

David Pryor

October 26 & 27, 1978

Wayne Eadie, Ray Scott, Ann Pride, Shirley MacFarland, Parker Westbrooke.

(If come again--try Holiday Inn, it's a way from Highway 3--Camelot

looks best.)

October 26

Arkansas Environmental Barriers Council - Welcome
to people in wheel chairs

Silver Haired Legislative Session - speech in House Chamber

Presentation of Environment Awards to Senior Citizens
in big room of Governor's Office

Meeting of group of Government officials conventions
in Arkansas - Department of Parks and Tourism is running it

Lunch at Carousel

Taping at Channel 2

Party in Stuttgart

Dinner at Stuttgart High School

October 27

Jonesboro Dedication to Gathings

Press Conference on Nerve Gas

In Governor's Office--making calls involving death of a member
of police commission, to a newly arrived but old friend
reporter at Gazette, to a mayor about development grant, to
reporter from press conference and signing stuff brought to him
by various aides.

"There are a lot of things I have to do in the next 60 days. First I have to get elected; and things look pretty good. Then I have to buy a home. If you're not a Rockefeller, that's not easy.... Another thing, I'm going to have to learn to drive a car again. I haven't driven one for four years. I don't even know what a car costs. I'll have to buy two. I've lived in a cocoon for four years. Now I'm going back to the real world. It's as if I've been dead for four years and am coming back to life."

Enormously personable in dealing person to person with people. Sitting here in the Governor's office after the first three events, one of the things you notice is how these "ribbon cutting ceremonies" naturally bill him as a booster of the state programs. To senior citizens (whose number of citizens ^{over} ~~was~~ 60 is second only to Florida) he spoke of Arkansas commitment to the aging and his own "trailer on the aging" in D.C. as manned by 21 young people, and how committee on Aging was finally established after he left. He spoke of how "frustrating" it was to try and "pierce the bureaucratic veil of the House of Representatives."

To the Environmental Barriers group, he spoke saying that the program was "the first in the nation."

To senior citizens awards group he said they were "helping to make Arkansas number one in these programs."

To silver haired legislature he said it was "first in history of Arkansas."

When I got in car he said "Refresh my memory. You wrote a book--(and I said "about the Appropriations Committee" and he said "The Power of the Purse". Then he said "I quote you--because the power of the purse is one of the great unused powers we have--the power of the purse."

A couple of times he introduced me as "one of the those fellows who writes books."

To group of government employees he tried to tell them to promote Arkansas. "No state has any more to offer for conventions than does the state of Arkansas." He wants to coordinate efforts to "pull more of this business to Arkansas"--"I'm appealing to each person here to be a salesman for Arkansas."

70% of all convention meetings are for people of 75-150 people and that makes lots of places in Arkansas eligible.

Last year - 20 million in tourist business.

Licence plate - "Arkansas - Land of Opportunity."

Shirley and Parker. "They're a pair. They will stick with you through thick and thin."

Bitterness from McClellan fight. Shirley and Parker especially.

David "You've got to love everybody".

Story of Hodges appointment - well kept secret. An "in joke." Parker impatient to know.

Channel 7 interviews - inflation. "I'm not one to beat it to pieces or nit pick it to death, especially when issue is inflation - ^{an} ~~an~~ greatest energy.... I support the President. It might not be best for Arkansas but I think we have to think of what is best for the nation. I'm against wage and price controls. The president's program may not be the final answer but until we do find the answer, I support the President."

"I would like to support some legislation to curb rising hospital costs. I don't know that Kennedy program is the answer. I was impressed with his knowledge and interest but I do not support his program because I do not think we can afford it. I'm searching for answer to contain hospital costs, but I have not found it."

Modest on
McClellan
+ caution

Would like to go on Agriculture committee he once said - "He's going to fight very hard on agriculture - rice prices are low - need to sell rice abroad. "I'm going to fight very very hard for the farmers of Arkansas."

1st thing he'd do is get briefed on issues of importance to nation.

Waiting for the interview, we ran into his 3 opponents--a Republican and 2 independents--all waiting to be interviewed on coming out. "I've decided the best way to campaign now is to do nothing to call attention to the campaign. Don't let anyone know you have a campaign. Let them think Clinton has a campaign or someone else."

As we drove by the Arkansas Teacher's Association, whose building is two buildings away from the Capitol, I commented. "The teachers sure are hard by the Capitol, watching over you."

He replied "They supported Jim Guy Tucker in the primary. They thought I hadn't given them enough in pay raises. In this election, the teachers, the unions, the other special interest groups--not one of them endorsed me. But I tell you that this was not the year to run with the support of the special interest groups. We turned those endorsements right around on Jim Guy Tucker and made him wish he had never gotten them. We said it's "you and me against them. And it worked. Or, at least I think it worked. I think that teachers endorsement backfired, don't you Wayne?" (Yes sir) Wayne's wife is a teacher."

"During the campaign, I said I wanted to get on the Senate Agriculture Committee. I regard that as a commitment. And from what I hear the committee is pretty demoralized, with Talmadge and all. So I don't think people are clamoring to get on the committee. The Finance Committee is the one I really want to get on."

Spent a lot of time fussing about whether to hold a press conference on nerve gas tomorrow to denounce fact that nerve gas is going to be manufactured in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Should he do it before the election? He turned to me and said what do you think of nerve gas? I said "I'm against it." Then the same to Ann "I'm against it." Parker said he should speak out after the election. "On November 9th. These people are worried about their jobs." Pryor said "But there's more to it than jobs. We can already kill each other a thousand times over. I think if we are going to fight a war we should fight with sticks and clubs." Then later he said "I'm the only person in the state who cares. It's a one man issue. I called Dale Bumpers this morning and talked to him about it. He doesn't care. Nobody cares but me. But every gut instinct I have tells me I should go ahead." We'll see whether he holds the press conference or not. (I guess I think he should not.)

He's so good natured, and jokes and winks at everybody (well, not winks, but brightens his whole face at everyone) and waves his fingers (not just his hands) at everyone, that you could take it for innocuousness. But he obviously has some strong beliefs. He also has a southern story teller quality about him.

Some stories so far. He's sitting with Mills when ^{Talk of things} Fed^{er} decides to retire and stuns everyone by announcing it on the floor.

Kid who works for Appropriations says he's going to run for Gqthings seat - tells Mills, Mills falls over, hits head and bleeds. Kid takes it as sign.

Talks - "country boy" about coming up to Little Rock from Camden and getting lost from his mother in the department store. His cousin is floor walker in Bliss³ - all dressed up very grandly.

His father brings ^{insane} ~~in same~~ people up to Little Rock handcuffed to back seat with eyes bugging out (he acts it out) "We'd come up to the hospitals with the sireen blowing."

"There isn't one person in the White House I can reach to talk to. When I was congressman I could, but not now. Would you believe it? There is no one I can call in the White House."

He's sending someone up to look at Lugar and Riegle office operation.

Tells story of how he was invited to a Eunice Shriver Lawn party when he was a freshman congressman. "The only trouble was the party was on Sunday and we went on Saturday--we were the only people there. It was typical Pryor organization."

That fitted with comment Ann made in the office. "You know how he hates to plan."

Dave said "One of the first things I'm going to do when I get to Washington is to instruct the people who answer the phones. People back here don't understand the lingo. They'll call for Senator Pryor and someone will say, "I'm sorry, he's on the floor." When you say that to the people here "He's on the floor" they aren't going to think about voting."

Then Parker tells story about how he was on the floor with a hangover and his secretary tells someone "He's on the floor." Great laugh.

What's it like now? "Meaningless. I'm not doing anything. I'm a ceremonial head or something. I don't know. I fight ^{fires} ~~farmers~~, worry about the bureaucracy. It's not bad I guess."

Stuttgart - "I'm gong to be moving out of town for a spell, but I don't intend to forget where I came from." *This key for him as he said in Wash DC - did get to by for british*

A communications gap in this country is one of problems of government. "and I don't exclude the Congress."

"I become concerned when I look at Congress and see that the fastest growing business is that of regulation. Budgets of regulatory agencies has increased 115%. I think it's a danger signal. We are becoming an over regulated society."

"It's been a pleasure to work with the agricultural community of this state--especially the rice industry." He talks about his request to meet with President. Briscoe, Finch, Edwards, Pryor.

"I hope I become a member of Senate Agriculture Committee. I want to become a member of that committee. If I get to Senate I'm going to make the point loud and clear that in all the Department of Agriculture there's not one advocate of rice industry, not one salesman ^{for} ~~from~~ the rice industry abroad. We need someone there who ^{cares about our problems - someone who} can see that people in the world are hungry and ^{us} ~~was~~ having ^{an} ~~own~~ overflowing rice crop in this country." "I look forward to your counsel, your ^{advice} and your prayers. We have a tremendous, wonderful state and a fantastic people." Talked about 160,000 people coming to a crafts fair in North west Arkansas War Eagle "because there is a yearning to hold onto, to savor and save something of that which made the country great." As we flew into War Eagle with the beauty of Arkansas below us, the mountains, the fall colors, I asked myself "Why do I want to leave all this and go to Washington? The only answer is that ^{service} ~~source~~ to ^{humanity} ~~necessity~~ is the greatest work of life. Thank you for giving me this rare opportunity."

In Stuttgart we went to a party at the home of the Executive Vice President of the second largest rice producing firm in town--the largest (Richland) in town is the largest in the USA! and then to a dinner party at Stuttgart H.S.

On the way down he said "They wanted to have the dinner at the Stuttgart Country Club, but I said no. I don't go to country clubs. It smacks too much of the rich and the high brow. People say, you say you're just one of the ordinary people and then you come to town and go off to the country club.' My daddy tried to buy the Camden Country Club one ^{to} ~~so~~ to graze his cattle on. That's all he thought they were good for." When we got to the house where the party

was, Ray Scott said "It's right next to the golf course" and Dave said "That's getting pretty close!" to the country club. Said Doug Brandon held meeting in country club and got criticized.

This talk symbolizes a little of the populism that is in him, plus the concern for aged and handicapped, plus outrage at nerve gas.

He talked about the state politically when I pulled out the map as we rode in the car to Stuttgart. He spoke of John Paul Hammerschmidt as "very low key, a very popular congressman particularly because of constituent service." He said Fayetteville was most liberal part of the state--but is ~~embedded~~ *bedded in* Republican territory--lots of retirees there. Said Bill Alexander was "a shade more liberal than his district, but is never too far out in front." And then he said there were two new ones. He thinks Brandon will win because he's a Democrat, but that Bethune will run a good race. Poll now shows 47-33-20 for Brandon and they think that if people don't see much difference between the two that will help Brandon because they'll vote party.

Then I asked him to look at the map and discuss his support patterns. "I've always done best in the southern part of the state. That's where my congressional district was. The eastern area has always thought I was a little too liberal. But against Jim Guy Tucker, I didn't look so liberal. I was the man who had to say no, who had to hold down spending, who balanced the budget, ran the biggest business in the state and ended up with a surplus. That sold the people in the east and I did well there."

Then I asked about the three way race. "The pollsters told us that Pryor votes didn't come out. They took the attitude what the hell, Pryor has it won, why bother. I got 35%, Tucker got 33% and Thornton got 31.8%. I was supposed to get 40% and I fell 5% short. That had a great effect on

my supporters. They really got out and worked every county, every town, every precinct, every box. They worked day and night, they did cartwheels and they turned the election around. In some places I went from 35% to 60%. I beat him in his home county of ^{Pulaski} ~~Perlaske~~. The first primary was actually very dull. There was more interest in other statewide races--even local races. But in the runoff, most of the other races were settled and it was one big shoot out for the Senate."

With respect to Ray Thornton he said a lot of Thornton workers came over to him. "The top eschelon Thornton people, those people who had worked their hearts out for him, they vanished. They were just plain tired--too pooped to pop. As for Ray, he didn't say anything publicly. He said Bobby Jo and I are going back to Washington and you all can do whatever you wish. But he said privately that he and his wife and their families were going to vote for David Pryor. And that got around."

He said he called Ray Thornton on the phone today to talk about "something he's interested in". "I told him I know how lonely it feels cleaning out your office now. I went through that once."

At lunch, during story telling, he and Parker told the story of Jed Johnson, youngest man ever elected/^{to Congress} and how he was beaten because his wife went on TV and when asked if they'd return to Oklahoma should he lose his reelection bid, she said "Oh no, we'd never think of such a thing. We'll stay in Washington." That killed him. And Dave said "That ruined him and he never has been worth anything since. He hangs around now with the group, the former members of Congress. I never even joined that group. Every year they used to have Former Members of Congress day and they would be treated like lepers. When we saw them, everyone would run and hide for fear they'd catch something from all these guys who had been defeated. It was like seeing lepers." Great hilarity.

✓ OK
He never
stayed long
and came
back.

He told stories all day--in plane, he and his wife did--and in general he seemed about as good humored as anyone I've travelled with so far. There's no press attending him all the time, and I got to talk with him nearly as much as with Cohen.

Also he treated me very seriously. He introduced me at the Stuttgart dinner as "one of the countries foremost students of Congress who wrote a famous book called The Power of the Purse about the appropriations process. I read it and I've known him for many years, ever since I was in Congress. He's travelled farther than anyone else to get to Stuttgart." He made me stand up. Sometimes he would say "He's gathering material for a book to be entitled David Pryor, greatest living American."

On the way to Stuttgart, Dave and Ray (who calls him "Guv") talked about staffing and who they were picking up and who they were letting down. They are trying for a small nucleus of a staff which they will then beef up as they go. But they are finding housing very high and salaries not high enough. Ray (who will be AA) expressed doubts to me but sees it as exciting and not a life-time job. He was appointed head of Office of Ageing by Bumpers, Head of Social Services by Pryor and then brought back as Executive Secretary to the Governor--his present position. They discussed different people, could they type, did they have Washington experience, could they do anything in Little Rock office, did they have lawyer-researcher-speech interview skills.

As they discussed staff, he turned to me and said "Should I do a press conference tomorrow or wait till after election." I said "I can't answer that question. I don't know anything about Arkansas. But I wouldn't want nerve gas manufactured in my state." He said "I don't want it made at all. How can we arrange a SALT agreement with the Soviets limiting arms, when at

the same time we are making secret arrangements to manufacture nerve gas in Little Rock, Arkansas.... The only way we found it was through a leak from the Pentagon. Said he didn't like it, didn't like way it was done and thought the Pine Bluff facility could do useful constructive toxicological work instead.

At the rice man's home as we waited for his wife to get there, Dave told of a dream he had had "about 15 times." It had to do with taking his bar exam. "I was under a lot of pressure taking the bar exam. I had already built a little office in Camden where I was going to open my law office. I had already brought in the man who was going to be my partner. But I hadn't taken the exam. I was going to take the exam on a typewriter, and when the instructor said go, I couldn't find a plug to plug in my typewriter. There wasn't any electricity in the building! And while I was trying to get my typewriter started, everyone around me was working away. I'll bet I had that dream 15 times." I note that, but make nothing of it. Maybe someone else would.

He looks too young to be a governor; but his sucessor looks even younger. When his wife asked him how his day went--on the plane ride back from Stuttgart-- he said "OK--the same" and then added "I raced upstairs and had a 20 minute nap. And did that do me a lot of good." So he can nap--this was when he went home after the Channel 7 taping.

On Friday morning, we rode to Jonesboro for dedication of the Federal Building there for "Took" ^{gathering} ~~Cathering~~. Flew out about 9:00 and got back about 2:00 p.m. Most of the time, David was thinking about his press conference.

When he got into the car on the way to the airport, he said "I decided to let it rip and go ahead with the press conference. The trouble is no one cares about it but me. But even Richard Nixon opposed nerve gas".

As we got on the plane on the way back, he said, "This press conference makes me feel less easy than anyone I ever had. The devil of it is I don't

know why I'm doing it. I just feel compelled to, that's all. When I told Bill Alexander, he told me in his own way that I ought to wait. He said he knew all about those things from the appropriations committee. He asked me why I was doing it and I told him I just didn't know why but I had to. He kinda shook his head."

I'm sitting in the security house while he transmits the message prior to holding his press conference at the Capitol.

He didn't say much about the ceremony at which he presented a plaque to Gathings calling the day "Took Gathings Day in Arkansas."

As we got back in the plane, he said, "How would you like to go to two of these ceremonies every day?" And as we got off the plane, he said "A lot of my job is ceremonial". When I asked him if he expected less as Senator he said "Yes." "I won't be so available up there." And I said "There will be two of you instead of one of you." And he said "And he'll be two years fruther from election than I will."

When I asked him what would have happened had he not gone, he said Bill Alexander would have explained and no one would have minded. He said Bill Alexander wouldn't have cared--and that only person who cared whether he stayed for lunch was the organizer. I guess he just feels it's part of the job to go if he doesn't have a big excuse.

News Conference

"This has worried me a great deal. There's a tremendous apathy about this issue and that worries me even more."

"We transformed that facility into one of education and research and we are about to take a step ^{ward} background."

"Dick, I may be walking into a trap, I may be making a big mistake this close to election."

"I'm not sure we'd ever find proper way to store a compost of chemicals or agents." DK how to transport them either.

"Morally I find it *repugnant* --the production of nerve gas... (But I'm here to say that the production of nerve gas in Pine Bluff is a tragic mistake."

"Admin^{stration} owes it to public to go forward with hearings and briefings to make certain that all precautions have been taken before we go forward with this tremendous commitment."

"How much is NCTR going to be transformed into into production of nerve gas... It's depressing that NCTR is not being used to its fullest capacity."

Economic reasons are the important reasons for producing nerve gas in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. I know the people of Pine Bluff, that they are proud of their community and would not want to profiteer from this suspect adventure. I think the people of Pine Bluff would want to see the NCTR expand and play a more positive role." (National Center for Toxicological Research)

"I ⁶would have waited very *early* till after the election. But I think a decision like this has no relation to a political race... A decision of this magnitude and this moral climate is one you can't wait on. I wrestled with it all week, hoping someone else would come forward. When no one did, I felt I had to get it off my chest."

"I'm hopeful this will cause discussion--it's time to ask some questions."

Afterward, when one of his aides was about to call the Colonel in charge of the Pine Bluff Arsenal he said - "Tell him I did it out of moral compunction and I did it before election so people will not think I have my feet firmly planted in sawdust. We probably just went down 19 points in the polls."

Sitting in his office making calls he asked everyone how it went--even me. ("You wanted to do it, you did it and the press conference went well") Then he said "The only one (reporters) I'm worried about is Carol Griffey - get me Carol Griffey on the phone." And he talked to her in private--he left his office. Ray Scott talked about how difficult he found press relations and how conservative he was with them. He feels he has been taken advantage of--reporters will go to someone and say "I wasn't talking with Ray Scott and he suggested I talk with you"--when the statement is a lie. Ann Pride came in and spoke of newspaperman coming in and going through the in-basket.

When he came back, he said, "Dick, one thing I know and that is 100 years from now, what I just did will not make any difference and no one will remember. We'll all be dead--of nerve gas" - big laugh. I said they were a good-humored bunch and Ray said that Dave insisted that all the staff have a sense of humor and not take themselves too seriously.

On the ride from the Capitol back to the mansion, he read his letter to the President on Nerve Gas. Obviously, the matter concerned him all day, and that was why I got nothing out of him today.

I said I'd like to come to Washington and he said fine--said he enjoyed my company, etc. etc. I think we parted friends. At least in the afternoon he was introducing me to reporters as having written a book "that is used in every classroom in the country."

Reminds me of Nebraska - signs in lobby--"Go Holtz Go", "The Hogs are Hungry" "Love them Hogs - Razorbacks" "Arkansas Razorbacks" There are 2 Razorback football schedules at the front desk -- on front and one beside cubby holes, with scores written in, (including Texas loss 21-28 last week), there are Razorback clocks, pictures, etc. everywhere, picture of the team at front desk. People walk through with sweatshirts. "Arkansas Orange Bowl Bound 1978." Also a basketball schedule at front desk.

From my first morning at breakfast through the evening meal I ate there Friday night most of the conversation I heard, or overheard pertained to the loss by Arkansas to Texas the weekend before. Barbara, David's wife said she hadn't felt the same since loss to Texas. People kept saying that Arkansas couldn't beat Texas, had a complex, it was psychological, etc., etc. A great preoccupation with football. I don't know what it says, but you'd never hear this kind of talk in RI or NY. The flight I was on to Dallas and was overbooked because of people going to Houston - Arkansas game and in the airport waiting room, people were talking about it.

Parker Westbrook - Dave said of him "He's like an old maid--well, he isn't but we call him that. He knows more trivia than anyone in Arkansas. You mention Cotton Plant or Oil Trough and he'll tell you who's who in each town, who married who and who's influential. He's deeply involved in all the historical and restoration movements in Arkansas."

Parker told me that he worked for Fullbright in D.C. for 26 years and would not go back to Washington. "I'm a drop out." from Washington.

Parker made the ^{instructive} msot ~~instinctive~~ general comment about Arkansas. "In the northwestern part of the state, you get a midwestern mentality; in the eastern part of the state you have a southern mentality; and in this part of the state (Little Rock) you get a southwestern mentality. So you have three very different mentalities in one state."

I asked Dave how many times he would have been in Jonesboro during the 2 campaigns. "Five or six or seven times. I never have been able to develop a strong base here. I have a base, but it's not a strong base."

Would base and increment be a way of talking about political support--surely the term "base" is part of the currency in which politicians deal and the language is certainly very common.

It occurs to me that the Governor gets a much bigger share of the media, and much more easily, than a Senator. Dave's nerve gas press conference I saw on Channel 7 at 6:00 and Channel 11 at 11:00. It also got a fairly big story in the middle pages of the first section the next day. Also, every mention of a pending appointment had Pryor's name connected with it. His presentation of a certificate to Texarkana HS band, on its way to Ireland, got a picture spot on the 11 o'clock news. He's on the TV and in the papers a great deal and I don't think he can command the media as Senator.

The story the next day by Carol Griffey, which Dave was worried about, came out fine. He called her afterward and her story said "in a later interview" so that his follow-up call helped. Ray said (and I agree) that he should have been) Dave was most worried that his references to SALT in the press conference might get him branded as a "dove". And it was Carol who pushed him on the SALT comment during the press conference. He had said (inadvisedly I thought) that when he first heard about nerve gas decision "I thought someone was trying to sabotage the SALT talks" but he went on to say that as he thought about it, he decided that was not so. She asked him why he changed his mind. And the conspirational-paranoia time of the "sabotage" comment struck me as excessive--even though he was worried about effect on the SALT talks. Surely Arkansans care about getting killed by nerve gas but not about SALT.

A comment that occurs to me is that it is rather hard (or it was hard in this case) to get Dave to talk about the campaign now that he was out of it and back to being governor. I think there ~~was~~ was more relaxation this time and that on the whole, I made a better contact than I would have had I come during the political campaign. But I got no sense of what his political worries are--

not the sense you get during the campaign. I think the only worry he has in the long run is Bill Clinton, and he can stop that by working like a bastard at the job.