Arkansas Supreme Court Project
Arkansas Supreme Court Historical Society
Interview with
Justice Richard L. Mays
Little Rock, Arkansas
November 14th and 19th, 2013

Interviewer: Ernest Dumas

Ernest Dumas: I am Ernie Dumas and I am interviewing Judge Richard L. Mays. This interview is being held at his law office in Little Rock, the firm of Mays, Byrd and Associates at 415 Main Street in downtown Little Rock, Pulaski County. And this interview is being conducted on Thursday, November 14th, 2013. The audio recording of this interview will be donated to the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History at the University of Arkansas. The recording, transcript and any other related materials will be deposited and preserved forever in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. And the copyright will belong to the University of Arkansas and the Arkansas Supreme Court Historical Society. Judge, indicate that you're willing to give the Pryor Center and the Supreme Court Historical Society permission to use this for the archives or over the Internet or however they choose to use it.

Richard Mays: I am willing to do that.

ED: Good. Judge, let's start with your birth. First, your name, Richard L. what does the L. stand for?

RM: Leon.

ED: Leon, Judge Richard Leon Mays. And when were you born?

RM: 8/5/43.

ED: 8/5/43?

RM: Uh-huh.

ED: And where?

RM: Little Rock.

ED: You were born in Little Rock?

RM: Yes.

ED: I thought somehow you were born in south Arkansas.

RM: No.

ED: Right here in Little Rock.

RM: Right here in Little Rock.

ED: And your daddy?

RM: Was Barnett G. Mays.

ED: What's his first name?

RM: Barnett G. Mays.

ED: Barnett G. what does the G. stand for?

RM: George.

ED: Barnett George Mays and your mama?

RM: Dorothy Mae Mays, Greenlee Mays. Her maiden name was Greenlee.

ED: Greenlee?

RM: Greenlee.

ED: G-R-E-E-N-L-E-E?
RM: Yes.
ED: Mays?
RM: Mays.
ED: And tell me a little bit about them. What were their backgrounds and where did they come from?
RM: Both of my parents were raised in the greater Little Rock area. My father went to Jones High; my mother went to Dunbar.
ED: Dunbar High School?
RM: Dunbar High School.
ED: Now where was Jones?
RM: Jones is in North Little Rock.
ED: OK. So he would've been across the river and she was in Little Rock?
RM: She was in Little Rock, right. And he grew up in North Little Rock. His father worked as a boilermaker for the railroad. I never knew my real grandmothers because they both expired before I was born, but I knew my stepgrandmothers. My father's stepmother was a teacher in the Little Rock school system; in fact, she taught me in the fourth grade.
ED: OK.
RM: And my father's father was a boilermaker for Missouri Pacific Railroad.
ED: So father and son were boilermakers?
RM: No, my grandfather was. My father was a businessman.
ED: Your grandfather was a boilermaker with Missouri Pacific?
RM: Right.
ED: And did he go on the trains?
RM: No, I do not think so.
ED: Grandfather, yeah.
RM: He was a boilermaker. No, he worked out there in the…
ED: In the Mo-Pac yards?
RM: Yeah, in the yards.
ED: In North Little Rock, yeah.
RM: In, I think, off of west Broadway and Camp Robinson.
ED: OK.
RM: As I remember. And my daddy owned a restaurant and a liquor store and went into real estate.
ED: Where was the restaurant?
RM: In North Little Rock, a place called Nouvean Drive-in.
ED: N-U-V-E-E-N?
RM: N-O-U-V-E-A-N.
ED: N-O-U-V-E-A-N?
RM: That's right.
ED: Nouvean Drive-in.
RM: Nouvean Drive-in.
ED: Was it kind of a burger place where you go by the window and get the pickup?
RM: It's kind of, yeah. It was a burger place and fries. We served outside so you could order and you could sit in your car.
ED: Did you have inside seating, too?

RM: Yes, inside seating, too. And I worked there later in high school.
ED: Was he the cook, too? Did he do the cooking?
RM: He would do everything, but he had a staff and a cook, a guy named, oh what was his name? A super guy, great personality. I think my daddy used him to help build the business. Skeet. Skeet was the cook.
ED: Skeet, that was his first name? Or was his nickname Skeet?
RM: That was his nickname.
ED: You don't happen to remember what his…?
RM: Cleophus, I think, was his first name.
ED: Cleophus "Skeet" something?
RM: Yeah. Cleophus Sanders, and they called him Skeet.
ED: OK.
RM: And just a personable guy, helped generate the business. I can see how, so much as I got to know him. He was a warm guy, very kind, never had a harsh word to say about anybody. And when I was a kid I, like all the other folks, found him just so receptive and warm and I always enjoyed his company.
ED: And you said you worked there some?
RM: I worked there in the summer.
ED: What did you do?
RM: Hopped cars, waited on and served customers.
ED: OK. So you could eat inside. Do you remember how many tables?
RM: Sure, he had space inside for about thirty to forty customers. So you could eat inside. I d worked the lot and I did that through college.
ED: So people could park outside and you go out and wait.
RM: Right.
ED: Where you put their food? Did you have those little trays that you hooked on the door?
RM: We had trays you put on the door.
ED: Yeah.
RM: And I'll never forget, one of the experiences I had with my father when I was in college. I was going to Howard, and I was working that summer at the end of my freshman year. I was working one night, and it was getting late, probably around 12 o'clock or getting close to twelve. And I was saying to my daddy that I had somewhere to go, maybe 11:30. I talked to him around 11 o'clock and I said, "Well, Daddy, if things don't pick up I'd like to leave early" and he said "OK, that's all right." And so as it came close to 11:30 I was about to leave and two couples came in and sat down. I went over to wait on them. They had a little difficulty making up their minds about what they wanted, and I was a little anxious to leave, probably a little impatient, but at some point in time they did figure out what they wanted and gave their order to me. I came back and shared it with my father. And as I got ready to walk off he asked me, "Who sends you to school up there at Howard?" And I said, "Well, you do, Daddy." And he said, "No, I don't send you to school. Those people that you just treated like shit over there send you to school and if you don't go over there and apologize to them they're going to stop paying your tuition." So I didn't really realize that I had treated them that way.
ED: But he observed it.
RM: Yes, he observed it. He felt that way about it. I went over and apologized to them, indicated that I didn't mean to be short and we appreciate their business and I'll bring

your food back in a short second. But that was a very meaningful moment for me because we weren't on the same page and I didn't realize that I was coming across that way. If he said I was coming across that way, I'm sure I was, and it served to at least cause me to reflect more on my conduct and on how I was coming across. I think it served me well for the rest of my life.

ED: Where was this restaurant exactly, in North Little Rock?

RM: North Little Rock off Sixth and Hickory Streets. It became a renewal area. They ultimately tore it down. We lived not far from the restaurant at Sixth and Walnut. My father owned a duplex; we lived in one side, and he rented out the other side; it was about a block down from the restaurant. I don't know if you're familiar with North Little Rock. My father was in real estate, too, so he developed and managed real estate in that area. I don't know if you're familiar with Shorter College Gardens Apartments?

ED: Yes.

RM: Do you know where Shorter College is?

ED: Yes.

RM: Well, it's on Eighth Street. You go farther down. You've got the housing complex that was built many, many years ago that they call Shorter College Gardens. He developed and managed that housing project.

ED: OK.

RM: And in the mid to late sixties, after the area was designated an urban-renewal area, my father developed a commercial area near Seventh Street for his real-estate office, a laundromat, a barber and beauty shop, a malt and hamburger shop, and a liquor store. Even before urban renewal changed that area, he had his restaurant, which he had opened in the early 'forties. He subsequently opened a liquor store as well as a motel and rent houses on other parts of his land. He was a good businessman.

ED: He was probably, in the African American community at that time, highly successful. He would've been…

RM: I would say, yes. He helped me understand the importance of self-employment and entrepreneurship. And he went into real estate accidentally. He would share the story with me later. He had a friend who was a real-estate broker and knew my father had a flexible schedule. One day he came by my father's business and said, "Look, Barnett, I'm going to be out of town Thursday…" And maybe this was Sunday or Monday because my daddy worked seven days a week. That place never closed. I don't think it ever closed until my stepgrandmother passed and that was only for her funeral. But he said: "Barnett I'm going to be out of town, but I want you to show this house to this couple. I'm going to give you the address and I'm going to give you the key and you need to meet them there about two o'clock. I want you to show the house for me." And my daddy said OK. He knew him. He was a pretty good friend so he went out, showed them the house, and about sixty days later or so he got a check in the mail for about six hundred dollars. And he wondered, what is this about? And he called the guy up and the guy said: "Oh, Barnett, they bought the house. I'm just showing appreciation for what you did." And Daddy said, "This much appreciation for that?" And he said yes, and my father said that's when he knew he was going into the real-estate business. (Laughing)

ED: (Laughing) OK. So that was his beginning in real estate?

RM: That was his beginning in real estate and he had a building right behind his restaurant, which he set up as his real-estate office after he took the test and became a broker. He

converted one of his buildings there on that space as his real-estate office, which was kind of out in the back facing the side street. My father owned a substantial amount of real estate in the area.

ED: Yeah. Did he do a lot of business and was his clientele altogether African Americans or did he have some white… Did he do some real-estate business outside?

RM: He developed several multifamily 221 (d)(3)s. [Section 221 (d)(3) of the National Housing Act helps finance rental and cooperative multifamily housing for moderate-income households and the elderly.] In fact, I got involved with the housing development when I became a lawyer and worked on some of the housing projects. All of what you've got over there now, the multifamily housing and housing subdivision , of course, were developed by him and to some extent by Tom Ferstl. This was later when urban renewal came through the area. Urban renewal relocated his businesses, tore the restaurant and liquor store down. He did not go back into the restaurant business, but he built his real-estate office across the street from the Shorter College multifamily development. He still had his liquor store, and he developed a washateria and other businesses. When I returned to Little Rock after working with the U.S. Justice Department to begin work as a deputy prosecuting attorney, I established a law office over there. When I began working as a prosecuting attorney, you could also practice privately.

ED: Yes.

RM: Even though you were a full-time employee. Tucker changed that. Jim Guy changed that. [Jim Guy Tucker became prosecuting attorney of the Sixth Judicial District in 1971.]

ED: Right.

RM: But when I went in you could do both. So he built… So he developed and managed St. John's Apartment Complex in Pine Bluff and Teresa James Manor in North Little Rock, not far off Third Street. He also developed and managed about five other multifamily housing units around the state. And so he became more heavily into real estate management as he got older and ultimately that became his major source of income.

ED: Until then the restaurant and the liquor store were probably his major sources of income?

RM: Yes.

ED: Yeah.

RM: But until then… Right, I'd say that.

ED: Let's go back to the restaurant briefly. Did you ever have white clientele? Did you have white customers ever?

RM: Yes.

ED: Occasionally?

RM: Occasionally.

ED: Because, you know, back in those days everything was strictly segregated.

RM: Yeah.

ED: Yours particularly, I guess.

RM: Yeah.

ED: Eating places.

RM: Right.

ED: Except, you know, when people would go over and eat at Sims and Fisher's Barbeque in Little Rock, occasionally.

RM: Sure, right.

ED: But that was…

RM: But they had separate dining rooms
ED: Yeah, they had separate dining rooms, yeah.
RM: But they'd have it later where white customers would come on the lot, sit in their cars.
ED: But never inside?
RM: I don't recall, maybe once or twice, but more frequently outside.
ED: Somebody from out of town might have come in.
RM: Somebody in from out of town.
ED: And not know how things are supposed to be might have wandered in and sat down.
RM: To order a hamburger, right. But that was, you know, most rare.
ED: Yeah, yeah. Go back. Do you have any brothers and sisters?
RM: A brother, an older brother.
ED: An older brother, what was his name?
RM: George Mays.
ED: George Mays, OK. And is he still alive?
RM: Yeah.
ED: When was he born, how much older was he then you?
RM: He was born in 1940.
ED: OK.
RM: In September, so he's about three years older than I am.
ED: OK.
RM: He's three years older than I am but he was four years ahead of me in school.
ED: OK.
RM: Because he started school when he was five.
ED: Now, did he become a lawyer, too?
RM: No, no. George didn't become a lawyer, but he went to the University of Arkansas and was one of the first blacks to graduate from the University of Arkansas.
ED: OK, all right.
RM: He graduated from high school in '57 and from college in '61.
ED: OK. And what did he graduate to do? Was he in business?
RM: Business, business administration. After graduation, George returned to Little Rock and worked with my father in the restaurant before he went out to California and worked out there. And then he came back to Little Rock and headed a semipublic agency around economic development. He had a program; I don't remember if it was funded by the federal government, but an offshoot of the state funds for economic development.
ED: The Office of Economic Opportunity?
RM: Right.
ED: In the late sixties, I guess.
RM: I think this was probably in the… Let's see, '61. I came back in '65. I went to law school and graduated in '68. You know, it was probably in the early seventies.
ED: OK.
RM: Probably early seventies.
ED: And he still lives here?
RM: Yeah, he still lives here.
ED: Let's go back. So you lived in North Little Rock, then?
RM: No.
ED: His business was still there but you lived in…

RM: Right.
ED: You were born over here?
RM: He had business over there. I lived in Little Rock.
ED: Where did you grow up?
RM: Carolina Street, which was out by Granite Mountain going toward Pine Bluff.
ED: OK.
RM: And I remember when there was an old Hilltop Restaurant. Go on past that and then the last street in the city was Carolina and we lived there.
ED: Out around Confederate Boulevard, out in there?
RM: Right. And that would be now Confederate Boulevard, but if you go on past that you had Booker Homes Apartments. Do you remember Booker Homes?
ED: Oh, yeah.
RM: Go out on past Booker Homes.
ED: OK.
RM: And about a mile past Booker Homes, a quarter of mile to a mile past Booker Homes.
ED: And then the park out there.
RM: Oh there was, right, Gillam Park.
ED: Gillam Park.
RM: But you had to pull off that. This is going on toward Sweet Home.
ED: OK.
RM: Are you familiar with Sweet Home?
ED: Yeah, yeah.
RM: So it would've been, you know, substantially before you got to Sweet Home.
ED: OK.
RM: On the hill, maybe.
ED: So you were almost in the country then.
RM: Oh, yeah.
ED: You were right on the edge of town.
RM: Right on the edge, right, right, no question.
ED: Was it kind of country?
RM: Yeah, yeah. I mean, there were a few people who lived out there. In fact, I saw—I didn't realize he was in my wife's class—but I saw a yearbook that I bought for my kids because my first wife was in there and she lived down the road. Next to me was a white family.
ED: So you lived in an integrated neighborhood?
RM: It was, and we played together as kids. In fact, Neal was his name. Neal and I played together. I was probably about two or three years older than Neal.
ED: What was Neal's last name?
RM: I'm trying to remember… Ragan. I think Neal Ragan was his name.
ED: Like the president? R-E-A-G-A-N or?
RM: I think R-E-G, Reagan, I think not. Maybe Ragan.
ED: Maybe R-A-G-A-N.
RM: R-A-G-A-N, yeah.
ED: I think that spelling was common around here, Ragan.
RM: Yeah. We were watching… I never will forget that during the '57 school crisis we were playing, watching TV and the black kids were trying to get to the school and the basically

white crowd was all out in front of the school. I remember they jumped on these reporters. These were some black reporters from Memphis and they caught that.

ED: Yeah, and one of them died not long after that as a result of that beating by the mob.

RM: And Neal was in our house. Neal got up and cut the TV off and said, "Look, let's go out and play" and we did. I didn't watch any more of it. We really weren't so much focusing on the news. I don't know what we were doing in the house but, you know, we weren't necessarily watching TV. We were in the room where the TV was on.

ED: That was in your house or his house?

RM: In my house.

ED: In your house.

RM: Uh-huh, in my house.

ED: Would you go to his house and play?

RM: Sure, yeah. No, we went to each other's houses.

ED: Parents didn't have any problem?

RM: No, no, no. They never did. In fact he…

ED: Was it a predominantly white or black neighborhood?

RM: It was probably at that time…

ED: Just mixed?

RM: Well, there weren't that many black families. The Joneses were a black couple who lived down the road. But below us were white, you know, probably a little bit more white than black. But I'll never forget that when we were young, he had a cousin who used to come over and play with us, too, occasionally. He didn't live in the area but he would visit Neal, and then we would all go play. He was a little younger than Neal. I'm trying to think of his name… But after I became a lawyer and began working as a deputy prosecutor I happened to see him in the courtroom.

ED: Neal?

RM: Not Neal, his cousin, who was younger.

ED: His cousin, OK.

RM: But he came up and spoke to me. "Hey, Richard…" And so…

ED: Was he about the same age as you all that played together or something?

RM: We played together. He was probably about, you know, five or six years younger than I was. But he was on the docket and I was handling the docket that day.

ED: So you were prosecutor that day?

RM: I was the prosecutor.

ED: You were the deputy prosecutor doing the docket that day?

RM: Right. And I said, "What's going on, what are you doing here?" He was charged with some kind of misdemeanor. I don't remember what it was—theft of property or something. Maybe it was… It could've been a felony but we reduced it to a misdemeanor. But whatever it was I said, "Bring your lawyer. You've got your lawyer here?" And he said, "yeah." I know I gave him consideration; I don't remember whether I reduced it to a misdemeanor, from a felony to a misdemeanor or just dismissed it because it was just a misdemeanor. Anyway, I worked out a deal with his lawyer for probation. But I know that he was most appreciative. You know… "How's Neal? What's he doing? How's he doing?" It was probably a felony and I reduced it because Richard Adkisson was the prosecutor.

ED: OK, you were working for Richard?

RM: I was working for Richard and he didn't like us for us to do anything without his approval. I filed charges under Richard. He would let me file charges against anybody, but if I recommended against filing, he'd have to sign off on it.
ED: OK.
RM: But he didn't like for us to make deals without his OK. I made that deal without his explicit OK, although I thought it was a deal that he would have approved. I would, you know, on occasion just use my own judgment about it after I listened to the facts.
ED: Sure.
RM: I remember that it had been a long time since I had seen anyone in his family. After I helped him out his parents called me because they remembered me. They were maybe the brother or sister of Neal's parents, and they called me and said "We really appreciate what you did for Buddy." I don't remember what his name was. And I said, "Oh it was justified." But Neal… It's been a long time. I probably saw him after we grew up maybe into my twenties. After I got into the thirties I don't remember ever having spent any time with him.
ED: About whatever happened to him? Yes. Well, it obviously was a mixed neighborhood out there. Did you encounter some racism out there?
RM: Not ever from Neal.
ED: Epithets, for example?
RM: Yeah.
ED: Did you hear that? Did you hear the word?
RM: Oh yeah, yeah.
ED: I mean that was a common one.
RM: Yeah, yeah. And there were some fellows below Neal who were fairly tough. We got into a conflict because they had called us niggers. My brother, who was bigger and more aggressive, and I got into a little scuffle with them. But I think Neal…
ED: Did you beat them up?
RM: Well, Neal stopped the fight.
ED: Yeah.
RM: There was a white boy that lived up there. He came up and called a few of us names and Neal kind of came in and got between us and ended it. That may have been early, in the beginning. After we got to know each other then we really didn't have problems.
ED: So you had some relationship with those boys later? I mean, that you had the scuffle with?
RM: No, I didn't because I didn't really know them that well.
ED: Yeah.
RM: I just knew they lived down below us. There was one family, about six of them living together and another couple. The only one that I really knew well was Neal.
ED: Yeah. You didn't go to school together though?
RM: No.
ED: Now what school did you go to out there? Was that in the county school district or the Little Rock school district?
RM: No, that was in the city school district, yeah.
ED: And where did you start at school?
RM: That was, let's see… There was a Granite Mountain Elementary School out there.
ED: OK.

RM: Which was a city area school.
ED: It was a what? Granite Mountain was a white school?
RM: No.
ED: It was a black school.
RM: It was a black school.
ED: And that's where Neal would have gone?
RM: And Dunbar was a junior high school.
ED: Yes.
RM: Horace Mann was the high school.
ED: So you already had Horace Mann?
RM: No. This was before. Eventually, I graduated from Horace Mann.
ED: OK.
RM: But this was when the '57 school crisis developed. I was in junior high school so I was probably going to Dunbar.
ED: Dunbar.
RM: Seventh grade, eighth grade, something like that.
ED: So you were going to Dunbar in the '57, '58, along in there?
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: And then went to Central High? No.
RM: And then went to Horace Mann.
ED: And then went to Horace Mann.
RM: Right.
ED: Now what did you say your mother did?
RM: My mother was really a housewife.
ED: OK.
RM: She just kind of worked in… Well, I shouldn't say that. She worked in my father's business.
ED: OK.
RM: Primarily worked at the liquor store.
ED: OK. So she kind of ran the liquor store?
RM: Uh-huh. She ran the liquor store.
ED: Anybody else in the family who worked in the…
RM: In the business?
ED: Yeah.
RM: Well, in the real-estate business. Ultimately, her sister came and worked.
ED: OK.
RM: The real-estate business got quite big and in the restaurant business he had about four or five, maybe five or six employees working for him.
ED: OK. So you started off at Granite Mountain Elementary, and where would Neal have gone to school?
RM: I really, I started off at Bush Elementary School.
ED: OK, Bush, that's no longer in existence.
RM: That's no longer there. But I lived with my grandmother my very first year. I went out to Tucson, Arizona, and lived with my mother when I was five. She went out there because she had tuberculosis and the doctor prescribed, apparently, a very dry climate for her as a part of the treatment and she went to Tucson and lived out there and I went with her. And

then when school started I came back and stayed with my grandmother, who was a teacher.

ED: And so she stayed out there, your mother stayed out there?

RM: My mother stayed out there.

ED: In that climate for a while.

RM: And so I stayed there and went to school with my grandmother and lived with her in the first and the second grade. And then in the third grade I went and lived with my mother in Tucson. In the fourth grade, I came back and my grandmother taught me in the fourth grade.

ED: Where did she teach?

RM: Bush.

ED: At Bush Elementary.

RM: Bush Elementary School.

ED: She was a fourth-grade teacher.

RM: She was a fourth-grade teacher. And in the fifth grade, in fact, if you…

ED: Did she give you an A?

RM: No, I think she was the hardest teacher I ever had. In fact, I always tell Katherine Phillips Mitchell… I don't know if you remember Katherine Phillips?

ED: Yes.

RM: She was president of the Little Rock School Board for a period.

ED: Yes. I remember Katherine.

RM: She was in the first grade with me. I mean she was in elementary school with me. And I'll never forget that my grandmother gave us a challenge on a division.

ED: A long-division problem?

RM: A long division problem.

ED: Yeah.

RM: And she said the first one that finished it she was going to give a dollar to, or something like that. And about six of us rushed over there and jumped on it. I was always good at math; math was one of my better courses. Anyway, I'm feeling confident and I called her "Big Mama! Big Mama! Big Mama! Big Mama!" She didn't react at all until Katherine called, "Miss Mays! Miss Mays!" And she said, "You got it," and, you know, she went over there and she gave her that dollar. And when we got in the car to go home she told me, "Don't you ever call me 'Big Mama' in that class again. You call me 'Miss Mays,' you understand that?" And I said, "OK, Big Mama." (Laughing)

ED: (Laughing)

RM: I never forgot it because I was in…

ED: Is that what you called her ordinarily, Big Mama?

RM: That's what I called her ordinarily, Big Mama.

ED: Yeah. What was her name?

RM: Her name was Bessie Mays.

ED: Bessie Mays.

RM: Bessie Mays. And she had a sister named Bert Jones and I don't know if you knew in that time when I was a little boy but they had a paper, a black paper called… What was the name of that paper? It was like the *State Press* but it was…

ED: Was it the *Southern Mediator Journal*?

RM: *Southern Mediator Journal*.

ED: *Southern Mediator Journal,* which was…
RM: Mr. Jones.
ED: Yeah, Mr. [C.H.] Jones ran that, yeah.
RM: That's who she was married to.
ED: OK.
RM: Mr. Jones, right.
ED: I remember Mr. Jones.
RM: Yeah. I remember him because…
ED: I came here in 1960, May of 1960, so you had both the *[Arkansas] State Press* and the *Southern Mediator Journal* at that time.
RM: Yeah. He was. I remember him because as a little kid I always loved pickles and he once came out and I had a pickle and he said, "Gimme some of that pickle, boy." And I gave him some of that pickle. He took a real big bite and left about that much pickle [holding his thumb and forefinger barely apart]. (Laughing) I wanted to say, "You're going to give that back or you might as well eat the rest of it." I mean, it was a moment that I always remember but I just said, "Yes sir, thank you."
ED: I'm trying to think, was it C.M. Jones?
RM: C.M., yeah.
ED: C.M. Jones. [No, C. H. Jones.]
RM: Right.
ED: Yes, all right. So did you ever think about getting into the newspaper business?
RM: No, I did not.
ED: Good, good.
RM: Well, I never thought about that. (Laughing)
ED: You're smart. So you went to Granite Mountain for a while, you went out to Arizona and spent school out there for a year.
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: What ever happened to your mother? Did she get well?
RM: Oh yeah, she got well. We came back.
ED: For how long was she out there?
RM: Well, in the fifth grade, after the fourth grade, she came back and we moved to Granite Mountain in the area where I was telling you we lived.
ED: OK, that's when you moved down there.
RM: Right, right. And so in the fifth grade through high school we lived there.
ED: So that relationship with the other kid, Neal, occurred in fifth grade along in that period of time.
RM: Yeah, when I started, right.
ED: When you would've been ten, eleven.
RM: When I was in fifth grade, when I moved there, yeah.
ED: Ten, eleven, twelve years old.
RM: Right, that's when we started our friendship.
ED: Yeah. And before you moved out there where did you live in Little Rock?
RM: Well, when I lived with my grandmother they lived at 1022 Cross Street.
ED: OK, all right. Well, anything else about… and then you went to Dunbar Junior High?
RM: I then went to Dunbar Junior High.

ED: My wife later taught there. That obviously would've been much later because my wife taught at Dunbar in probably, I don't know, around 1970 or so, and then she went to Central High. She was at Central High about twenty-eight years, I think.
RM: Oh really? Well, that's where all my kids went.
ED: Well, when they went she would've been the librarian.
RM: They all graduated.
ED: She would've been the librarian at Central High during those many years.
RM: Yeah, well they all graduated from Central, all my kids graduated from Central.
ED: Yeah. Did you get into any fights in school?
RM: Not many. There were a few, you know.
ED: But you never went to an integrated… You never got to go to an integrated school in the Little Rock School District?
RM: I went to integrated school in my third grade in Tucson.
ED: In Tucson, but not in Little Rock.
RM: Never in Little Rock.
ED: So the integration occurred in '57 and you would've been in junior high school then and so unless you went to Central High...
RM: No.
ED: …you wouldn't have been in integrated schools.
RM: No, right, right. All my school years except for my third-grade year.
ED: Yeah.
RM: And the interesting thing about it, to make a point of it, is that I remember the name of all of my teachers in elementary school except my third-grade year.
ED: The year you were out there in Arizona?
RM: The year I was out there.
ED: I suspect you were a definite minority in your class out there.
RM: Well, it was, you know, it was Hispanic.
ED: Mixed?
RM: Black and white.
ED: You had quite a few other black kids?
RM: Yeah, there were a few other black kids, not many. You're right, absolutely not many, actually more white and Hispanics kids.
ED: Hispanics. Yeah. Maybe a few Indian? I don't know whether there would've been any there or not.
RM: There could've been.
ED: Or a few Mexicans, probably.
RM: Yeah, Mexican, I remember one because I never will forget the… I don't know what got into me, but there was this little Mexican girl sitting in front of me and I pulled her hair. You know, she's saying "Leave me alone" and whatever, and then a little Mexican boy over there pointed at me and the little Mexican friend next to me said, "When the school day ends you better beat it home because that's a real bad boy over there." I do remember that.
ED: You took him at his word?
RM: I took him at his word and I went out the side door and not the front door and they didn't see me until… But they were out there waiting at the front door for me and I was

probably a half a block away before they saw me. And I ran all the way home and they ran all the way after me but they did not catch me.

ED: But you were fast?

RM: I was fast enough not to get caught. (Laughing)

ED: OK. Well, speaking of running, when you were in junior high and high school did you participate in athletics?

RM: No, not really. You know, at the sandlot.

ED: Sandlot ball?

RM: Yeah. At the sandlot I played at.

ED: You played sandlot baseball?

RM: Football.

ED: Basketball?

RM: Basketball and football more than any sport. I was in the band in junior high school and in high school.

ED: OK.

RM: And we would play… always play… In fact, I got my arm broken playing.

ED: Playing in the band?

RM: Playing football in the band. We were in practice. After practice, we'd always play.

ED: So throwing the ball after band practice and broke your arm?

RM: Well, somebody hit me. A boy named Harold Gardner hit me. I was at Horace Mann at that time and he knocked me into a wall.

ED: Harold Gardner broke your arm?

RM: Yeah, he broke my arm while we were out there playing around.

ED: Well, I've never heard of a band kid breaking his arm.

RM: (Laughing)

ED: All right. Any other experiences in high school? Were you a studious kid?

RM: Well, yeah. I was in the Honor Society. I was president of the Student Council.

ED: In high school?

RM: In high school. And I was…

ED: Did you make pretty much straight A's?

RM: Well, I had, you know, probably a 3.0 or 3.5.

ED: Yeah.

RM: You know, A's and B's but probably a little bit more A's then B's, but I had a good academic record.

ED: Did your father or mother go to college?

RM: My father went to junior college. He had two years.

ED: Around here?

RM: Yeah, he went Dunbar Junior College.

ED: Dunbar?

RM: Uh-huh.

ED: Dunbar at that time was a kind of a junior college, right?

RM: Yeah, I think that Dunbar Junior College was over there. . . This is beyond my memory capacity. Dunbar High School was the big school, but I think there were some buildings… The junior college was close to the high school at that time. Back then it was a junior high school and then senior high school.

ED: Yeah, yeah.

RM: But they had a Dunbar Junior College… a Baptist college at that time.
ED: Yeah. OK, so you go to high school and you participate in the band, you're in the Honor Society, you're president of the student body.
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: That's an elected position that you ran for?
RM: Yes.
ED: So were you kind of a politician? Were you a big gladhander?
RM: Well, I didn't think about it like that but I mean, you know, you have to decide to run and then you have to run and then, of course, you've got to get elected.
ED: So did you have a tough race?
RM: I don't think so, I didn't think so. I mean, I was even president of the Student Council when I was in the sixth grade.
ED: OK. Were you a David Pryor or Bill Clinton? You just automatically ran for class president every year?
RM: (Laughing)
ED: That's what they did.
RM: Yeah.
ED: Pryor said he ran for the president of the student body in the first grade and won, and so he had to have it for the second grade and he had to have it for the third grade.
RM: Well, you know, I guess I was…
ED: You weren't burning with political ambition?
RM: I was always interested, I can say. I don't really know what motivated me in the sixth grade, but in the eleventh grade I certainly knew that I wanted to run. And in law school I also wanted to run for the legislature.
ED: You mean back early?
RM: Back early, before you had small districts when I was in Little Rock or Baltimore or D.C. I knew I was interested in running for office.
ED: You knew you wanted to do that.
RM: Yeah.
ED: OK. So you graduated from high school in what year?
RM: In '61.
ED: 1961 you graduated from?
RM: From Horace Mann.
ED: From Horace Mann and your dad wanted you to go to college?
RM: Yeah. And there was never any issue about it.
ED: Did he ever talk to you about that? Did they make you study hard?
RM: They didn't really have to make me study.
ED: They didn't have to.
RM: I understood that issue.
ED: You needed to study.
RM: From the very beginning, yeah.
ED: So you knew you needed to study to get out.
RM: I knew I needed to study. I think I became interested in the law and becoming a lawyer when I was in the third grade. I think from the third grade on up when somebody asked me what I wanted to do I said that I wanted to be a lawyer. So I never changed that.
ED: And it was because of going to the courthouse?

RM: I don't think so.
ED: Or knowing a lawyer or anything?
RM: Maybe.
ED: Did you know any?
RM: Not really.
ED: I guess black lawyers in Little Rock then might have been nonexistent.
RM: I don't know.
ED: Well, there had been, you know… What was the guy way back there in the Elaine massacre case?
RM: Right, you had Scipio Jones.
ED: Scipio A. Jones.
RM: Yes, he was a lawyer but I didn't know anything about him.
ED: Yeah.
RM: The first lawyer that I can remember from Little Rock that I met was either… I think the first lawyer I really met was Christopher Mercer.
ED: OK.
RM: Because he kind of worked… He was in a little social club with my father and they would meet on Sundays. I'd already wanted to be a lawyer by then but I was probably in high school at that time.
ED: So Chris Mercer would've been the only one in Little Rock, as far as being a black lawyer?
RM: They had a guy, another lawyer by the name of Trimble. He lived on Broadway; he was shot. I always think about him because he always reminded me of Calhoun.
ED: On Amos & Andy?
RM: On Amos & Andy, yeah.
ED: Did you listen to Amos & Andy?
RM: Yeah, I listened to Amos & Andy. He seemed like they made the role for him. They looked at him and thought of him when they came up with Amos...
ED: So he was Calhoun?
RM: Yeah, he was Calhoun, you know. I think his name was Mr. Trimble. He ended up becoming quite successful as a lawyer when he was shot. He lived on Broadway, right there not far… It was at Chester and Broadway or Ringo and Broadway on the south side… I mean not Broadway, Roosevelt.
ED: Roosevelt Road.
RM: On the south side. I do not remember exactly when he was shot, but I was a lawyer when he was shot.
ED: You were already a lawyer.
RM: Well, there was one other lawyer, Anderson. He was Les Hollingsworth's uncle; he was married to Les Hollingsworth's aunt. I don't remember Mr. Anderson's first name, but I do remember that he was a railroad pullman. He would run on the railroad and practice law in the interim.
ED: So he did a little law practice?
RM: Right.
ED: And worked on the railroad?
RM: I didn't know anybody that was successful. The first lawyer that I met in terms of what I truly understood as success was…

ED: Chris Mercer?
RM: Was John Walker.
ED: John Walker, OK.
RM: Yeah, I didn't perceive Chris as a person who was all that successful in the practice either.
ED: Well, in those days it probably might not have been. It might have been just about impossible to be successful, wouldn't it?
RM: It was difficult, I would say that.
ED: Yeah, yeah. And then the civil rights era comes along.
RM: Yeah.
ED: It took a person like John Walker to do it.
RM: Yeah. And John was certainly the most successful. By the time I met John, I was pretty close to going to law school. I might have been a junior in college, something like that.
ED: OK. Well, let's go back. So you're going to Howard, you decide to go to Howard. How did you choose Howard University?
RM: My granddaddy on my mother's side had a lot to do that with that.
ED: Your grandfather on your mother's side?
RM: On my mother's side.
ED: All right.
RM: Right, he lived in…
ED: Was he educated?
RM: No, he wasn't. But he was a boilermaker at the naval yard in Philadelphia. Grandfather Greenlee was a fairly scholarly guy; he did a lot of reading, was kind of self-taught.
ED: His name was Greenlee?
RM: Greenlee.
ED: OK.
RM: And he's the first person, if I remember correctly, who raised the Howard issue to me and caused me to inquire about Howard. He said, "Look, I want you to go to Howard, son." And I said, "Oh really?" He said, "You need to look into that, it's a good school for you" and boom, boom, boom. That was the first real information I had on Howard and, I probably… I wasn't a senior at that time but I was maybe in the tenth grade or eleventh grade, I can't remember which. But I think he was the first person to encourage me to attend Howard, and then I started reading a little bit about Howard. I became attracted to the college and started saying, "Look, that's where I want to go, Daddy," and I went.
ED: By this time there were some integrated colleges in Arkansas.
RM: Absolutely.
ED: Because when I started college in the fall of '55 it was the year that they desegregated some of the little colleges around Arkansas. I went up to Henderson [State Teachers College] and we integrated it. I can say that I integrated Henderson State Teachers college, me and a guy named John Walker. Not John Walker, John Taylor. Have you ever known John Taylor?
RM: Uh-uh.
ED: He later went with Martin Luther King. He told me he was with Martin Luther King when he was killed in Memphis. But John and I were in the same class. I left after a couple of years and went to [University of] Missouri and then he came back some years

later and we renewed our friendship. So Henderson and U of A had integrated, marginally.

RM: My brother went to U of A; he graduated in 1957.

ED: Yeah, so your brother had gone up there.

RM: Well, he went up there his second year.

ED: All right.

RM: He got a football scholarship to the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff his first year. That was ’57–’58. And then ’58–’59 he went to University of Arkansas. That’s how I understood the issue because…

ED: You mean ’48–’49, right?

RM: No, ’58.

ED: Oh ’58.

RM: ’58.

ED: ’58.

RM: He went there in ’58 and graduated from college in 1961.

ED: OK.

RM: And he had a scholarship. For whatever reason, they persuaded my daddy to pay tuition. I remember that my son had a full scholarship, a football scholarship, to University of Arkansas and Nebraska, but my wife preferred him to accept a track scholarship to Kansas, which is not anything like a football scholarship, OK? You get about a hundred dollars a year for a track scholarship.

ED: Yeah.

RM: On the track scholarship.

ED: Yeah.

RM: And on the football scholarship you get a full ride.

ED: Yeah, yeah.

RM: But my wife really didn’t want him to play football. I believe that was the issue.

ED: He’s gonna get hurt.

RM: He was gonna get hurt. So Kansas presented a much more significant tuition challenge than University of Arkansas, or Nebraska, which was a full ride. And I thought about that when I thought about my daddy, who let my brother withdraw from the University of Arkansas in Pine Bluff where he had a full scholarship and transfer to the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville where he had absolutely no scholarship. And I just thought that that should communicate to my brother the level of commitment that my father had to his education.

ED: Yes, I would think so.

RM: (Laughing) I don’t think he appreciated it, but he fully understood later.

ED: Yes, yes. So you go to Howard. Did you look at any other place, or did you just say I’m going to go and just applied at Howard?

RM: Right, I don’t think I ever looked at any other place.

ED: So you went there four years?

RM: Yes.

ED: You graduated in four years?

RM: Uh-huh.

ED: What did you do there?

RM: Well, actually I had a pretty good academic record. I got the Elaine Locke Award from Phi Beta Kappa my first year.
ED: What kind of award?
RM: That's the highest academic average in my freshman class.
ED: OK. And what was the name of the award?
RM: Elaine Locke.
ED: E-L-A-I-N-E?
RM: E-L-A-I-N-E , I think.
ED: L-O-C-K-? Don't pull your thing out there [pointing to microphone wire].
RM: Oh, yeah. I think that's it right there. Only I still keep it. You see right there behind, or just above the picture of where I'm with Mrs. Obama and the vice president.
ED: I think it's L-O-C-K-E.
RM: Yeah.
ED: I think it's got an E on the end of it.
RM: Yeah.
ED: OK. So that's the outstanding freshman academic award for a freshman?
RM: Right. And I ran for the Student Council president. I just wasn't elected.
ED: Your freshman year?
RM: No, no.
ED: Later?
RM: Later.
ED: Yeah.
RM: My junior year.
ED: Junior year.
RM: Had a good run but…
ED: You didn't shake enough hands?
RM: Didn't shake enough hands.
ED: Didn't pass out enough candy bars or anything.
RM: Right, right. I enjoyed it though. It was a lot of fun. I can say that.
ED: Yeah. Who beat you? Do you remember?
RM: Yeah.
ED: Was it a female or a male?
RM: Yeah, I think, and he was in a fraternity. All I can remember was that he was a Kappa.
ED: A Kappa something.
RM: Kappa, yeah.
ED: Some Kappa.
RM: Yeah, he was in a fraternity, belonged to a different fraternity.
ED: OK.
RM: The fraternities kind of sponsored the politics.
ED: Yes.
RM: And I was an Omega, so you had three black fraternities. You had three social primary fraternities. One was the Alphas. That's John Walker's fraternity.
ED: OK.
RM: They were kind of studious guys.
ED: Yeah.
RM: Less social but focused.

ED: OK. And you had the medium group that did a little bit of drinking and a little bit of studying.
RM: Yeah, that's the Omegas, yeah. That's the Omegas.
ED: That's you.
RM: And we called our primary value moderation.
ED: Yeah. Moderation in all things.
RM: And the Kappas did all the drinking and absolutely didn't study.
ED: OK.
RM: (Laughing)
ED: All right, OK, understood. And what did you study, what did you major in?
RM: Political science was my major and business administration was my minor. And I was on the forensic debate team, which was probably my major extracurricular activity in college. I worked at the Library of Congress part time in my third and fourth years.
ED: This was kind of a part-time job?
RM: Uh-huh, a part-time job.
ED: While you were a student there?
RM: While I was a student because my daddy got me a car my junior year.
ED: A new car, or was it a used car?
RM: A new car.
ED: He bought you a brand-new car?
RM: Right, a Belvedere. I had wanted a… I'll never forget because I wanted a Mustang, I do remember that.
ED: Yeah, he wouldn't spring for a Mustang?
RM: Well, he didn't even… I was talking to my mother, primarily.
ED: OK.
RM: You know how that goes. "Mama, I want a Mustang." She said, "Well, look, I'm gonna talk to him for you, Son. I'm gonna get you a car." And so I came home, I guess at the end of the sophomore year, and my dad said, "Come on, come go with me." And we went to the Plymouth dealership and he said, "Get in that car." And it was a Belvedere and at that time, I guess, it was a new car, 1963. I guess it'63. And he said, "How do you like that?" And I had enough sense to say, "I like this car." "OK, you want that?" "Yes sir, yes sir, I want it."
ED: OK.
RM: So that's the last I heard of it.
ED: So you got the car. Do you remember what color it was?
RM: Yeah, it was gray.
ED: Gray. Why did you get a gray?
RM: Well, he got it.
ED: Oh, he picked it out.
RM: Right, he picked it out. I didn't have anything to do with it.
ED: You would've picked out a red convertible probably.
RM: Right. I kept it all the way through law school. I kept it. I didn't buy another car until my second job out of law school; it was with the Pulaski County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.
ED: OK. So you kept the car all the way through?
RM: All the way through that, yeah.

ED: So you remember any teachers or courses that were especially meaningful?
RM: To me at Howard?
ED: At Howard.
RM: You know, I can remember some experiences. I think my logic teacher was a very unusual lady. And I had a Nigerian teacher. I'll never forget on my first exam I got a C. And I walked up after school, I mean after the class, and I said, "Look." And he said, "Well what do you want?" And I said, "I want to talk to you about my grade." It was fall semester.
ED: Midterm?
RM: Midterm. And then he said, "Well, OK, what's the problem?" And I said, "Well I got this C." And he said, "Well, are you dissatisfied with a C? Is that a problem?" And I said, "Well, it's not a problem but I would like to make a better grade than that." I remember state and local government, too. And he said, "Oh really?" And I said, "Yes sir. Are there any special issues here? I have an average of at least a B on my exams." And he said, "All those people who did better than that turned in a special paper." And I said, "Well, did we talk about that?" And he said, "I shouldn't have to talk about it. If you don't know it, you don't understand that you got what you deserve." And I said, "OK, yes sir, I understand." He kind of taught me… let me understand a little about the system.
ED: So the second semester, the second nine weeks or whatever…
RM: I did better.
ED: You turned in some special papers?
RM: Yes, I was much more aggressive.
ED: Yeah.
RM: And I started communicating with Mr. Iqwood. He had a very pronounced accent.
ED: Was he Nigerian, you think?
RM: He was Nigerian, yeah.
ED: A long Nigerian name?
RM: Yeah.
ED: Like Akinwalemiwa?
RM: Yeah. It was tough; he talked to you pretty tough, too.
ED: Yeah.
RM: Going over and just talking to him was a challenge. But after that I got totally responsive. We had a good relationship as far as grades were concerned.
ED: So do you remember what your gradepoint was after graduation?
RM: Oh, it was not nearly… It was a little over 3.2. You know, I had a 4.0 in my first year and probably about a 3.6 or so in my second year and then in my third year I probably went down to about 3.0.
ED: Did you have a girlfriend that you started spending a lot of time with?
RM: Oh yeah. It became a different issue for me.
ED: OK, all right. I figured that's what intervened.
RM: And certainly my last year even less. But the same thing… At the University of Arkansas I had a good first year at law school. I was number two in my class at the end of the first year because the top two students in your freshman class at the University of Arkansas law school were members of the university's student court. That's how I served on the Student Court; that's how I met Mack McLarty. He was president of the Student Council at the undergraduate level.

ED: OK.
RM: When I was in law school.
ED: You graduated from Howard in what year?
RM: ’65.
ED: ’65?
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: OK.
RM: 1965.
ED: High school ’61, Howard ’65?
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: And did you immediately that fall enter law school?
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: At U of A?
RM: Yes.
ED: And…
RM: I never gave much consideration to any other school.
ED: All right, so that’s where you were gonna go?
RM: Uh-huh, because I always wanted to stay here in Arkansas and practice law. Again, my grandfather was probably instrumental because he had suggested that wherever you go to law school is where you want to practice. I don’t think that was necessarily solid advice but that was the premise.
ED: Yes. So that’s where you met Mack McLarty. Was he in law school then?
RM: No, he was in college.
ED: He was in college.
RM: I was in law school. He was like president; he was on the Student Court because he was president of the student body.
ED: OK, so that made you a member of the Student Court.
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: So this would’ve been in the fall of ’65.
RM: Fall of, yes, fall of ’65.
ED: ‘65 when you entered.
RM: Right. And I probably didn’t serve on the court then. I went on the court in the fall of ’66, probably, my second year. At the end of my freshman year is when I met him.
ED: Who else notable in that class?
RM: In that class? Well, Jim Guy Tucker was in my class.
ED: Jim Guy Tucker was in your class?
RM: Uh-huh, he was in my class, in my law school class. Let’s see, because I was on the Law Review my… Let’s see, who else was in my class? My best friend was a guy named Sanders, I’m trying to think what Sanders’ name was. He was a very studious guy. He left and went to Oklahoma. I don’t know what happened to Sanders but he was a super guy. We were real good friends in law school.
ED: How many African Americans in that class?
RM: Nobody in my freshman year.
ED: You were the only one?
RM: Uh-huh.

ED: ’65, so I guess it was later when it began to be – I guess it was seventies and eighties when you have…

RM: You didn’t have a black graduate from the University of Arkansas after that initial crew went up in the fifties, ’51, ’52, ’53. I think the last to graduate before me was Chris Mercer.

ED: Really?

RM: Uh-huh.

ED: And that would’ve been in?

RM: In ’54, something like that, ’55.

ED: ’54.

RM: When I graduated in ’68, I was the first black to graduate since that group.

ED: Since Chris Mercer’s group?

RM: Since Chris Mercer’s group, right.

ED: What accounts for that, do you think?

RM: I don’t know, I don’t know.

ED: I had not realized that there’s that big gap in there.

RM: You know, in that time and in that era you had Wiley Branton, you had George Howard.

ED: Yeah, all of them and the Chris Mercer group.

RM: And the Chris Mercer group.

ED: Yeah.

RM: And they had a little range, you had Haley, George Haley.

ED: George Haley.

RM: And you had Shropshire, a guy who went up to Gary, Gary, Indiana.

ED: Yeah. S-H-R-O-P-S-H-I-R-E, I think was his name. [Jackie L. Shropshire was the first African-American law school graduate, in 1951.]

RM: Yeah. Shropshire, he served as city attorney, and he was very close to Richard Hatcher, who was the mayor up there for a long period.

ED: Yeah. So how were you treated there?

RM: At the University of Arkansas?

ED: At the University of Arkansas Law School? I mean was there still… Back in the earlier days there was still a lot of segregation and blatant discrimination at the law school.

RM: Well, look, I did have problems getting a place. When I was up in Fayetteville I had a couple that rented a place for me and when the owner found out I was black he tried to withdraw from the contract. It was a trailer community around me but I lived in a house, and the landlord said that he didn’t want his house blown up and he wanted me to move. I don’t remember, but the graduate people who had helped me and located that place for me went to the university and the university said it would take him off the list if he did not…

ED: If he rescinded the contract?

RM: If he rescinded the contract.

ED: And they wouldn’t send him any more students.

RM: And they wouldn’t send any more people over there to him in any of his places. He backed up and, after that incident, I never had any trouble.

ED: So he treated you all right after that?

RM: Right, I never even saw him anymore because I sent my rent in.

ED: But in law school itself?

RM: No problem.
ED: No problem. I mean, you were seated?
RM: I'll tell you, except for one incident. In the school itself the only racial incident I had up there in my freshman year was I put my name on a list to work at the University's home football games. If you wanted to work and take tickets at the football game you could do that. They just had a list on the wall and if you wanted to work you just signed your name. I signed my name and I'm trying to think of his name… He's dead now; he worked in the prosecuting attorney's office. But he came by…
ED: Here in Little Rock?
RM: Yes, in Pulaski County, I'm trying to think… good guy. He came by and he said, "You know, do you really want to work or do you just want to cause trouble?" And I said, "Well, I don't know why I would be trying to cause trouble. I mean, no I don't, so yes, I really want to work." I'll think of his name. He got killed in an accident and he went into the prosecuting attorney's office with Tucker. He said, "OK, I'm going to fight for you. I'm going to go and tell the president that."
ED: Because some people were trying to deny you that job?
RM: Yeah, apparently. I mean, that was the only contact I had other than when he came back and told me it was done, you can go to work.
ED: So Mullins was the president back then? [David W. Mullins]
RM: I think Mullins was the president, yeah. And so I worked at the game and I'll never forget at halftime people would come in and so the other folks working at the game they would charge half price. So, you know, this was guidance for me. So, you know, what do you do? Guys come up to you and say, "I want to get in the game." You know, "What do I do, Ernie?" "You charge half price, Richard." I said, "OK." So I charged half price and at the end of the game I turned in all my money. And when I turned in the money the person said, "Where did you get this extra money?" And said, "Well, if people came in after halftime I charged half price" and he said, "Who gave you permission to do that?" Well, then, I knew I didn't want to create a problem for the others, so I just said, "Well, you know, I thought that was the thing to do." They said, "No, that's totally against policy."
ED: Although it made them additional money.
RM: Yeah, although it made them additional money. And they brought me up for trial before the Student Court.
ED: OK.
RM: And they didn't really dispense any punishment. My problem was that I didn't want to get anybody else in trouble because that meant they weren't turning in their money, OK? Somebody said, "Oh, he wants to be a lawyer" and, you know, "You fool, why did you turn in your money?" I would not have taken it if I weren't going to turn it in, but they didn't discipline me.
ED: The other people were just pocketing it, they were charging half price and pocketing it?
RM: Yeah, they were just pocketing the money.
ED: OK.
RM: And nothing happened. Although they brought charges against me they weren't sustained.
ED: OK.
RM: And those are about the only two negative experiences, I mean, other than… I would say to be perfectly candid with you that I don't really think I experienced any discrimination

when I was at the law school. I had good relationships. I had gotten a little arrogant. I remember Dean… because I made pretty good grades and I was pretty focused.

ED: Was Leflar a facult member? [Dr. Robert A. Leflar, former dean, distinguished professor.]

RM: Leflar was one of my professors. I liked Leflar a lot. He was a very strong professor and I enjoyed him tremendously. But the dean, I forgot what his name was. He taught labor law. And I never will forget one incident. I had gotten pretty comfortable. This was not my freshman year in law school. This was probably even my senior year because I'm kicking butts a little bit. By then, hell, I probably thought I was right at that time.

ED: (Laughing)

RM: And dean, what was his name? [Dean Ralph Barnhart?]I always liked him, but he called on me in class and asked me a question. I don't remember what the question was but I do remember my answer, which was, "I can't help you, Dean." And he said, "I don't think I'm the one that needs help here." (Laughing)

ED: (Laughing)

RM: That to me was a very effective signal, and that is a lesson I definitely got in my head. After that, I was like, "What the hell is wrong with me?" He caused me to kind of reassess my mindset. I liked him, too. You would know him. He was dean all the way through the years up there. He didn't talk much, didn't say much, very direct kind of guy and knew how to communicate very effectively. He made me get my act together and re-focus. You know, you come in, you understand the system, you do well, and it's easy to lose your focus and begin to take too much for granted.

ED: Sure.

RM: But the bottom line, in fact, was that when I graduated—I don't remember which professor it was—he asked me, "What are you going to do when you graduate?" He said, "You know, the real world is not like this one up here at the University of Arkansas Law School. They're not going to treat you like we treated you. You think you can manage that? And, you know, I don't remember who said it but I said, "I think I can work it out."

ED: You knew what he meant.

RM: Yeah.

ED: You're going out there in the real world.

RM: You're going to find some real challenges; this ain't like the real world.

ED: You're going to see some discrimination.

RM: Yeah. But I can truly say that it was very even experience for me and I did not feel like they were going out of their way to be too accommodating or certainly going out of their way to kick me in the butt. I thought the professors were fair. At that point in time I had focused. I understood. I didn't try to sit up at the front of class and answer every question. I just tried to be prepared. I never wanted to be called on when I hadn't done my homework. After I established my study routine during my freshman year… I remember when I was in class with Jim Guy [Tucker], and Jim Guy was a Harvard graduate and very articulate.

ED: Yes.

RM: I said, this is going to be a high curve. You were graded on the curve system in law school.

ED: Yeah.

RM: I said, “This brother here, he’s prepared. I better focus in this class.” But I found that I could compete. Jim Guy and I became very good friends, and I would either give him a ride or catch a ride back and forth with him from Little Rock when we were in law school. Jim Guy had also gone to Harvard with a very good high school friend of mine, Herbert Denton, whose father had been a principal in the Little Rock School District when I was a kid.

ED: Yeah, his father was principal over at Dunbar.

RM: Yes.

ED: He hired my wife at Dunbar.

RM: Well, his son went to Harvard and was a scholar and started working for the *Washington Post*. He had gone to school with the son of the owner of the *Post*.

ED: Yes, yes, I remember him, yeah. My wife adored Herbert Denton [the elder Denton, the principal].

RM: Yeah. Well, we were best friends in high school except when the school closed he got a scholarship at one of the private schools up in Massachusetts and from there he never did come back.

ED: Yeah.

RM: I mean, he left that and went to Harvard and went into the service.

ED: Were there any other black law students who followed you while you were still there?

RM: Yes.

ED: You broke the…

RM: For my freshman year I was the only black.

ED: Yeah.

RM: But the next year George Miller and Sharon Miller came up there, and the next year Les Hollingsworth [Perlesta A. Hollingsworth].

ED: OK.

RM: He came up there.

ED: OK. So you all were classmates.

RM: I was ahead of the list.

ED: Although you were two years ahead of him.

RM: Yeah, I spent one year with Les.

ED: OK.

RM: We lived together my senior year.

ED: Yeah, for the record that’s Perlesta, P-E-R-L-E-S-T-A.

RM: Perlesta.

ED: That’s his full name.

RM: Right.

ED: So you roomed together for a while?

RM: Yes, yes, my senior year.

ED: OK. Now, we haven’t touched on any of the personal stuff—if there are any romances and marriages and stuff. You haven’t gotten around to your…

RM: My wife?

ED: Yes.

RM: I married my high school girlfriend. She was tenth grade and I was in the twelfth grade when we started going together.

ED: What was her name?

RM: Jennifer Winstead.
ED: J-E-N-N-I-F-E-R.
RM: I-F-E-R, Right.
ED: W-I-N-S-T-E-A-D.
RM: Yes.
ED: OK.
RM: Her mother was Versie Winstead.
ED: V-E-R-S-I-E.
RM: She ran the Village Square Apartments complex. She was the manager.
ED: Village Square.
RM: Do you remember Village Square?
ED: OK, yes.
RM: Do you remember that?
ED: Yes.
RM: She managed that.
ED: OK. So you all started going together in high school?
RM: Uh-huh, when I was in twelfth grade.
ED: When did you marry?
RM: Married when I graduated my first year in law school, my freshman year, in December of ’65.
ED: OK. So you got married your freshman year of law school?
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: Well, had she gone to college as well?
RM: Yeah. She had gone to the University of Pittsburgh for two years and then she transferred to the University of Arkansas when we got married.
ED: All right.
RM: So she graduated from the University of Arkansas.
ED: Was she a year or two behind you in high school?
RM: Yeah.
ED: Right.
RM: She was two years behind me.
ED: OK. So you graduated from law school in?
RM: ’68.
ED: ’68.
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: And you passed the bar?
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: And then –
FEMALE: Mary Steele is here so I’m going to let her look at this jacket.
RM: Yeah, that fits me good, that fits me well. Right, that fits me good.
FEMALE: All right.
ED: So you graduated and passed the bar in ’68 and came down and established the law practice in Little Rock? What happened then?
RM: No, I went to work with the Justice Department.
ED: Oh, that’s right. Tell me about that. You get a job in the Justice Department in ’68. That would’ve been in the…

RM: There was an honors graduate program. I went to Justice on that program.
ED: That would be in?
RM: In D.C.
ED: In the last year of the Lyndon Johnson...
RM: Last year of Lyndon Johnson.
FEMALE: Sorry, she actually needs to measure you.
RM: Uh-huh.
FEMALE: And Sue Paul would like for you to meet the students that she has over in the conference room.
RM: OK, I'll be right back.
ED: OK, you're going to do that now?
RM: Yeah.
ED: Let me shut this. OK, all right.
(Pause)
ED: All right, we're back after a short break, I think, let me check.
RM: Can you hear me? One, two, three.
ED: Yes. All right, we're back. Now, after we turned the mic off you gave me a high school yearbook that I want to get on the record. I guess it was the year that your wife graduated, her graduating class at?
RM: Horace Mann.
ED: At Horace Mann High School. And the classmates included Mahlon Martin.
RM: Yes.
ED: Later city manager of Little Rock and later head of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, a great man.
RM: And he served as the first black director of the Department of Finance and Administration under Clinton when he was governor.
ED: Clinton's first director of finance and administration.
RM: Right.
ED: The most important member of his cabinet. Also in that class was Henry Jones.
RM: Yes.
ED: Who was later U.S. magistrate and should've been on the federal bench, should've been a federal district or appellate judge over the years. I think the senators [Dale Bumpers and David Pryor] later regretted they had not appointed him to that position. I've forgotten who else… Dr. Beverly White was in her class.
RM: Yes she was, absolutely. Yes, she was, right.
ED: I think there were a couple others, significant people that I… They're all significant but recognizably important people in Arkansas in that class. Well, let's go back. We'd gotten you graduated from law school and accepted to the bar, and you'd gone to Washington, the Justice Department. This would've been in 1968.
RM: Yes.
ED: This would've been the last year of the Lyndon Johnson administration and the attorney general would've been…?
RM: Clark.
ED: Ramsey Clark was the attorney general.
RM: Ramsey Clark.
ED: And you went up there as what?

RM: I went up there as a trial attorney.
ED: OK.
RM: In the Criminal Division, organized crime, actually. It was a special section. And at that time they had various task forces that were targeting personalities that they had reason to believe were very active in organized crime. I remember Attorney General Ramsey Clark treated the attorneys with special courtesies by inviting us up one day out of a month, usually a Friday, to have tea and coffee with him.
ED: Yes.
RM: So I was in the Criminal Division. That was the largest division, by the way. At that time it was headed by a gentleman named Henry Peterson, who was a section chief. I think Henry ultimately became the assistant attorney general for the Criminal Division. And after I went on in '68 Nixon won the presidential election and Mitchell became…
ED: John Mitchell became the attorney general, I guess in January, early anyway.
RM: '69
ED: Early 1969. So did that end your career or were you there for a while?
RM: That did not. I always wanted to come back to Little Rock, I stayed there. They did make us account for every fifteen minutes.
ED: They did what?
RM: Every fifteen minutes. When he came in…
ED: Yeah.
RM: They took a different management approach…
ED: Yeah.
RM: with the attorneys and we had to fill out time sheets to indicate how we spent our time. There was a lot of resentment about that in terms of being treated like accountants instead of lofty professionals.
ED: Yeah, you're a wage earner now.
RM: Yeah.
ED: You punch a time clock.
RM: Had to punch a time clock and Martha Mitchell, if you remember correctly…
ED: Yes, from Pine Bluff.
RM: from Pine Bluff was his wife.
ED: Did you meet her?
RM: I don't think I ever met her.
ED: OK.
RM: I did meet the FBI director several times at that time.
ED: J. Edgar Hoover.
RM: J. Edgar Hoover.
ED: Yes.
RM: Because we were in the same building at the time.
ED: Yes.
RM: They were building the new FBI building so the agency had not moved from the Justice Department to the new location. I must have ridden up on the elevator with him three or four times.
ED: Yeah.

RM: I remember I thought it was a distinct honor to see him there with that much history. But he never spoke and he was very focused; he wasn't trying to run for any office, obviously. But I stayed until…
ED: But he was no longer investigating Martin Luther King?
RM: No, as far as I know. I don't know.
ED: Well, let's see, King was killed in '68 right?
RM: Yeah, that's right he was killed in April.
ED: He was killed in April.
RM: So no, he wasn't.
ED: So you were not there when Martin Luther King was killed?
RM: No, I went up there in August.
ED: Oh, you go there in August.
RM: Right. And the first day on the job was my birthday, August the 5th, 1968.
ED: Robert F. Kennedy had been killed by then.
RM: Robert F. Kennedy had been killed by then, yes. And so I stayed until maybe like May, June and then I came back and started as deputy prosecuting attorney under Richard Adkisson.
ED: So you came back to do that. So you stayed until the spring of '69.
RM: Uh-huh.
ED: Under the Republican Justice Department?
RM: Yes.
ED: While you were up there in the Organized Crime Division, did you dig up any dirt on anybody we know, like Frank Sinatra or anybody?
RM: No, I read logs of electronic recordings and summarized them. My first real active involvement, though, was in a trial with the U.S. attorney for the Western or Eastern District of Maryland, a guy names Steven Sachs.
ED: S-A-C-H-S?
RM: S-A-C-H-S. And eventually he ran for governor. He was a very energetic U.S. attorney. I assisted Mr. Sachs in a prosecution of a labor-union guy, who was allegedly a part of the crime syndicate, under the Hobbs Act for extortion of the mayor's father-in-law, if I remember correctly, who was a big contractor. The trial was held in Arlington, Virginia, where he was defended by the Edward Bennett Williams firm. The first thing I noticed about those guys was that they were all six feet plus. I don't think they had any lawyers who were not at least six feet.
ED: Really?
RM: Yes.
ED: You mean the defense lawyers?
RM: In the defense bar, yeah.
ED: Do you think that was a strategy?
RM: I think that was a strategy, yes.
ED: So they just look like might makes right?
RM: They were very tall, right. They were effective lawyers. I mean, we got a conviction in that case. Steven Sachs was not close to six feet.
ED: OK.
RM: But he was a…
ED: They kind of put some elevator shoes on him?

RM: But he had a lot of charm and personality. I was very impressed with him and my taste of that trial work and experience is what accelerated my decision to return to Little Rock. Actually, Sachs offered me a job to move from Justice to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Baltimore. He invited me to dinner at his home. And at the same time I had been offered a job by the prosecuting attorney's office in Pulaski County.
ED: By Richard Adkisson.
RM: By Richard Adkisson.
ED: How did you know Richard? Adkisson, by the way, for the record for the transcriptionist, A-D-K-I-S-S-O-N. Richard B. Adkisson. And he would've been elected prosecutor in '68 or '66, probably elected in '68.
RM: Uh-huh, '68 probably, yes.
ED: Yeah.
RM: And he ran against Milas Hale.
ED: OK.
RM: Milas Hale was one of the contenders and I had supported Milas, had gone and worked for him in the campaign. And David Hale was his brother.
ED: His brother.
RM: I had met David earlier before he went to work for Richard Adkisson as a deputy prosecutor. But I knew Milas better, and I think they had pushed to… They had identified me to Dick Adkisson and they had reached out to me. I remember when I went in to talk to Henry Peterson to resign from the Justice Department he already assumed that I was going to go to work for Steven Sachs, because Sachs had talked to me and so, you know…
ED: In New Jersey?
RM: In Maryland.
ED: Maryland, Maryland.
RM: And go to the U.S. Attorney's Office directly as opposed to staying with the Justice Department. And he said, "Look, I already know why you're here and, you know, you're making a good judgment and a good choice and I think you'll be happy with Steven." And I said, "Well, I am here to terminate but that's not where I'm going. I'm going back home and I'm going to work for the prosecuting attorney's office.
ED: And did he say, "Why, for God's sake…"
RM: (Laughing)
ED: "are you going back to Arkansas?"
RM: And he's like, "Are you serious about law?"
ED: Have you been there? (Laughing)
RM: (Laughing)
ED: OK.
RM: But, you know, I chose that route and I enjoyed it. I personally liked Dick very much. And when I did come back he was very supportive of me.… They call him Richard "Blanks" Adkisson sometimes.
ED: Blanks?
RM: Blank, because when you said something that he didn't apparently fully understand, he would stare expressionless like he went blank.
ED: Blank. OK.
RM: Consistently. (Laughing)

ED: OK. Well, now, but you didn't know him before?
RM: I didn't know him, no.
ED: Did he ever tell you why he got your name?
RM: Not really. I mean, I knew that it had to come from the Hales. I knew Milas Hale through David Hale and he wanted to hire me full-time.
ED: Even though he had beaten Milas?
RM: Beaten Milas, right. Chris Mercer had been hired as the first African American to work as a deputy prosecutor, but he was a part-time prosecutor. So I was really the first full-time African American to work.
ED: Who did Chris Mercer work for… He didn't work for Richard Adkisson?
RM: He was still there, I think.
ED: So he had been hired by his predecessor.
RM: He had been hired by the predecessor.
ED: I don't remember whether that was Lee Munson?
RM: No, no, that was later. Lee came after him.
ED: Lee came after.
RM: Because Lee and I were working for Adkisson.
ED: OK, that's right, he did.
RM: That was Jernigan.
ED: Yeah, John T. Jernigan and then Jernigan ran for a judgeship and got elected.
RM: Yeah.
ED: John T. Jernigan.
RM: Yeah.
ED: So in '68 he gets elected circuit judge and Dick Adkisson is elected prosecutor. So you're not the first. I had forgotten that Chris Mercer had been a deputy prosecutor.
RM: Yes.
ED: He was the first one.
RM: He was the first one.
ED: But you were the first full time?
RM: I was the first full time.
ED: So how long did you do that?
RM: I did that until I left and went with John Walker, which was probably about '70. '71.
ED: For a couple of years, then, you were a deputy prosecutor.
RM: Yes.
ED: So you did court work?
RM: Yes.
ED: You went down to Municipal Court or Circuit Court and prosecuted.
RM: I had trials in Circuit Court; I really moved from the first… I mean there were racial episodes in that context.
ED: Tell me about those.
RM: There were several but the one… Judge Kirby was the judge.
ED: William J. Kirby or William T. Kirby. William Kirby, anyway, was a circuit judge.
RM: Yes. The first incident occurred in his court. I can't think of the lawyer's name but I do know the lawyer. He was entering a plea for a young black man, and I'm representing the state. There was a jury panel in the courtroom because I was preparing to try another case. A black gentleman, T. E. Patterson, a member of the Little Rock School Board, was

on the jury panel. When the lawyer was entering the plea—and I think his name was Mr. Sheppard—he held up two fingers behind the black defendant's head and said, "Judge, this is a good nigger."

ED: Talking about Patterson?

RM: Talking about the guy that was entering the plea.

ED: Oh, the defendant.

RM: The defendant.

ED: Was this a white lawyer or a black lawyer?

RM: This was a white lawyer.

ED: A white lawyer.

RM: A white lawyer talking to a white judge and putting two fingers up. "That's all I want him to get," basically.

ED: So he holds up two fingers behind his ear?

RM: Behind the back.

ED: Behind his head.

RM: Yes.

ED: And that's suggesting that's how long he think his client ought to get.

RM: Yes, "he's a good nigger." And I'm there standing representing the state, so I objected. I said, "Judge, I object." And Judge Kirby said, "Well, what are you objecting to, lawyer?" And I said, "Well, he's using a disparaging term in reference to his client." And Kirby said, "What did he say? What did he say?" And I said, "He said 'nigger'." And Kirby said, whatever his name was, "Will, can't you say 'nigra'? Don't you know how to say 'nigra'?"

ED: (Laughing)

RM: And the lawyer said, "Yes, your honor." Kirby said, "You try to say 'nigra' the next time. Is that OK, lawyer?" And I said, "Well, I guess that's better than 'nigger', judge." And then we proceeded. One other time when I was getting ready to go up to Judge Kirby's court–and this gives you a better understanding of Judge Kirby because I really liked Judge Kirby, personally.

ED: Really? OK.

RM: I was getting ready to go into Judge Kirby's office and before I went in I heard one of the lawyers talking and saying "niggers." "Niggers are just the worst people in the world, they're just terrible people, judge." There were several white lawyers in his office, and instead of going in I just decided not to. At least at that time I wasn't sure I should enter and simply waited outside. But Judge Kirby said, "Look, (whatever his name was, Will, John,) "niggers are just like white people." He said, "There's some good niggers and there's some bad niggers. You know, you just can't group all these niggers together."

ED: (Laughing)

RM: And I just decided not to go in and returned to the prosecutor's office.

ED: But you still liked this guy? Well, OK.

RM: Yes.

ED: That was the times.

RM: That was the times.

ED: Yeah.

RM: On another occasion when I was prosecuting a black defendant and the prosecuting witness was white, the prosecuting witness was testifying, "Look, I came over there,

judge, and this nigger had taken all of my…" He was responding to my questions about what happened.

ED: He what?

RM: He's responding to my questions.

ED: OK.

RM: Now, he's the prosecuting witness.

ED: OK.

RM: And he said, "This nigger is taking all my chickens." And I said, "You mean this gentleman here?" "Oh yeah, that's what I mean." And during the examination he dropped back into it. "I went over there and started screaming at that nigger." I said, "You mean Mr. Johnson here?" "Oh, yeah."

ED: (Laughing)

RM: And we had to go through all that. Now, the judge didn't interact with this process in any way.

ED: This is still Judge Kirby?

RM: No, no, this was not Judge Kirby.

ED: Lofton?

RM: This was in Municipal Court.

ED: Oh, Municipal Court.

RM: And I do not remember the judge's name.

ED: Sullivan?

RM: No. Probably right after Sullivan, or either before him. If you told me his name, I might remember it. The judge was just stoic. He didn't know what to do. But he did let me correct him without…

ED: Times have changed a little bit.

RM: Yes. Times have changed. I remember racially separate water fountains and bathrooms. In the Courthouse, there were racially separate bathrooms, and we go from there to Obama. That suggests a significant change in this country.

ED: Yeah. Did Dick Adkisson allow you to prosecute white people?

RM: Oh yes.

ED: You prosecuted some white people?

RM: Yes.

ED: Yes, OK.

RM: Yes. Dick Adkisson was fairly racially sensitive. The only racial episode that occurred his office was an allegation that I was fraternizing with a white female employee. Mr. Bussey, a black member of the prosecutor's staff, approached me about those rumors.

ED: Charles Bussey?

RM: Charles Bussey.

ED: He was a city director of Little Rock and later mayor of Little Rock.

RM: And he worked as an investigator.

ED: Yeah.

RM: In the prosecuting attorney's office.

ED: Right.

RM: There apparently was suspicion that I had a relationship with one of the white secretaries, and he came to me to inquire. He had known me since I was kid. He invited me over to his house and asked if I had a personal relationship with one of the white secretaries. I

said, “Oh, no sir, Mr. Bussey. He said that I could confide in him if that were the case. I told him that I understood but such was not the case. And then the next day Dick Adkisson called me in to his office, and he said they had a fraternization policy. “You know, Richard, we’re not supposed to be fraternizing or anything with the staff, you understand that?” And I said, “Yes sir, I understand.” He said, “Well, rumors are going around that you and this particular staff member have been fraternizing.” And I said, “Well, do you know who’s spreading that rumor?” And he said, “Well, no.” And I said, “Well, you better find out because that’s a serious rumor and that could be harmful to you. I don’t think you need a rumor like that going around. The people that you need to bring in here are the people who are making that accusation. You need to either make them provide proof of it or stop spreading it.” And Dick kind of went blank. He said, “You know, Richard, you might have a good point there.” And that was the last of it.

ED: Last you heard of that?

RM: That’s the last I heard of that.

ED: All right.

RM: He’d always ask me about John Walker. “What does John Walker think about me, Richard?” “You know,” I said, “I’m sure he likes you. Everybody likes you. Do you know somebody who doesn’t like you?”

ED: (Laughing)

RM: (Laughing) And he would only ask that at a party where he had been drinking.

ED: Yeah.

RM: You know.

ED: When he had a little bit to drink.

RM: He’d get a little to drink and he would begin to interrogate you. He’d ask about Sammy Davis Jr. “What do you think about Sammy Davis Jr., Richard?” (Laughing) But in the office under normal conditions, he was an excellent boss to work for. I was happy.

ED: Well, I never had the impression that he was a racist. I just wonder about whether at that time letting a black man prosecute a white person in a court where the jury… where he would’ve thought that might affect the jury.

RM: Right, no.

ED: But you prosecuted lots of white people?

RM: Absolutely, yes.

ED: Good, good.

RM: Had no issue.

ED: You know, we should say that Richard Adkisson, subsequent to that, was elected circuit judge, I think probably 1970 or ’72.

RM: Right.

ED: And then was later elected chief justice of the Supreme Court, probably in 1982.

RM: Absolutely.

ED: He was elected to the Supreme Court but I don’t think he finished his term, or he finished a term and didn’t run for re-election.

RM: Right. I don’t think he ran for re-election.

ED: At any rate, I wanted to get that history in. Well, Judge, it’s 5:30. I’ve got to be at a thing at about 6:00 so I’ve got to go. So we might end this here.

RM: Sure.

ED: We need probably about another hour and a half or so.

RM: Sure.
ED: There's some great stories we need to tell, if we can remember where we ended.
RM: Sure.
ED: With you in the prosecuting attorney's office we'll stop it here and pick it up again later.
RM: It's a pleasure, Ernie.
ED: Good thanks.
(Pause)
RM: One, two, three, four.
ED: Yep, and I can hear me, too. All right.
RM: OK.
ED: We're in business. OK, when we left off… Today is Tuesday, October 21st, is that right?
RM: November 19th, isn't it?
ED: November, November, I guess, 21st, 2013. Have I got the dates right?
RM: No, November 19th.
ED: November 19th.
RM: Right.
ED: All right, so we're at November 19th. When we left off last week we still had you as a deputy prosecutor under Dickie Adkisson, as I recall.
RM: Yeah.
ED: And I guess we'd explored that pretty fully. I don't know whether you had any other -- we told a couple stories.
RM: Right.
ED: And you worked there how long, as a deputy prosecutor?
RM: Oh, probably about a year and a half.
ED: And that would've taken us up to about 1970 or so, I guess.
RM: '71, maybe.
ED: '71.
RM: I went back and started working.
ED: Yes, '71, I guess, was when Adkisson left office and a new prosecutor took over. Does that sound about right?
RM: Tucker.
ED: Jim Guy Tucker, yes, all right. He became the prosecuting attorney and you left and then started a law practice?
RM: Yes, I was practicing part time.
ED: Yes, you were already practicing part time.
RM: By then, right, because we could practice part time.
ED: Right.
RM: Under Dick Adkisson.
ED: Now, were you practicing alone or who were you practicing with?
RM: I was practicing alone to the extent I practiced. We could practice up there but we simply couldn't have our secretaries.
ED: Sure.
RM: We couldn't pay the ladies. They could do work for us but we couldn't pay them. But I had an office in my father's real-estate office over in North Little Rock that I would go to.
ED: OK.

RM: In the evening.
ED: Over there in the Shorter College neighborhood.
RM: Right.
ED: So when Dick Adkisson's term ended you went back to your law practice.
RM: I think, you know, I went back but I was always practicing.
ED: Yeah.
RM: But I think I joined John Walker.
ED: All right, so that's where we need to pick up. John Walker. Was he about the same age? He might've been a year or two older then you.
RM: No, John is six or seven years older than I am.
ED: Oh is he? All right. Yeah, he's my age; he's about seventy-six.
RM: Yes.
ED: So he was already practicing law and already engaged in some civil-rights legislation.
RM: He already had a pretty big firm over there, [Phillip] Kaplan and [John T.] Jack Lavey had already joined him.
ED: OK. So Phillip Kaplan and John Lavey or Jack Lavey, as we called him… They had left the McMath, Leatherman, Woods and Youngdahl Firm.
RM: Yes.
ED: And gone over and they had established the first integrated law practice in Arkansas.
RM: Law firm, yes.
ED: And it was Walker, Kaplan and Lavey, I guess at that time.
RM: Yes.
ED: And then later there were a couple others who joined.
RM: Yes.
ED: Let's see, John Sizemore. Did he come along and Buddy Rotenberry [Burl C. Rotenberry]? [Actually, it was Walker and Rotenberry when Kaplan and Lavey joined the firm.]
RM: Buddy Rotenberry and Les Hollingsworth went over there for a period of time.
ED: And Les Hollingsworth.
RM: Right.
ED: So did you all get there about the same time? The law firm was already established and then you joined them?
RM: Yes. When I went over there Les left.
ED: Les Hollingsworth. This is Perlesta Hollingsworth?
RM: Right.
ED: And he had already left?
RM: He had left and gone to work for [Governor Winthrop] Rockefeller.
ED: OK, went to Rockefeller.
RM: As an advisor on prisoner affairs.
ED: Yes. That would've been in about 1968 or '69, I guess Rockefeller's second and last term, when Les went over there because I was covering the Capitol and I remember Les being over there.
RM: Right, Les went over there. He may have already been gone. He probably was already gone when I went over there, but Buddy Rotenberry was there. We named the firm Walker, Kaplan, Lavey, Rotenberry and Mays, I think.
ED: OK. Now, John Sizemore did he ever…

RM: He worked with them but I don't think he ever moved over there for a time.
ED: Yeah. He might have had just some relationship, but John [Sizemore] had some problems and I think he would work together with them on that.
RM: Right. I remember him well.
ED: So, I guess Jack Lavey did mostly labor law.
RM: Labor law.
ED: And employment law.
RM: And Phil Kaplan, too.
ED: Yeah.
RM: All of them except for Rotenberry. Rotenberry had been with Legal Aid, I think,
ED: Yes, he'd headed up Pulaski County Legal Aid before that.
RM: Yes.
ED: And, of course, all of those guys are still around. Jack Lavey is one of my dearest friends still.
RM: I haven't met a gentleman finer than Jack Lavey.
ED: Yeah.
RM: Since I've been…
ED: He's been struggling with cancer now for about six or seven years. It just keeps coming back and coming back and coming back. [Lavey died in April 2014.]
RM: How's his wife, Kay?
ED: She's doing great, Kay's doing great. We have dinner every Saturday night unless he's had chemo treatment or surgery recently. You know, he's fighting back.
RM: He was a super guy. I have a friend that reminds me of Jack that I do business with now, His named is Edgar Rios. He's a lawyer.
ED: R-I-O-S?
RM: R-I-O-S, yes.
ED: Yes.
RM: And he's in an investment deal with me and we've worked together. I met him when I started working for Clinton when he ran for president the first time. But he reminds me in that he's always got a good temperament. He doesn't let things upset him too much but he's just such a positive, easy-going person. If there are two implications he always takes the positive one.
ED: That's Jack. Jack always represented working people. He never represented anybody except workers.
RM: Yes.
ED: You know he'd never represent a company or anything. And he's always positive; I mean he is certain his client is going to win. If he's taken the case, the facts and the law and justice are on his client's side. And, of course, the federal courts have changed over the last twenty-five years and now you've got a judiciary that's pretty hostile to that class of people.
RM: Yes.
ED: But he's still always positive and his clients are…
RM: It was a very good experience for me.
ED: Yeah. What kind of law did you practice there?
RM: Well, I came over as a [NAACP] Legal Defense Fund intern. Walker got me an internship with the Legal Defense Fund.

ED: OK.
RM: And so I got involved with civil rights. One of the first cases we brought—I brought, actually, under Title VII—was against the Arlington Hotel.
ED: In Hot Springs.
RM: In Hot Springs. And I appealed it and won. Judge Harris.
ED: [U.S. District[Judge Oren Harris.
RM: Oren Harris…
ED: From El Dorado.
RM: Right, he was the district court judge on that case.
ED: And he ruled against you?
RM: He ruled against me, right.
ED: And you took it to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals and won.
RM: To the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals and won, right.
ED: OK.
RM: And it was really one of the first cases under Title VII in the 8th circuit.
ED: Was this a discriminatory hiring case?
RM: Yes. It was a discriminatory hiring case. All of the black employees were porters, and all of the white employees were bellmen. And you had no clerks or any of the administrative staff who were African American. But he [Harris] gave me a leg up because in his ruling—he ruled from the bench—he was trying to be conciliatory, which he probably shouldn't have done. But he said, "Look, you know I understand these issues. When I was in Washington and served in the Congress we had a lot of qualified blacks who could work in these positions. But…"
ED: We didn't let them…
RM: Well, he said, "They were there and qualified, and they worked in those positions in Washington. But we don't have qualified blacks here in Arkansas who can be clerks or bellmen," he said. "And it's just one of those things." So, I started my brief off with his quote. "We don't have blacks qualified to be bellmen and clerks in Hot Springs, Arkansas." I didn't see that much difference between porters and bellmen.
ED: Well, I'd like to think he set you up purposely.
RM: (Laughing)
ED: But knowing Judge Harris he didn't. He was from El Dorado, where I'm from.
RM: Yeah.
ED: And I used to see him out at El Dorado County Club. I'd go out as a newspaper reporter to cover the Oil Belt Golf Tournament out there. And he and Bruce Bennett, who was this racist attorney general...
RM: I remember Bruce Bennett as attorney general.
ED: …back in the early '60s.
RM: Yes.
ED: And I'd see them in their white suits sitting out there.
RM: Yes.
ED: Sipping whatever. I don't know what kind of drinks they had out there. The two of them out there on the veranda at the El Dorado County Club. So I'm sure he was sincere when he said they just didn't have any qualified blacks.
RM: Yes, they got them up in D.C. but they just don't have them down here in Hot Springs.
ED: Yes. All right, so you got it overturned at the 8th Circuit.

RM: Yes.
ED: Do you remember any other cases you did?
RM: Yes. One of the most significant cases I had involved a case against the Little Rock Police Department for a pattern and practice of police brutality. I remember that I had to pick up my youthful witnesses early in the morning. We tried that case for about six weeks.
ED: Again, in federal court?
RM: Again in federal court, Judge [G. Thomas] Eisele. And he not enter a final order on that case for more than ten years after trial. The strength of that case was that the Little Rock jails were segregated, which was an obvious violation. First, we were dealing with a pattern and practice of police brutality when I filed the suit because they were holding people on what they called "S" and when someone was held on "S", the police didn't allow them to make bond.
ED: What does S mean?
RM: Suspicion, S. That's all it meant.
ED: Oh, suspicion.
RM: Yes.
ED: Held them on suspicion.
RM: And so they had a pattern and practice of arresting suspects and not charging them while holding them incommunicado for about twenty-four, forty-eight, seventy-two hours. I thought the law was clearly against that practice. I do recall that two good things happened. First, the city attorney got an opportunity to witness the injuries to the suspect because he had to arrange for me to see the accused after the police officials refused to allow it. Weeks was the chief.
ED: Gale Weeks.
RM: Right, and so I had information that the accused had been brutalized, physically abused. The problem for the police was that they didn't charge him with resisting arrest; therefore, they didn't have any reason to physically abuse him. Most officers understood that if a they physically abused a suspect they needed to at least charge him with resisting arrest to justify the reasonable use of necessary force.
ED: Yes.
RM: I called the city attorney to arrange to visit the suspect. I had a case where the parents were alleging that their son had been abused. I called the city attorney and I wanted to go see him [the accused] and the police wouldn't let me go see him. They wouldn't let me see my client, so I called the city attorney. He met me at the city jail. He said, "OK Richard, no they can't do that, of course I will help. They're holding him on S, too. Therefore, he has not bail. Weeks was against letting us visit the accused, but the city attorney went on down to the jail and he let me see him.
ED: He was against letting you see him?
RM: Yes. I took pictures which clearly showed that the suspect had been physically abused without a resisting-arrest charge to justify the need for force. On another occasion a client of mine claimed that he was being harassed by police officers. So I said, "Look, if they pick you up and arrest you, you give them this note: 'My name is John Jones; I invoke my Fifth Amendment rights and please direct all questions to my lawyer, Richard Mays, who can be reached at boom, boom, boom, boom.'" He was later arrested and called me. [laughing]. I went to visit him in the city jail and asked him what happened? He said,

"Well, I gave them that note. They slapped me upside the head, took my note and told me I better not say another thing, OK? And they just locked me up." I said, "Well, what did they charge you with?" He said, "I don't know what they charged me with." I then went to see Captain Terry of LRPD and asked him, "What are you charging him with?" He said, "We don't have to charge him with anything, we can just keep him." So I got on the phone and called Jim Guy Tucker, the prosecutor. I said, "Jim Guy, I have a client who is being detained without charge. I asserted that "the police must either charge him or release him." And Jim Guy said, "Well, let me talk to him." And he talked to Captain Terry (laughing) and I don't know what he said but afterward they released him, OK. I told my client that he better get on out of here right away.

ED: (Laughing)

RM: But I knew then Jim Guy was not going to be one of their favorites.

ED: Oh he was not—the police didn't like Jim Guy. They were kind of…

RM: Yes, he had created an enemy. I didn't really mean to get him into any trouble, particularly. But we were moving toward the trial in this case against the police and I thought that we had a great chance to succeed. To buttress my case, I secured a polygraph expert. That's what made this case so interesting. I first heard about him while watching the network news. He was the expert who had been involved in the Nixon case and had done polygraphs to attempt to validate potential evidence. He had what I considered to be national credibility, national stature. He was from Chicago. And I called him and persuaded him to polygraph a few of my witnesses. I advised him that this case was being supported by the Legal Defense Fund. So he said, "Well, you know, I've got a pretty big expert fee." And I said, "Look, we're down here in a tough community, we need your help, we need a person with your credibility because nobody's going to believe my witnesses who are alleging police brutality. I've got about ten or twelve young black men that I want you to polygraph before I put them on as witnesses." I had been told that of all the federal judges, Judge Eisele was one who found the polygraph credible. If you laid the proper foundation, he would be inclined to admit that type of evidence. Judges differed on that.

ED: Yeah.

RM: Some judges didn't think you could lay enough foundation.

ED: Yes.

RM: And he said, OK. He'll do it. I had a law firm employee by the name of Willie Scott, who helped me manage these cases. I might have put on sixty-five or seventy witnesses, maybe more. I can't remember. But in order to get these witnesses at the time I had to pick them up early in the morning, go get them before they got up. Willie would help me. Well, when the expert came I had Willie pick him up at the airport and transport him while he was in Little Rock. He gave my witnesses who were alleging police abuse a polygraph exam, and most of them passed. But when my expert came back to testify in court, David Henry, who was the trial attorney for the city attorney, tried to undermine him on cross examination by alleging that he had a drinking problem. He had apparently had a few alcoholic drinks during his previous visit to polygraph my witnesses in the presence of my employee, Willie Scott, and that information had been shared with the defense team. Willie—I didn't know it—was working for the Little Rock Police Department and also me, OK? (Laughing)

ED: (Laughing)

RM: So he had already told them [the police] about my expert's drinking habit. I should've known. David Henry had assumed responsibility in that case since the previous attorney ran for judge and won. After my expert testified, David Henry began to badger him with questions such as, "When did you have a drink? Did you have a drink for lunch?" "How many drinks do you have a day?" "Would the drinking taint your results?" And so Henry attempted to discredit my expert by alleging that he had a drinking problem. Weeks had been pro-polygraph up until then, but he came over and told me, "I used to be for this polygraph, but I can see with all your boys passing this test that this can't be valid."

ED: (Laughing)

RM: He said, "There's a flaw in polygraphing? I am never going to use polygraph anymore." But despite all of the challenges, we had a bunch of fun trying that case. I tried that case for at least six weeks, maybe longer.

ED: But Judge Eisele never ruled on it?

RM: Judge Eisele did not rule on that case until… He ruled on it maybe ten years later or more.

ED: Ten years later before he rules on it.

RM: Yes.

ED: And then he rules against you?

RM: Well, he couldn't have ruled against me on all of it because they had integrated the jail before he ruled on the suit precipitated that, so he couldn't rule against me on that. The S practice had been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in a case out of New York, so he had to give me that. I was asking for an injunction to restrain that, but they had stopped doing that by the time he ruled.

ED: By the time he ruled.

RM: Right.

ED: Yeah.

RM: And most of the alleged wrongful police conduct had ceased by the time he ruled. So he pointed that out. I didn't push him hard because you don't want to piss off a judge that you want to rule for you. But I probably should've done more to force him to rule on the case before the expiration of ten years. But at the same time, most of those practices, most of them had stopped. Most of the practices that I complained of in my suit were no longer occurring in the Little Rock Police Department. But he didn't give any of the individuals any damages. I don't think he gave me an attorney fee. If he gave me one, it wasn't very much.

ED: Yeah.

RM: He just decided he didn't want to deal with it, and by the time he dealt with it, effective relief had really already been granted.

ED: Yeah. So the suit was effective, just without a final judgment?

RM: Right.

ED: At least for some period of time. Did you do any work in Eastern Arkansas, like Forrest City or any of those places?

RM: Yes.

ED: I know Jack Lavey had some work over there.

RM: Yeah.

ED: Over in Texarkana, and in Forrest City.

RM: I did. I remember, in fact, I went over there. I'm trying to remember if that was the Sweet Willie Wine situation when I went over there. I do remember the guy, what was his name?

ED: Yeah, Sweet Willie Wine [a pseudonym—his name was Lance Watson] would've been about probably 1970.

RM: Well, when I went over it… What's his name? There had some disturbances. They had some guns and one of the guys—I don't remember his name—got into a conflict with John Walker. They had a National Black Congress up in Gary, Indiana. I'm trying to think of his name. His wife's daddy was mayor of the little city right out of Forrest City—the first city you get to as soon as get out of town, if you keep driving on your way to Memphis.

ED: On the other side?

RM: Right, on the other side going to Memphis.

ED: So Wynne is north of there. So it wouldn't be Wynne.

RM: I think it was Wynne.

ED: Maybe it was Wynne.

RM: It may have been, yes.

ED: Wynne's a little bit north of Forrest City.

RM: As soon as you go on the Interstate. But this guy…

ED: Wheatley is on this side?

RM: Yes, it is on the east. Yes, it's on the west side. But I went over there to defend him. They had some kind of controversy, I'll never forget. And I heard the sheriff's deputy talking to Gene… We were having a hearing there about one o'clock. I had gone over to defend these guys and the deputy was telling Gene Raff.

ED: Gene Raff was the prosecuting attorney.

RM: Was the prosecuting attorney.

ED: R-A-F-F, from Helena, was the prosecuting attorney for that district.

RM: And the judge said that a group of people were coming over here and they were going to manhandle some of these niggers, and he said "niggers." I was not in the group he was talking to. I was in a different area of the courthouse talking to some of my clients, but we could hear what was being said.

ED: Was the sheriff Coolidge Conley at that time?

RM: I don't remember. I don't remember who he was. I know I went over there when he said that and I repeated what he said. I said, "I understand from what the deputy said here that you've got some people who are going to come over here and whip some of these niggers, is that right?" And he said (laughing), "Yeah, that's right. I apologize for the language."

ED: But he said that's what they're going to do.

RM: That's what they're going to do. And I said, "Well, what should we do here? What are your thoughts?" He said, "Well, I think we need to pass this case; I don't think we need to try this case right now. Do you mind if we pass it?" I said, "No, I don't mind if we pass it."

ED: So these were some African Americans who were charged with…?

RM: Disturbance or various misdemeanors. They had had a big to-do. I don't remember.

ED: Were they protesters?

RM: Protesting.

ED: Yeah.

RM: And they had a big fallout. They had guns, too. I mean, these guys had guns. Everybody was kind of tense. There was a lot of tension down there. Old Gene passed it. He said, "You know, lawyer, if I were you I'd move on out, too, as soon as you can." We had a lawyer, I'll never forget, by the name of Al Daniels and his wife practiced with us. They were a white couple; both were lawyers. And they had gone over there, you know earlier, and had been physically abused. I remember when Linda—was it Linda Scholle? I'm trying to think. But they were a couple that associated with us in the summer.

ED: Right.

RM: They were doing some type of internship from somewhere. But they had been manhandled.

ED: Well, those were some nasty times in that community. About that time, the *Arkansas Gazette* was not, as you can remember, very popular...

RM: Right.

ED: …over there as well. So our reporter went over there. He went over there in the daytime, but he did not spend the night. We said you get back to Little Rock before dark.

RM: Right.

ED: Leave town and head back, straight back as fast as you can before sundown. We had a reporter named Wayne Jordan who went over there and got a motel room there, I think the Holiday Inn there in Forrest City. And this group came down that night to his hotel room, some rough guys.

RM: Yes.

ED: Fortunately, he was disabled; he had artificial legs from polio or something when he was small, when he was a child. And they came in there; they were going to take care of him.

RM: Yes.

ED: And so he got up and said, "Well, let me tell you something, you see these legs? He kind of pulled up some of these kind of metal things on his legs and he said I got these in Vietnam because I don't take any shit. I got these in Vietnam and you don't scare me at all."

RM: Right.

ED: Well, they were impressed that this guy had fought and got his legs blown off in Vietnam.

RM: Right.

ED: Which was just a lie that he made up.

RM: Right.

ED: But he said they showed him some respect after that.

RM: (Laughing)

ED: They left him alone, they turned around and left after that. So that's what Forrest City was like at that time.

RM: Yeah.

ED: Of course, he was a white guy.

RM: It was tough. Well, the two that were beaten were white.

ED: Yeah, OK, right.

RM: Yes.

ED: And then Texarkana: There was a racial feud about that time down in Texarkana. They had the Model Cities program down there and some of the white leaders were trying to shut it down because there was race mingling going on and protests.

RM: That was a big case.

ED: I know Jack Lavey got involved down there.

RM: Yes. He got down there. I got involved in Arkadelphia. There was also a big case in Arkadelphia.

ED: Yes.

RM: Well, I went down to defend these students. The high school students had gotten into a fight, a racial fight.

ED: There at Peake High? Peake High School was the black high school.

RM: In Arkadelphia, right.

ED: Yes.

RM: I think this was a part of the Arkadelphia school integration effort, but whatever had happened they prosecuted all the black kids and didn't prosecute the white kids. So John [Walker] talked to me and indicated that our firm had been contacted to represent about 26 black students. I went down to represent them. Well, I'm trying to remember. I was told by the court that those cases were set for ten o'clock. When I arrived about ten o'clock, the judge had called another case involving another black defendant unrelated to the school case and, as I entered the courtroom, he said, "you are late." So I said, "Well, Judge, I was told that my cases weren't going to begin until ten o'clock." He said: "Yeah, but we got this boy here and he is charged with shoplifting, and we have started his case." And I said, "Well, I don't know him. I don't represent him." And the prosecutor said, "Oh, no, Judge, he represents him because when he was here earlier in the month talking to the black high school defendants, I saw him talking to this defendant and heard him agree to represent him." So I said: " I don't even know what he is charged with. What is his name, Judge?" "Well, hell you ought to know that if you represent him." I have a bad habit of gesturing with my hands and pointing as I speak, and as the Judge and I were talking, he said, "Don't point your finger at me." I then approached the bench trying to explain my position, and he said, "Don't lean on my bench." And as I stepped back, gesturing with my hands still trying to explain that I did not represent this defendant, the Judge said, "you are in contempt of Court. Bailiff, take him to jail." I then asked what was my bond, and he responded, $100.00. And so I said, "Well, I will represent him. I shall pay my bond and be right back." And so the legal battle began. Anticipating racial hostility, I had brought a white court reporter with me because the Arkadelphia Municipal Court did not have a court reporter. When I explained that to the Court, he looked at her with deep suspicion.

ED: Yes.

RM: The judge found the young man guilty and then moved on to the trial of the black school defendants. In those cases, whenever I would interrogate a witness, I would ask, "Look, for the record, your honor, state your race for the record." And the judge said, "Oh no, we're not stating race. This has got nothing to do with race." And I said, "Well, I'm just making my record, your honor. And he said, "Don't ask for race another time in this court. If you do, I'm going to…"

ED: Do you remember the name of the judge?

RM: I am not sure.

ED: It wasn't Lookado, was it?

RM: No, Lookado was a circuit judge. This was the municipal judge, but I also ran across… Arnold was the prosecutor, I do remember that, who became…

ED: Dub Arnold.

RM: Dub Arnold.

ED: Yeah, yeah.

RM: Who subsequently when on the…

ED: Became the chief justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court. [William H. "Dub" Arnold]

RM: Became the chief justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court, right.

ED: And he was a prosecutor and later a circuit judge down there as well, I think.

RM: Right, he was and he was prosecuting at this time, OK.

ED: OK. He was the prosecutor?

RM: He was the prosecutor, right. He was the one that said, "I saw them over there talking to him." But I think it was Judge Steel who held me in contempt of court. I do remember that when I went down to the sheriff's office and pulled out a check, a deputy said, "Oh, no, we don't take checks, lawyer." Fortunately, I had a hundred dollars in cash. And when I went back up to the courtroom, it was crowded with state troopers and the parents of the black school students. This judge held me in contempt one more time. I made reference to a U.S. Supreme Court case which supported my legal position. I said "Look, there was a case that addresses this issue that was just handed down by the Supreme Court." And he said, "What was the case?" I said, "Well, I'm trying to think of it, but it was in the *Arkansas Gazette* about a day…" "I don't run my court by the *Arkansas Gazette*."

ED: (Laughing)

RM: (Laughing) I said, "Since you are a judge, I thought you might remember the case." He said, "You're in contempt of court!" I said, "Well, what's my fine?" He said, "Twenty-five dollars." Instead of going up, he went down. So I understood that his heart wasn't in it. He lectured me and said, "Look, we're all men of good will. Let's try to get along." I continued to make my record, asking, "Well, what race was he?... Well, who were you fighting?... "Well, who arrested you?" Because of the radio news coverage, John Walker and Phil Kaplan heard about the hearing and drove from Little Rock to Arkadelphia to assist in the hearings. They took over, and I rested. The judge found all of the defendants guilty, and we appealed to circuit court. I returned to Arkadelphia with Ted Goodloe, who was a white lawyer who practiced with us, for pleas and arraignment in circuit court. I am having trouble remembering the circuit judge's name.

ED: Wasn't Lookado, but was it…started with a G.

RM: Yes, Goodson. Goodson.

ED: Goodson? Was it John Goodson?

RM: John Goodson.

ED: And there was also a Gooch [James Gooch].

RM: No, this was John Goodson.

ED: OK.

RM: John Goodson. Goodloe and I appeared together on these cases. After I began to address Judge Goodson, he started talking to Goodloe and just ignored me.

ED: As if you weren't there.

RM: Yes, I was there. And so the judge asked Goodloe, "Well, can't we just waive the jury trial on these cases, Mr. Goodloe?" And Goodloe said, "I can't make that judgment without talking to Mays, Judge." The Judge said, "What do you mean? Aren't you the lawyer?" Ted said, "Yes, but I work for Mr. Mays, and I have to talk to him about it. You have to ask him if he'll do that." And Judge Goodson said, "I'm not going to ask him anything. If you can't handle this case alone then I'm going to bar your firm from even practicing down here."

ED: He was not going to let a black lawyer practice in his court.

RM: I am not sure what he was thinking, but he barred the whole firm.

ED: Barred the whole firm.

RM: He said, "Your firm is barred from practicing law in my court." We secured a good lawyer to appeal his disbarment ruling to the Arkansas Supreme Court, and we won. We prevailed and they reversed him. I do not recall our lawyer's name, he was a very well-known and highly respected white lawyer from Jonesboro, Arkansas.

ED: Bill Penix?

RM: Bill, no not him. His daughter married a Little Rock lawyer who has a criminal law and civil rights practice. He's much older now, but you only have about two or three white lawyers like that. I think his daughter was a professor at the law school. I have it on the tip of my tongue. He's Republican but he was a Rockefeller-type Republican.

ED: George?

RM: But at any rate, he argued the case for us before the Supreme Court.

ED: Now, it wasn't George. Was it Blytheville? Could it have been Blytheville?

RM: Blytheville.

ED: Blytheville.

RM: It could have been Blytheville.

ED: And that lawyer's name… He's dead now, I think. [It was Oscar Fendler.]

RM: Yes, he's dead now.

ED: I can't think of his name but I will think of it and we'll put it in the transcript of this.

RM: Yes.

ED: Anyway, I know who you're talking about.

RM: Yes.

ED: A colorful lawyer.

RM: Yes, a colorful lawyer, very good. So he took it to the Supreme Court and got it reversed.

ED: So you had quite a few civil rights cases.

RM: Yes.

ED: Largely, I guess you did some other kinds, but civil rights is the kind of stuff that you basically did and at that time.

RM: Right, that's true.

ED: Well, does that bring us up to when you decide to run for the legislature?

RM: Yes. That's about when I decided to run.

ED: In 19?

RM: '72.

ED: '72. Well, let me lay out just for the record a little background for that. After the election of 1970 they had a census, of course, and reapportioned the legislature after each ten-year census. And this time the Board of Apportionment, which consisted of Dale Bumpers, Ray Thornton… Dale Bumpers was the governor, Attorney General Ray Thornton and I

think Secretary of State Kelly Bryant. They created new districts broken down into single-member districts…

RM: Right.

ED: for the first time, except in Pulaski County and I think one other place where they had multi-member districts. But they created for the first time districts in which there would be a substantial African American population in a district.

RM: Right.

ED: Enabling them with some luck…

RM: Right.

ED: to elect an African American to the legislature.

RM: Right.

ED: So in Little Rock a district that encompassed eastern Little Rock and maybe a little… I don't remember if it went across the river into North Little Rock?

RM: No.

ED: It didn't go on the Arkansas side of the river, so there was a three-member district.

RM: Right.

ED: In which, let's see, you got elected?

RM: Right.

ED: And Dr. William Townsend got elected.

RM: Right.

ED: And Robert Johnston.

RM: Bob Johnston.

ED: The other white guy got elected.

RM: Right, right.

ED: And then I guess…

RM: Jerry Jewell.

ED: On the Senate side, Jerry Jewell was elected to the Senate.

RM: Right.

ED: From a district about the same size, not exactly the same, but about that same kind of district.

RM: Right.

ED: Now I guess there was one other one. Henry Wilkins…

RM: In Pine Bluff.

ED: down in Pine Bluff got elected.

RM: Right.

ED: Was that it?

RM: That was it.

ED: You had three African Americans in the House, one in the Senate.

RM: Right.

ED: And that was the first time that African Americans had served in the Arkansas legislature since soon after the end of Reconstruction.

RM: Right.

ED: I guess about 1892 or so. You really had seventy, about eighty years since an African American had served in the Arkansas legislature.

RM: Yes.

ED: So did you have an opponent in that election?

RM: Yes, I did.
ED: Do you remember who you ran against?
RM: Yes. In the Democratic primary I ran against – from the East End Civic League…
ED: Jeffrey Hawkins?
RM: Jeffrey Hawkins.
ED: So you beat Jeffrey Hawkins?
RM: I beat Jeffrey Hawkins.
ED: Well, that was kind of an achievement. Jeffrey was pretty…
RM: Yes, he's pretty sophisticated.
ED: He was pretty potent.
RM: Yes, he was.
ED: And kind of in with the city government and so forth.
RM: Yes.
ED: The power structure.
RM: Yes.
ED: And what about the general election? You had a Republican?
RM: Right, I had a Republican. I believe that was Roy James, an insurance agent. He wasn't as tough as Jeffrey Hawkins, I do remember that.
ED: Yeah, yeah.
RM: But yes, because that was not long after you still had strong Rockefeller Republicans in the black community.
ED: Yeah.
RM: Sam Sparks ran against…
ED: Sam Sparks ran against Jerry Jewell.
RM: Jerry Jewell, right.
ED: Yeah.
RM: All right.
ED: And I remember John Walker was supporting Sammy Sparks.
RM: Yes.
ED: For the Senate then.
RM: Jewell was the president of the NAACP.
ED: Yes, yes he was.
RM: Yes.
ED: Yes. Jerry served about three terms.
RM: Yes.
ED: He was Dr. Jerry Jewell, was he a…
RM: Dentist.
ED: He was a dentist. And then Dr. Townsend was an eye doctor.
RM: Optometrist.
ED: He was an optometrist.
RM: Yes.
ED: And I've forgotten how Robert Johnston got elected. I guess he probably had a runoff opponent. I think he must have beaten an African American in that race.
RM: Yes, he did. I remember when we were first elected I overheard a few white legislators talking about Robert Johnston the men's room.
ED: This is the men's room back at the Capitol?

RM: The men's room at the Capitol, at the legislature.
ED: In the House?
RM: Yes.
ED: Yeah.
RM: In the House. And they were talking about Johnston. He said that Johnston "acts just like a nigger." One of the other guys responded. "He represents a bunch of 'em." (Laughing)
ED: (Laughing)
RM: They could not see me.
ED: That's where I am now.
RM: I don't know if I ever told Johnston. But they didn't know I was there.
ED: Yeah. A lot of business occurred in the stalls in the restrooms, a lot of deals. Well, so Dale Bumpers was governor… You took office in '73.
RM: Yes.
ED: And that would've been Dale Bumpers' second and last term.
RM: Yes.
ED: Well how did they treat you in the House?
RM: I had good relationships in the House.
ED: Did you ever encounter any personal racism?
RM: Not really, no. Maybe only with old Boyce, Boyce Alford.
ED: Boyce Alford from Pine Bluff.
RM: Yes, from Pine Bluff. I had a little conflict with him. The white legislators made that adjustment very smoothly. Now what's his name? When I got up I'll never forget… Oh, what's his name? He came back to the legislature from Conway. He'd been there a long time. He wanted me to…
ED: Paul Van Dalsem?
RM: Paul Van Dalsem.
ED: From Perryville.
RM: From Perryville.
ED: Paul Van Dalsem from Perryville.
RM: I had talked to the speaker about bringing up a noncontroversial bill during morning hour. [Morning hour is a parliamentary period at the opening of each day's session when noncontroversial matters can be taken up and disposed of quickly. If five members object that it is controversial, it is pulled down and must be placed on the long calendar of business for the session.]
ED: And the speaker in 1973 would've been Buddy…?
RM: From Pine Bluff, Buddy Turner.
ED: Grover W. "Buddy" Turner Jr.
RM: Right.
ED: From Pine Bluff, yes.
RM: And I told him, I said I have this little bill I want to bring up and told him a little bit about it. He said, "OK, I'll recognize you and let you come and explain it." But, during morning hour if you had five hands you had to pull your bill down. So I was going to the floor to explain my bill, and all of a sudden I heard yelling, "Hell, no!" So Buddy was trying to explain to him. He said, "Paul, Mays has talked to me about this and we understand that it's a noncontroversial bill." And old Van Dalsem said, "Mays can't have a noncontroversial bill." (Laughing)

ED: (Laughing)
RM: Van Dalsem said, “Give me five hands.”
ED: And he got them.
RM: He got them. But after I got to know him, I got along pretty good with Van Dalsem.
ED: Do you remember what the bill was?
RM: It wasn’t a controversial bill, it might have been…
ED: It had nothing to do with race or anything?
RM: No. No. It didn’t have anything to do with race.
ED: Yeah.
RM: As a matter of fact, eventually I got it passed. I think it was requiring common carriers to provide uninsured motorist coverage. My argument was that common carriers should be required to protect their customers against uninsured risk. I thought it was a good consumer bill. And eventually it did pass.
ED: You passed that bill later in the session?
RM: I passed that bill, yes.
ED: But not in the morning hour?
RM: Not in the morning hour (laughing), not in the morning hour.
ED: Do you remember whether Van Dalsem voted for you and passed it?
RM: Well, I don’t remember if he did or not. But we had pretty good relations. Paul and other white legislators would frequently approach me and say, “Mays, we need your help on this bill. This is good for your people and you need to support it.” I would quickly preview the bill and say, “Look, I want to vote for it, but my people are going to put me out of here if I vote for that.” (Laughing)
ED: (Laughing)
RM: “I can’t get this by my people, but I like you and want to support this bill. My people, however, will kill me for voting for this.” And we’d go back and forth and not take it personally. They were good-spirited folk. I don’t recall experiencing a significant racial incident in the legislature during the four years that I served.
ED: I don’t remember too much about the ’73 session. I know Bumpers still had quite a bit of stuff he passed that session. He had a rural road program of some kind [a penny gasoline tax to repair and improve rural roads] and I don’t know whether that’s when they funded kindergartens, but a lot of folks…
RM: I think they did.
ED: You think that was the session that you funded kindergartens for the first time?
RM: I think so. You see, [David] Pryor was the next governor.
ED: Yeah, Pryor took office in ’75.
RM: And I introduced a bill with Cal Ledbetter that dealt with sex discrimination. I didn’t put race in it, and we passed that bill without much controversy.
ED: So it was a kind of a Civil Rights Act?
RM: Civil rights for women. ill.
ED: For women?
RM: It prevented employment and discrimination with respect to a woman.
ED: Yeah.
RM: When I would be presenting the bill, the white legislators would ask, “Mays, this got something to do with race?” And I said, “Oh, no, this has got nothing to do with race,

Representative. We didn't put anything about race in here." "OK, then, I might be able to support it." (Laughing)

ED: Well, they were frank about it anyway.

RM: Yes. They were. They were frank about it. (Laughing)

ED: (Laughing) I've forgotten. Didn't you introduce a bill, maybe with Jerry Jewell, to create kind of an Arkansas Civil Rights Commission?

RM: We did. That was one of the first bills by the black legislators. We introduced a Civil Rights Commission bill in the House but it did not pass. They might've passed it over in the Senate.

ED: Yeah.

RM: A group white and black legislators introduced the Equal Rights Commission or something like that.

ED: Yeah I remember.

RM: But we didn't get it.

ED: You didn't get it passed. Did Bumpers create one then administratively?

RM: He may have, yes.

ED: Rockefeller, I think, had done something like that.

RM: Yes.

ED: But they never could get one passed.

RM: The Equal Rights Commission… He may have, but I know our bill didn't.

ED: You couldn't get that passed?

RM: Right.

ED: In the seventies.

RM: Right. No, we didn't.

ED: It might be still something of a problem in 2013.

RM: Oh, yes. (laughing).

ED: Certainly.

RM: Probably have more trouble now than it did then.

ED: They might not under the new kind of Republican legislature. So did you have an opponent in '74?

RM: Yes. I had an opponent and she was a tough lady, too. What's her name? Cunningham, good-looking lady, too.

ED: Cunningham.

RM: And what was her name? Irma, a lady named Irma Cunningham.

ED: Irma Cunningham? I remember an Erma Hendrix, but it wasn't Erma Hendrix. Of course, Irma Hunter Brown ran later.

RM: Irma Brown, no. She was younger than they were, but she was very attractive. We had a nice rapport…. I said, "If you beat me then I'll take you out to dinner, and if I beat you then you take me out for dinner," and she said OK. She was an aggressive campaigner with her signs all over the city. I am listening to John Walker who was saying, "Look, Richard you don't have to campaign much. Don't spend a lot of time." But Deborah Mathis, a local TV news anchor and good friend, came to my office and showed me an interview that she had done with Ms. Cunningham which was clearly positive. She said that I was very difficult to reach but asked, "Do you mind if I just interview you in your office?" I said all right. And she interviewed me and then she told me, "I like you but you could lose this race if you don't get out and begin campaigning, OK? Because your

opponent is doing a much better job than you apparently understand." And Lottie Shackelford, who worked with labor, also approached me for my campaign materials, which she distributed. I left the law office and went out and began aggressively campaigning in the neighborhoods and ultimately won re-election.

ED In '76.

RM: Yes.

ED: And why did you choose not to run after that? You didn't see any future in the legislature?

RM: Well, it was just taking too much time. I had two Minute Man restaurants that I was operating and while practicing law. I didn't think I had a real future, politically, and I didn't want to be a legislator for the balance of my political life.

ED: So you couldn't look down the line and see that the people of Arkansas were going to elect you to major office?

RM: (Laughing) No. Right, I didn't see any office above the legislature and I didn't want to run for the Senate.

ED: Outside of your precinct.

RM: Yes, that was.

ED: That was your last hope.

RM: Yes, maybe I could run for state senator but I wasn't interested in that either. I always had an interests in the county prosecuting attorney's office or Congress, but I didn't see any real opportunity there in Arkansas.

ED: So you had started some Minute Man restaurants. That is the Minute Man franchise here.

RM: Right.

ED: The burger place that started out on Main Street.

RM: From Wes Hall, right.

ED: Wes Hall's Minute Man.

RM: Right.

ED: Great number five's; number five was my favorite.

RM: Right.

ED: Chili, cheese and onion.

RM: Those charcoal-broiled hamburgers. I owned one on Roosevelt Road in Little Rock and one in North Little Rock on Locust. I went into the business with a white friend, Mike Long, who was a manager at a Minute Man over in North Little Rock at the Locust location. I met him through his wife, who was a secretary in the Pulaski County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. We were both chess players. He had a chance to buy the North Little Rock location in the early '70s and approached me about helping with the financing. I did, and we became 50/50 partners. In fact, we got an article in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* for establishing one of the first integrated businesses in Arkansas. We were doing pretty good when I saw another opportunity to purchase land and develop a Minute Man on Roosevelt and Center Streets, not far from Broadway, so I did. So we ended up owning two Minute Men. I practiced law with John [Walker] until like 1977 or '78, when we went our separate ways.

ED: And before that had Kaplan and Lavey moved out, or was it later when they separated?

RM: We all broke up about the same time. Lavey moved out earlier, and the law firm became Walker, Kaplan and Mays.

ED: Yes.

RM: Later, we decided to move into the Pyramid Life Building on Second and Center Streets. At first Walker did not want to go downtown. He said his clientele didn't want to go downtown. I said, "Look, your clientele is already going downtown, Mr. Walker.
ED: Yeah.
RM: And Kaplan supported me, and John finally agreed.
ED: And so it's still Walker, Kaplan and Mays?
RM: Yes.
ED: Did somebody else join you?
RM: Not as a partner. Henry Jones and Woodson Walker were black male attorneys who joined us. We had a young lady by the name Linda Scholle.
ED: Linda Scholle, yes. S-C-H-O-L-L-E.
RM: Yes, she joined us.
ED: And she married… What was his name? He was founder of Arkansas Consumer Research. [It was Fred Cowan.]
RM: Right, right.
ED: And they moved to Kentucky.
RM: Yes, they moved to Kentucky.
ED: And he later became attorney general of Kentucky and very nearly became a U.S. senator from Kentucky.
RM: Yes. I didn't realize he had almost become a U.S. senator.
ED: Oh, he…
RM: He was a super gentleman.
ED: He was and right now I can't remember his name but we've talked from time to time over the years but he became attorney general of Kentucky and then I think he was a Democratic nominee for senator. [Actually, Cowan briefly ran for U.S. senator in 2004 but backed out and yielded to another Democratic candidate. He is currently a circuit judge in Kentucky.]
RM: Yes.
ED: And Linda became a corporate lawyer, did you know?
RM: Oh yes, I'm not surprised.
ED: Yeah, yeah.
RM: Linda was just a super lady.
ED: Yeah. She was smart.
RM: Yes. She was a super lady. Also a young lady named Vashti Varnado.
ED: Vashti Varnado.
RM: Right.
ED: V-A-S-H-T-I V-A-R-N-A-D-O. She was from Helena?
RM: She was from Helena.
ED: Yeah.
RM: And she worked with us in the 70's until she left our offices and went to the attorney general's office under Clinton.
ED: When he became attorney general?
RM: Right, when he became attorney general.
ED: I don't what happened to Vashti.
RM: I don't either.
ED: I haven't heard from her in a number of years.

RM: Yes.
ED: She was pretty sharp.
RM: Yes, she was.
ED: Yeah. So you practiced law over there then until ’77, ’78, somewhere along in there?
RM: Yes.
ED: And then what did you do?
RM: Then I went over to the Union Bank Building. I left the firm. Kaplan left and went to the Tower Building. Les Hollingsworth was practicing with Zimmery Crutcher. And so I’m not entirely sure what precipitated all of this breakup, but Walker went over to the First National Building and Les went with him, and Kaplan and Si Brewer…
ED: Silas Brewer.
RM: Went to the Tower Building, and I went to the Union Bank Building with Zimmery Crutcher and we practiced there.
ED: Now Zimmery is Z-I-M-M-E-R-Y.
RM: E-R-Y, uh-huh.
ED: C-R-U-T-H-C-H-E-R.
RM: Right.
ED: OK. So you all practiced over there, continuing the same kind of, I guess, kind of general practice?
RM: Same general practice, right, until Darrell Brown joined me and Zimmery at Union Bank Building , and I identified this building [415 Main Street] from the Union Bank Building. I saw this building and then I approached Phil Kaplan and Les about buying a building downtown. I thought this would make an excellent law office. When I saw it, it was empty but had most recently been an Army or Navy recruiting center.
ED: That’s right, the Navy or the Army.
RM: Navy, yes, Armed Services Center.
ED: Yeah.
RM: I ascertained the name of the owner and approached him about purchasing the building. I put a deal together that included Phil, Les and my firm.
ED: So you all moved here then?
RM: Then we moved over here.
ED: What, ’78, ’79?
RM: Oh no, let’s see, we practiced there until we moved over here I think in ’83.
ED: Oh so that was ’83?
RM: ’83 or ’84.
ED: So we’re skipping forward there so I guess the next after you and Kaplan and Walker all moved downtown then I guess it was 1980, not long after that, that you get appointed to the Supreme Court.
RM: We moved down town to the Pyramid Building in about 1972, and Zimmery and I moved into the Union Bank Building in about 1978.
ED: Does that take us up to there?
RM: I believe so.
ED: Anything else?
RM: I was appointed to the Supreme Court probably in December of ’79.
ED: All right, so what happened there was, for background, for the record, that, let’s see, Carleton Harris, who had been the chief justice for many years, decided to retire. I think

he was getting into poor health and he decided to retire. And almost simultaneously Conley Byrd…

RM: Right.

ED: …who had been an associate justice since 1967 had developed severe back problems and had to, I think, write his opinions standing up.

RM: Yes.

ED: And he decided to retire and take disability and retire simultaneously with Carleton Harris, so Bill Clinton then appointed John Stroud.

RM: yes.

ED: No, no. He appointed John Fogleman, who was already on the court…

RM: As chief.

ED: Elevated him to be chief justice for that year of 1980 and then appointed John Stroud to take Fogleman's place as associate justice.

RM: Yes, that's right.

ED: And appointed you to take Conley Byrd's place.

RM: Right.

ED: So I guess I've got all of that straightened out.

RM: Yes.

ED: So in late '79 or January 1st, somewhere along in there.

RM: Right.

ED: You became a justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court.

RM: Yes.

ED: Do you remember when Clinton approached you about that? How did he?

RM: Yes, he just called me on the phone and said, "Richard, how would you like to be on the Supreme Court?" And, you know, I said, "Which Supreme Court?" And he said, "the only one that I have the power to appoint you to." (Laughing)

ED: (Laughing)

RM: I said, "Well, if a lawyer can't take time to be a Supreme Court justice, he probably should've been a doctor, so absolutely. Thank you, governor."

ED: That was it.

RM: That was it.

ED: Now I guess you are not the first African American Arkansas justice. George Howard had already been appointed.

RM: George Howard was appointed by Pryor.

ED: David Pryor had appointed George Howard.

RM: Right.

ED: I guess two or three years earlier.

RM: Right.

ED: To finish out a term as well.

RM: Right.

ED: And so you were the second?

RM: I was the second.

ED: Yes.

RM: Right.

ED: So you joined that court, and again you were coming into an all-white and fairly conservative bunch of old guys.

RM: Yes.
ED: What did you encounter there. How did that compare with the legislature?
RM: The legislature? The other justices were excellent gentlemen. My experience on the court caused me to develop a much keener appreciation for people independently of their legal philosophy. For example, Justice John Stroud was a very conservative jurist, but I found him to be an unusually kind, decent, and charitable person. I always tended to view issues and people from the same prism, but after serving on the court began to realize that the two were completely separate. Kindness has absolutely nothing to do with being liberal or conservative. Diversity enhances the credibility and effectiveness of an appellate court. George Rose Smith was probably the most inspiring justice for me for many different reasons but [Darrell] Hickman and [John] Purtle… I just thought the world of Purtle…were very principled and persuasive judges.
ED: Yeah, he was probably the only one of there, on the court, that you would call a liberal.
RM: Yes.
ED: I don't know whether you would call the others all conservatives.
RM: You may.
ED: But he was the only one who was really a firebrand liberal.
RM: He was the only one on there that was. You're right.
ED: Right. And the others I guess…
RM: Hickman might go with him in some circumstances. [J. Frank] Holt is, as George Rose would say, "What is it today, Frank, Tweedledee or Tweedledum?" (Laughing)
ED: That's what he'd ask Frank?
RM: Yes, Frank. That's what he'd ask Frank. Frank didn't take hard positions much. He was always relatively passive.
ED: Frank Holt?
RM: Yes, Frank Holt.
ED: Yes.
RM: That's how George Rose would describe him… I think that was a way of saying, "Justice Holt would never be far from his core position. He is not going to be controversial."
ED: Yes. We probably should establish now who's on the court at that time. Of course, you had you and John F. Stroud from Texarkana.
RM: Yes.
ED: Who were appointed justices for a year. Fogleman, who'd been on there since 1967. Frank Holt who had been on and off the court since about 1962 or '64.
RM: And a very nice guy.
ED: Yeah.
RM: Very nice.
ED: A sweet, sweet gentleman. And John Purtle, who went on about 19… He might've been on there two years… [Purtle was elected to the court in 1978.]
RM: Before I got on, right.
ED: And then Darrell Hickman, who went on about 1978 or 1976 [Hickman was elected in 1976], somewhere along in there. And then the other one, I guess, George Rose Smith.
RM: Right.
ED: I guess that would be the seven justices.
RM: Right.

ED: And George Rose Smith, who'd been there since about 1948, was the, I guess, the guru of the court.
RM: Yes.
ED: The guy with the great background and everybody respected him. He had actually organized the court. I mean, it functioned according to a plan that had been developed in '49 or so by George Rose Smith and maybe Robert Leflar.
RM: Yes.
ED: So he ran the court in some ways.
RM: Yes, he did.
ED: Although he was not the administrator.
RM: He did. I mean, he was low key with it but yes. He was very persuasive, very direct.
ED: Would you say he's curt?
RM: I wouldn't. I think that's too strong a term for him.
ED: He was always gentlemanly about it.
RM: He was always a gentleman, right. I never saw him as arrogant at all. I didn't see it. If he was arrogant he was arrogant in a quiet sort of way, not really in his demeanor but in his lack of willingness sometimes to engage you. He made up his mind and said what he's going to say.
ED: He was not a big conversationalist?
RM: No.
ED: A backslapper.
RM: No, not ever.
ED: Did you go to lunch with him?
RM: We all went to lunch on Fridays together. I was building a home in Pleasant Valley at that time. I started building that home while I was on the court. Well, I actually bought a lot in Pleasant Valley through my brother's wife, who was Caucasian. I bought that lot probably in '77. Justice Smith went with me to the development site as the home was being framed. I tried to listen more than I talked during my term on the court. I mean, my position on the court was only to speak when I felt a need to make a point that was very important to me. Otherwise…
ED: Other than when it was your case.
RM: Other than your case, right.
ED: If your case comes up then you present it.
RM: If it was my case then you have to present.
ED: The arguments for your case.
RM: Yes. You were the check judge.
ED: Yeah.
RM: If you were the check judge you would also make comments. I listened certainly for the first three months as much as I could and learned, truly listening to those judges. I felt that I grew and matured in the law while serving on the court. Sometimes in the practice of law, experience in life is much more germane than what is learned in law school. But when serving as judge the intellectual challenge frequently reveals a side of you with which you may not have been familiar. It's a process which teaches you about yourself. Sometimes you end up being more conservative than you thought, and sometimes more liberal than you thought. But you are in situations where you have to reflect on your values, where those values came from, how long you've had them. Is this something new

for you? Can you be objective? It's a process that causes you to search your soul. It was a tremendous experience.

ED: Do you remember any… I'm trying to think back to 1980 whether there were any big, big cases. Of course, all the cases are big for the people, the complainants and defendants, who are involved in them.

RM: Yes.

ED: They're always big but whether there was any earth-shattering cases… I just don't remember any during that year.

RM: There was a case, I'm trying to remember, a federal case, a case where they overruled the… Was it the interest rate that the federal government controlled?

ED: Oh, the interest-rate amendment.

RM: Yes.

ED: The usury amendment, that's right.

RM: Usury, right.

ED: That did come down that year because in the election of 1980 or '82… Maybe the case was shortly before you came on the court, or maybe it was while you were on the court that they ruled that…

RM: The federal government controls our rate for us, the Constitution…

ED: For nationally chartered banks and so forth?

RM: What the issue was, this was one of the times when the court had at least a four-three decision nullifying the federal legislation.

ED: Yes.

RM: That had…

ED: Lifted the Arkansas interest rate.

RM: Right.

ED: The federal legislation effectively diluted the Arkansas usury law, which was set flatly at ten percent.

RM: Right, right. And I remember that the way that was done was one of the more cavalier… I'm trying to remember which judges…

ED: George Rose Smith would've been involved since he was a strict observer of that…

RM: Right.

ED: that ten percent usury provision. It applied to everything. Banks or lending companies couldn't get around the ten percent limit by calling something a fee.

RM: Right.

ED: They would try to say this is a fee, not interest.

RM: Right.

ED: Yeah.

RM: I remember they reached that decision by saying, "If you'll vote for it, I'll vote for it, OK? If you vote to nullify the rule then I'll vote for it." I think they got four votes. "But that's not how we reach decisions here…"

ED: But they did it in that case. [The case was *Superior Improvement Co. v. Mastic Corporation*, 604 S.W. 2d 950 (1980).]

RM: They did. And that was the only instance that I can recall where I really thought that they were less than judicious in their deliberations.

ED: They were a little bit political in that decision.

RM: They were political, totally political, in my opinion. That was the exception. But, all in all, I thought that the court acted responsibly. Each justice had a contribution to make to the court and each made it. My service caused me to realize that the makeup of a court is extremely important, and its performance can suffer if different points of view are not adequately aired. I am proud to have served with the judges with whom I served. I tried to take myself out of that but as an observer of the court. Purtle had the balls to raise issues in conference that most judges wouldn't raise. He was not the type of judge who could be intimidated. He was a standup guy.

ED: He was the most controversial member of the court for the period he was on there…

RM: Yes.

ED: I think it's safe to say, because he didn't hide his political views.

RM: He would sometimes introduce allegations in discussing cases which I considered improper. I mean, he knew all the facts and history, and he would appear to take into consideration facts that were not part of the record.

ED: In the record.

RM: Right.

ED: Yes, yes.

RM: And I think even if you feel that way you only open yourself up to criticism.

ED: Well how did he and George Rose Smith get along. There was some friction there. I don't know how much was personal. In some of the other interviews we talked about how Purtle would come in with his chains around his necks and his shirt unbuttoned and, of course, George Rose always was impeccable.

RM: Right.

ED: And he was conservative and it really would just fly all over George Rose Smith, that Purtle…

RM: I had a sense that George Rose Smith had some resentment of Purtle's style, but I never heard George Rose Smith say anything negative or otherwise about Purtle. I think that George Rose felt that talking to others about Purtle would be giving Purtle too much dignity. But Purtle would occasionally talk about George Rose.

ED: Yeah.

RM: "You know what that pompous ass thinks," Purtle would say.

ED: Yeah (laughing).

RM: So Purtle would privately make short personal comments. But if George Rose said anything about you he would probably say it to you.

ED: To your face.

RM: Yes.

ED: Well, you told me an incident before, when I just got here the other day, that I want you to repeat. It was in the conference with Frank Holt.

RM: Yes, I believe Frank Holt, right.

ED: Tell me about that.

RM: We held conference after the oral arguments, at that time on Monday. After oral arguments at nine o'clock, we'd go into conference for the rest of the day and then we'd hold conference on Fridays where we would discuss and vote on opinions that were to be issued.

ED: Opinions?

RM: Opinions. Maybe George Rose was the check judge on this case that was Frank Holt's case, right?.

ED: Frank Holt, yes.

RM: Frank was writing and George took issue with the case. He said, "Look, that's not good law. That logic is not going to work. You can't justify that." And Frank Holt said, "Well look, if you read *Johnson v. Jones* (or whatever the case was)… That case was a decision I wrote two years ago. I think it's directly on point. I think it's controlling in this case." And George Rose said, "Is that the case that you've holding in your hands now?

ED: So Holt had a law book in front of him?

RM: He had a law book, yes. And he said "Yes." George Rose said, "Let me see it." Frank handed him the book. George Rose said, "You know what I think about this case? You know how much value I think this case has?" And he just stood, walked over to the trash can and threw the law book in it. He said, "That's where that case deserves to be. That's how much value that case has."

ED: (Laughing)

RM: (Laughing) And everybody reacted in dismay, and Fogleman kind of took charge. "George, George, let's not, let's not go there, come on." This was on a Friday, and we would always go to lunch together on Friday. We went to a pizza place. George and Fogleman had a favorite place they'd go most Fridays. I'm not sure Purtle would go that much, but George, Fogleman, Hickman and Holt would go. Four or five of us would go.

ED: Was this down at Shakey's Pizza?

RM: Yes, I think it was Shakey's.

ED: Down on Rebsamen Park Road.

RM: Yes.

ED: I remember that.

RM: Yes, yes, yes.

ED: I remember that, yeah. I used to see them down there occasionally.

RM: And I believe that that was George Rose's favorite place. That's something they'd been doing a long time. And we ended the conference and went to lunch. I think Frank went that time. I mean sometimes he would go and sometimes he wouldn't. But George Rose Smith was very angry, and he didn't consider that precedent valuable. (Laughing)

ED: (Laughing) It wasn't a real precedent if he disagreed with it.

RM: He didn't like it. He just threw that law book at the wastepaper basket and said that's where that needs to be, right there, OK? (Laughing)
[Justice Darrell Hickman maintains that it was he, not Holt, who was the butt of Justice Smith's fury that day and that it was his law book that Smith threw in the wastebasket.]

ED: Did you dissent very often?

RM: Not very often. I might dissent in conference but I didn't as a rule find it necessary to promulgate a dissent. I did on a few cases. I learned that from George Rose Smith. He said you express yourself in conference. It's your position but, unless it's really a significant matter, you try not to….

ED: Yeah, he didn't dissent a lot.

RM: Right.

ED: I mean, he didn't write a lot of dissents.

RM: Yes.

ED: He joined in some dissents.

RM: So no, I might disagree in conference but, once I lost the vote, as a rule I didn't see a need to try to preserve anything for posterity unless there was something I really saw that needed to be said.

ED: Yes. Of course, George Rose Smith was the great opinion writer. He wrote these very crisp, short opinions that got to the point and summarized the case quickly. There weren't a lot of citations. He got straight to the meat of it.

RM: Yes.

ED: And you could read it and see the central point and then he'd dispense with it. As a reporter always covering the court I always loved George Rose Smith's opinions because he wrote your story for you.

RM: Right.

ED: And with Fogleman or somebody else you might have to plow through the opinion for thirty minutes.

RM: Right.

ED: Trying to figure out what the point was and what the lead on your story was.

RM: Right.

ED: I think at the end of the year he would always add up or had his law clerks add up all the opinions and the length of opinions all year long.

RM: Right.

ED: And he'd grade everybody.

RM: Right.

ED: So did he do that the year you were there?

RM: Yes. That's the year I won. He gave me the award for being brief and concise, with the fewest average pages in your opinions.

ED: That's other than him?

RM: Other than him, right.

ED: Yeah, yeah. So he always finished first?

RM: The person next to him, right.

ED: Yeah,

RM: And I didn't necessarily try to do that. I wasn't aware that I did. I really bought into his philosophy, though, of trying to be concise. In most instances you talk yourself into trouble. My experience on that court taught me to listen more and try to say it in as few words as I could. I wasn't thinking about it in the context of how many pages necessarily, but his philosophy really made good sense to me. I find in life that you can talk yourself out of a problem and then right back into one if you keep talking. He had a quiet, powerful leadership. He could communicate in so many different ways other than verbally to let you understand his point of view. He had a keen sense of subtle humor. He frequently exercised by walking the Rebsamen golf course. I played golf at Rebsamen on weekends and would frequently see him walking the course. I looked forward to spending time with him and his wife after leaving the court.

ED: Peg?

RM: Yes, Peg. She was a super lady. They both were such a quality act.

ED: And Hickman. Darrell Hickman, who was kind of a character on the court, I guess.

RM: Yes, Darrell was…

ED: When I interviewed him he spoke very highly of you, how great you were.

RM: I enjoyed him. Darrell was a refreshing person; you knew he really wasn't going to BS you. He wasn't as liberal as Purtle, but he was very objective. He'd listen to your argument, even if he wasn't totally tuned into it, and let you finish it before he interrupted you. He was a good communicator and proud of his history. He wasn't trying to be anybody but who he was. He knew who he was.

ED: Yeah.

RM: That's what I really liked about him.

ED: I think he had a good deal of suspicion of power—powerful law firms, powerful banking interests, investment interests. He was suspicious of all of that. I think that was often reflected in his opinions. So, in that respect, I think he and Purtle probably had something in common.

RM: Right. Purtle knew he could probably bring Hickman with him. He could get me. He might be able to get…

ED: Never Fogleman.

RM: No, he wouldn't get Fogleman. He could get Frank.

ED: Or George Rose?

RM: He could get Holt, maybe. You never knew which way Holt might go. He could go either way.

ED: Either way, or no way.

RM: Right.

ED: He might just recuse. He recused more than any justice, I think.

RM: As George Rose Smith said. "Tweedledee, Tweedledum, which way?" In fact, sometimes when we would go around the conference room and it was his time George Rose would say, "Which way are you going to go on this one, Frank, Tweedledee or Tweedledum?" (Laughing)

ED: (Laughing) Well, that's true. But Frank Holt was such a sweet guy. All right, well anything else? Any other observations about that year on the court? Did you think, "Well, I might want to do this; I might want a career as an appellate judge?"

RM: No, I didn't. I think that it can be an isolated existence. I can see how you can lose yourself there. You're not talking to many people, you've got your law clerks, you've got the other judges, but you really don't see many lawyers except in oral arguments. It's easy to lose your common touch when you're a judge at the appellate level. You've got to make a special effort to stay in touch with people. I saw an interesting movie on television last week on the Muhammad Ali—the [U.S.] Supreme Court deliberation on his case, when he refused to be inducted. I didn't realize it but the initial vote on that case was five to three to affirm. Thurgood Marshall recused so he didn't even participate in that case; only eight judges participated. And Judge Harlan [Justice John Marshall Harlan II] got the chore of writing the opinion, and his clerk disagreed with that decision. When the clerk was assisting in writing the decision, he wrote it the other way, because he thought another case involving the Jehovah Witnesses repudiated the principles that the five relied on to sustain the conviction. Justice Harlan disagreed, but the law clerk kept pushing Harlan. Harlan finally said, "Look, I told you what my decision is. I want you to write it like I want it written. And the law clerk apparently decided that he couldn't write it that way and was going to resign. Did you see that movie?

ED: No, I didn't.

RM: As he was resigning Harlan told him "I've changed my vote on that case. And I want you to write this to reverse it." So that made the decision four to four.

ED: Four to four.

RM: And Harlan advised [Chief Justice Warren] Burger, who was very disappointed in Harlan and responded by telling Harlan that his change of heart wasn't going to change the decision. Before that issue came up, however, Burger had gone to Harlan on another case that the court had considered and in which Harlan was the lone dissenter and told him, "I need all nine of you. This needs to be a unanimous decision so it's just very important to me." After listening to Burger, Harlan didn't dissent, and made it a unanimous decision. Harlan convinced the other judges to join him on Ali's case so that it was seven to one to reverse. And, of course, Harlan went to Burger and said, "This is the type of decision that ought to be unanimous," and Burger went with him. And the Ali case went from a five-three to affirm to an eight-zero to reverse.

ED: To reverse. [In *Cassius Clay v. United States*, 403 U.S. 698 (1971), the court in an 8-0 ruling reversed the conviction of Clay (later Muhammad Ali) for refusing to report for the draft because the government had failed to specify why Clay's application for conscientious-objector status had been denied.]

RM: And that tells you a lot about how courts work. I didn't know that history, but I remember a case I had as a lawyer that–I don't even know who the principals were—was similar. I won a case in the Chancery Court and the other side didn't appeal. A case with similar issues came up when I was on the court. When I read the briefs, it was an open-and-shut case for me because I had already been on that side of the law and I had won. It was an open-and-shut case for me right away until we got into conference. I was just settling in and by the time the discussion got to me the count was five to one to reverse.

ED: Going the opposite way?

RM: Going the opposite. So it really didn't make any difference which way I decided, the case was going to be reversed. We decided the case seven-zero to reverse, totally different from what I had initially felt. My history as an advocate for a different legal position induced me to be less objective.

ED: So you changed your vote, too?

RM: I changed my vote, too.

ED: The other way.

RM: I changed my vote, too. And I changed it for good reasons. What that process made me do was step away from the case and begin looking at it from a distance. I was too close to that case in the first place. It probably would've been even better for me to recuse because I was already vested in my position. It also let me know that if that other lawyer had appealed I might not have prevailed.

ED: Yes.

RM: That was one of the lessons that I learned from practicing with John Walker. His greatest strength is his tenacity. You don't beat him in trial and think that you have won. To me, the principle that he represents is that the law is a process. You look for ways to prevail at every stage of the legal system.

ED: Yes. Well, we've got you about halfway through your life. Let's push forward a little more rapidly after the Supreme Court. Your term on the court ends at the end of December 1980, and then you go back to…?

RM: Practice, right.

ED: Practicing law.
RM: That's when Clinton lost, too, by the way.
ED: What?
RM: He lost that election.
ED: Yeah, Clinton lost in 1980.
RM: Right.
ED: And then got back into office in '82.
RM: Right.
ED: And so you continue to practice law here through the 'eighties, I guess.
RM: Yes.
ED: And essentially the same way, with Kaplan and…
RM: Well, we came down to this building in roughly about '83, '84.
ED: Yeah.
RM: We all had different offices in this building, and we stayed here through the eighties. I went off and campaigned for Clinton in '91 after he announced his candidacy for president in the later part of '91. And in '92 I joined Clinton's National Finance Committee and raised money for his campaign. I spent that year traveling and fundraising in LA [Los Angeles], Atlanta, Kansas City, D.C., New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis. I went to…
ED: So you did that pretty much full time in '92?
RM: Pretty much full time, yes.
ED: We want to talk a little bit about that, but let's go back to the eighties. That wasn't the end of your public service. After the Supreme Court, he [Clinton] appointed you to the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission, rather the Arkansas Economic Development Commission.
RM: Right.
ED: And one other position too, right?
RM: I was on the Ethics Committee.
ED: Oh that's right; they created a State Ethics Commission as a result of an initiated act of something?
RM: Yes.
ED: In about 1988 or so?
RM: Right. And Clinton appointed me to that commission.
ED: Violations of the lobbying prohibitions, various ethical violations by legislators and others?
RM: Yes.
ED: And then you also served on the Economic Development Commission?
RM: Yes.
ED: When did he appoint you to that? I have that some place.
RM: He appointed me – no, I think…
ED: '85 or so?
RM: I think Tucker appointed me to that.
ED: Oh maybe it was, maybe it was Tucker who appointed you to that commission, all right.
RM: The state received substantial funds from the Walton estate. The commission could fund various public projects upon application. One of the projects was submitted by Mrs. [Janet] Huckabee to modernize the Governor's Mansion. When Tucker resigned,

Huckabee became governor. I believe that the commission consisted of seven members, six Democrats and one Republican. And Mrs. Huckabee presented the Governor's Mansion project.

ED: The big expansion of the Governor's Mansion using AIDC...

RM: State funds.

ED: Yeah.

RM: Three million dollars. She wanted three million dollars. And that's how I got to know him.

ED: Mike Huckabee?

RM: Mike Huckabee. I thought it was a pretty good idea. I do not recall the name of our commission chairman, but I believe that he was head of the Department of Finance and Administration under Tucker. When she appeared before the Commission to request the funding, he was diplomatic. He said, "Look, it sounds like a pretty good project and I wish we could be more helpful, but we do not have the funds to support that project." I disagreed with him and moved to give her money. The one Republican on the commission seconded it. "All in favor," Nobody really said much either way. We might've had a few words, but nobody voted no.

ED: So it passed by two to nothing?

RM: Yes, it passed. And she called later and thanked me. That started my relationship with Huckabee.

ED: So let's go back to 1992 and Clinton is running for president. You take off and you travel the country. You raised a lot of money for him, as I recall.

RM: I raised a lot of money for him.

ED: Do you remember about how much you raised? I mean, it was a…

RM: I would say over a million dollars.

ED: Yeah, a pretty good sum of money.

RM: Yes.

ED: For an old Arkansas boy…

RM: Yes, a good sum.

ED: …from the Shorter College neighborhood to raise that kind of money.

RM: Yes, I met a lot of people.

ED: Yeah.

RM: I was on both of his inaugural committees. That's when I met the mayor from Chicago, Rahm Emmanuel.

ED: Rahm Emmanuel, yes.

RM: He was one of the first people to come Little Rock to work with the Clinton campaign.

ED: Yes.

RM: And David Wilhelm.

ED: Yes. Rahm stayed down the street from me. He had a little room down on Ridgeway and I lived about a block away.

RM: Oh really?

ED: He stayed in Brenda Tirey's house for a while, while they were running that campaign. He never paid all of her rent, or reimbursed for telephone calls. He was always making long-distance telephone calls.

RM: Right.

ED: Anyway, that doesn't matter. So he gets elected and you go to Washington, too, with him.

RM: Yes, I go along.
ED: You set up an office. Did you maintain an office here and up there?
RM: Maintained office here and worked with Cassidy & Associates, which was a lobbying firm.
ED: Cassidy, C-A-S-S-I-D-Y?
RM: Yes, yes.
ED: Cassidy & Associates. So they're in D.C.?
RM: Yes.
ED: And so what did you do?
RM: I was an executive vice president. I assisted Cassidy in marketing the company's services.
ED: Yes. So you kind stayed up there for the duration.
RM: Yes, I did.
ED: But you made some other contacts around the world, I think.
RM: I did. I traveled the world, went to Ghana, and started working with a company called CMS Energy about expanding a power plant in Ghana. CMS was a Michigan company.
ED: Yeah.
RM: I worked with CMS Energy to enter into a contract with Ghana to expand a power plant in Takoradi, Ghana, from a 330-megawatt plant to a 660-megawatt plant.
ED: Now what's that town you mentioned in Ghana?
RM: Takoradi.
ED: Can you spell it?
RM: I think it's T-A-K-O-R-A-D-I. I think that's how you spell it.
ED: Close enough, we'll have to find it. When I get the transcript I'll look it up.
RM: I spent most of my time in the capital, Accra.
ED: Yes.
RM: It was a very interesting experience for me. I went all over. I went to Ghana, I went to South Africa, I went to Nigeria, I went to Côte d'Ivoire, I went to several other countries. I would travel to Africa, Europe. I'd always try to stop and spend time in one of the European countries traveling to and from Africa.
ED: Do you still have some interests in Africa?
RM: I had a carried interest in this plant.
ED: What does that mean?
RM: You earn your interest through your services rather than investing capital. We sold the facility to Dubai in 2004 or 2005.
ED: Sold it to Dubai?
RM: Dubai, yes. Although I began my work in Ghana in 1993, I did not receive much compensation until about February 6, 1999.
ED: About six years before you got any payoff at all.
RM: Yes.
ED: Yeah. So you pretty much came back after Clinton left office, shut things down up there.
RM: Right.
ED: And you've been pretty much here ever since.
RM: Yes.
ED: Continuing to practice law with Arkie Byrd, who is a lawyer, and your son.
RM: Yes.

ED: Richard L. Mays, Jr.
RM: Yes.
ED: And now your daughter…
RM: Right.
ED: Who is?
RM: Tiffany.
ED: Tiffany, who's a member of this law firm.
RM: Yes.
ED: Who else, is that it?
RM: That's the four of us.
ED: The four of you in this law firm here. What have I not covered? I mean, we skipped over the last twenty years in just a few minutes.
RM: (Laughing)
ED: We spent all that time on the early years and…
RM: There wasn't that activity going on over the last year.
ED: OK. So Mike Huckabee put you on the Economic Development Commission, right?
RM: Yes, he put me on Arkansas…
ED: And then he put you on the Arkansas Banking Board.
RM: Banking Board, yes.
ED: And are you still on the Claims?
RM: I'm on the Claims Commission.
ED: Beebe put you on the Claims Commission?
RM: Huckabee appointed me first and then Beebe reappointed me.
ED: OK. So you're on the state Claims Commission.
RM: Yes.
ED: And are you the chairman? Co-chairman now?
RM: Yes.
ED: On the Claims Commission?
RM: Yes.
ED: The other thing we talked about when I first got here is Soul of the South television. Tell me about that project?
RM: Soul of the South is a network that's dedicated to the brand of the South, which focuses on African Americans but also Southern history, foods, culture, and politics. It has a business model similar to that of CBS or NBC network with local affiliate stations.
ED: Yes.
RM: We are in approximately twenty-one markets including Little Rock, New York, Chicago, and Dallas.
ED: You're already on those?
RM: Already on them.
ED: When did it start?
RM: We really–let's say May.
ED: In May, 2013.
ED: Was this an idea you came up with?
RM: No. I helped others to fund and market the business.
ED: Do you have a title with it or anything?
RM: I am currently serving as chairman of the board of directors.

ED: All right. So that's something we can look forward to here in the next few years.
RM: I would hope so; I think that the timing is good.
ED: Yes, yes. OK, you know there is one thing that we haven't covered. We talked about your kids here and I should've covered it way back at the beginning—your marriage back there. Let's cover that. I think we did cover your marriage back there.
RM: I got married early in law school, but I lost my first wife.
ED: She died of cancer?
RM: Cancer, yes.
ED: When did she?
RM: About 2000.
ED: OK.
RM: I just got married again in 2012.
ED: And what is her name?
RM: Supha, S-U-P-H-A.
ED: S-U-P-A?
RM: P-H-A.
ED: S-U-P-H-A.
RM: Yes.
ED: OK, and what was her last name?
RM: Mays now, you mean before?
ED: Mays now, yeah OK. Before—her maiden name?
RM: Xayprasith. She's Thai.
ED: OK. All right, where did you meet her?
RM: In Little Rock.
ED: How did you meet her?
RM: She worked in Bentonville and had long career with Walmart. I met her at an event in Little Rock.
ED: OK.
RM: And we continued to develop a relationship.
ED: OK. Well before I end, and it's getting awfully late... I've kept you here and the dark has set in outside quite a while ago.
RM: Didn't take long for that to occur.
ED: I don't know if we can do it with the length of this cable here. You've got this gallery of photos all around your room and some of them are pretty notable. Let's see if I can get this.
RM: Listen, let me go to the men's room first.
ED: OK, you go to the men's room.
RM: OK.
ED: And I'll shut this down for a second.
(Pause)
ED: This is going again. OK, Judge, we've got this gallery of pictures all around the wall, I want to just get you to briefly mention who these people are in these pictures and what's going on—not all of them but some of them. Here's one at the top that's got you and David Pryor and Bill Clinton on a golf course?
RM: Right.
ED: Is that here or where?

RM: I think that's in the D.C. area.
ED: OK.
RM: That's in D.C.
ED: All right. And the picture below that are?
RM: That's President [Jerry] Rawlings of Ghana.
ED: OK.
RM: And he's visiting the White House. This is in the White House. The person who is to his left…
ED: In the middle?
RM: Yes, in the middle, is the deputy protocol chief and that's me.
ED: OK.
RM: I'm greeting him. And those people behind the deputy protocol chief are some of the members of President Rawlings' delegation. He's waiting meet with President Clinton.
ED: OK. And down at the bottom another golf picture of some kind.
RM: That's in Chenal; we're playing here in Little Rock. That's Jim Guy Tucker, the governor and that's…
ED: Governor…
RM: That's President Clinton and Governor Tucker and, I'm trying to see, and the three of us …
ED: We don't need to mention them all, I guess. And here is a picture of… ?
RM: My wife, Jim Guy and Betty.
ED: Betty Tucker.
RM: Betty Tucker, right.
ED: That's in 1993, when he was governor.
RM: Right.
ED: He had recently become governor.
RM: Yes.
ED: And above that is a picture around a dinner table of you and, I guess, Jim Guy Tucker?
RM: I was on his inaugural committee.
ED: In 1994?
RM: Yes, I think so. He became governor [after Clinton resigned to become president] and then he ran one other time.
ED: All right, yes.
RM: But that was at his inaugural.
ED: OK. And looking over here there you are with President Barack Obama.
RM: Right. That was before he actually won but after he had obtained the…
ED: Democratic nomination.
RM: Democratic nomination.
ED: In 2008.
RM: In 2008, right.
ED: And then above there there's a picture of you and Governor Beebe.
RM: Right, and Martin Luther King III.
ED: Martin Luther King III.
RM: And Senator Bill Walker.
ED: And state Senator Bill Walker of Little Rock. The top here is some joggers on a wet street. Who is that?

RM: I was jogging with President Clinton in D.C. We jogged about two miles.
ED: Looks like it's raining outside.
RM: It was raining outside.
ED: Streets are wet.
RM: And we were jogging early that morning. That's early morning in D.C.
ED: OK, that's why it's so dark, yeah. All right, and then over here there's two pictures, a posed picture of you and the other six justices of the Arkansas Supreme Court in 1980.
RM: Right.
ED: And then below that a picture of the full court on the bench in the Supreme Court chamber.
RM: Yes.
ED: Here you are with…
RM: That's my wife and Governor Beebe.
ED: Your wife, Governor Beebe and you.
RM: Right. And the gentleman there is Sylvester Smith and that's Michael Steele, who was the lieutenant governor of Maryland at that time.
ED: OK.
RM: But subsequently became the head of the Republican Party.
ED: Yeah, he was the national chairman of the Republican Party.
RM: National, right.
ED: And over here are you and Bill Clinton.
RM: And Ron Brown.
ED: And Ron Brown.
RM: Right.
ED: Who was the secretary of Commerce under Bill Clinton and who later died in a plane crash in Europe—some place over there?
RM: Yes, yes.
ED: Below that is a picture of you and President Kennedy–excuse me, President Clinton.
RM: Right and my wife.
ED: Your wife.
RM: And that was one which was overnight stay at the had to spend the night in the White House.
ED: And who is the other gentleman?
RM: I don't remember who the other gentleman is but President Clinton is showing us around the White House and providing history on some of the paintings on the wall.
ED: OK.
RM: Sharing that with us.
ED: And over here is a picture that looks like it's on a park bench. That's President Clinton and it looks like… Are cherry blossoms behind?
RM: That's a picture of President Clinton and President Rawlings in Africa.
ED: Oh, that's in Africa.
RM: That's in Accra, Ghana.
ED: Accra, Ghana.
RM: Right.
ED: A-C-C-R-A, Ghana.

RM: And that's in the back… That's the back area where Rawlings–President Rawlings—stays, kind of like the White House for him.

ED: Yes, OK. All right, and there are lots more pictures here of family but I just wanted to get the international flavor of your relationships.

RM: That's a picture of Secretary Clinton.

ED: That's you and she when she was secretary of state?

RM: Yes. And then we have a picture of me with Mrs. Barack Obama.

ED: Michelle Obama.

RM: And the vice president's wife.

ED: Oh yeah, Jill Biden.

RM: Jill Biden.

ED: That's Jill Biden. So it's a picture of you and Michelle Obama and Jill Biden.

RM: Right.

ED: Yes, I'm glad we picked that one up. Anyway, I think that we've gotten a flavor of your international life, at least for the last ten or fifteen years. So Judge, is there anything else that we need to cover?

RM: No, I think I've probably exhausted you with all of these stories.

ED: No, they've been great stories. Some parts of Arkansas history that I think…

RM: Well, I'll say I have had no greater honor in my life then serving on the Arkansas Supreme Court.

ED: Yes.

RM: And getting the chance to meet the other justices and know them personally. And, as I said, recognizing from that experience that conservatives are good people (laughing) too.

ED: All right, good. Well, Judge, thanks. And again, when we take a look at the transcript there may be other things to put in.

RM: OK.

ED: That is, if our memories are jogged between now and then. All right, so we'll shut it off here.

RM: OK.