

DAVID PRYOR

February 3, 1981

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I went to David Pryor's office and stumbled into a staff meeting. Melinda met me outside and got me some coffee and said they were talking about constituency service emphasis.

David came to get coffee, saw me and asked me in. They were talking about getting on radio--Ann Pride was talking. He said after same talk
DP "Our first speaker today will be Dick Fenno. (applause) He's the only reporter I would allow to sit in on our staff meetings... When is your book coming out?" DF "You keep asking me that." DP "You've been following me since I was governor." Ann Pride. "We ought to get something out of him, we've put up with him long enough." DF - "I'll hold a pizza party for you." Laughter.

Afterward Dave talked. "We're trying to adjust to being a minority Senator. Speaking frankly, I don't think there is any major, across-the-board kind of legislation a minority Senator can introduce or be associated with. He can propose an amendment here or an amendment there--cosmetic things. So we are gearing up, for the next 6 months to emphasize constituency service--more newsletters, more radio, more personal telephone calls instead of just letters, more visits. We are going to target certain counties in the state where I have never done very well--places where there are scars left from the Faubus campaign or the McClellan campaign. I'm going to spend more time in those places. I am going to be a constituency senator, for at least 6 months. We are going to have staff meetings each week to give the staff a heightened sense of constituency service, constituency relations. I'm excited about it. I was down for a while after the election, but now I'm really excited about all the things we can do. I think
a I'm/frustrated AA. I like to think of innovative ways to communicate with

FW (PT)

constituents. It's a problem with the staff here--especially if they don't come from Arkansas, and several of them do not--they tend to forget the people back there, out of sight out of mind. They tend to think that the people out there know what is going on and don't have to be told. I want to get input from all members of the staff and to get them all thinking about the next newsletter. I told the staff a little story this morning. I was out in Phoenix last week to give a speech and I played in a tennis tournament. I've never played in one before. But I met a lady there. She was covered with diamonds, very sophisticated, lots of money,--her husband bought a football that had been used in the Super Bowl for three minutes for \$4700. She said to me, 'it must be wonderful living in "The White House!" Most people don't have any idea what we do here. I'm going to do more speaking at schools. These are very effective--you speak for 45 minutes and then take questions. You get to meet a large number of students, whereas you could never get their parents. They welcome public officials. I'm going down to speak at Batesville Friday night. But on the way I'll stop at Cabot and maybe one other town to speak at the high school. I'm excited about it."

Talked about Paul Tsongas. "He's doing very well for himself. He's writing a book. He's gotten a lot of credibility. That speech he made ^{to the ADA} was one I could have made. But a liberal talking to liberals gained a lot of respect from it. He also got a lot of respect from his work on the Alaska Lands Bills. The big developers came to have a lot of respect for him because he worked hard and did not take uncompromising positions." (Then - to his committees.)

"When I ~~first~~ heard that we had lost the Senate, the first thing that came to my mind was that I had lost all the patronage. I couldn't appoint

judges or federal marshalls anymore. I could ^{veto} ~~top~~ them, I guess, if senatorial courtesy worked. I found that a great relief. I always hated patronage. The second thing that entered my mind was that I would lose my subcommittee. That was the vehicle I had used to get into the area of consulting practices. Now I had lost that vehicle. I lost 3 or 4 very good staff members. I kept one; the other ones all got good jobs. I don't know what the third thing was---maybe nothing. When I was out at that tennis tournament in Phoenix, I said to Lowell Weiker. "How come you got to be such a good tennis player?" He said "I've been in the minority party in the Senate for so long, all I had to do was play tennis. Now, you're going to become a good tennis player, too."

After his discussion of Tsongas, he said "About ^{my own} ~~your~~ situation, I'm on two committees that have become submerged--Governmental Affairs and Agriculture. I'd like to get off Governmental Affairs. I can't get off Agriculture; it's a good political committee. But next time, I'm going to work hard to get on Finance. I've already written a letter to that effect. My goal on Agriculture is to hold ^{things} ~~heavy~~ on agriculture prices in New York City. And ^{Then they'll learn how little the farmer gets from what they pay at the grocery store.} I'm going to do it, you'll see."

"We went home for three weeks ^{in August} during the drought. I have never seen people so discouraged. They wouldn't even go out doors. They just stayed in the house. It was the greatest psychological ^{'blah'} I've ever seen. I watched birds fall out of the trees dead, right before my eyes. It was like standing behind a jet engine all day. If we have to go through another summer like that, I don't know what the farmers will do."

"I have joined a group of about 10 moderate conservatives. I missed the first meeting, but I was a little disappointed when the paper headline said "Democratic conservatives organize to fight Democratic liberals." That's not the idea at all. Our idea is that between Jesse Helms and Sarbanes, or Paul Tsongas or Kennedy--say between Helms and Kennedy--there has to be a

middle position. On food stamps for example, Helms has his knife out and wants to gut that program, and the McGovernites, the nutrition people, want to give it to everyone. There has to be a middle ground on that issue. Our idea is that we can make a contribution by developing that position, ^{we} ~~like~~ plan to meet once every two weekes." Said Baren, Chiles, Heflin, Zorinsky ("he votes with the Republican right"), were with the group.

Story about FHA Director candidate from Arkansas - comes to DC to interview for the job and drives by capitol. ^{"He said,} "It must be great to live there where all the Presidents lived." He thought it was the White House. Poor guy, he didn't know anything except how to chew tobacco and spit. He was out of it. He didn't get the job."

Ann told me that Ray Scott had left for Alabama State Department of Health.

During the discussion of radio, Ann Pride told how people tell her "I heard David Pryor on the radio the other day and I sure like him." "What did he say?" "I don't know." David laughed. "She probably thought there's ole David Pryor up there doing something. He sounds pretty good." I mention this because his self image is so much that of "ole David Pryor."