

DAN McKENNA

July 15, 1982

Went in early, to cafeteria and sat down with Dan McKenna.

Arlen had a hearing on insanity yesterday and I asked about him (and Senators) jumping from issue to issue.

"I'm not sure whether or not Arlen is temperamentally or psychologically suited to be a legislator. He's a very impatient guy. He's trying to accommodate himself to the system around here, but he's a person who wants to get things done. He's very smart and he has a lot of energy. He is very imaginative. He can't sit still. That's the way he was as DA. He was outraged by the Hinckley decisions. He said publicly that he could not remember a worse decision in a criminal case. And he knows criminal law as well as anyone around the Senate. Publicity was one of the ingredients in his decision to hold hearings. But in his defense, this is an area in which he considers himself to be an expert--maybe the expert--and in which he is acknowledged to have special expertise. He saw this as an opportunity to get something done quickly. He saw it as a case where he might not have to sit around, for years and wait to accomplish something. Look how his criminal career bill is languishing...

I asked whether or not it might not be better to stick to one bill.

"You can't spend all your time on one bill. There's an ebb and flow to the business of the Senate. What are you going to do in those periods when there's an ebb. You have to be doing something... Arlen wants to be on top (of the wave) all the time... Sometimes I think he thinks he ought to have been here 6 years ago, when he lost to John Heinz in that primary by 25,000 votes and he's trying to make up for lost time."

Cha
too
Intr.
Mick
cannot
rewards
in front of
Arlen
called it made
early on
but he's too
from intent
than his
stuffed
A big thing happen
the balance for
quite a while
washed or
would it
he making
as a product

Need - public
why all the hearings!
insanity!

"Arlen has been down here for 18 months and I think he's taken more seriously already than John Heinz, who has been here 5 1/2 years. You know how he got this morning's hearing don't you? He went over on the floor and threatened that 'if you don't give me a hearing, I'll mess up this bill.' Now that shows he's learning something, doesn't it? He was going to tack his bill onto Dan Quayle's bill. People know he's serious when he does something. They know that he's tenacious, that if they take him on, it will not be with impunity. And he's trying all the while to be a nice guy. Still, you have to let people know that you're serious and that they can't fuck with you."

Kennedy on TV.

Wilcox and Cohen feed him ideas and he sifts

Dan thinks question of Arlen being a legislator is "unresolved." Dan sees being a legislator as involving wasting a long time for things to happen and sees Arlen as impatient, as needing to stay in motion all the time.