

DAVID PRYOR

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I dropped in to leave my coat and check on the Glenn trip to Arkansas. DP was sitting at the receptionist's desk talking with Gene Martin (APSA Fellow) about 2 state cops he had fired when he was Governor, which firing had just been upheld in the courts. I forget what they were accused of. "I just fired 'em. I didn't know whether I had the authority or not. The court just upheld me this week. Do you know shortly after I had fired them I was commencement speaker at a school for the blind. I looked out and saw one of those men. His daughter was totally blind. He closed his eyes tight and shook his head sadly.

We started talking about the M-1 tank and the ACE bulldozer that goes with it to clear the way. I told him I saw it on TV. He was sorry he missed it, got a copy of the Post and read this morning's story about the tank and how much more it will cost to redesign it.

"I'm going to put a little recession bill in to cut out the ACE bulldozer and just see what happens... (later). The Post is going to start an expose on this. Walter Pinan told me. And I want to get this bill in before the story comes out in the paper." At several points in talking with staffers and visitors, he said 'I'm going to put in this little ole recession bill and see what happens.' When he handed it to Knox, Knox looked puzzled. "I've never handled a recession before; but I'll try."

David hopscotching around as usual. But with a purpose--to get press. And it's consistent with his new anti-defense department posture. "They call it a new generation of tank. That's pentagonese--new generation. If we're not careful, we'll kill all generations." Some talk with a staffer about M-1 being vulnerable to nerve gas--is that a connection in this case?

He sat in the receptionist's chair greeting each staffer as he or she came

to work." "How you doin?" "Come on in and sit down, we're talking about the M-1 tank." "I got here so early this morning the guard had to let me in. I don't have a key to the office." Then at 9:00, there was a staff meeting in his office. He stayed outside behind the desk. Two men from Arkansas came in "Well my goodness, what are you all doing up here? Bob, how are you, Joe, how are you? If you're here something must be going on in the railroad business or the insurance business or the banking business.... Dick, these two are high rollers... They're having a staff meeting in my office and they won't let me in. So I'm the receptionist." I cannot imagine any of the others doing that. He's just as busy as the others, but never too busy to stop and talk.

While he's sitting at the desk he calls Dale Bumpers. Bumpers isn't in and he asks for Polly. Tells her that he visited his father-in-law in the hospital at home and ran into a girl with terminal cancer--that the girl would appreciate a letter from Dale Bumpers. "It would mean so much to her." Then he tells Polly that he met Tim's mother, doing volunteer work in the hospital and to tell Tim that.

Then he asks Liz who takes care of cases where someone wants to get into the army and Liz says she does. "This young man showed me to my seat at the races last weekend. He told me he was trying to get in the army but was having trouble because of some physical ailment. Would you call him?"

He had these notes on the back of his schedule card--casework from a weekend at home.

Gene Martin, Don Harold and David got to talking about an extra office they have as a temporary matter.

Gene: We're going to lose the extra office on April 1st.

David: I said I wasn't going to get involved in that.

Don: That office is so convenient.

David: I may change my mind. I'll tell them if they just give me that one..

Don: That you'll never ask for another?

David: Yes, it's like running for third grade president--I'll never ask for another office." He and Don laugh. It's the old joke.

David and his two guests, Bob Smith and Joe Bell, the Little Rock Lawyers went back to the office to talk Arkansas politics and David told me to come along. I did. They talked about the Clinton-Tucker race for governor--and how Clinton seems to be having trouble. He went on TV to apologize for what he did "Chuck Percy ad" and Tucker hit him hard "gigged him." They reminisced about "NW Arkansas" and a couple of counties - David rehearsed his vote in Sebastian county, McClellan beat him. He beat Fautus, Thornton beat him. He beat Tucker, etc.

David: "You can't predict that county."

Bob: "They ought to be part of Oklahoma."

David: "You can think that but don't say it."

They talked about Monroe _____ who got 32% vs. Bill Clinton in the primary. He found a state program to teach disadvantaged people how to cut wood. They spent \$150,000 getting staffed up and buying equipment, ran out of money and actually cut 2 cords of wood. So Monroe went out and cut 2 cords himself and went on TV and said Gov. Clinto spent \$150,000 to cut 2 cords of wood and I cut 2 cords and it cost \$2.00. Monroe was 75 years old. That's known in Arkansas as a "gig." "It started Bill Clinton's downfall" says Bob. And David says that Clinto has trouble letting things like that roll off his back.

David said Monroe came to DC recently to ask David and Bumpers to help him get some money from DNC and they had to tell him that DNC didn't get involved in primaries. Monroe is running for governor again this year. "I asked him what his highway program was," says David; "and he said 'Lay 'em with the smooth side up.'" Lots of laughter. Monroe drives a 1974 truck with 125,000 miles on it and has no telephone. "He called me collect the other day, says David," "and I told him to hand up and I'd call him back. He said he couldn't because he had no phone." More laughter.

Then David starts talking about Mayor Bobby Ferguson of Texarkana, Texas. "Bobby Ferguson is in touch again. I swear he's up here every three weeks. He won't fly. He drives. I was down in Texarkana a couple of weeks ago. They have this half finished criminal justice building opposite the court house. They can't get any more money for it. So it sits there like a ghost. It's a white elephant--an awful mess. Before I held my press conference, Jack Williams (my former campaign manager) got Bobby over in the corner and said "You son of a bitch, if you mention money for that criminal justice building, I'll cut your balls off." Great laughter. "And he would, too" says Bob amid laughter.

Bob tells David he heard him on a call-in show.

Bob: "One guy thanked you for keeping Tucker out of the Senate."

David: "Oh, yes, I told him that we have many fine candidates running this year."

Bob: I know. He said he didn't care about that. He was just congratulating you for keeping Jim Guy out of the Senate.

David: You never know what you're going to get on these call-in shows I remember once down in El Paso. I had been in Congress for about four months and I thought I had the answer to all the world's problems. There wasn't anything I didn't know. The first caller came on the line and said 'Congressman,

how come you used Ted Kennedy's boat without permission. (laughter) I said, 'Why he and I are great friends. Sometimes Ted Kennedy uses my boat and sometimes I use his boat; and he would have been insulted if I had asked his permission.' You never know what's coming. I always thought Ted put someone up to it; but he never has admitted it."

There may be more continuity between David's campaign style and Washington style than many others. He just stays so close to his constituents. I can't imagine many others yukking it up that way with his supporters in the morning. But maybe David is just more open in that way.

David talked about tomorrow's action on Harrison Williams. "Is he going to go through with it?" I asked "He's going through with it. I don't know whether I'll talk or not. Tom Eagleton and I decided that if one spoke the other wouldn't. I'm torn. I don't condone what Pete Williams did. But I think what the Justice Department did was terrible. I think they ought to be on trial. I'm afraid if I speak I might say that."

He and Barbara O'dell talked about arrangements for the weekend. Barbara will go down today to cover logistics. David suggested no head table. "One tradition I don't like is the head table." Then they talk about how difficult Mary House, the local arrange(?) is to work with. Then she says that the local people want Glenn to go to a morning event to help raise money. "Oh, don't make him do that. A speech and a reception are enough to make him go through."