

ARLEN SPECTER

September 16, 1983

I stopped in, on my way to APSA, to see Lonnie Taylor re CMS stuff and Arlen came in from his squash game, tieless, and we went in and had coffee in his office.

I asked how he liked the DC Subcommittee--mentioning the Inquirer article. "I like it. I had to give up a seat on the defense subcommittee to get it; but I'm glad I did it. Running a subcommittee teaches you how to work the legislative process. And it's given me a chance to work on some of *my* ideas in the criminal law area. I got 28 million extra in the budget for DC courts, prisons and the criminal justice system generally. The administration hates it, but there's nothing they can do about it. They aren't going to fight me over 28 million. I got a very positive, supportive editorial in the Washington Post."

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I mentioned the Inquirer story. "The Inquirer reporter (he named her) saw what I was doing. She knew it was a good story, and she wanted to write the story. But the management wouldn't let her. So it came out only so-so. My relations with the Inquirer are strained. I arrested a reporter of theirs in 1972, and they have never gotten over that. They still remember it. They were very supportive when I was attacking the magistrate system. But they cost me the mayor's election in 1973--after I had arrested their reporter. They supported me in 1980. But they give me something and then take it away. (They don't exactly bend over backwards to be nice to you.) Not only do they not bend over backwards to be nice, they scrunch toward the middle. I've learned not to get excited. You can't attack them and you can't patronize them. You can't get too close to them or too far away.

I try to keep my distance. I don't want them to think I need them, that I can't get along without them. They have other fish to fry and so do I. So in the end I go about my business and they go about their business. And I take what comes."

"We're going to get the career criminal bill out of the Senate soon. I thought we had it ready before recess, but Kennedy objected. We have our controversy with the DA's organization settled--mostly. We put the veto in the congressional intent section of the bill and not the jurisdiction section. I think that will be all right. It should be on the floor next week. It will pass the Senate. The trouble will come in the House. It will take time. But I think it will be part of a deal--with the Justice Assistance ^{bill} Bill Hughes wants. There may be a big crime package. And if that happens, my bill will surely be part of it. One way or another we'll get it."

I asked him if he learned anything from last year that stood him in good stead this year. "I learned that the legislative process is not fast. There are a thousand pitfalls, and if one of them snaps, you lose. You can't rush it. So you learn to be patient, just like you do with the Inquirer. ~~But~~ You keep the pressure on, but you don't get excited. You just keep coming back to people again and again till you get it done." ~~Same~~ determination.

"But I wouldn't call it a learning process when you run up against an incompetent fool like William French Smith, at the very end. Everybody on Capitol Hill knows that now. If he were ever nominated for the Supreme Court, as he may well be, I think you might find a revolt in the Senate. When you have everybody together in the room, when the President wants to settle it and when Meese has the formula ready, when you have checked it out with Webster, with Casey, with the Treasury Department officials, even with Cap Weinberger, and then you get to an imbecile who says 'no'. You don't learn anything by dealing with an irrational force." This was said with some passion as he recalled his eventual setback last year.

played it close to the vest

Kevin Mills says "We have a different bill this year. He won't quit. And people believe him more this year than they did last year."

Bill Loughery says he's "strong" now and said there was an editorial "Perpetual motion" about him (DK where) that reflected that. He thinks, "Arlen has locked up the Repubs. He's made all the right moves. They know he votes with the party when he can. They've been through it with Scott and Schweiker, so they understand." But he acknowledges that "it's a tough state." and that what happens ^{naturally} ~~naturally~~ will have biggest effect - 15% unemployment, and RR at top of ticket will hurt. He says "the moderate Republicans are running things now. Anything they don't want doesn't get done now." Story from Frenzel "we moderates were the key votes in the House and we didn't even know it." Lonnie - Arlen is involved in a lot more things now.