, you know. But the Germans, the English, and the Austrians would pick you up. You know, interesting commentary.

SL: Interesting.

RB: Yeah, yeah. Very much so. But I—boy, I—it was just a great experience. I just can't—and again, I was kind of a shy, introverted student—academic-type at Sewanee. And, again, my last two years, after having a good time my first two years, I worked darn hard and, you know, did well and got into graduate school and all that. But I did not know the way of the world until—if I hadn't done that Europe trip, it woulda been an experience because I got to New York—I got to Columbia, and I went to my dormitory at John Jay, to register, and they said, "We've never heard of you. [*SL laughs*] I said, "Well you know, I'm a student here." And they said, "Well, did you send in your form?" And I said, "What form?" You know, I'd—I—if I'd gotten a form, I hadn't focused on it. So I had to go down the street

and check into a grade D hotel and had to live there until I found a place to live. And you know, so I mean, that type of experience is, you know, what the trip to Europe prepared me for.

[03:14:00] SL: What was it that turned the corner for you at Sewanee? What—how did you all of a sudden decide to work hard those last two years?

RB: Well, I'd—I think part of it was my roommate situation. I was able to get a situation where I could have, basically, a single room, and so that eliminated a lotta distractions. And I decided I enjoyed studying. And really got into it. And it was interesting to me, and I became more accomplished, and I could see some things in literature or whatever that were exciting to me, so it turned me on. And I think that was the main thing. I think, also, I was the typical sophomore, where you're just so immature and doing stupid things and you—all of a sudden, you say, "Wake up, you know. This isn't goin' anywhere." So that happened to me at the age of about, what, nineteen or twenty.

[03:14:54] SL: Were there—was there anything that happened in your life that was a major, major hurdle for you to overcome? You know, growin' up and through college, was there any traumatic event that you can remember that shaped you in any

way?

RB: Oh, there're probably a series of basic humiliations and that sorta thing. Not one specific incident comes to mind. But I was kind of a shy, retiring person, and one of the best things about working hard and becoming a very accomplished and recognized student was it gave you a security and an accomplishment that you could look back on and, you know, gave you kind of—"Well, this is—I can feel proud of myself about this." So it was overcoming kind of a—an initial embarrassment—introverted personality that this accomplishment—especially, well, playing football. I got some acclaim for doin' that but especially in college, academically. And I'd always—I knew how to party. I mean, that was not [*laughs*] a big deal. But I think that was the main thing—just recognizing that I could do something well and just building on that. It's hard to say that there was one incident that was a major hurdle, but I think, generally, just coming—overcoming my reticence and being more introverted and being more outspoken and, certainly, getting into politics cured that real quickly [*laughs*] 'cause you have to go around the state and talk to everybody under the sun. But I think the grand tour helped a lot, too.

[03:16:32] SL: Well, you probably got some confidence in the

football stuff, too.

RB: Yes, yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

[03:16:40] SL: Did you have a favorite coach?

RB: Ray Peters. Ray Peters—I—you've heard of Wilson Matthews because . . .

SL: Yes.

RB: . . . he was the coach up here. Ray Peters was his assistant at Central High. And when Hall High opened, Ray Peters moved over to Hall, and Wilson Matthews stayed at Central. And Ray Peters was my coach, and yeah, he basically told me that I was a wiseass, and I needed to shape up, and I needed to take the game seriously, and "Nobody owes you anything." And, yeah, it was a real lesson. And he told me that, and I didn't believe it for a while, but yeah, he had an impact. I remember comin'—we were doin spring practice, and I came in to him one day, and I said, "Coach Peters, I can't practice this afternoon. I got a cut on my finger here," and I cut it on a s—talkin' about my uncle and Spam—I cut it on a Spam can [*laughs*], I think—somethin' like that. And he looked at it. He said, "Brown," he said, "I've had bigger cuts than that on my eyeball." [*Laughter*] And I said, "All right, Coach, where do I go to dress out?" But no, he just—he kinda slapped me around and told me that nobody owed

me anything. And it was—he was a—yeah, he had an impact.

SL: It was a comeuppance, wasn't it?

RB: Yeah, yeah, 'cause he kinda saw it the way it was.

SL: But he went to Hall.

RB: He'd shifted over to Hall, and he was the football coach there. Yeah. That was—see, this—Hall had just opened, and he was our first football coach, and I was on the first football team at Hall.

[03:18:10] SL: Do you remember much about Wilson Matthews?

RB: Other than I tiptoed around him. You know, he was a presence, and his football teams were some of the best teams in the South, as you well know. And he was no-nonsense. Peters was no-nonsense, but I got to know Peters. I never got to know Wilson Matthews. But those teams he had were just crackerjack. I mean, Bruce Fullerton—some of those people were just amazing. I mean, they could beat anybody in the South and did. I mean, it was bruited about that they should've scrimmaged Fayetteville. The Shoats back then coulda given 'em a pretty good game, I suspect.

SL: I suspect that's probably true. I know Bob Lamb tells a story that Wilson Matthews used to come over and coach special teams at Little Rock Junior College back then.

RB: Mh-hmm.

SL: And so he had a dose of Wilson, too.

RB: [*Laughs*] Well, you either took to him, or you didn't.

SL: Yeah.

[03:19:04] RB: Now the coach at Sewanee, believe it or not, was a man named Shirley Majors, and Shirley Majors was the father of Billy Majors and Johnny Majors and Larry Majors, all of whom were stupendous football players and coaches. But Shirley Majors was undoubtedly the toughest man I've ever met, and I used to watch him spit between his teeth and tried to emulate that. Never could. [*SL laughs*] But I think Wilson Matthews was cut outta the same mold. And the mold back then was "Bear" Bryant. I mean, Bear Brant—Bryant kinda set the standard. And even when I was doing two-a-days in August at Hall High School—I mean, we were doin' things they would never allow you to do today, you know, because of dehydration and the possibility of falling out because of some kind of a deficiency. And fortunately they gave us salt tablets. And that saved us—you know, having that saline in your system, otherwise we would've been passin' out all over the place. But it was harsh. I mean, it was the idea that, "You're a sissy unless you can put up with this, and no water," you know. But . . .

SL: Yeah, I remember the [*RB laughs*] salt tablets.

RB: You remember all that stuff.

SL: Yes, I do.

RB: Yeah.

SL: I sure do. Well . . .

RB: But it—and that was a lesson, you know, and I—you felt like—it's like climbing two or three high peaks. If you do it and you get through that—you get through the two-a-days—I mean, that's somethin'. And I remember coming home during the noon hour and I—all I could do was drink water, you know. That's all I could do [*laughs*] and then go back and cough it up or, you know, whatever.

[03:20:35] SL: Were you lucky enough to get out without any major injuries?

RB: Oh, I had—there was a crack-back block. It was not a really crack-back, it was on my upper—I got hit in the face and had about ten stitches but nothin' major. I mean, [*SL laughs*] I always had—no, I mean, that—I [*laughter*] . . .

SL: Ten stitches today, though . . .

RB: Yeah.

SL: You were in the emergency room for a while, you know.

RB: Yeah, that's right.

SL: And you don't do anything . . .

RB: That's what they did.

SL: . . . for weeks afterwards.

RB: You know, and . . .

SL: Yeah.

RB: . . . and, hell, it got me some acclaim. I mean, the women loved it, and the coach was proud and everybody—you know, you're kinda the center of attention for a while. But it was a fair block, but I was coming in defensive end, and he was the halfback, and he just circled around and got me—or actually, I think he was the offensive [end] man, and he circled around and came back and got me just before I was to hit the quarterback. [*SL sucks air through his teeth*] And it blindsided—I never saw him.

SL: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

RB: But again, I like to hit. I mean, that was the game.

[03:21:31] SL: Yeah. Mh-hmm. So did Hall High have a good team?

RB: We had a pretty good team under the circumstances. First year, we lost some games we shouldn't have lost, but we beat some people we shouldn't've beaten. I remember we lost to Benton, and that was too bad. We lost to Forrest City. Now Forrest City had a great team, and I'm tryin' to remember—one of the—B.

[Lindsey] who is the Lindsey up here? Jim Lindsey?

SL: Jim. Mh-hmm.

RB: All right. This is Jim's older brother, and Sonny Holmes was the quarterback. I mean, they had a good team. And Donny Kessinger was, like, second-string quarterback. So now you're talkin' about some athletes. And we got out there, and we played a good game with 'em. They beat us somethin' like 9–0. And I remember the fullback, who was just a rough-and-ready guy—had his two front teeth knocked out [*laughs*] during the game. He just spit 'em out and kept goin', but it was a tough game, and we didn't win that one.

[03:22:31] SL: Were there blacks on those teams?

RB: Oh no. Uh-uh. Uh-uh. This is a—we're talkin'—that year, it's [19]57–[19]58—it's the year that you had the Little Rock Nine. But no, Hall was not integrated, and Central was the only one integrated school in probably the—well, I was gonna say the state. I think Charleston, Arkansas, had integrated before that and maybe Hoxie.

SL: Fayetteville.

RB: Hoxie and Fayetteville. Yeah. So there were some integrated schools but not at Hall.

SL: I remember there were schools that would not play

Fayetteville . . .

RB: Yeah.

SL: . . . 'cause they were integrated.

RB: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. But Hall was not. And, of course, African Americans changed the game, my goodness. Bigger and faster.

[03:23:13] SL: What about Sewanee? What kinda football team was that?

RB: Pretty good but Division III.

SL: Yeah.

RB: You know, playing schools like Washington and Lee and Rhodes and Millsaps. Schools like that.

SL: Yeah.

RB: And it was good football, but I mean, you see Razorback football and then see Division III, and it's like it's in slow motion and a lot smaller, and you can hear pretty good hits. And of course, now Sewanee has a lotta blacks on its team, but back then, they didn't. But Shirley Majors was still the coach, so he had some guys who would come down from the hills with their moonshine bottles and stay in school for about a semester and then drop out. [*Laughter*] I mean, you couldn't give scholarships, but . . .

SL: Right.

RB: Every now and then, there'd be a couple of guys show up and not last a—not make it through the school year.

SL: But get a season in.

RB: Get a season in. Of course. Yeah.

SL: Yeah, sure. Yeah.

RB: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

RB: Yeah.

[03:24:08] SL: Okay. So you take your tour of Europe. You get a big boost in your confidence in yourself, and you're kinda—your gumption boost, I guess.

RB: Right.

SL: Say.

RB: Right.

SL: And you get to New York, and they don't have you at that school. You believe you're gonna go to that school. And—so you go down the street to a dump of a hotel until you get can get that straightened out. How long did it take you to get that [*RB laughs*] straightened out?

RB: Well, you got the picture. That's exactly what happened. I went down to the Harmony Hotel—that was the name of it—on 110th in West Side and checked into this hotel. And they gave me a

room, and I went up to the room and unpacked what I had with me. And I don't know if it was the first night or the second night. This was like we're—William Styron. This is like one of his books. [*SL laughs*] So I'm up there, and I hear the shouting down the hall, you know, and I've seen movies recently, like *The L-Shaped Room*, about bedbugs and all that, and I'm looking at this bed anyway. And I hear this shouting down the hall, and it's two African Americans in a fight—man and a woman. And I say, "Well, I"—you know, the—I can put up with this for a while, but I just—it's really gettin' to me. I mean, they're—this is just not right that they're distracting and being discourteous—you know, kinda that ol' southern thing. And I said, "I'm gonna go down and ask 'em, you know, to be quiet." So now I say to myself, "Now what you cannot do is go down there and say, 'Will you all please be quiet?' Just don't do that, Bob." And I'm talkin' to myself. So, finally, it's probably midnight or somethin' like that, and I wander down the hall of this grade D hotel, and the door's cracked open and this two—couple—these two people—the couple are in there fighting—having words. And I lead [RB edit: lean] my head my head in there, and I said, "Will you all please be quiet?" [*Laughs and claps hands*] And they looked up at me, and they were so astonished that, yeah, it calmed down, but it

was just illustrative of what the situation was. I was there for about a week, I'd say, and I eventually posted a notice and found out where notices were posted—"Wanted, roommate"—that type of thing—and finally found a person that I could move in with, and we were simpatico. And we got a place on the upper—West 87th Street.

[03:26:34] SL: So there wasn't any university housing that . . .

RB: No, I'd missed the boat. I mean [*laughs*], the—there was no room in the inn. I was just—stupidity on my part, but then—you know, back then I was not interested that much in forms and filling out things.

SL: Right.

RB: I mean, I could do it for a scholarship, but not just for—I mean, I always went to Sewanee, and they had a room for me. So I mean, goin' to New York, I assumed would be the same thing, but it wasn't.

SL: So what was your apartment like?

RB: An efficiency. Basically, a big room. Well, big—you know, [*unclear word*]—fourteen by fourteen, maybe. Curtain in between. He was on one side. I was on the other side. Bathroom. Kitchen. That was it.

SL: That's two bunks, a bathroom, and a kitchen.

RB: That's right. An efficiency apartment. Polish woman ran the apartment building. And that's where I found out that JFK had been shot. I came back to this place and walked in—she said, "Oh, it's such a"—she had an accent, of course. She—"That's such a sad, sad thing. The president was such a good man. He's been shot." I said, "What?" He said, "Yeah. Yeah, he's been shot." And I went up—we were goin' up to Connecticut to—for dates—not my roommate—another friend of mine and I were goin' up to Connecticut for dates with two college women we knew. And went to the West End bar on Broadway and sat there and watched the telecast of what had happened and then caught the train up to Connecticut. But anyway, that's where I lived for about, I guess, half a year, and then I moved into a different apartment on Broadway with another couple of guys. And . . .

[03:28:10] SL: You say that with a little smirk on your face.

RB: Well, I don't know if you've ever heard of Paul Goodman, but Paul Goodman was a freelance anarchist, and he wrote a book called *Growing Up Absurd*, and it was about—I mean, this is not left. This is far-left type guy, and he ran with the so-called beat crowd, like William—Wilhelm de Kooning, the artist and . . .

SL: You bet.

RB: . . . people of that ilk. But he was goin' to teach at Wisconsin for a year, so he was renting his apartment. So a couple of guys and I rented Paul Goodman's apartment, and it was an experience. I mean, he had wonderful music. I slept under a de Kooning. He had all of these accolades from the famous Beat crowd around the apartment. So I mean, it was just kinda neat. But . . .

[03:28:57] SL: How much was the rent?

RB: Oh my goodness. I don't know. There were three of us, and I remember one of the guys moved on. The second guy would not pay me what he owed me, so this is where my legal strain came into play. I finally collected by various means. [*SL laughs*] But I don't know what it was. It was enough for me to want to collect what he owed me, and—but my scholarship ran out after that first year, and I had to get a job. And English majors were not a hot commodity back then in the job market, but I looked through the want ads in *The New York Times*. And there was one ad that said, "Wanted: English major," and I went to this particular agency, and they said, "The Equitable Life Assurance Society is looking for contract drafters." I said, "What is that?' And they said, "Well, you draft contracts. You know, amendments to contracts." So I went up, and I had to be tested

and went through the process—got the job. So that was my second year in New York, and I moved outta Paul Goodman's apartment and went down and got a solo apartment. Well, actually, it wasn't solo. I had a law student as a roommate down there—a law student and his girlfriend, as it went. [*Laughs*] But anyway, we lived on Claremont Avenue for the second year. And I was dating Charlotte, my wife, that second year. And she was from Fordyce. She had a tragedy. Her family was—if you ever went down to Fordyce, there was a marvelous old Georgia mansion that was down there—pre-1964. And in 1964, when both of us were in New York—she was on the east side. I was on the west side—the house burned down and killed her father.

SL: Oh.

RB: And we were havin' a date the night after that happened I got the phone call that it had happened, so—and it was a real tragedy, and to some extent, we became closer because of that and began dating seriously that next year. But anyway, she came from a very prominent family down in Dallas County—Fordyce.

KK: Coffee?

SL: The coffee ready?

KK: It's been here for a while. I was waitin' for a place to jump in.

SL: Oh, well let's pause tape.

TM: [*Unclear words*]

[Tape stopped]

[03:31:05] SL: We probably oughta let the folks looking at this or reading the transcript or listening to the audio that you and I just had a big ol' cup of coffee . . .

RB: [*Laughs*] And we're wired.

SL: . . . [*laughs*] and we're wired now. And we've talked about a few things while we were having coffee. I was gonna say that—you know, we were just kinda joking how this is not really a test and—but I will say that folks sometimes—when they're recounting their life, they come across things they hadn't thought about in a long time. And sometimes the—there—it evokes an emotional response; sometimes it spurs an entire different path that—than we were on. I wanna get back to music and your ex—your musical experiences. You grew up—there was a piano in your house. Your father played Beethoven to blues. Your favorite hymns are more Baptist oriented, but you also fell in love with rock and roll when it came out. So let's—I wanna start talkin' about your record collection. How—when—you started collecting records when? When . . .

[03:32:33] RB: Probably with the 45s. You know, and that woulda been about the time I moved to Little Rock, which was age fourteen, but before that we had, I guess, the *Hit Parade*. This is all pre-"Rock Around the Clock" and Bill Haley, which was roughly 1954, and *Blackboard Jungle*, which was a seminal film for my generation, and the background music for that was Bill Haley and "Rock Around the Clock." But it's a wonderful film with Sidney Poitier and had to do with a concrete jungle-type public school in New York City. But anyway, my—the music before Bill Haley and some of—The Clovers and "One Mint Julep" and "Annie Had a Baby" and that sorta thing. [Before] the black, African American music, [it] was pretty simpering. It was the *Hit Parade* stuff like "I Saw Her Crying in the Chapel" and that type of thing, which we watched as teenagers—young teenagers, but really was not very inspiring for me. I liked the—I liked something more like the jitterbug, but the jitterbug was not what we danced to with rock and roll. It was a completely differently dance. But I always liked dancing, and you know, I liked to get out, and we'd have a good time. And the best music in the world to dance to is, like, the rock and roll—really, the rhythm and blues. I used to—I think I mentioned this earlier—in Little Rock, I could get "Randy's Record Mart" in Gallitan,

Tennessee, which was playing the Howlin' Wolf and some of this ol' rock and roll music, which was just wonderful. So I would listen to that. I'd listen to Little Richard, and I'm sure I had Little Richard—you know, "Lucille" and that type of thing and Elvis to some extent. I liked "Money Honey." Jerry Lee Lewis I liked. And I liked to some extent—oh, gosh, I'm blankin' on the name now. But anyway, the early Sun Records people. I really enjoyed that, so I had most of their records. And again, the records that had a good beat—rock and roll rhythm and some blues-type beat I would buy. And those are the records we would have at the parties. The early Elvis records were very popular in my group, you know, when he was recording for Sun. And then I think his first RCA albums had these—the old Sun Records on 'em. So that was fun. That was fun.

[03:34:57] SL: So I guess there was—you know, speaking of Sun Records, I guess you have to mention Johnny Cash. Did you ever . . .

RB: Johnny Cash was good, but that was more when I got to college—[*RB hums "I Walk the Line"*] "Dum, dum, dum, dum, dum." And that was a little bit monotonous, but when you got to "Folsom Prison Blues," and "Jackson" with June Carter—now that was my kinda music. That was good stuff. So Johnny Cash—I

liked some of his things, and some were not as popular with me, but I think "Folsom Prison Blues" is one of the great songs.

[03:35:31] SL: What about rockabilly?

RB: Rockabilly I liked. Ronnie Hawkins. I really didn't know that much about Ronnie Hawkins until I read about The Band and the fact The Band was his band. Of course, I saw the film, *The Last Waltz*, and was familiar with him, and I've seen him play in Little Rock. He's played at Cajun's Wharf on occasion—maybe more like early [19]90s. I don't know if he's been there recently. But yes, I liked that, and I liked the old honky tonks, you know, where rockabilly was played. Maybe one of the reasons I liked them is they were not—back then they didn't card as much as they do now [*laughs*] as far as being able to go to some of those clubs. But you know, back then I was not a judge. [*Laughter*]

SL: So when you say "card," they didn't ask for an ID for your age.

RB: They were pretty loose about it—the truth of the matter. And clubs, in particular, whether you were goin' to rush parties or whatever, were very loose about it. That was my recollection.

[03:36:30] SL: Now there were a couple of different circuits through Arkansas. Now did—you know, did the black artists play in the same places that the white artists played?

RB: I think they did, as a matter of fact. I remember goin' down to

Robinson Auditorium, which is where I saw Elvis, and it could not have been more than a couple of years after I saw Elvis where I saw Little Richard, you know, playing some of his really early stuff. And that was well attended. And Chuck Berry, of course, I saw later. Chuck Berry was not that popular I didn't—I don't think in the African American community. Little Richard was, you know. But—yes, and I'm sure The Coasters and groups like that would come in. Where they stayed was a different issue, you know, before the public accommodations legislation passed Congress in the Kennedy/Johnson era. But, yeah, we had some of that music. Ray Charles. I remember Ray Charles. I saw Ray Charles in Chattanooga when I was at Sewanee, and I remember goin' down for a quote "concert" [*laughs*], and it was very good. So Ray Charles was one of my favorites, too.

[03:37:43] SL: Do you think that the rock-and-roll phenomenon in some way coincides or helped facilitate the civil rights stuff, where it was a mixture of cultures that was getting airplay now, and there were, you know, the basic rhythms were from outta the African American community. They were being—you know what I'm tryin' to say?

RB: Yeah.

SL: There was a crossover that was happening culturally.

RB: I think the easy answer to that is yes. No question about it. I mean, Elvis, of course, was criticized by, again, the adults for being African American music, you know. And our—and that was one of the reasons that he was censored, I think, on some of the national shows, like *Ed Sullivan*, because of his dancing and whatnot, which was associated to some extent, I think, with certainly white and black jitterbutting back in the [19]40s. But I think the music and the relationship with the rhythm and blues—I mean, rock and roll came outta rhythm and blues. I don't think there's any question about that. And even rockabilly did with the basic beat. And there may've been a countrified aspect to some of the rockabilly, but the beat was still rhythm and blues—speeded up a bit. But yeah, I think that definitely helped—probably that and football—as [*laughs*] much as anything to foster integration and more communication between the races, which was a good thing. It certainly was happening in the public schools, to some extent. It didn't, early on, happen that much in the churches, which is still a mystery to me, but it just didn't. And I think it was just cultural—two different cultures. But the music, as you indicated, brought the cultures together. And certainly, whites would go to black concerts and vice versa. And it was certainly a big deal in the South, and

maybe this wasn't fostering integration as much as it should have but having the prominent black bands come to the fraternity houses and that sorta thing. I think we had Ike and Tina Turner before they became famous, you know, and that sorta thing. But—you know, and the blues artists, like John Lee Hooker—I mean, that was very, very popular, at least when I was in college. So yes, I think that helped to foster an understanding. And the blues—I mean, the blues are universal, you know. "Jimmy" Reed and "Lightnin'" Hopkins—you just can't beat 'em.

[03:40:12] SL: [*Laughs*] Well, what about—so what about the Beatles? When did the Beatles enter your life?

RB: Well [*laughs*], I was in New York, and you'll hafta help me on the date, but I think it was 1964 when they landed at LaGuardia, or maybe it was Kennedy—I guess it was Kennedy—the international airport. And when they got off the plane, I mean, they didn't know how they were gonna be received. They had been this phenomenon that you'd been reading about in New York in *The New York Times* magazine section and certainly in the pop magazines. And—but they got off the plane—they didn't know if anybody was gonna be there or not to speak of, and it was hysteria. I mean, it was Elvis multiplied. So when they

came to New York and played on that first *Ed Sullivan Show*, I and everybody else in the world watched it. And that, I believe, was, like, maybe late winter of 1964—something like that. So—and I liked some of their stuff. I liked some of their stuff. I liked the rock and roll aspect to it, like, "I Saw Her Standing There." That was one of the early songs. "Can't Buy Me Love" was not my type of song, but "I Saw Her Standing There" was. So I liked some of their early stuff. I saw the first movie, which I thought was incredibly good, which was *Long Day's Night*.

SL: *Hard Day's Night*.

RB: *Hard Day's Night*. I'm sorry.

SL: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

RB: And *Long Day's Night* is Eugene O'Neill, I think. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yes. Uh-huh.

[03:41:43] RB: [*Laughs*] But anyway, *Hard Day's Night*. And I thought that was a remarkably good film—surprisingly good to me. I mean, Ringo Starr does a pantomime in the movie, and John Lennon is just as much of a wisecracker as you would expect him to be. And Paul McCartney was the artist, and George Harrison—you just didn't—he was just there. But a very good movie. And then there was kinda the rumors. You know, "The Beatles are beginnin' to take—smoke marijuana and do

drugs—do LSD." And you know, they've gone from this kind of healthy-type group to more of a Rolling Stones group, and the Rolling Stones were more the bad boys, you know, back in the early days. And I really liked the Rolling Stones. [*SL laughs*] Yeah, and I've probably been to five or six Rolling Stones concerts and just really like the Rolling Stones. But they were the bad boys, and as far as the music, I probably prefer the Rolling Stones. But when *Sergeant Pepper* came out, that had to be, I'm guessing, probably [19]65, [19]66—kind of in that period—[19]67. Kind of in that period. And I remember I was in Charlottesville at law school and a friend of mine came. And I was married at the time, so it had to be [19]67. She came and brought the album to us, and we sat down and listened to it. And it literally—of course, this was the vernacular of the time—blew my mind—and it was very engaging. It just kind of a transforming-type thing because a lot of this music we've been talking about is rebellion. I mean, rock and roll, at its core, was rebellion against parents and the older generation and the old way of doing things and perhaps segregation and crossing boundaries and just being innovative and exploring. [03:43:35] And the [19]60s—my goodness—I was in New York [19]63, [19]64, [19]65, and [*chair squeaks*] the cap was about to come

off, I mean, with Vietnam and the civil rights movement and whatnot. So you could just see everything just simmering under the surface, and music was a large part of that. And it's interesting to me that—I think there's a correlation between war—and of course, we were involved in Vietnam, the early stages of Vietnam—and the arts. And we have a crisis. Whether it's the civil rights movement or war or whatever, you're gonna have an enhancement of the arts. And I think there's a direct correlation with that. And we saw just excellent theater—Richard Burton, Alec Guinness—these great—Albert Finney—these great stars on Broadway. And the music was burgeoning. James Earl Jones. The creativity in the air—and I think, again, society was in crisis. You can almost take it back to Homer and *The Iliad*, you know. Writing as a result of war. And I think there is a correlation. All of that was percolating in New York, so aside from the Beatles, which was very much a part of it. There was a lot going on. And then, of course, in 1968, my ol' school, Columbia—Mark Rudd took over the campus, and you know, I was in Charlottesville at the time, still wearin' a coat and tie, [*laughs*] so I was divorced from my New York days. But it was incredible to me that student activists—the SDS—the Students for a Democratic Society—could take over a campus like that,

and they did, as you recall, and stopped the show. And before that, at Berkeley, you had had the Free Speech Movement, and that was a very radical-type situation for the time. You had monks burning themselves in Saigon in the early days and the self-immolation was being filmed on a regular basis. All of this was just a horrifying, terrifying—civil rights—the whole society was at the boiling point. And the Beatles were part of that. New York—I experienced it directly. Charlottesville, my first two years in law school, it was pretty much like the early [19]60s. The explosion hadn't hit there until my third year in law school, and then it did—assassination of Martin Luther King, in particular.

[03:45:48] SL: Was the folk movement in New York active when you were there?

RB: I'm sorry.

SL: The folk movement. You know . . .

RB: Yeah, Peter, Paul . . .

SL: . . . Dylan . . .

RB: Peter, Paul, and Mary and all that.

SL: Peter, Paul, and Mary. Yeah.

[03:46:00] RB: When I was living—and I don't know if this is on tape—I lived in Paul Goodman's apartment for about five

months, and he was a freelance anarchist who wrote *Growing Up Absurd*. But I was in his apartment, and I remember one of my roommates walking in one afternoon, so this had to be [19]64. And he had an album, and it was *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*. Now that's when Bob Dylan's walking down, I think, in a green jacket in Greenwich Village. And he said, "You gotta hear this." And it had "Oxford Town" on it and all of these great songs. So, yes, Bob Dylan. Joan Baez had really hit before then. I mean, Joan Baez was popular before I got out of Sewanee, so I was familiar with her. And then Peter, Paul, and Mary and, you know, some of the early stuff really—what's the name of the group? Not The Four Lads but—Kingston Trio.

SL: Kingston Trio.

RB: So all of that, you know, seminal folk stuff. But I think Bob Dylan really took it, obviously, to a higher level, and you know, he was the man. And Elvis, as the song goes, he kind of dropped his crown, and the jester picked it up, and that was Bob Dylan.

SL: It's interesting. There's a real Arkansas connection developing at that time, too, 'cause . . .

RB: Are you talkin' about The Band?

SL: Yeah, Hawkins had broken his number one commandment and

had gotten married and [*RB laughs*] now became Levon Helm and the Hawks and . . .

RB: Absolutely.

SL: . . . Dylan was lookin' for a band.

RB: Yep, yep, yep, and that was amazing. And it's a great Arkansas success story. I mean, The Band was very accomplished. Now I think Levon was from Arkansas, and I know was it—Robertson was—he was from Canada.

SL: Robbie Robertson was from Can—all the rest of 'em were from Canada.

RB: Were Canada. But yeah, Levon—of course, Levon was the singer/drummer, so—to some extent.

SL: Yeah.

RB: But no, that—that's a great story. And the fact that Dylan recognized that talent, you know, is a tribute to him.

SL: Well, okay, I'm glad we got that.

RB: [*Laughs*] Got that outta the way.

SL: Got—you got the music stuff in there 'cause it sounded like to me that it was a part of your life that we . . .

RB: Always.

SL: . . . really hadn't touched upon much.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

[03:48:19] SL: Okay, so we're at Columbia, and you're working on a master's in English literature? Is that . . .

RB: Yes, that's correct.

SL: And you spent two years there.

RB: I did.

SL: And you courted the lady that would become your wife.

RB: Charlotte Banks from Fordyce.

SL: Charlotte Banks from For—and what was she doing in New York?

RB: She had been to Briarcliffe College, and she was in New York attending the Katharine Gibbs Secretarial School [New York City, New York], and back then at Katharine Gibbs, you wore a hat and white gloves to secretarial school every morning and learned how to type and take stenography and that sorta thing. It was terrible. [*Laughs*]

[03:48:56] SL: So you've mentioned that y'all didn't—really just weren't totally comfortable with each other early on.

RB: That's correct.

SL: Is that—does that have anything to do with the Rolling Stones versus white gloves and—I mean, what . . .

RB: No, no, I don't mean to depict Charlotte—I don't think Charlotte particularly cared dressing up and having to put on a hat and taking—and she certainly didn't care for the secretarial work, but

back then, her options were fairly limited, you know, unless she wanted to go into some kind of master's work, which was not what, you know, she wanted to do. So she had been in the New York area. Her roommate from Briarcliffe was comin' to Katharine Gibbs, and they did it together. And they lived not in the Barbizon [Hotel for Women], which was back then the place for nice young girls to live but in an apartment on East 72nd Street. And anyway, she—there was a bit of the West Side versus the East Side aspect to it. But you know, opposites do attract. And—[*SL laughs*] and Charlotte certainly likes to dance, too, so [*laughs*] no question about that, so . . .

SL: That's not—that's . . .

RB: And we went to the theater. I mean, this idea that what was happening in society and in the arts—I mean, that was pervasive. I mean, that was not limited. And you know, the East Side was—I mean, the Kennedy assassination and civil rights and all of that was percolating on the East Side as much as the West Side.

[03:50:23] SL: That Kennedy assassination was quite a blow . . .

RB: Absolutely.

SL: . . . emotionally to the whole country.

RB: Absolutely.

SL: And I'm just assuming that broke Charlotte's heart, too.

RB: It did indeed. And the idea—and she experienced this probably more than I did—but the idea that some people would say things about the assassination, indicating that it was a good thing just about put her over the edge. I mean, I—she almost took a swing at somebody who said that one time. So I mean, it's the type of thing where, you know, all—virtually everybody in my generation, with some exceptions, of course, were just devastated by it. And then going through the ritual—the funeral ritual the whole country went through was just agonizing. And havin' the commentators cry and just seeing John-John salute and all that. Yeah. I mean, it was just a—it was terrible. And the whole LBJ thing. I—you know, the bloody blouse that Jackie was in on the plane. I mean, it was just something that was unbelievable. Unbelievable. Rivaled only by Martin Luther King five years later—and Bobby. Bobby. I mean, I was comin' back from, I guess it was Sewanee. I'd gone through Sewanee after law school in 1968. Kennedy had been shot that early spring. I had left Charlottesville. I was drivin' back to Little Rock to begin my law practice, and I decided that I was gonna support Bobby Kennedy for president, and I had not supported him earlier because I thought he was a carpetbagger in New York and that

sorta thing. But I was going home to work for Bobby Kennedy, and I stayed at Sewanee in the Sewanee Inn, woke up in the morning; and Frank Mankiewicz, I think his name was, was standing on top of a car announcing the fact that Bobby Kennedy may not live. And then, of course, they had that video playing over and over again—a head and the—what, the . . .

SL: Pool of blood.

RB: . . . saucer or the pan or whatever. And you know, it was just unbelievable to me. So you know, those two events were just staggering. But—and got back to Arkansas and was just kind of at sea. I supported Hubert Humphrey, but I didn't go out and work, you know.

SL: Yeah.

RB: Didn't work for him.

[03:52:38] SL: So you get your master's degree, and when is it that you and Charlotte tie the knot? When does that happen?

RB: We did it in 1966. I applied to law schools, and I really applied to only two law schools, and I made a decision. I applied to Harvard and UVA—Virginia—and got into both of 'em. UVA offered more money. And I—you know, I could've gone to Harvard and worked on the side, but my family was Virginian, and my brother-in-law had gone to UVA and—some of my

Richmond friends I knew were gonna be there, you know, in law school, even though I hadn't seen 'em in ten years. [*Laughs*] And it was easier, frankly. And I'd been in New York. New York—I love the city. I was there Easter Sunday—still enjoy it. But after a couple of years, it can wear on you a little bit. So I decide to come to—I had gone to seventy-eight speed down to thirty-three and a third goin' to Charlottesville [*laughs*], and it was a slower pace and, frankly, easier. I learned very quickly that I was not a natural law student. I mean, my whole adult life had been geared to English literature, and I wrote a thesis on the female symbol in the poetry of John Keats. I mean, it was not law related. I didn't have law around my house. I had a minister and I had a mother who was kind of into poetry. And my grandfather was a state senator, but I wasn't—you know, we just didn't have a close association, so it wasn't the type thing where I picked up law by osmosis. So I had to really start from ground zero, and it was hard. And we got married after my first year in law school. I went from New York living kind of a Bohemian existence down to Charlottesville living in a dormitory my first year. And then she came down. We got married and moved into an apartment lookin'—overlooking a funeral home. [*SL laughs*] Maybe there's something symbolic about that.

[*Laughter*]

SL: You know, growin' up in Fayetteville, one of the things about funeral homes when I was a kid—they were also the ambulance service. I don't know . . .

RB: [*Laughs*] Sure, they were. [*Laughter*] And maybe limousines for important events, too.

SL: Yeah, yeah. So University of Virginia. That's a tough school. That's a tough law school. It's one of the best in the country.

RB: Tough law school. That's right. That's right. It was.

SL: So you had to apply yourself.

RB: That's right, I did.

[03:55:03] SL: And did Charlotte work while you were in law school or . . .

RB: She did. She did. I had a good scholarship for most of it and then a student loan towards the end, which I paid off for about the next twenty years. Fifty dollars a month to—I call it Wachovia [pronounced Watch-oh-VEE-uh], but it was Wachovia [pronounced Wah-KOH-vee-uh] bank [*laughs*], and I'd never heard of . . .

SL: Wachovia [pronounced Watch-oh-VEE-uh]. [*Laughs*]

RB: . . . Wachovia [pronounced Wah-KOH-vee-uh]. But I paid this loan—but Charlotte—yeah, she worked for a doctor when she

signed on, and she worked for St. Anne's School, which is where John Grisham's—you know, he's in—involved with that school now because his children went there. But anyway, she helped me get through law school, you know, because of her workin', we were able to survive. And my parents helped some, and I had the scholarship, so all of that together really worked well, and I really had minimal debt. I think one of the tragedies for students today is the student loan debt, which is really a ball and chain for these kids getting outta college and graduate school. And I think it leads to problems. You come out with six-figure debt—especially in this particular climate—and it can really lead to problems—stress and otherwise. So I'd—I hate it. I think the system has to be brought back into whack some way somehow, you know, and not saddling people with such a onerous debt on the front end. But my debt was not that onerous, and I got out—and as I say, I had a job back in Little Rock with Chowning, Mitchell, Hamilton, and Burrow, which is the law firm I was telling Tom Dillard about earlier. And that's where I started out practice. But it was exciting. It was an exciting time, and we came back and some of our old friends had—were more traditional. And Charlotte and I eventually decided that we wanted to do somethin' different, and that's one of the reasons I

got into politics with Jim Guy Tucker and started doin' some different things, and it's made it very exciting—including goin' to Washington for three and a half years and so forth.

SL: So how long were you and . . .

TM: Excuse me, Scott. We need to change tapes.

SL: Oh, okay.

[Tape stopped]

[03:57:08] RB: The name I was blanking on earlier—one of my favorites—can't believe I forgot him because he was the opening act for Johnny Cash and was a great musician in his own right, was Carl Perkins.

SL: Oh, sure.

KK: Oh, absolutely.

RB: [*Laughs*] You know, how could I forget it?

SL: Yeah.

RB: You know, he's the one who really did "Blue Suede Shoes" right, you know, not Elvis. But anyway . . .

SL: Are we rolling?

TM: We've been rolling.

SL: We've been rolling. [*RB laughs*] You gotta watch these guys. [*TM laughs*]

RB: Maybe they got my Carl Perkins comment. That's good.

SL: They roll at will.

TM: You got it. [*Laughter*]

[03:57:34] SL: Yeah. Yeah, that's good. Okay, so what year is this in—when you finish in Virginia?

RB: I finished in 1968, and that spring was when Martin Luther King had been assassinated, and then, as I was coming back from graduation, Bobby Kennedy was assassinated. So that was the double whammy. And I was coming back, and of course, there were—there had been riots in Little Rock and throughout the South and the country because the Kennedy—or, excuse me—the King assassination and then the Bobby Kennedy assassination just—there weren't riots in Arkansas, but there certainly was weeping and gnashing of teeth in some quarters—not everywhere but some quarters because he was considered to be the heir apparent. Now I think Kennedy—I think—I believe Kennedy carried Arkansas when he ran against Nixon. And in fact, I'm sure he did, so he was not anathema. The Democratic machine still controlled things. Whether Bobby Kennedy woulda defeated Richard Nixon is a different story. I don't know if that woulda happened, but I certainly was coming back to work for Bobby Kennedy.

[03:58:43] SL: Well, Nixon was developing the southern

strategy . . .

RB: That's exactly right.

SL: . . . at that point in time.

RB: Yeah.

SL: He saw that if you got the South, you win.

RB: Well yeah, and Lyndon Johnson knew that he had given Nixon the southern strategy by virtue of the civil rights and the Great Society programs. Yeah, that was the trade-off. The South was gonna go Republican, which it did.

SL: And to this day—it's just now—that stranglehold is just now softening, really.

RB: Well, I think this last election with Virginia and North Carolina goin' for Obama is a major, major bake—breakthrough. You know, it's interesting to me that Arkansas was not more favorable towards Obama. I thought it'd be a lot closer in Arkansas than it was. But I think Arkansas, the margin was maybe as great as anywhere in the South.

SL: Yeah.

RB: You know, for McCain.

SL: Yeah, it was disappointing.

RB: It was. It was. [*SL laughs*] It was surprising to me.

SL: Yeah.

RB: It was surprising.

[03:59:43] SL: So golly, the tragedies bring you—you're in Little Rock after these national tragedies hit. What is Little Rock like now, and how is it different from the way Arkansas was when you left?

RB: Well, it's interesting. When I came back, we were kinda thrust into a society of old friends, which was kind of a traditional group. And Charlotte and I had, frankly, been to the city. I mean, we'd been to New York and been in Charlottesville and taken the grand tour, and Charlotte been educated in New York state, so our interests were a little bit different, frankly. And these friends were old friends and still are—good friends. But there was an excitement that was happening—we knew—in the rest of the country and, frankly, Little Rock—if you tuned into rock and roll stations, you were not getting the music out of San Francisco or Berkeley, for example, or you know, Denver, Colorado—some of the—oh gosh, Creedence Clearwater Revival—that type thing was not—Janis Joplin. That sorta thing was not being played on the local radio stations yet and was considered quote "hippie" music, you know, in some quarters. So—but that was the type of music that was exciting. I mean, that—we were, what, twenty-five, twenty-six—the—a little bit

older than that—twenty-seven, and Charlotte was twenty-five, and so that was exciting to us. And we were interested in what was goin' on throughout the country—especially in the wake of what had happened. So we were more interested in doing some different things. And as it turned out, we started exploring things around Arkansas and what Arkansas has to offer is just incredible. I mean, we started doin' things like the Buffalo River and just going around the state seeing friends in various communities. Charlotte had a strong south Arkansas connection because of growing up in Fordyce. [04:01:43] And she joined eventually a travel agency and worked at a travel agency. Now you talk about opening the door to great things. [*Laughs*] I mean, back then you got a lotta free trips and that sorta thing, and that's probably—in our first ten years of marriage, the most exciting thing we did—we took great trips. And she did. She worked for Poe Travel, which is an agency in Little Rock. And that was just a lotta fun. So we were expanding our horizons with a lot of different groups of people and that was fun. And Rockefeller was governor. And Anne Bartley, his stepdaughter, was a friend and kind of in the peer group, and Jim Guy Tucker was dating her at one point and just a lot of different people around and different things happening. And Win Rockefeller was

bringing in African Americans to his administration, like Sam Sparks and like Wallace Cunningham [RB edit: Walter Cunningham] and William "Sonny" Walker and Les Hollingsworth. And you know, the—these were—I hadn't had a whole lot of, you know, black friends in my past, but these were people that were peers that I could relate to. So we were doin' that, and there was a lot of social interaction in the late [19]60s, more so than today. Probably in the workforce there—there's a lot more social interaction, but I'm talkin' bout goin' to people's houses and that sorta thing in the late [19]60s, early [19]70s. And so that was exciting. And it was about 1971 that I decided to leave the law practice where I was and get involved in a political life. And the seeds of that had been sown, you know, a lot earlier—probably with—starting with the Little Rock crisis. But the [19]60s, as you well know, were a very exciting time to be around, and again, music was a large part of it. What was happening was some of the music—not only in California but later in Seattle and throughout. So, you know, we enjoyed it. It was a happy, happy time.

[04:03:50] SL: Yeah, there was lots of—television was also kinda turning a corner, too. There were more progressive, hip shows, and comedy was taking a turn and . . .

RB: Well, we watched *Laugh-In*, in Charlottesville and . . .

SL: Yeah.

RB: . . . that was one of the great shows. I mean, that was just a—and the brothers—the Smothers Brothers, my goodness, I mean, they [*laughs*]—they had a—I mean, drugs was just pervasive—were pervasive. And they had routines on *The Smothers Brothers* where people were obviously high doing comedy routines, and that was anathema to the owning moguls of those broadcasting networks. And they eventually, as you know, censored the Smothers Brothers and took 'em off the air, which was a mistake because it was one of the widely—most widely watched stations in the country at that time—programs in the country—that and *Laugh-In*. But those are two of the ones that immediately come to mind. But everybody was experimenting with things, and that was happening before I got back to Little Rock. That was in Charlottesville, we were watching those programs. But that was great evidence of the fact that society was shifting in a major way and more towards the openness. I mean, this had been spawned, I'm sure, and this is not [*laughs*]—obviously not original with me but the civil rights movement and Vietnam—the anti-war effort—*Hair*—I mean, all of that—it just goes . . .

[04:05:22] SL: *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

RB: *Jesus Christ Superstar*. I mean, I—that was playing in Little Rock this last week, and that's—I love the music to that show, you know, and I grew up with that. But—no, but what was happening with the societal shift was illustrated by the music, to a large extent, and by some of these shows like Smothers Brothers and whatnot. And, again, it was rebellion, and I'm one of the people who thought that rebellion was a good thing to kinda shift from where we were in the [19]50s. At the same time, I think, in certain respects, it went too far with the shift. And I'll give an example. I think the core curriculum in college, for example, and Vanderbilt and Columbia still maintain the core curriculum where you have to take certain courses to graduate, you know. You had to be proficient in certain courses to graduate. Ivy League doesn't do that, for the most part, other than Columbia. Brown University—I think you can just go to Brown—take whatever you want to and graduate as an honor student, and that's a shame. I think a core curriculum is a—is important. But that's one of the things, you know, with the western novelists and that sorta thing that was thrown out the window. And I think there shoulda been a more expansive recognition of other great authors in other cultures. And I

certainly didn't get that when I was in college. I think [Sewanee] stopped with Dylan Thomas, and we didn't even read Norman Mailer when I—and certainly not Allen Ginsberg but [*laughs*]—but not to mention some of the artists and authors in the French culture and that sorta thing—although I will say that French films were very popular when I was in college, and [*SL laughs*] they were great. I mean, they were wonderful. And they were symptomatic of the new understanding—new age. But I think, to some extent, the [19]60s went too far as far as throwing things out the window.

[04:07:18] SL: Well, the pendulum . . .

RB: The pendulum swung too far. And I think it's being recognized now, and that's kinda—I think it's coming back to some extent. I think our system of education—and I've read a good book on *The Post-American World* by Fareed Zakaria, and so I'm an expert in this area now. [*Laughter*] But he makes a point, and I take him at his word. He says, you know, what one of the greatest accomplishments of America are our universities. He says the universities in America, of the ten greatest universities in the world, eight are in the United States. He said of the fifty, probably thirty are in the United States. And the whole world recognizes the fact that the superior upper-level education is in

the United States. And he said one of the reasons for this is that the Chinese and the Indians are very good as far as by-rote education, which I was describing earlier. That's the way I learned when I was very young. And they test very well because of that. You know, they can memorize. They do it by rote. They come in—they can just ace those tests—standardized tests. Where America has the advantage is thinking outside the box—creativity, development, ingenuity, imagination. And these other cultures are beginning to realize that, and I think there's somethin' to that. I think there's somethin' to that. So the Indians and the Chinese still send their excellent students to the United States to be educated even though India has great institutes of engineering now, for example. But I thought that was a telling point, and I think it's true.

SL: It sounds right.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

[04:08:59] SL: So what about the law practice that you were in? What kind of law did you practice for them?

RB: Well, when I was—when I came back to—from law school to join Chowning, Mitchell, Hamilton, and Burrow; this was a law firm that was a traditional law firm. It was a well-known law firm—historic law firm—had some major clients, some of whom they

lost as a result of the Little Rock crisis. But my practice was basically working with Dub Hamilton, who had clients like Esso [Oil Company], at the time [*laughs*] it was called Esso. International Paper and that sorta thing. And I did basic contracts work, collection work, property work. I did some litigation, which I really liked. There's nothing like gettin' up in front of a jury and arguing your case. I mean, that's drama. [*SL laughs*] So I did some of that but not enough, and the truth of the matter was it was a traditional practice and not a very exciting practice. You were talking about one of the barriers to overcome. I think I've mentioned the fact that the political campaign helps you immediately get over any kind of introverted nature. That wasn't really exactly correct for me. What really helped me was going to the prosecutor's office and having to go into court—to municipal court when you had a hundred people in there mad at somethin' and standing up and prosecuting people, knowing nothing about the cases. You got up there in the morning. You said, "Officer, I see we have criminal information for terroristic threatening. Tell me something about the facts of the case." And that's the first time you learned about it, and you had to argue this particular case in front of the judge. That is throwin' somebody outta the nest. That was tremendous

preparation for being somebody who could articulate and get over any kinda shyness.

[04:10:53] SL: Now this is when you were working for the prosecutor's office.

RB: This is when I went with Jim Guy Tucker's office initially, and that was after three years, but I'd learned some of that by virtue of the jury trials that I was doing at the Chowning firm. And I did one or two before I went to the prosecutor's office.

SL: But now were you and Charlotte friends with Jim Guy Tucker before that time, or did you get to know each other after . . .

RB: We knew him, but we really got to know him because of—well, of Anne Bartley, Rockefeller's stepdaughter, was a friend of ours, and Jim Guy was dating him [her] and I—as I said earlier in the first interview, I had gotten to know Jim Guy by virtue of his first campaign for prosecutor, which was very exciting for—he was twenty-seven. I was twenty-nine, and we were prosecutors, for gosh sakes. And you talk about Bill Clinton being elected—what was he, thirty-one—something like that—when he was elected governor and probably twenty-nine when he was elected attorney general. The truth of the matter—and this is my political observation—the one position that has more power than anyone else in the state of Arkansas are the prosecuting

attorneys. I mean, it's a very, very difficult, challenging, and powerful position to be in, and you make tough decisions on a daily basis as to who you're gonna prosecute; who you're gonna charge; what you're gonna do; who you're gonna plead out. And so, for young people being in that role, you have to be very adroit. You have to be on your toes. So that taught me a lot just by virtue—by the nature of the office that I was involved in. And it was completely different from—again, the traditional office that I'd started out in and had been in for three years. My dad, by the way, when I first came back to Arkansas was still the Episcopal bishop. And he didn't retire until 1970, two years later. [04:12:42] And I probably oughta mention a couple of things about Dad's role in the Little Rock crisis . . .

SL: All right.

RB: . . . because I know I brought some information on that. But Dad—initially, in 1957, when you had the first riots when the Little Rock Nine were going to Central—took a stand—a public stand and said, "All men are brothers, basically, and we need to have the ministry of reconciliation, and this is something that we all—as Episcopalians"—he wrote it to the churches in Little Rock—"should honor." Well, that sounds very reasonable today. The ministry of reconciliation—let all people be brothers. I

mean, let's follow the law. Back then it was not—you had taken a stand in favor of integration if you espoused something like that. In some quarters, he was really honored for taking that particular position. But in Little Rock the society was split, and I'd say split is probably an exaggeration. It was probably—the heavy majority was in favor of segregation. And even in the areas where we lived which were more, in a sense, enlightened, there was a split. So Dad—he took it on the chin. He was written up in the press—you know, *Life* magazine and *Time* magazine and *The Living Church*, which was all—we were proud of him. But by the same token, that's—you know, that doesn't inspire a whole lot of—what do you call it? "Maybe he's looking too good nationally and not too good locally, you know." And I think people resented that, to some extent. So he took it on the chin. I didn't, but he did. And he wrote a book the next year called *Bigger Than Little Rock*, which told the history of the first year—Little Rock crisis—and espoused, again, the ministry of reconciliation. But very controversial. Very controversial that he would do that. And again, to me, it's kind of challenging to think that the ministry of reconciliation—reconciling society—would be controversial, but it was. It was back then. So I mention all this had occurred in, what, [19]58, [19]59, and then things began to

mellow out a bit. But Dad had also [*laughs*] done a sit-in, as they say, for the state capitol. There was a—this when Faubus was still governor. There is a cafeteria in the basement of the state capitol which was segregated. And this had to be, I'm guessing, 1965, maybe.

SL: Oh, wow.

[04:15:15] RB: Something like that. So Dad and the monsignor from the Catholic Church and the rabbi and a couple of others marched up the capitol steps. Well, this was perceived as being something that people—they might not have disagreed with the message that he was he conveying. It was the way he went about doing it. So there was a little bit of controversy surrounding my father, and I was not—it didn't bother me in the slightest because my peer group could've cared less. But I think it was hard on Dad because of his peer group, and in some communities, he was shunned. And there's nothing worse than being shunned, as we all know. You know, when you're isolated—cut off—from certain people, your friends—people who have been your friends—that can work a number. So I came back to Little Rock knowing that this was going on, to some extent, but not fully appreciating it until I came back. And, understand, I hadn't been in Little Rock, really—you know,

Sewanee, I wasn't here. Columbia, I wasn't here. Charlottesville, I wasn't here. I was outta the state for fully ten years. So I come back to Little Rock in [19]68, and I kinda see what Dad had been going through, and it's the tail end of his ministry, and he serves for two more years and then retires. But that was just another piece of the equation. And Mom and Dad leave and move back to Richmond, really. So that's just a piece of what was going on at about the time that I switched and left this position at the law firm and moved over with Jim Guy Tucker.

[04:16:52] SL: So did the—did your mom and dad—did they suffer through any kind of threats? Was there ever . . .

RB: Well, the first year, [19]57, [19]58, when the violence had broken out at Central High School, [*SL clears throat*] they would get the silent phone calls—you know, where the phone would ring, and nobody was there. And Mom finally figured out to get a whistle and blow the whistle into the phone, and that [*laughs*] had an effect. And Dad would get calls like, "We have a place in the morgue for you." That sorta thing. Now as far as anybody parking outside, I don't remember that happening. You know, the State Police was involved in some of this, just looking at people they considered to be dissidents—whether they ever

looked at my father, I don't know. But I know that there were some things publicly said about Dad—you know, that he was on the wrong side of the issue and "watch out"-type stuff.

[04:17:55] SL: Hmm. Whatever happened to those people that were on the other side of the issue? I wonder . . .

RB: Well, you know, society began to right itself in 1959. I was still at St. Stephen's at the time, but again, I faulted the adults for not doin' more about the situation. But behind the scenes, the business community and the legal profession were working to try to rectify this. I mean, good Lord, the schools in Little Rock had closed, and you're tryin' to get economic development in the city. I mean—again, you don't have to be overly bright to know that this is killing the city as far as industrial growth and everything else. And the business community woke up to that and said, "My goodness gracious!" So they were working behind the scenes and out in public with something called the Women's Emergency Committee to reopen the public schools, led by Adolphine Terry and Dottie Morris and Vivion Brewer and some others. And they were the—they were champions. They were out front sayin,' "The men have failed us. We're gonna take this thing, and we're gonna get somethin' done." So the ship was beginning to right itself. And towards the spring of 1959, there

was something called the STOP campaign. And what had happened—the school board had tried to purge every—fire every teacher who had any kind of association with any suspect group. Obviously, the NAACP, but anything that was a suspect group, you were fired. So there was a purging of the teachers, and there was a movement started called Stop This Outrageous Purge, and that's the first time—with the help of the Women's Emergency Committee—that the purges stopped, that a moderate school board—three members of the school board were elected who were moderate, as opposed to three members of the school board who were segregationists. So this happened, like, in the spring of 1959, and that was another good example of the ship righting itself and tryin' to get back into the groove. And the following year, both Central and Hall opened with integration—black students at both schools.

[04:20:06] SL: Spurred by women.

RB: Absolutely. And Adolphine Terry told Harry Ashmore, who was the editor of the *Arkansas Gazette*, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his columns—she said, "Harry, the men have failed us again, you know. The women are gonna have to do somethin' about it." And they went public, and you know, my mother became a member, and she wasn't alone. I mean, there were—literally,

towards the end, probably hundreds of members. But the women said, "We're not gonna stand for this, that education will be just done away with—obliterated—in Little Rock because of this issue." And they stood up, and they were tall. And you know, there were repercussions. You remember the "*Gazette* ad, too bad." I mean, if you had an ad in the *Arkansas Gazette*, proponents of segregation said, "Stop doin' business with this particular concern." So that had a chilling effect on the *Gazette*. And the *Gazette* stood tall during that time and—but there were people who were known to side one way or the other, like Will Mitchell and the law firm I joined had supported the STOP campaign, and he lost some business at the law firm because of that. So that was not uncommon, and a lot of other firms benefitted by virtue of the fact that they supported Faubus and what was being done.

[04:21:28] SL: Was your—do you know if your father and mother were aware of Edith Irby Jones at the Medical School, or of course, Silas Hunt and George Haley and Mercer and all the—the group up at Fayetteville?

RB: I—if they were aware of it, they probably read about it. I think Haley and Mercer and that group—it was really—George Howard—I think that was in the early [19]50s, as I recall. So it

was probably when we were still in Richmond . . .

SL: I see.

RB: . . . when that was going on. And . . .

SL: That's right. They didn't get there—they didn't get to Little Rock till . . .

RB: [Nineteen] fifty-five.

SL: . . . [Nineteen] fifty-five. Uh-huh.

RB: [Nineteen] fifty-five. And my wife, Charlotte, has a first cousin, George Collins, who was in that class with Chris Mercer and all of them. And he remembers it fondly. And the idea that you would set up, as they did at the law school, some kind of artificial barrier which I—what was it, a rope or . . .

SL: A rail.

RB: . . . a rail, you know. [*Laughs*] And Dean [Robert A.] Leflar finally said, "This is absurd," which, of course, it was and took it down. But . . .

SL: Had it in his closet.

RB: [*Laughs*] He should. A relic. But I mean, those guys were trailblazers, as you know, and you've been over to the law school and seen their portraits in the what is it, the Bobby Fussell room that they have over there now?

SL: Mh-hmm. That's correct. Mh-hmm.

RB: And—but I mean, those guys were heroes. I mean, that was not an easy thing to do. Again, the whole idea—and this is why I admire so many of the black leadership for being shunned. You go into a situation—you're ostracized. And I'm sure they were, to a large extent. I'm sure they were at Central High School. I'm positive of that, for the most part—those nine students. I mean, that's a terrible situation to be in.

SL: [*Sighs*] When did you—I know that you said—are you still active on the—with Sewanee, your . . .

RB: I was on the Board of Regents, which is the operational board, until roughly 1995. So I'd served on that board for six years, and before that, I was a trustee for a number of years.

[04:23:31] SL: Are there—what other civic entities have you been involved with since your return to Arkansas? What . . .

RB: Well, that's a good question. I've been a—in the Big Brothers program forever. I decided at the tender age of sixty-six I wasn't gonna be relating that well to a twelve-year-old, so I was involved in it for about fifteen years, but stopped about a year ago. But that was a primary effort. Chur . . .

[04:24:01] SL: Let's talk about Big Brothers for a minute. . .

RB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: I mean, what exactly did you do in the Big Brothers?

RB: Well, the first program I was involved in—I did this primarily—I would take on a student who was either in high school or junior high and be a mentor to that student. And that meant I would take him—it was always a him—to the zoo—to movies after a period of time. I mean, you hafta be very careful in this program, for obvious reasons because you have an older man with a younger person. So they had to be very careful in where you go and what you do. But you obviously are working with a single-parent family—the mother—and the mother wants some male influence involved. So I would try to take this person to—I'd even take—you know, go out and scoot—shoot skeet, go to games, go to the zoo, go out to eat, go to Chili's, you know, talk. "Are you working hard at school?" That sorta thing. So you're really a presence [*doorbell rings*], and you know, that was important to these kids. That was important. So I did that for fifteen years, and then I got more involved in a program where I would go to the school itself and just spend an hour every week with the boy. And usually that boy was younger—like—more like twelve—somethin' like that. And I would just talk to the kid—read books with the kid. I had the kid read a book to me. It was interesting. One of my last Little Brothers—I said, "What do you wanna read today?" And he said, *Uncle Remus*. You know,

well—you know, in our society, you think that's not politically correct. That's what the kid wanted to read, and so he loved it, and he read it to me and—this is at a, you know, overwhelmingly black elementary school. But it worked better for me towards the end to go over and spend an hour a week with the kid. And we built up some pretty strong relationships. I think I had maybe two or three Little Brothers working in that type of scenario, as opposed to going and being responsible for doing somethin' with the kid ad hoc, and you always would heap guilt on yourself. "Why aren't I doin' more?" [*Laughs*] You know. And then when you start heapin' guilt on yourself, you're not doing a very good job. It becomes more of a duty and obligation than something that's worthwhile. But I entered it after I was elected to the Court because I wanted to have more of a idea as to what was happening in the African American community and in these homes. And that certainly gave me an education in that regard. Before that—you're talkin' bout community affairs—in the [19]80s I wrote. I did profiles. I wrote for the *Arkansas Times*. I was a contributing editor of the *Arkansas Times*, and I did . . .

SL: That's pretty incriminating.

[04:26:51] RB: Yeah. [*Laughter*] You're tellin' me. Well, this was

back in the days of Bill Terry and Alan Leveritt, when they first started out. Not the current publication . . .

SL: Okay.

RB: . . . which is a lot different. The current publication is more kind of a spin-off of the *Arkansas Gazette*. Back then it was profiles, and you know, I did people like Frank White and Sheffield Nelson and then articles on the Public Service Commission—that sorta thing. Probably the best thing I did was something for the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. And we were talkin' bout Tom McRae earlier—but he headed the foundation at that time. He was the director. And I wrote something called "The Second Crisis of Little Rock," and the question was "What was happening with our public schools?" We were losing whites. "Why are we losing whites? Are we about to the tipping point where the public schools are gonna go all black? What can we do about this? Where do we get that pool—that renewed pool of white students?" And the racial attitudes, you know, and—you know, neighborhoods and integrating neighborhoods. And all of that—kinda combined it into a study. And that was—that's probably—I'd—I hate to say this, but not really. I'm proud of it. It's probably the most worthwhile thing I did in the [19]80s—published it in 1988. But it just talked about twenty [RB edit:

thirty] years after the first crisis, had anything improved? What was happening? Are we now in danger of having everything go all black? And Little Rock is one of the few major southern cities compared to Jackson and Birmingham and some of the others that still has a pretty healthy component of white students, you know.

SL: In the public schools.

RB: In the public schools. Now you've got competition galore from charter schools, which is still a public school, but from the Christian schools—the Episcopal school that's opened, and this is major competition because those are excellent schools with a lotta money. So that's happening now. But that's basically—my community involvement was there—church, Bar Association, committees for the Supreme Court—that sorta thing. And I'm sure I'm leaving something out.

[04:28:59] SL: What is it that you do with the church? [*Beats on table*]

RB: I was—I've been on the church board. We call it a vestry in the Episcopal Church. And we—I chaired the committee to elect our new bishop—to find a new bishop for the church. Things like that. And so I'm involved, and it's a—as I say, it's something that's in my blood. The . . .

SL: Yeah.

RB: . . . church is in my blood. So it's more a habit. I think my wife's probably more spiritual than I am, but I'll say this, and I guess it sounds good for me, that if I don't go to church I miss it, you know.

SL: Yeah.

RB: And I certainly think about spiritual things and what I oughta be doing.

[04:29:40] SL: We just kinda glazed over this. Is there anything you wanna say about Lowell Grisham?

RB: Oh, Lowell Grisham is a friend of mine. He's—I—he's a very attractive guy, and I'm sure he's a catalyst up here. Somebody told me—and I didn't know Lowell Grisham until, really, he served on this committee with me. But somebody told me ten years ago, "Well, there are only two liberals up in Fayetteville now, and one is one church, and one is Lowell Grisham at St. Paul's," and I've forgotten who the other one was. But I think the other one's left, so [*laughs*] Lowell may be your sole liberal up here. But I respect Lowell. I mean, he has a point of view. I don't agree with him on everything, for sure. He doesn't agree with me on everything. But we're friends, and we certainly worked well together, and I think he's a dynamic force in the

Episcopal Church.

SL: You get the feeling that he certainly has high ground, that he—he's very strong morally and . . .

RB: I—there's a . . .

SL: . . . there is a beacon quality about him.

RB: Oh yeah. Yeah. And he has his eyes on the prize. I mean, he knows where he wants to go, and he knows how to get there, and that's an admirable trait. I respect anybody who can do that. And Lowell certainly can. And we're buddies, you know. I like him. I see him infrequently. I saw him at a funeral recently. But when I come up here and—you know, like when I was campaigning a couple a years ago, and I dropped by to see him, well, he's off somewhere, you know, and he's . . .

SL: Right.

RB: . . . he's got this huge complex across from the courthouse. But you know, he was off somewhere. But he's a force, and his wife is, too. So—good people. Good people.

[04:31:15] SL: Okay. So we're kinda approaching this point where we've got to look at everything we've talked about, and you need to decide if there's something that we haven't talked about. I'm so grateful that you brought back in the [19]57 crisis and your dad's involvement with all of that and . . .

RB: Right.

SL: . . . your family. Is there anything else that we need to talk about that we haven't talked about? Is there anybody that you want to talk about that you haven't talked about yet? And I'm not just talkin' about what you and I have talked about . . .

RB: Right.

SL: . . . but anything that you and Tom talked about earlier. I mean, this is the time for us to gather . . .

RB: Kind of the catch-all, huh?

SL: Well you know, have you got another good story?

[04:32:01] RB: [*Laughs*] Well, I'm a rugged individualist, and that—you talked about personality being developed in the first five years of existence. I'm not sure how I developed that, but it must be somewhere in my familial makeup. But I've always been independent. I've always done very well on my own. I've also needed people, but not a whole panoply of people, you know. I can get it done. I can forge ahead. Gosh, that independence comes from somewhere, and it must come from the fact that my dad had to scrap and save and my mother did, too, and you know, he did work in the oil fields like Win Rockefeller did, but his situation was a little bit different, I think. [*Laughs*] But he did the roustabout work and the roughneck

work, and you know, that's a terrible, terrible existence. I mean, that's hard. That's hard duty. But he had the independence, and I developed that. And to some extent, it's protection, but to some extent, it develops the ethic of hard work. And that's how I've been successful. It's just working very difficult tasks and makin' sure I kept the nose to the grindstone. So it's that independence that has stood me in good stead. And I—I'm sure my role models—my father, in particular—although my father was someone who was independent himself and was off working very hard. I can't say, for example, that my dad was around the house all the time, because he wasn't. But in a sense, that's what develops independence and the ability to make it on your own. But I've had some good role models. I've had people who've stood beside me—my wife, in particular. I mean, when I first ran for office and people thought I was crazy—you hafta be half crazy to [*SL laughs*] run for political office. My goodness. And somebody—well, you know me by now—a little bit about me [*laughs*]—and to see me steppin' out—say, "Well, I'm gonna run for a statewide office against a known politician," who I ran against, even though I knew how to run political campaigns—I'd been involved in campaigns—to do that was one step from

insanity. But I did it, and I had a secret weapon. And the secret weapon was my wife, Charlotte, who is an extrovert and who is an excellent campaigner. In fact, I hate to say this, and it's not completely true, but it makes a good story—I'd go into communities, and people would say, "Now, Bob, we're really glad you're here, and would you mind just kinda standing over there and let Charlotte work the room for you?" [*Laughter*] And I'd say, "Fine, that—that's all right with me." And she doesn't meet strangers. [04:34:40] But one story on the campaign trail—she was down in Dumas, and she was talkin' to this guy, you know, at the—what is it? Ding Dong Daddy—whatever that Dumas festival is. And I was someplace else campaigning, and she was talkin' to this guy and said, "Now you need to vote for Bob Brown for the Supreme Court." And she talked to him and talked to him—talked about my attributes and why I'd be a good judge and all that. And at the end—this is after thirty minutes—she said, "All right, tell me why? Why won't you vote for Bob Brown?" And he said, "I'm a convicted felon." [*Laughter*] So I—Charlotte was effective, but she was not always the most practical as far as [*SL laughs*]—you know, I think "Skip" Rutherford, the dean of the Clinton School of Public Service is fond of saying, "There's a fifteen-second rule. You talk to

somebody for fifteen seconds and then move on," which is a terrible rule, by the way. And when people like—well, some politicians do practice that. It's a terrible rule. It doesn't work.

SL: Right.

[04:35:40] RB: And David Pryor never did, and Dale Bumpers never did, and they're excellent. But Charlotte has been my mainstay and she has been excellent as a partner in that regard. And my son. I mean, I—you talk about a watershed event. I was there for the birth of my son. I mean, to see live childbirth is just amazing, you know. So—and he's kind of a miracle baby, but all of that's exciting. That's life. That's life.

SL: He's a miracle baby.

RB: It took us eleven years to have him because of a medical condition and whatnot that we had to overcome. But we were able to do that and you know . . .

SL: He's healthy and . . .

RB: Oh yeah. Yeah, he's fine. Charlotte had somethin' called endometriosis, which is a . . .

SL: Uh-huh. Yeah.

RB: Back then—I mean, this is, like, thirty-some years ago, and people just thought, "Well, you're just complainin'. I mean, there's nothing wrong with you."

SL: Right.

RB: I—you know, the medical—don't get me started. I mean, the [*laughs*]—but anyway . . .

[04:36:38] SL: Well, you can start. [*RB laughs*] I'm not gonna stop you. [*Laughs*]

RB: No, no. I mean, things like that—I mean, I have a lotta respect for doctors, but in some instances, when they have kind of a blind spot about something where there's obviously is certain wrong and don't have either the imagination and creativity to delve into the problem and try to determine what actually is going on here—that's very offensive. And Charlotte almost lost both her ovaries, and finally my mother-in-law, to her credit, discovered that there was a doctor at Methodist Hospital in Houston. Charlotte went down there and discovered the condition. Took two pounds of this stuff out of her system and took an ovary. She was able to conceive after that, and we had Stuart.

SL: That is a miracle.

RB: It is a miracle. Yeah, God is . . .

SL: Nothin' short of a miracle.

RB: God is down in Houston. His name is Bob Franklin, by the way.

SL: Okay. [*Laughter*] Houston's good. Little Rock's good, too.

RB: Little Rock's excellent. UAMS is the jewel in the crown.

[04:37:37] SL: I think people forget that doctors are human . . .

RB: But . . .

SL: . . . and they have the same frailties that all humans have. They're susceptible to all the same foibles and shortcomings. They're—you know, I mean, you expect them to be miracle workers, and you expect them to be godlike and to come through, but some of 'em are just not equipped . . .

RB: Yeah, I . . .

SL: . . . to do that.

RB: And I think that's well said, and I really do not disparage doctors. I just disparage people who have blind spots who will not delve into a situation and kind of wave it off and say that there's nothing wrong with this person when there obviously is.

SL: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

RB: Yeah.

SL: I'm with you . . .

RB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . on that.

RB: Yeah. But [*SL sighs*] anyway, that's, I think, the independence and you know, mentors. I think I—I've talked about as far as my high full—high school football coach. [*Laughs*]

[04:38:29] SL: How about this question? What is your—do you remember a favorite time that you had in Waco—the most fun you had in Waco? Do you remember what that may've been? May—you may've . . .

RB: Well . . .

SL: . . . in trouble over somethin' that . . .

RB: I had a [*doorbell rings*] friend named Nicky Russell in Waco, and we would do wild things. [*Airplane flies overhead*] We were the Coyote Kids, and my sister was part of that group, too. And we would go, I mean, at the tender of age of five and eight—I mean, [*unclear word*], my sister, was eight, and I was five, and Nicky was my age. And we would go out and kinda terrorize, like Coyote Kids. And we had a yell that we'd use, and you know, that was just a—that was just great fun. And you know, some of the dogs and cats and little bitty children would flee when they saw us coming, you know. [*SL laughs*] That type of thing. But really, the—something that you triggered by that question occurred in Richmond, and I was not much older than eight, nine, ten. But we would go over to a friend's house, and they had these huge vines that just covered all of these shrubs and bushes and whatnot. And you could climb up in the trees and literally fall down into the vines and just—you know, like

you're diving into water. And we would do that for hours, and it was more fun than anything in the world. But anyway, that—you triggered that when you asked that question.

SL: That's good.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: That's good pictures.

RB: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[04:40:01] SL: All right. Anybody—you wanna say anything about David Pryor?

RB: I love David Pryor. I'm gonna introduce him in two weeks for the award he's receiving for his work with the elderly. And I'm gonna say that David Pryor really embodies what is good about Arkansas. You know, it's the courtliness. It's the honest and obvious regard he has for people. You know, he loves people. You can't say that about everybody. I mean, some people can fake it. David Pryor obviously loves people—his devotion and his commitment to public service. He is a wonderful institution, and I laughingly said during one of our breaks that—well, Mike Beebe's called on him. I guess, first, Clinton called on him to be dean of the Clinton School of Public Service—first dean. And then Mike Beebe called on him head up the Democratic Party. And now he's been appointed to the Board of Trustees, and if

John Pelphrey doesn't work out as a basketball coach [*SL laughs*], I'm sure David's gonna [*laughter*] saddle up for that. But no, he's just—he is just willing to do whatever it takes. And you didn't hear this story, but when I went to Washington, he was the man that people wanted to talk about for his work going undercover in the nursing home as opposed to the person I was with, Dale Bumpers and John McClellan and Wilbur Mills. David Pryor is a great man in the history of this state. He just is.

[04:41:28] SL: So you've probably already talked about Bumpers and Jim Guy, and you've had your say on those folks, or is there anything else you wanna say about . . .

RB: I wanna mention one other thing which I haven't mentioned. And we've talked about English literature and that sorta thing, and that was my major. That was my life's work. I almost became a college professor. I could've gone on and gotten a Ph.D. at Columbia. I didn't do it. But the professors I had at Sewanee—writers and literary criticism people and whatnot—were just real inspirations to me, and especially a man named Andrew Lytle, who was a writer who was one of the Southern Agrarians. So that had to be a defining moment for me, just being in that culture with these great, great teachers. I never became real close to any of 'em, but I knew their greatness, and

they inspired me, and they helped me and got me trained in an area that I became very good at as a result. But I wanted to mention that.

SL: That's good. That's good.

RB: Yeah.

SL: It is known—that school is known for its literary . . .

RB: That's right.

SL: . . . acumen.

RB: *The Sewanee Review* and all that.

SL: Yes. Mh-hmm.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

[04:42:34] SL: Anything about Ray Thornton? Know Ray much at all or . . .

RB: Ray Thornton is a gentleman, and David Pryor is a gentleman. And I—you know, I worked with Jim Guy Tucker in that Senate race, and David Pryor and Ray Thornton, who was defeated by Jim Guy, in a sense, because Jim Guy made the runoff against David Pryor—has never been anything but a gentleman towards me, even in light of this history. And I really respect him, and I enjoyed working with him on the Supreme Court. He was an excellent justice on the Supreme Court. You know, you might've had the suspicion that here's a congressman and a president of

colleges who's come to the Supreme Court—he's not gonna do the work. He doesn't care about it. He got there, and he worked awfully hard, and he's bright as he can be. Ray, at his heart, is a scientist—an engineer. That's his first love. So he brought a particular acumen to the table that I thought was very helpful to the court. I mean, he understood what DNA was, for example. [*Laughs*] I couldn't even pronounce what DNA means. But you know, he—he's a great guy. He's been a great servant here again in Arkansas, and I've told him this. I said, "Ray, you have done more as presidents of the school that you've been president of. And as a congressman and as a justice on the Supreme Court, you've accomplished more than you would have as a United States senator, in my judgment." And I believe that. And David Pryor—I've already said what I think about David Pryor. He's just a—the greatest example of an Arkansan that I can think of. He embodies it. He embodies this state—personifies it.

[04:44:21] SL: What about the state Supreme Court as a entity—as a whole—that whole gathering of minds there? Is there anything you wanna say about the Supreme Court, and maybe not individuals, but . . .

RB: Well, I believe in the election of judges, and that's probably the

most controversial aspect about the Supreme Court. There's a pretty good faction of people in the state who would rather see the justices appointed by the governor after a commission makes nominations—the idea being that that's less political than the open election. I believe open elections are preferable. I think if you get into the appointment situation, you're talkin' bout a different kinda politics—all of which is to say that—I won't say by hook or by crook—we got there through the election process, which means that we had to go through a certain ordeal by fire and have the people of Arkansas select us. So I think that makes us an exceptional group that we're all elected statewide, and I think we all bring something different to the table. And ever since I've been on the court, the members of the court have brought something different to the table. It's not the same thing. Some people may have a better understanding of being a trial judge. Some people may have a better affinity for people. You know, that sorta—but everybody brings somethin' different. What is the work on the court—and I said this earlier—is to get three other votes in addition to my own, so that you have a four-person majority. [*Laughs*] Without four votes, you can't do anything. With four votes, you can do anything. So that's been the lesson learned on the court. I

could do the research. I could do the writing. It was the personalities and workin' with the personalities and tryin' to convince people, where my natural tendency is, "Well, this is reasonable. Why don't you understand this and agree with it?" Well, that's gonna get you not even to first base, so [*laughter*] that's been the lesson learned. And we all hafta work collectively to really make the system work. And if we don't do that, then we're in a whole heap of trouble, and the state is at a disadvantage. But it works extremely well in light of the fact that we come from disparate backgrounds with disparate interests, personalities, and inclinations. It's an amazing system that you can get seven people together and, essentially, arrive at a conclusion with four votes and better the situation for the people of Arkansas. [04:46:54] Now you probably know this. I espouse more openness on the Supreme Court with television cameras in the—for oral arguments, I just think that's a [*dog barks*]—that's gotta happen. And I fault the United States Supreme Court for not doin' that. I think they should've taken the lead in this area, and they haven't. But the court—I'll be on it for another five years—five and a half years—and that'll be it. But I've thoroughly enjoyed the experience—worked hard at it. It's taught me a lot, and I think I've benefitted from it. It's been

an experience, so . . .

[04:47:26] SL: Okay. [*RB laughs*] Any . . .

RB: Closing argument?

SL: . . . anything that . . .

TM: I'm glad you touched on the—[*clears throat*] you know, the cameras in the courtroom kinda thing 'cause I know you—that's why you—one of the reasons you were up here to speak.

RB: That's right. That was yesterday. That's . . .

TM: And I think that's an interesting element to hear your view on that.

RB: The education aspect of that. I just can't believe the United States Supreme Court will not get off its backside and—are we still recording? [*Laughs*]

TM: Yes.

SL: Yes, we are. [*Laughs*]

[04:47:50] RB: Oh, I cannot believe the United States Supreme Court will not say that this is something that is beneficial to the American people primarily, but also to law schools, to public school children, to whoever you can beam those arguments into. Now I know a lotta their arguments would be like watching corn grow. But by the same token, you learn how the judicial system works at the highest level. And that counts for something,

especially when you have a case like *Bush v. Gore* or Terri Schiavo or something—a death case, a cultural issue. You know, those are important things, and the American people just don't wanna read one morning in the *Democrat-Gazette* that the US Supreme Court has done something—this bomb drops outta the sky. We oughta have some familiarity with the process and televising oral arguments, I think, would at least go a long way to making that available. I'm not saying everybody's gonna sit down and watch corn grow, but they could if they were interested in a particular issue. And I think that'd be great. I think it'd be great for the law schools. I think it'd be great for public education. And a lotta states are doin' it. Arkansas needs to do it, and the US Supreme Court needs to do it.

[04:49:02] SL: You are definitely preaching to the choir. [*Laughter*]

RB: Well, good. Good.

SL: 'Cause here we are. [*Laughter*]

RB: Let's take a vote.

TM: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

SL: No, that's—I totally, absolutely agree.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: There is a—there is an air of mystery and confoundedness . . .

RB: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . about the supreme judicial court system that . . .

[04:49:24] RB: And I think the United States Supreme Court wants it that way, in a sense. A *New York Times* reporter wrote a story maybe five years ago saying exactly that. Her name's Dahlia Lithwick. But she wrote a story saying that the court is enigmatic, mysterious, and they like it that way. And you know, that—I understand you hafta be kinda the secret branch of government. You can't be out there involved like the General Assembly in every political decision that comes down the pike. But to let the American people who you're really accountable to understand what you're doing I think is paramount. And without opening it up more and having more transparency, that's not gonna happen.

[04:50:02] SL: I really don't see a downside. I . . .

RB: Yeah.

SL: . . . I cannot see . . .

RB: Yeah.

SL: . . . you know, the argument that they'll use it to grandstand or . . .

RB: Yes, yes.

SL: . . . I—that is so—I . . .

RB: It doesn't pan out as far as my . . .

SL: It doesn't pan out. Doesn't pan out.

RB: . . . in my experience, I mean, everyone I've talked to—nobody said that's the case.

SL: You . . .

RB: And that was the fear, but it's not the case in reality.

[04:50:19] SL: Well, we were told when we started videotaping interviews that no one would ever talk in front of a camera.

RB: Well [*laughter*] . . .

SL: You know.

RB: I—you—well, I—and you found that's not the case, for sure.

SL: Yeah. I would envision it'd be like a C-SPAN kinda thing.

RB: Mh-hmm. I think it would be.

SL: For the most part, probably ignored . . .

RB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . by the general public.

RB: Yeah.

SL: But when there was something really happening . . .

RB: Absolutely.

SL: . . . having it recorded—having it available to view—having it available to watch live if you're interested.

RB: You know, fifty million people . . .

SL: That's a great service.

RB: . . . watched the Florida Supreme Court, and they had a live feed at that time in 2000 . . .

SL: Yeah.

RB: . . . on *Bush v. Gore*.

SL: Yeah. I'm still angry about that.

RB: You know. Yeah, yeah. [*SL laughs*] Yeah, yeah. Well, the United States Supreme Court should've done something comparable. Course, they had the audio, but that's not the same thing.

SL: It's not. It's not.

RB: Not the same thing.

[04:51:10] SL: Anything else?

RB: I think that . . .

KK: Well, I had a couple of follow-ups.

SL: Okay, here we go.

KK: Two things just because [*unclear words*].

SL: Now you're gonna hafta look at me whenever you . . .

RB: Sure, sure.

SL: . . . talk.

KK: I'll just throw 'em out there, and then I'll go sit down. One was you said that after Martin Luther King's assassination, there were riots on Little Rock, and I wanted to hear if you had any more

information about that because there's some dispute about whether there were ever riots or not. And the—course, the role Rockefeller played in helping quell that. And then the other thing is the way Rockefeller brought blacks into state government. Like to touch on those two things if you care to comment on either one of those.

[04:51:42] RB: Sure, sure. [*Chair squeaks*] Well, I was asked the question about what happened in 1968 after Martin Luther King and his assassination and the fact that there were some riots in Little Rock. I—my understanding—and I was not in Little Rock when that happened. I was in Charlottesville. But my understanding was that there were demonstrations plus. In other words, there was some rock-throwing—some incidents like that. Whether there were hoards of people marching down the street, I can't testify to that. But then I know there was some activity that occurred demonstrating against that particular murder—the assassination. And I know that some lawyers got involved representing the people who had been arrested for disturbing the peace as a result of those—that situation. And my mother thought that I was one of the lawyers 'cause there was another Bob Brown who had signed up to represent some of those people, and that was another lawyer named Bob Brown,

not myself. But several lawyers said, "We will represent these people free of charge who have been arrested for this particular demonstration." Probably more a demonstration than a riot.

[04:52:55] You know, as far as Rockefeller, what he did was oil on the waters, in my judgment. It was very courageous to get up there on the capitol steps. It was a healing ceremony because he was basically surrounded by the black leaders of Little Rock, and it brought them together and was singing "We Shall Overcome" on the state capitol steps. Now that sounds kind of a—not a big deal in this particular day and age. It was a very big deal back in 1968. And very courageous. And I think he did a lot to quell the attitudes, especially in the black community, by showing his sympathy and being simpatico with what had just occurred. So I thought it was a major step by a politician in trying to reach a racial harmony after a very traumatic incident.

[04:53:47] SL: Do you think the [law] enforcement community just overreacted to some of the demonstration that went on and that. . .

RB: I'll give . . .

SL: . . . prompted the free representation?

RB: That—I think the free representation was a result of [being]

sympathetic to what had happened with the assassination of King and understanding perhaps acting out on the part of some people—disturbing the peace or whatever. I don't know what law enforcement did because I wasn't here. I know that there were arrests made and that these people needed representation, and some of my peer group—younger lawyers—stepped in and said they would do it.

[04:54:28] SL: M'kay. And then was there . . .

KK: The fact that . . .

SL: Oh, the . . .

KK: . . . Rockefeller brought blacks directly into state government—people like Sonny Walker.

[04:54:37] RB: Yeah. Well, I think [*laughs*]—in comparison to his predecessor, Orval Faubus, Rockefeller was a watershed event as far as bringing blacks into government. And I've mentioned a couple—"Sonny" Walker for sure. Wallace Cunningham [RB edit: Walter Cunningham]. Sam Sparks was really—Rockefeller was kind of almost an adoptive father for Sam Sparks. I think Sam Sparks was raised at Petit Jean. Les Hollingsworth was one of Rockefeller's legal aides. Yeah, it was a new day as far as seeing black faces in state government where that hadn't happened before—certainly not with Orval Faubus. And again, the fact that

the—here was a governor, a public figure—not only a public figure, a Rockefeller—who was doing this. It sent a great message to the Arkansas African American community and, I think, had a direct impact as far as whites understanding more of the issue and our need to do something, not to talk the talk but walk the walk, as they say. And I think that, for Arkansas, was—what Rockefeller did was almost as important as Obama being elected president. Course, Arkansas did not [*laughs*] vote for Obama. But you know, it was a great healing effort that he did and, obviously, a number one commitment on his part. As you know, when Rockefeller left office, he commuted everybody on death row. I can't tell you what the percentage of African Americans were on death row, but I suspect that the large majority were African Americans. This was a real commitment for Rockefeller, and I really commend him for that and take my hat off to him.

[04:56:19] KK: Now talk a little bit—now you've talked about the positive aspect of Rockefeller—talk a little bit about some of the difficulties that Rockefeller had.

RB: I think there was a perception—well, it wasn't a perception, it was really a reality that Rockefeller had a good staff; was able to commission studies on—whether it's reorganization of state

government, increasing the income tax. Cummins—certainly, the prison system was directly—Rockefeller—we haven't touched on that—but he was directly involved in that, trying to do away with the trustee system at Cummins and Tucker, which couldn't've been more corrupt. I mean, when you have the animals guarding the zoo, as it were [*laughs*], I mean, that's not a good system. So he started the situation where you brought in free-world personnel to actually administer the prisons and not have the trustees guarding the prisons. On the down side of that, Rockefeller had great ideas. He tried to accomplish these people—these [*laughs*] tasks. By the same token, he was perceived as somebody who could not actually get the job done. He could not get the legislation passed through the General Assembly. He was—it was suggested, and he admitted this at one time—that he was drinking during the day, and that sort of aspect to the personality caused him to be something of a joke in some quarters, which was not helpful to his stature with the General Assembly as far as trying to get things accomplished. So that was a bit of the down side. I think the man did the best he could under the circumstances, but he did have some negative aspects about his political persona that did not enable him to get certain measures passed through the General

Assembly. And that's where the rubber meets the road, is getting things through the General Assembly. You can have great ideas all day lone—long, but not being able to get them passed is a direct negative. And I think that was probably the true impediment for his administration—particularly his second administration because people were recognizing that while he is—he's been a great watershed event, this is no longer Orval Faubus. We need somebody who can step in and actually, you know, pass the things that need to be passed in Arkansas. And he really—he was the one who paved the road for Dale Bumpers for that reason.

[04:58:59] SL: And helped pave the road for John Paul Hammerschmidt, probably, in the third congressional . . .

RB: And John Paul Hammerschmidt, too.

SL: You know, in his defense, you hafta—we hafta remind ourselves what was before him, and the network that had been established for the past dozen or more years. He was an outside person stepping in, and he had great ideas and had the higher ground, and it was time for change, but he was also Republican . . .

RB: Well . . .

SL: . . . in a state that was totally Democratic.

RB: I couldn't agree with that more. And he was shunned. I've

already talked about the hardship of being ostracized and shunned. The Democratic Senate, in particular, did not cotton to Winthrop Rockefeller. And they respected him. They respected his money. But as far as thinking that this is somebody I'm gonna support and move out for, absolutely not. And he did not particularly cotton to them. I don't think he schmoozed as well as could have. He had great aides with Tom Eisele and John Ward and Marion Burton, but they were not able to overcome the resentment that some of the senators in particular and some of the House members, too—the leadership—felt towards Rockefeller for succeeding Orval Faubus and defeating most recently one of their own, Marion Crank. So he had that to overcome, and there are always these rumors about Rockefeller, which, you know, didn't stand him in good stead with some people. So it was unfortunate, but that's—that was the nature of the situation back then.

SL: [*Sighs*] [*Beats on the table*] We good?

TM: It's pretty great.

SL: You had enough? You want any more?

RB: That's fine to me. [*Laughter*] Well, if you have a question, I'll answer it.

SL: Well, let me think just real quick before we . . .

TM: Hang on. Let me change tapes real quick.

SL: Oh well. Then we can probably stop.

TM: Well, I don't think—you know, I don't know if there's anything to this, but from the legal standpoint and from where you sit, do you see anything on the horizon that's gonna be comin' up or anything new or any big issues that maybe aren't—we're not into right now but might be—we might be havin' to deal with in the future? Is that . . .

SL: I guess . . .

RB: Well . . .

SL: . . . what does the future hold?

[05:01:16] RB: Well, any constitutional issue—any issue that is recently passed the Arkansas people, and you can think of one or two that are being challenged now in Circuit Court—I would be surprised if those issues do not eventually come to my court. And one cultural issue would be the gay and lesbian adoptive parents or foster parents. Obviously, there was a constitutional amendment passed that said that cannot happen in Arkansas, and it's being challenged. I would see that at some point on the horizon. We have issues related to coal-fired plants that probably will come to my court eventually. We have celebrated—I say celebrated—that's the wrong word but

certainly publicized murder cases that will eventually come to my court. So there are a whole plethora of issues. I mean, we're never at a loss to have something that's very challenging. I suspect that as far as education, that's something that the court has certainly taken a position on and feels strongly about. I don't see anything on the horizon in that regard, but it's something that—and I am hopeful, and I have every reason to be optimistic that the governor and the General Assembly will continue to tow the line on Lake View and what was done in that regard. But you know, the cases that receive the most attention are probably the cultural issues, constitutional issues, anything related to generation [RB edit: education]. And so that's what I anticipate. Short answer, and I'm probably forgetting a couple, but those'd be some of the key issues comin' down the pike. It makes life interesting.

[05:03:04] SL: It does. [*RB laughs*] You're in a great place.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Well, okay. I can't thank you enough . . .

RB: Well, I'm glad to do it.

SL: . . . for all the time.

[05:03:11] RB: I appreciate it, Scott. You're a good interviewer, and you know, we covered a lotta ground. I can't believe that—I can understand how the music is interesting. [*Laughter*]

SL: No, it's all interesting. [*RB laughs*] It's all interesting. How often does anyone get to sit down with a Supreme Court justice for this many hours and get his life story? I mean . . .

RB: Yeah. Well, I appreciate it.

SL: . . . it's a great and wonderful honor to . . .

RB: Well, you're . . .

SL: . . . to be here with you.

RB: . . . you're kind to say that, but I've enjoyed it. I—it's been fun.

[05:03:39 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]