

TALK WITH BRUCE LINDSAY - 1/12/79

I asked him to talk about campaign - some highlights.

Primary was "dull" in part because candidates didn't want to hurt each other since everyone wanted to get loser's votes in runoff. At start of primary, polls were something like 40 35 13--Pryor - Tucker Thornton - Tucker stayed the same, Thornton gained, Pryor slipped some and final was something like Pryor 35, Tucker 32.5, Thornton 32.5.

We discussed who Pryor people wanted to win. He said their instinct was that Tucker would be easier to beat but that these pollsters said Thornton. Their reasoning was (1) Thornton was closer to Pryor and Pryor more likely to get Thornton supporters than Tucker supporters (2) "Two major institutional groups, teachers and labor, were opposed to Pryor and would have gone to Thornton if he had come in second."

"We concluded after the primary that all 3 candidates had bored the people to death".

They had, during the primary, done relatively little media, but had campaigned in the little towns going from town square to town square. They decided to snap it up in runoff. Press conferences every day, calling attention to differences in position between Tucker and Pryor.

Public service commission issue came up. Pryor's campaign manager accused by Tucker of trying to rig Public Service Commission decision. Took a couple of day's time - complex - but they think it had little or no effect. Second flap was over a Pryor ad saying teachers were getting 30% increase during Pryor's term and AEA felt wrong figures were used and made a big play out of it. Bruce Lindsay thinks that had little effect. People thought teachers had it pretty good.

Pryor did well in all parts of state in runoff.

Their polls showed that 2/3 of people who did not vote would have voted for Pryor, so they worked to get organization together. In some places, they inherited the Thornton organization. Their polls also showed a number of people who assumed Pryor would be in the runoff anyway and since he had it made, they voted either for their preference between the others or the weakest of the other two. Bruce says Pryor people were "disappointed" in the primary. "We expected 40% of the vote."

They were also "very nervous" just before voting on the runoff because they had 2 intensive weeks of campaigning between the 2 elections, they had the PSC flap and the teacher's flap and they couldn't be sure how all that would shake out. "As it turned out most people had made up their minds."

I asked about Bumpers and Pryor support and Bruce said (and Ann agreed when she came in) that "they are practically opposite. Pryor is strong in the East and South. Bumpers is strong in the West and North. And the only place they overlap is in Little Rock."

They gave me a little map lesson and during it I never heard one complimentary word about Bumpers. So, as of this moment, I can say that I've never heard anything nice or anything derogatory about Bumpers. His name is never mentioned purposefully. It seems as though they don't get along well or at least that they are not buddies, I'll have to see what their political pasts have been and whether they have crossed in the past.