

January 10[?], 12[?]
1979

DAVID PRYOR

Jan 1979

Doug Jackson, Bruce Lindsay, Ray Scott, Ann Pride, Melinda _____,
Deborah ~~Marsha McMillan~~.

Late Tuesday I went around to Pryor's office (temporary) right across the hall from Tsongas. I sat for a moment in the reception room--absolutely bare, telephones on the floor--one desk and two chairs, nothing on the walls, one bookcase with a tiny picture propped up on one shelf.

Ann Pride came out and I kidded her about the come down in elegance from the governor's office. She laughed and said "wait till you see my desk," which turned out to be in the middle of one of two rows of three desks each (mostly legislative) crammed into one small room next to the receptionist's room. She commented how she would do "some legislative, some political work". "I'll be a swing person." Said how happy she was to be rid of scheduling, which she did for governor. Told me a little bit about different ones on the staff. "We're swinging right into work. Most of it comes through the mail. ^{Will} But ~~But~~ is working hard with the farm groups and others on agricultural matters. He's our country boy; but he's a lawyer and a CPA and the smartest person you'd ever want to meet. We're committed to reintroducing the Bumpers-Hodges agricultural bill. It needs a lot of work, so ^{Will} George is working on that here and going back to Arkansas. That's the major piece of legislation we're getting ready to introduce."

She tells me he'll probably get Agriculture (not Finance) maybe ageing and then some other.

She says Pryor wanted an office in the old building. "One thing he said was 'Get Russell.' I like it with the fireplaces and all. It looks more senatorial." They will get Room 404 in 6-8 weeks. She commented on

how they grabbed one of the old desks (there were only six or eight available) and pointed out an old overstuffed couch that they also got. "People come in here and fall in love with the furniture; but we tell them it stays with us, too bad." There was evident pleasure in getting old, senatorial furniture in a "senatorial type building."

As we went through the Senator's office (also completely bare in terms of any personal effects) she said. Senator Melcher had had the office before and had kept cats in the office. "Senator Melcher kept two cats in the office. The cat hairs were so bad that we had the rug completely shampooed and had the draperies taken away. Several people in the office have allergies. It still bothers them."

An introduced me to David's personal secretary--Melinda--and Ray Scott greeted me effusively as I came through the door into room where he, Bruce Lindsay and Melinda. He's warm and friendly and no less guarded than most other aides; but he punctuates his conversation with "candidly" or "I'll be very candid with you" or "In confidence." My guess is that he tells me more than he would some others ("When reporters take out their pencils, that's when I clam up.") But behind all the warmth is a guy who knows exactly what he's saying and gives away nothing he doesn't intend to. But the contrast with Dennis Kanin could not be greater. With Dennis, you get 5 minutes you feel like thanking him profusely. With Ray, you get the feeling that you can walk in the door and say hi anytime. Dennis is more like Paul; Ray is more like Dave. And maybe that's not a coincidence.

There is a personal graciousness that is southern. There is also a concern with personal relationships that is Southern. Ray talked about how helpful the seminars put on by Stan Kimmitt the Secretary of the Senate and the

Sergeant at Arms had been. He and Bruce went to it, along with David. "It gave the Senators a chance to meet each other. Pryor hit it off with a couple of them--Stewart from Alabama and Simpson of Wyoming. They seemed to like each other. And of course Pryor, Boren and Exxon have a lot in common being governors."

He also noted how some Senate functionary had told him "their office" was the best organized at this stage of any he'd seen in years and the furthest along in organizing and getting to work of any of the new Senate offices. Now has no power around here, but that made us feel pretty good." He attributes it to the fact that he moved his family up here in November and went on the Senate payroll (under new provisions) in late November. These comments may reflect some insecurity (Ray speaks of himself as "the real tin horn in the group.") but I think it more likely reflects the fact that because he was inexperienced in legislative area, he needed a jump ("If we hadn't come here in November to start getting organized, I don't know where we'd be right now") and he's pleased with internal recognition of his efforts.

Another emphasis on personal politics. "To be candid with you, we put as much emphasis on personality in choosing the staff as we did on their expertise. We want people who will get along with one another, who work well together in close quarters. We want people with a sense of humor, people who won't be offended by the occasional tempers or profanity that sometimes arise. We didn't want people who were prima donnas. One of the problems with Pryor is that he's so open and accessible to the staff that it's easy for someone to think that he's special and become a prima donna. On the other hand the value is that he's accessible to lots of different people and ideas. We were interested in the chemistry of the office, achieving the right chemistry. I think we did. Bruce and I did 99% of the hiring, but almost always with

the concurrence of the boss. He met most of them before we hired them and the others afterward. He's met them all and he likes them."

"one of the twists I had to make in my own thinking, coming from the executive to the legislative branch was recognizing that the staff was it. In the governor's office you can tap the resources of the entire executive branch. You can get all the expertise you need. If I couldn't get it at the top of the agency, I'd go down the line until I got it from the working level--from the people I dealt with when I was in the agencies. But here, we've got fourteen people and "this is it" as far as your resources are concerned. That's not entirely true, of course. You have the congressional research service. That required a real twist in my mind. We had to hire people who are not so much specialists that they can't move across several areas. Yet that can't be so much generalists that they don't understand their fields well enough."

He talked about committee assignments. DP wanted Finance, Agriculture, Governmental Affairs and--later changed to something else--Environment and Public Works. "We've adjusted our requests to what we have a realistic chance of getting."

"We're 90% certain of getting Agriculture." I said he made a commitment on that and Ray laughed. "He's going to take that whether he wants it or not." Clear indication was that his real interests lay elsewhere--Finance.

"From the scuttlebut I hear, we don't have much chance of getting Finance." There are only 2 vacancies on Democratic side. "For one thing there's some feeling that are too many southerners on the committee already. David Boren wants it and he's being called a southwesterner. There's a map the steering committee uses to determine geographical balance. I saw it and Oklahoma sticks into the south pretty far. But the thinking I've heard is that Boren is a southwesterner and Bradley is an easterner, and they have the inside track.

I've also heard that Chairman Long wants Boren on the Committee because of his views on oil and gas."

He then generalized about the process. "It's strange to me to see this internal maneuvering--this "informal^{fernal} maneuvering." When we were in the executive branch, we saw it going on in the legislature. But we looked at it and said you bastards do what you want and we in the executive branch will step in and save everything. But now we are "the bastards." That has required a mental click for me."

Says he and Pryor came up to Washington after the Primary and made a tour to see Bobby Byrd and Alan Cranston and I don't know who else. He did Governor's business as pretense. But it indicates that he knew he was a winner, and started to work on committee assignments and make contacts. This gave him an organizational jump. But not a seniority jump since Hodges was forbidden by law to resign early.

It was during this trip that he met Ray (S4H) Greenaway, Alan Cranston's AA. He told Ray (S4H) that the days of apprenticeship and the clerk are over, and that people should speak up, etc., etc. That discussion made an impression on Ray (S4H), and I guess, furthermore, they get along OK. "Confidentially, Ray is the source of all my information on what's happening with committee assignments."

He also said he'd had contact with Boren's people, when I asked about AA networks. It's clear to me, though, that these networks are not well established--not yet anyway.

They emerge gradually--maybe out of trial and error.

TALK WITH DAVID PRYOR - 1/12/79

Re decisions. "They won't be as piercing and burdensome as those you make as governor. When you make them, the Panama Canal, or SALT, the burden will be there. They will be momentous decisions, but they won't come as often. As governor, you make them every day. Maybe here when you make a decision, it will be more intense. But they won't come as often."

When I came in he spread his arms, looked around the room and said "Well, here I am. Is this what I've wanted for so long? I don't know."

"One thing I can't get used to is waking up in the morning and not having ten people around the mansion doing things for me--the state police, the housekeepers, the prison inmates. Not having to worry about them has lifted a great burden off my shoulders, and even more for my wife. We wake up in our own little house in Bethesda, Maryland. I love it. It's a great freedom. We're looking forward to gearing down our life style. It will be so much more simplified, even if it is more complex than most people's. Right now, it's all so new. In the food store the other night, they would not cash my check. I said to the man who was with me "I'm learning all over again what life is like for everybody."

His wife was not there. She had gone back to Arkansas "to clean up the lake house so we can rent it for the racing season in Hot Springs." So Dave has been taking care of his young son Scott. Two days ago, when I went into the office, Dave was running out door to pick the kid up at school. Yesterday my interview was cancelled because the kid was throwing up and Dave had to stay home and take care of him. Today, Dave brought the kid in with him to the office. "He's down the hall opening the mail and playing with the computer." As soon as my interview was over, he went down the hall to see how he was doing.

David Pryor does not pontificate. That is the nicest thing about this nice person.

"I have a lot of respect for the Senate," he said a couple of times.

Early on, while he was just free associating he said, "We won one victory already. We got an office in this building. It's much more--what would you say--senatorial. Who do you suppose has sat in this office--
✓ Arthur Vandenberg, Henry Cabot Lodge, John Kennedy? Who knows? When I move to my new office I'm going to find out. There's a history to this place and I want to know it."

"We'll be moving to our permanent office--Dick Clark's former office. I only hope I don't suffer a similar fate."

The one thing he said "off the record" was something he had said when I was in Arkansas. "The Agriculture Committee is in a shambles. There's almost a vacuum there. When I told other Senators that I wanted to be on it they said 'too bad,' or 'maybe we can reduce the size of the committee so you won't have to go on.' I think if I go on the committee I can move up rather fast. I think I can make something out of it. Of course, I don't know anything about the staff situation. The committee touches such a broad range of subjects of importance to our state. I'd like to get active in the hunger area--for humanitarian reasons to feed people around the world and because it will help our farmers to sell their crops. I very much want to become active in the hunger area."

"I think of Bill Clinton in the Governor's mansion and I don't envy him one bit. It will be relatively easy to make the change. I psyched myself up for it."

I asked him if it felt any different from the time he came to the House and he said "That was twelve years ago"--the idea was that it was ~~12~~ eight years ago. But then he said "At that time, we had a tremendous urge to go to every-

thing we were invited to. This time we won't feel any pressure or necessity to go to the embassies or other places--not nearly as much work it's going to take to bone up to make these decisions like SALT two and vote on them."

When I asked him if he thought he was more naturally a legislator than an executive he thought and said "more legislator, if I had to choose"--then he told story about a man who voted for him "even though I think you'll make a lousy governor." He thought I was too free with money, not tight fisted enough. But when I balanced the budget and left with a state surplus, he changed his mind." The story didn't really fit my original idea and question didn't really work.

"A governor in the South is a special person. There's a special relationship between a governor and the people in the South, a relationship that doesn't exist in the North or Northeast. It's a southern part of our character for the Governor to be a special person. No matter how long I'm in the Senate, I don't think I can create that relationship with the citizens. They don't look on Congressmen or Senators with the reverence--no, not reverence--warmth. If I became President, which I'm certainly not, I'd go back to Arkansas and they'd say, 'If you play your cards right, you might get to be Governor. It's a special office. In the South a Senator is a step sideways, a step to a role that is not so well defined for them. If you ask them how a Senator can tell you more about ^{how} the governor relates to their lives. They think the Senator votes on the Panama Canal, maybe on dams, but not things that affect their everyday lives."

On difference between governor and senator "Mark Hatfield says that when he was governor he used to press on bell and people came. Now the bell rings and he runs. They run his life."

"A governor has immediate power at his fingertips--power over people,

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tech*

*relater to their lives, they
aren't sure.
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jobs, patronage, programs and directions. A senator's role is of a long range nature. The great frustration for a Senator is that you vote for a housing program, maybe 3 billion, and it's four years down the track before you see housing project for the elderly in Magnolia, Arkansas. As governor, I'd say 'I want to build a home for the elderly in Warren, Arkansas' and 18 months later I'd go down and dedicate it. I'll be dedicating buildings all this year and next year that I helped start. For a Senator, there's a longer time involved before you see the results of your labors."

"I have no patronage as Senator--and that's a great burden off my shoulders. Last week a man called me and said 'My son wants to be a game warden in ____.' I said 'Don't call me, call Bill Clinto.'"

Then he told story of man who wanted to be made member of welfare board even though it never met, so he could have a plaque on the wall--especially since his law partner supported Tucker in primary. He used this as example of requests he gets. I guess he granted this one while he was still governor. (At this point, he had been out of governorship for a week." Ann said they pulled out of the mansion December 26th).

"I was trying to explain to my 12 year old driving in this morning why the Senate is called the most exclusive club in the world. For one thing it has very few members. And when it gets down to it they are mutually protective of each other. But it's a hard thing to explain."

"On election night Walter Mondale called to congratulate me. He said, 'Dave, you're one of a hundred.' I almost said to him 'I'm one of 50 now.' It'll be fun." (No doubt he's looking forward to it.)

I asked him about committee assignments and exhibited none of the intensity of Tsongas. "In my first letter I asked for Finance and

Agriculture. I won't make the Finance Committee for reasons I probably shouldn't go into. I will get on Agriculture. "I think I'll try Governmental Affairs--they handle a broad range of issues across the government-- or I may seek a seat on Environment and Public Works. Dale Bumpers is on Appropriations so that is out."

I asked if he had lobbied at all. "I only did a little bit of lobbying. I called Senator Long out of courtesy and told him I had applied for his committee. I did the same with Senator Talmadge on Agriculture. I called a few friends on the Steering Committee and just said "If you're not committed, I'd appreciate your consideration." "I don't think they would appreciate being put in a position where they would have to say no to you. But I haven't actively pounded the corridors and gone to see them."

"Frankly, I'm not worried about my committee assignments. I once said that if I get elected I wouldn't ask for any committees. I'd rather be a free spirit, a rover, a humming bird sipping nectar from many different flowers. I'm undisciplined. I don't like to sit there for hours on one subject. I never did enjoy the [House] Appropriations Committee--sitting there for hours discussing the number of typewriters to give GSA and whether they should be Underwood, Remington or Smith Corona."

This means, he's likely to be a gadfly type Senator, not a member of the club. My guess is that this set of predispositions might be better satisfied in the governor's office.

I asked him about the seminars and he said they were helpful in meeting other Senators. "I'm trying to put together a meeting of all the new Democratic Senators next Tuesday afternoon to extend the orientation program. We could use some organization, very loosely structured, to share information that each of us might not have by himself. On issues, we don't agree. I doubt that Judge

"The first thing I'm going to do when I move into my permanent office is to get rid of those overhead lights. Don't they offend you? I may have to have a dozen lamps in my office, but I'm going to get rid of those fluorescent lights. I asked somebody what happened to the lights that were here before and he said they took the chandeliers out some years ago. So I asked them where the chandeliers are now. He said nobody knows. Can you imagine how beautiful a chandelier would look in this room? As you can see, I really want to talk about chandeliers. The hell with SALT TWO."

1957-1964
1964-1968
1968-1972
1972-1976
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1980-1984
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than they are. As they would say 'He's gone up there and gotten uppity. He's got Potomac fever.' That kind of stuff. People are very sensitive to change in a person. They watch a person very closely in a campaign--and especially I think in defeat. They want to know how a guy takes defeat. In 1972, what kept me in public life was that I was considered a good loser. People told me the best talk I ever gave was my concession speech. They like to see how you lose."

I asked about his plans to go back home. "One of the traps we fall into is that when the state Chamber of Commerce or the Lumberman's Association are having a luncheon in Little Rock, we get into the trap of going down, giving a speech and catching the next plane back. When I go back, I'd rather pay more attention---instead of groups---to geographical areas of the state, going to two or three different towns. If I go down and make a talk for 25 or 30 minutes, I haven't learned a thing and haven't imparted anything. If I went down now I couldn't tell them anything. I don't know any more about Washington now than I did a month ago. I don't want to fall victim to that." (It almost sounds as if he'd been asked to do that recently and had decided against it.)

He said he's going to have a staff of 6 in Little Rock and 15-16 in Washington. "We're going to try and do what Lawton Chiles does. He does all his ^{work} ~~truscade~~ in his state. We have the "orange pouch." Do you know about "the orange pouch?" Well if we get mail here, and get it in the orange pouch by early afternoon, it will be in Little Rock the next morning. We're also going to call people directly when we take their cases. We'll call and say, 'We have your social security letter and this is what we're going to do about it.'"