Interview with Taylor Pensoneau

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Interviewer: Mark DePue

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DePue: Today is Wednesday, March 11, 2009. My name is Mark DePue. I'm a volunteer with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library working on a major project on Governor Jim Edgar. Today it's my pleasure to be talking to Taylor Pensoneau. I should say as we begin this series with Taylor, first of all, good morning.

Pensoneau: Good morning, Mark.

DePue: We're going to be talking today about [former Governor] Otto Kerner. I should mention Taylor has had lots of experience as a journalist; then as a lobbyist; and now as an author, a published author, of several books, always on interesting political figures and historical figures in Illinois. We're going to talk about Otto Kerner today, and then the next time we sit down, it's going to be Ogilvie's administration, and then a session on Walker's administration, and big Jim Thompson, and finally we'll get to Jim Edgar's administration. So I am looking forward to doing this series of interviews and learning all of this background information (laughter) about Illinois politics. It's colorful. Would you say "colorful" is a good term to use?

Pensoneau: Well, I'm glad to be talking to you, Mark. I think it's important to record the observations of individuals like myself who have been around for a good number of years and have been privy to public events here in the state.

DePue: Yes, a firsthand observer, so to speak.

Pensoneau: (laughs) I think that's fair to say.

DePue: Okay, let's start with your life, though, and put this into some kind of a frame of reference. When and where were you born?

Pensoneau: Mark, I was born October 20, 1940, in St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Belleville, Illinois. Belleville, of course, is the seat of St. Clair County.

DePue: And for those who know a little bit about Illinois history, St. Clair County is where?

Pensoneau: St. Clair County is actually, in many regards, part of the greater St. Louis area. St. Clair and Madison counties, our neighboring counties, are generally considered part of the so-called Metro East, meaning the east side of the Mississippi River, that part that still comprises part of the greater St. Louis area. Geographically, it'd be in southwestern Illinois, its western boundary. Part of it is the Mississippi River. Across the Mississippi River, you have St. Louis, Missouri.

DePue: Does that mean you're a Cardinals fan?

Pensoneau: Oh, yes, absolutely. (DePue laughs) Well, as I always say in talks and so on, down there, one grows up with the St. Louis Cardinals. The St. Louis Cardinals are virtually a religion in the greater St. Louis area. The bond is that strong.

DePue: Baseball, but not football.

Pensoneau: Baseball. Baseball.

DePue: Were the St. Louis Cardinals football team playing in St. Louis at the time?

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. I remember the St. Louis Cardinals football team, sure, but the support and affinity never were there for the football Cardinals like we have seen through the decades for the St. Louis Cardinals.

DePue: Yeah. What brought your family to the Belleville area?

Pensoneau: It's a good question. Well, on my dad's side—the name Pensoneau, which is French, of course—the Pensoneaus go back a long way. They were among the early settlers in southern Illinois, actually. It's an old—

DePue: Are we talking even before statehood?

Pensoneau: Yes. Oh, yes, yes, we are. The answer is yes. Right, right. Families, individuals with the name Pensoneau were among the early French settlers in

that part of Illinois.[1] And I've never completely ascertained where in France they originated, but I was told that some of the Pensoneaus who've been listed in histories of St. Clair County came down through Canada and settled down there. And yes, the answer is yes, it was well before statehood. My father's name was Leslie Pensoneau—L-e-s-l-i-e. My mother's maiden name was Bernice Taylor—B-e-r-n-i-c-e, last name Taylor—which is, of course, where I get my first name. And Mom's family—basically they were more recent arrivals. My mom's grandpa Taylor, as I understand it, immigrated to the Belleville area from England, and he was in coal mining.[2] And on my mom's side, her father as a younger man was a coal miner, working the coal mines, including, I have to believe, at one point, in one of his father's coal mines.

DePue: His father owned a coal mine?

Pensoneau: I think so. That's what I was told. Yeah, his name was John Taylor, and he was an owner, uh-huh. A son of his was named Hugh Taylor, H-u-g-h, and Hugh Taylor was the father of my mother, Bernice, so Hugh Taylor was my grandpa Taylor, obviously. Later on in life, though, as I was growing up, the coal mining segment of the family history was over with, and my grandpa Taylor worked in one of the large breweries then operating in Belleville.

DePue: A brewery in Belleville? I wasn't aware of that.

Pensoneau: Mm-hmm. Oh, there was more than one. Yeah, Belleville had a number of breweries still going when I was a kid growing up, mm-hmm.

DePue: What were the firm names?

Pensoneau: Okay, I believe it was at the time the Stag Brewery, Stag beer. But there was also a brewery called the Star Brewery, and I think there—

DePue: Star Brewery?

Pensoneau: Star, yeah. Mm-hmm, still going. Yeah. I think that was the brewery; I used to swim in the brewery pond. (laughter)

DePue: Don't recommend that today?

Pensoneau: No, I do not. No, no, no, no, no. I didn't always use the best of common sense when I was a kid. Well, let's put it that way. But—

DePue: No one expected kids to, though.

[1] There was a substantial French Colonial population in the area along the Mississippi River, with towns of French names. At the time of this interview, a number of Habitant log homes are being restored and re-occupied. *Editor*

[2] Southern Illinois is still known as coal mining country. *Editor*

Pensoneau: Well, I didn't. (laughter) But anyway, that's a bit of history on my mother's side.

DePue: Then your father's ancestors had been in that area for 150 years—close—or maybe 120 before you came along.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, yeah. No, they were among the early settlers there, Pensoneaus. In fact, I was always told the first ferry across the Mississippi River from what is now East St. Louis[3] to St. Louis was reportedly run by, quote, "Pensoneau Brothers." At that time, of course, East St. Louis was not called East St. Louis; it was called Illinoistown. The name East St. Louis came along years later. Also, a Pensoneau, a descendant—or, excuse me, an ancestor—owned much of the land that today houses the public square in Belleville.

DePue: Okay. What did your father do for a living?

Pensoneau: My father—born and raised in Belleville and a lifelong resident of Belleville, as was my mother. My father ran a men's clothing store. It was called the Toggery. I understand that was a common name for men's clothing stores. I always say Dad was a Main Street merchant in Belleville. My father's family was not wealthy, and I understand my dad, I think, quit high school after either his freshman or sophomore years to go to work. One of his first jobs was, he got a job as a clerk in a men's clothing store in Belleville, and that's how he learned the business; eventually he had his own store.

DePue: What did he do during the Second World War?

Pensoneau: Okay, good question—during the Second World War. My father and a cousin of his opened a clothing store as young men in Belleville prior to the start of the Second World War, all right? When the war came on, they closed the store, and my father took a job as a civilian in running what they called the Base Exchanges at Scott Field, which is near Belleville. Scott Field is today Scott Air Force Base, but back during World War II, when the Air Force was still part of the Army, it was called Scott Field. There were a number of exchanges, stores, on the base, and my father was the civilian manager of those exchanges.

DePue: There had to be an explosion of growth at Scott Field at the time.

Pensoneau: It was incredible. I mean, as a very little kid, I can remember going out there. I was, of course, born in 1940. I can still remember when the war was still going. Among my earliest memories are going out there and standing on the sidewalk in front of the main Base Exchange or Post Exchange. I could watch the planes taking off and coming in, and it was just like a mystical, magical—getting to watch that. I have vivid memories of it. Anyway, that's what my

[3] East St. Louis, IL is across the Mississippi east of St. Louis, Ferries operated long before there were bridges. *Editor*

dad did during World War II. Now, earlier on as a younger man, my dad had put in time in a military uniform in some sort of capacity that had him training at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. That's straight south of St. Louis, overlooking the Mississippi River. I can't tell you if it was like a National Guard situation or whatever. But my father had, I think it was a stomach problem, that prevented or kept him out of uniform in World War II. But as I said, he ran the Base Exchanges. I can remember at night, it was fascinating. Dad would bring home generals to eat and all this—it was great. You know, I can remember this. I (laughs) would be allowed to touch their—the cabbage under… (laughter) It was a big deal. They'd lean down, and I could put my little fingers on all the medals and all the ribbons and everything else. I remember these things.

DePue: Being born in 1940 means that I would think your strongest memories growing up would be of the 1950s; we tend to idealize the 1950s anymore, I think.

Pensoneau: And I'm among those. I'm writing a book right now, as we talk, on the last of the prominent Illinois gangsters, and I've just concluded what he was doing in the 1950s. Always in my writing I try to set an atmosphere for different time periods, and I've almost written exactly that, that regardless of what reality might have been, in looking back we do consider the 1950s as an ideal period, one of relative calm, in spite of the atomic fear hanging like a sword over everybody's head, that the 1950s looked like perhaps the most calm, normal period, decade, in modern American history.

DePue: Well, it certainly is a contrast to the decade that came after that. (laughter)

Pensoneau: I'm in that right now.

DePue: OK, what was your life, then, growing up in Belleville during those years?

Pensoneau: I had an ideal life growing up. I always considered myself to be lucky and blessed, as I have been throughout most of my life. The Belleville I grew up in was the closest thing you can imagine to the so-called American ideal. It was a great city, probably close to forty thousand. Had a great neighborhood school system. I started out at the Washington Grade School, which served my neighborhood. It was a very safe place to grow up. We could run around in the streets and the yards all night, way after dark. There was never any fear of anybody bothering anybody. Kids had free rein.

My mom and dad rented a house. My earliest memories, in terms of where we lived, was a house that they rented on the south side of Belleville. It was on South Jackson Street. It was about a long block up from the St. Clair County Fairgrounds, which is on the south edge of Belleville. The house is still there. It hasn't changed a bit. I saw it about four or five years ago when I

did that article on the kid in Belleville. You know, families with a lot of kids lived in the neighborhood, and there were just kids all over the place.

DePue: Of course, that would have been during the baby boom years.

Pensoneau: That was during the baby boom years. And (laughs) railroad tracks, very busy railroad tracks cut across the street one house away from us. In other words, you had the tracks and then a big old house right there sitting next to the tracks on the north of the tracks, and we were the next house, so the constant ebb and flow of trains was a factor in our lifestyle. I remember our house would shake when the big—of course, this was back in the coal fired days of the [steam] engines and so on—and I can remember our house would shake when the trains would go by. Of course Mom, if she had, like, laundry hanging out on a line in the back of the yard—she knew kind of when the trains would come—she'd have to run out and get the sheets and stuff off the line and run it in real quick because the soot pouring out of the engines just kind of covered everything.

DePue: Did young Taylor see that as a great distraction or as fun to see the trains rolling by?

Pensoneau: You know what? I was kind of excited by it. It was exciting—exciting living that close to the train, to the tracks. I kind of thought it was special, (laughter) I really did.

DePue: Well, let's get you into high school. Where did you go to high school?

Pensoneau: Well, as I said, I started out at Washington Grade School, which is in the south side of Belleville, and then I was about ten years old, I think in 1950—I was in the fifth grade—Mom and Dad had a house built out in Swansea. That's now what you'd call, I guess, a suburb of Belleville on the north side of Belleville, but it's separate politically. At that point, I went to High Mount School—that's two words, High Mount. And High Mount—it was one school, but it had its own special school district—it was not part of the Belleville school district. It went to the eighth grade, so I went to High Mount through the eighth grade. I graduated from the eighth grade in 1954, and then I went to Belleville Township High School, which at that time was the only public high school in Belleville. There are now two public high schools. But the high school I went to at the time was called Belleville Township High School. Now it is known as Belleville West. And I went there for four years.

DePue: That had to be a pretty big class you had then.

Pensoneau: We were. It was one of the largest public high schools in downstate Illinois. It was big, yeah.

DePue: Does that mean you had fewer opportunities in things like sports and extracurricular activities?

Pensoneau: Well, if you want to talk about it, I wanted to go into it, because it was always interesting. Yeah, of course, sports were a big deal with me. I was never a star. I had the opportunity to run beside and rub shoulders with some stars, though—big-time stars. But sports were a big deal. I went out for football right away my freshman year. I was on the football team for three years. Also, of course, in the spring I ran track. Football was interesting. I learned a lot there. Of course, my freshman and sophomore years, I was on the freshman-sophomore team. One of my biggest thrills in life was after my sophomore season, I got a little letter B, which I thought was just fantastic at the time. It was not a varsity letter, of course. But my junior year, I was on the team, and it was interesting—it was one of the most interesting experiences of my life. I was not a bad football player. I was little and thin, but I was tough. In my junior year—our first varsity game—I dressed, and we walloped the team from farther south in Illinois, Metropolis. It was a non-conference game and I did get in the game near the end, and then, I don't know what happened. For the rest of the—this is my junior year in the fall—I didn't dress anymore, and I couldn't figure it out. Of course, I was at practices all the time, but there were only a small minority of us on the team that didn't actually then dress for the games, and I was in that minority, and it was kind of a learning experience for me. It made me want to strive harder to succeed in life, in what I did. And I did. It was a reason—I'm jumping ahead for a second here.

DePue: Go ahead.

Pensoneau: It was a reason later on when I was at Belleville Junior College, my sophomore year I played football, and I started. I went both ways: offense and defense, at that end. I was a right end. And I did it in a way to prove to myself and to others in my life that I was a good football player, good enough to play, and I did. We had a terrible team, but I think I caught the most passes. I started out as the second string right end, and in our first game, halfway through the first quarter, the first string right end got hurt and never came back. I went in and never came out again for the rest of the year. And it was kind of funny. The last night my brother and I talked before he departed for Vietnam as a Marine officer—my younger brother—we talked, because we didn't know if we'd ever see each other again—and as it turned out, we didn't see each other again. We talked about some things, and he said—(pause) he said, "I always knew why you played football at Belleville Junior College, because you had to prove to yourself, and maybe to others who knew you, that you could do it." And it was true. And he said—(chokes up) that was one of the last things we said to each other. I apologize.

DePue: What was your brother's name?

Pensoneau: Pardon?

DePue: What's your brother's name?

Pensoneau: Okay, my brother was four years younger, and his name was Terry. Terry, of course, as everybody in my world knows, went on and became a Marine officer. Terry was a fantastic guy. Now, he was a great athlete. I was Mr. Middle-of-the-Roader; he was very good. Terry went on and became a Marine officer, commander of a rifle platoon in Vietnam, in action every day, and was killed in December of 1968.

DePue: December of 1968. That was a tough year for the Vietnam War.

Pensoneau: It was, yeah.

DePue: It started the year with the Tet Offensive.

Pensoneau: You're right. And he got killed right before Christmas, mm-hmm, yeah, in action.

DePue: Now, you were twenty-eight at the time?

Pensoneau: I think that's right. Very good. I was twenty-eight years old at the time, yeah. I was up here then.[4] I had been here about three years.

DePue: How did your parents take that?

Pensoneau: Pretty tough, pretty tough. That's of course the biggest setback in my life. We were very close, although I was four years older. It was tough. I will say that his loss, his death, was probably the biggest thing to hit Belleville during the Vietnam War. Today he's honored in many ways down there. Through the park in Swansea there's a drive that winds, and it's named Pensoneau Memorial Drive; it's named after him. He also went to High Mount School, and High Mount School has his picture on the wall. They honored him in many different ways. The school has the flag that was on his coffin. The honor society at the school is named the Terry Pensoneau Chapter of the Honor Society, and they have a ceremony every—it's usually in May—when they induct new members each year. I go down and I speak at it every year. I go down there for it. It's very moving. They make a real big deal. High Mount School has memorialized Terry in many ways.

DePue: One of the toughest parts about the Vietnam War was that it divided so many Americans in terms of their views. Did that happen in your family?

Pensoneau: You know, again, Mark, it's certainly a good question. Terry felt that… Terry graduated from college, then he taught school for a year—he taught at High Mount, in fact—and then he, of course, was enlisted in the Marines. Went to Officers Candidate School at Quantico. Terry felt that we couldn't be involved in something of that magnitude and a person at his age not participating; it was his duty. Terry was very patriotic, and his position was that if elected

[4] Springfeld, Illinois

officials of his country—obviously meaning Kennedy and then Johnson, because Terry was killed before Nixon was president, so we can't implicate Nixon in this—Terry felt that if the leaders of our country had decreed that we be in Vietnam for the purpose we were there, then it was his duty to be among those to fulfill that mandate. And that's what he did. In the case of Terry, there were divided opinions in Belleville about the merits of the war, but the death of Terry really united everybody. He was regarded as a hero, and everybody was tremendously proud of him.

DePue: What were your feelings about the war before his death?

Pensoneau: Well, of course, I was a military reservist at the time. I was in the Air Force Reserve, and a number of times I thought we were going to be mobilized, so I might have—whether I would have gone to Vietnam, I have no idea. I was in a military troop transport group. But I thought that I would be in uniform full-time, too, for a while. Never happened, but we were always told, Get ready to be mobilized in two months or something like this, but it never happened. It was interesting.

I was ambivalent. I was a reporter at the time, of course, for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and I covered all sorts of things regarding the war: the protests, the related civil rights movements, things like that, and I always tried to approach it from the eye of a reporter. I tried to be non-prejudicial, -judgmental, and I just tried to report what was going on in as much depth as I could. I certainly didn't volunteer to go from Reserve to Active Duty status on my own, which I could have, as others in my position could have. I didn't do that. I didn't myself relish going to Vietnam. I was mentally prepared to be activated. Again, as I said, it never happened.

I don't want to say that I flatly opposed the Vietnam War because I don't think I did. I had—and this is kind of a trite term—I had mixed feelings. But I had just tremendous respect and admiration, and I was even in awe of people like my brother—and not just my brother, but I got to see some of the other young Marine officers that were with my brother—almost all of whom were killed or maimed in Vietnam, I might add—and I just thought these guys were like young gods.

DePue: You can't get much of a tougher duty than being a platoon leader in infantry—

Pensoneau: Rifle platoon, right. Rifle platoon leader. We can talk about Terry as much as you want. Terry was the outstanding graduate in his Officers Candidate School class at Quantico, Virginia.

DePue: Growing up—well, he was four years younger than you, but who were the most powerful influences on you growing up?

Pensoneau: I would say my dad. My dad. My dad was a self-made man. As I said, he didn't graduate from high school, had to go to work, but he was his own boss; he ran his own men's clothing store. And Dad always made it known that he expected his kids—there were three of us; I was the oldest of three—to make something of themselves. Dad wasn't much for lectures and so on, but you just knew that Dad expected you to try to do well, and I did not want to disappoint my dad. I really think that my dad was, in this regard, the biggest influence on me. I just knew that Dad wanted me to succeed in sports, he wanted me to succeed in school, and he expected us all to live lives in which we didn't get in trouble. And I just didn't want to disappoint my dad.

DePue: Was religion a part of your life growing up?

Pensoneau: It was and it wasn't. My dad's father Pensoneau was Catholic, but my dad was not raised as a Catholic. My dad as a kid ended up spending time at the Presbyterian church in Belleville. My mother came from a Protestant family. As we were growing up, my mom and dad did not go to church. Dad only went to church for weddings and funerals. But when we were little kids living down on South Jackson Street, we lived not too far from the First Presbyterian Church. Mom would dress us up on Sunday mornings and send us off to go to Sunday school at the First Presbyterian Church, all three of us.

DePue: She didn't go herself, but she sent you?

Pensoneau: She did not, no, no.

DePue: That's interesting.

Pensoneau: And we did. I never went to church services, but I did go to Sunday school at the First Presbyterian Church, and then we were baptized in the First Presbyterian Church. Terry's funeral was out of the First Presbyterian Church. My sister's marriage was in the First Presbyterian Church. My first marriage—I've been married twice—my first marriage was in the First Presbyterian Church. And here in Springfield, I did join Westminster Presbyterian Church. So I was a Presbyterian all my life. In terms of going to church, it's been back and forth. I didn't go to church hardly at all as a teenager; however, I was at the church a lot because the Presbyterian church had a youth fellowship called Westminster Youth Fellowship, which was very popular. It was 90% social and 10% religious, and it would meet on Sunday nights. When I was a senior in high school, I was the president of Westminster, which was actually a fairly big deal in Belleville because kids from all different churches came to Westminster on Sunday nights. So I did spend a lot of time there.

Later on, here in Springfield, I did serve a term—I was on the board of deacons for Westminster Presbyterian Church. My own two kids were baptized at Westminster Presbyterian Church. And right now, just to bring us

to full cycle, my second wife, Elizabeth, and I are members of a small Methodist church which is right out here between New Berlin and Jacksonville. It's on the Old Jacksonville Road. It's called Island Grove United Methodist Church. It's a small church. Liz and I were married there. As I said, it's the second marriage for both of us. I was, I guess you would say, Presbyterian, Liz was Catholic, and we made a decision when we got together we were going to start over fresh, so now we're both Methodists. In fact, I'm chair of the church council, (laughter) and Liz is president of the United Methodist Women. (laughter) How's this? Well, so that's my religious background. Unless we're on the road, we go every Sunday to Island Grove United Methodist Church. So we're actually very active members.

DePue: Well, let's get back to the high school years, because I want to ask you this question now: What did you think you wanted to do with your life as you got close to graduating from high school?

Pensoneau: Okay. Well, a little feature story was done on me when I was a sophomore by the school newspaper; they asked you what you wanted to do, and I said I wanted to be an accountant, which was kind of a joke as it turned out. Anyway, I always had an interest in newspapers. Belleville had two daily newspapers at that time. I loved to read them. We took one, and I read it thoroughly, and I thought I wanted to, quote, "write for newspapers." My junior year in high school, I took journalism, high school journalism, and the teacher, Miss Lilian Jossem—now, her spelling is tricky. It's in that article that I gave you, though.

DePue: Okay.

Pensoneau: Miss Lilian Jossem was a tough taskmaster. She was called "Tiger Lil" behind her back.

DePue: That's not such a bad nickname for high school kids, though.

Pensoneau: No. She was a beautiful woman. She had never married. She was Jewish. She took a personal interest in me; she thought I had promise. So she taught me how to write a basic news story. She took me under her wing. And then after my junior year in high school, she was asked by the folks at the *Belleville News-Democrat* that was one of the two daily newspapers in Belleville to send in a kid to be a summer flunky, or intern, you'd say today, at the *News-Democrat*, but with the news department, and she selected me. Of course, I showed up right after the end of my junior year, and that began my newspaper career. I worked there in those summer months between my junior and senior years in high school. A fantastic experience. And then I knew I wanted to be a newspaper reporter at that time.

DePue: What did they have an intern doing?

Pensoneau: Well, I actually got to write. I got to cover sports, Little League sports and things like that and write. I also got to do some news stories and so on. But basically I was a legman for—the staff wasn't large. There was a city editor and then there were two or three other reporters and there was a sports editor, and whenever they had errands to run: Go pick up this report over here at the county courthouse; Go get that; Do that; Run out here, somebody's kid got killed but they're willing to give us a picture at the home to run in the paper—I would actually take a cab and go to that home and get the picture and things like that. I would just do everything. Menial things, like take down the box scores for baseball games going on in the summer by local teams and things like that. But I did get to write stories. I did get to write stories on summer sports and so on.

For example, when the papers would come off the press downstairs in the shop, I would have to go down and be among the first to grab about ten off the press and run them back up to the city editor up in the news room and things like that. I would sometimes go out with—we had photographers—with a photographer on an assignment where he would be taking the pictures and he needed someone to be with him to take down the names of who were in the pictures and the setting and things like that. I would do that.

DePue: That's all good training, it sounds to me.

Pensoneau: It was great training, it really was, and it was—

DePue: Did that seal the deal for you as far as what you wanted to do?

Pensoneau: It really did. The city editor was—you asked, after my father who was a big influence on me—it had to be Joe Adam. He was tremendously demanding and tough. I remember he called me "Junior."

DePue: Did he fit the mold of the stereotype for the crusty old newspaper editor?

Pensoneau: Did he? Oh, he was tough and mean and demanding and straightforward, and I was scared to death of him. (DePue laughs) I mean, absolutely. When he called my name—Get up here, Junior, I want you to do this or do that, or Here's some little two bit three- or four-paragraph story; you can write this—you know, on some women's club having a meeting or something like that—I mean, I just absolutely almost saluted when I would go up to his desk. (laughs)

Actually, to be fair, though, even the veteran news people there were scared of him, too. I mean, he was the boss. And he was a legend. He did everything. He covered the city council. He covered the St. Clair County Board meetings. He covered everything controversial. He was one of the hardest-working individuals. He was always there, working night and day, and he read all the copy that had any significance to it that got in the paper, too. He really ran the whole news operation of the *Belleville News-Democrat*. At

the end of that summer I had made a good enough impression that they asked me to continue working.

Now, I was going into my senior year in high school, and they wanted me to cover high school sports and to do other things. So what I did is, during my senior year—it was an unusual situation—I would be picked up every morning about five o'clock in the morning or 5:30 by one of the reporters who lived out near where we lived, and I would accompany him to the *News-Democrat* office, and I would work till about 8:30 in the morning. An arrangement was made between the *News-Democrat* and the high school. My first class wasn't until nine o'clock in the morning, so then about 8:30 I would run from the *News-Democrat* office, which was about a block and a half from the square in Belleville where all the buses were, and I would run up there and catch the bus that went out by the high school, and I'd get off the bus in time to get into the high school for my first class at nine o'clock in the morning.

It was an interesting existence because I had to cover all the sports for my high school; in addition, then, there was a Catholic high school called Belleville Cathedral High School. I was responsible for covering Belleville Cathedral games, too, so on a Friday night, you have to wonder how could I do all these things. Well, here's the way we did it: In the fall, I would cover the football team—my senior year, and I was no longer on the football team, though I was running cross-country. I would cover Belleville's football game on Friday night, and Cathedral would be playing somewhere, usually on Friday night, and so they hired a kid that went to Cathedral to cover those games, but he didn't write the stories. So after my game was over, I would go down—I had a key—I went down to the *Belleville News-Democrat* office like eleven o'clock on Friday night and I would write my story of what Belleville High School did in the football game, and then the Cathedral kid would come up about midnight and he would sit and dictate his notes to me, and then I would write (DePue laughs) the Catholic school game, where they were playing. And I wouldn't get out of there till 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning on Saturday morning, but that copy was there. And then I had to be back in the morning to work, so I would go home for a couple hours and then I would be picked up at 5:00 or 5:30 again and come back down and work. We had no Sunday edition, but we did have a Saturday edition, so I would work till about noon on Saturday. Now here's where it got complicated and interesting.

DePue: It hasn't gotten complicated yet?

Pensoneau: Oh, it's very complicated. So this is my senior year, but I'm on the cross-country team. I had a pretty good junior year in track in the spring, so at the end of my junior year, the coaches—which at a big school like Belleville pretty much determine what you do or what you don't do, okay—they indicated that in the fall of my senior year, I not go out for football again, I run cross-country—which is what I did. I know I had to because they said I would, so I ran cross-country in the fall. So sometimes we'd have meets on

Saturday. Now, if we were running on Saturday mornings—they were always in the mornings—the *News-Democrat* would let me off that morning. Okay, I didn't have to go to work that Saturday morning, but I would still be covering those football games in the fall, so I wouldn't get out of there until three o'clock in the morning. I wouldn't get home into bed until maybe between three and four o'clock in the morning. I'd get about two hours of sleep, then I'd have to get up and get to the school to dress for our cross-country meet if we were going to a big invitational in St. Louis or Alton or wherever. So I would be running in high school cross-country with about two hours of sleep, and sometimes I know the cross-country coach would get on me because they all knew I should be doing better, but that's interesting. Now, here's another interesting angle: How many people do you know that were writing for the town newspaper covering themselves?

DePue: (laughs) Well, I was thinking about that. There's a conflict of interest there at some point.

Pensoneau: Of course it's a conflict. So I was writing about myself and the teams. (laughter) Isn't it incredible that you get to write about yourself? So I always somehow managed to make myself look a little bit better in the articles that appeared in the *News-Democrat* than I was, and if I didn't do well, I was able to insert my own excuse in the articles. Can you believe this? And those who knew me well knew what was going on, so all my teammates and all the athletes would wait to see how things were reported because they all knew I was writing all the stories, with the football team, too, and everything else. It was really funny.

DePue: Did you take some heat from some of the other kids?

Pensoneau: I didn't take heat from the kids because I was starting to get a little diplomatic then, (DePue laughs) and I managed to make not just myself but all of us look a little better than we were. And this applied to my buddies at the Catholic school, too. (laughs) I never even saw their games and I managed to make them look better than they really were, and it was always appreciated. The objections came from the coaches because the coaches sometimes said, Look, you know, I read the day where you guys—you guys didn't do that well. It was a disappointing show in the Beaumont Invitational or this or that, you know. I would say, "Well, you know…" See, I would make excuses for the other guys, too. If someone was sick, I would put that in the article, or wasn't feeling good, and all this stuff, you know.

DePue: Well, all this is happening, though, before you've had the opportunity to kind of learn from a theoretical sense what a good journalist was supposed to be.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, absolutely, absolutely, and I was violating all sorts of rules. (laughter) When someone didn't do <u>good,</u> I would actually make up excuses for them. I would have friends at both the public and Catholic schools

thanking me for not making them look as bad as they perhaps performed in a game. Now, this went on also through basketball season; I covered the basketball games. Now, in basketball, I had a break there that Cathedral did have a kid that covered basketball, could write the stories, so I didn't have to write the stories of the Cathedral basketball game, but of course I covered my own school. And then in the spring, of course, I ran track. We had a very good track team. We were very good, but I made it look even better than it was, and of course I made heroes of everybody running for Belleville in track in the spring of my senior year, including myself. (laughter) But how many people do you know—and this is a paper that had a large circulation—I mean, probably thirty-five thousand. I mean, this is not a little weekly shopper thing or whatever to throw away; this is a major paper, and it still is today. In view of that, isn't that interesting that I was getting to write in a paper of that size about myself and sports? Now think about it.

DePue: What did your parents think about this whole experience?

Pensoneau: They thought I was too busy my senior year. They thought I was just too busy. Now, so I got out of high school, graduated, 1958, and then I worked again, and during the summer after my high school graduation for the *News-Democrat*, and of course that was easy compared to the senior year I had just finished. That was a very pleasant summer, and I was getting more work on news assignments, too; they were trusting me more. So in the fall, the decision was made—I wanted to go away to a boarder school like some of my friends, but I didn't. College had never been a priority in my family. I guess I was the first to graduate from high school, and I was certainly the first to go to college.

So I started out at Belleville Junior College, continued living at home. But at the start of my freshman year at Belleville Junior College, the hierarchy of the college and the family that owned the *News-Democrat* had a discussion about me, and at that time, as I was told reliably—both told me the same thing, the dean of the junior college and Robert Kern of the Kern family that owned the *News-Democrat*—they said that they thought I might amount to something, but I had to do well at the junior college. The dean at the junior college told me that, "If you do well here—and we want you to do well—we'll work on getting you a scholarship out of here." It was decided I would no longer work for the *News-Democrat*, so I went to school full-time at Belleville Junior College.

DePue: The people at the newspaper decided you would no longer work for them?

Pensoneau: I was called in at the end of the summer, and they said they had talked with Dean Kenneth Edwards of Belleville Junior College, they had a discussion about me, and they told me—which the dean himself later told me the same thing—but they told me that, Everyone wants you to do well at the junior

college, and we don't think you can continue working here as you— (cell phone rings?)

DePue: That wasn't supposed to happen. Let me stop this for just a second here.

(pause in recording)

DePue: Okay, sorry for that interruption.

Pensoneau: It's all right, no. Mr. Kern, who was sort of the patriarch of the family that owned the *News-Democrat*, called me into his private office and said, "We want you to no longer work for us as you start at the junior college," and he informed me of the conversation, that, "We want you to do well, and there was a chance that if you do well at the junior college, you can get financial help to go on from there." They said, We're proud of you; you've done a good job here, and we feel you've learned a lot—which was true—but we want you to do well at the junior college. We've had a conversation with Dean Edwards, and we want you to make good grades, and if things work out for you there, we think you'll maybe get a scholarship and can go on. And then Dean Edwards later reiterated that conversation to me also, not long into my freshman year at the junior college. So that was it. I didn't go out for football at the junior college. The junior college no longer has football, but it did then. I didn't go out my freshman year; I buckled down, studied hard, made good grades. And then my sophomore year I was really doing very well at the junior college. Then I did go out for football, and then I played. I was also editor of the yearbook.

DePue: Did you have a sense that Mr. Kern figured that you might never be coming back to the Belleville paper?

Pensoneau: Good question. I never resolved that in my own mind. Of course, I never did, but whether he thought I might, I don't know. I don't know. I never had another conversation with Mr. Kern until my brother was killed in Vietnam, and then everybody came to the funeral home. Good question, but I don't have a clear-cut answer. I thought about that myself, and I didn't know where life would take me at that point. But the point is I did do well at the junior college, and the scholarships were applied for at the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri at Columbia but also at Washington University in St. Louis, and I kind of thought if I could go to Washington U in St. Louis—there was one thing appealing there—I could go out for football because, as you can tell, I love football. I love sports, and football's number one. Okay, Washington U, a major school, but pretty—

DePue: Academically you can't get too much better than that.

Pensoneau: No, no, no. Great academically, but football was all walk-ons and so on, and I thought I would have a chance to make the team at Washington, and I probably would have. So as it turned out, about the same time, not long before

I graduated from the junior college, I got scholarship offers from both Washington University and the University of Missouri School of Journalism. And I thought about it, talked to a few people—and I knew I wanted to be a newspaper reporter. The Washington U scholarship was given by the English department or the literature department or something like that. Oh, and the other factor, too, was I wanted to go away. See, I'd continued living at home my first two years while so many of my buddies had gone right away to four-year schools right after high school. So I went to Mizzou and did very well there—was one of two marshals in my graduating class, in fact. And then I went—

DePue: Which means what?

Pensoneau: Best grades, top grades. Best grade average. In fact, I did better grade average at Mizzou than I actually did at the junior college, if you can believe that. Academically, in many ways, the junior college was tougher, more demanding, than Mizzou. Well, and if we're being honest in this—

DePue: Absolutely.

Pensoneau: At Mizzou, I really took off down there, see, because I had had all this real experience in the Belleville *News-Democrat.*

DePue: More than most your classmates?

Pensoneau: Yes. Oh, yeah. It was obvious, yeah. Right. And plus, I had to make good grades at Mizzou to keep my scholarship; it was based on grades. So a combination of the fact that I had to buckle down at Mizzou, and I didn't have any extra money anyway to screw around or join a fraternity, any of that kind of stuff. I mean, I really enjoyed Mizzou, but it was like a job: I had to make good grades, and I did. And then also I had this experience already, which really gave me a leg up. It soon became evident that it was a real leg up on a lot of the other kids in my class. So after my junior year—

DePue: What timeframe are we talking about?

Pensoneau: Okay, well, I graduated from high school in '58 and I graduated from Belleville Junior College in 1960. Okay, so I went to Mizzou in the fall of 1960, and I would graduate from the School of Journalism in 1962. After my junior year at Mizzou—and I was doing well—I was approached by the faculty, and they said, You definitely will have your scholarship renewed for your senior year—you've done okay—but we want to tell you about something. The St. Louis Newspaper Guild—that's like the union in St. Louis—has a scholarship, and monetarily it's about the same as the one you've got now, but this Newspaper Guild scholarship includes starting right away a summer internship at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. We want you to switch scholarships from the academic one you've got to this one being given by the Newspaper Guild because if you take it, you'll spend the summer in the

news room at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in St. Louis. It was like a no-brainer, and I took it.

DePue: This is the big leagues, then.

Pensoneau: Now we're in the big leagues. We're knocking on the door. I took it, so about two, three days after the end of my junior year at Mizzou, I'm in the newsroom, the city room, of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. And, I mean, I just can't tell you the feeling of what it was to… I mean, I was even younger than—at that time, you still had copy boys and all that kind of stuff—I mean, I was even younger than all the copy boys and everything else, (laughter) and it was really interesting. (laughs) I got treated with great respect by the editors—the city editor, the news editors. I mean, there were umpteen editors, you know. I was right away given assignments and so on. I mean, they were low-level, but I got to spend time down at police headquarters and in the courts and doing all the low-level things, you know. It was just fantastic. At the end of that summer, I was going back to Mizzou for my senior year in the journalism school. They told me I'd made a good impression and that I was kind of a pioneer in that regard, that they had never really done this before, and that this was interesting, having someone as young as me in the newsroom.

So I went back for my senior year at Mizzou. I was a sports writer at Missouri, okay? I was a sports writer at Missouri, and my beat in the fall was the big beat: I covered the Missouri Tigers in football, and that was great, and then of course I covered them in basketball. Well, shortly before the Christmas holidays I received a phone call in my dormitory at Missouri; the managing editor of the *Post-Dispatch* was on the phone, and he said, "Are you coming home to the St. Louis area for the holidays?" and I said, "Yeah, of course I am, sir." he said, "Well, I would like you to come in and see me." Well, I knew then this had to be good news; they were calling me. So when I went in, he said, "We want you to go to work here. We want you to go to work here full-time after you graduate in the spring." So that's how I got on with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

DePue: You didn't have to hustle like so many other people were going to have to.

Pensoneau: I did not, I did not. I had an interview lined up. At that time, everybody that got out of journalism school got a job, okay, but not with the *Post-Dispatch* or the *Chicago Tribune*; you started at a more regional paper or a smaller paper. I had actually had an interview scheduled for when I got back from the Christmas break; one of the Philadelphia papers was sending a person down here to recruit, and several of the faculty people had arranged for them to interview me. I thought I was going to have a shot at going to work as a cub reporter in Philadelphia, but—

DePue: Well, that would suggest that the reputation of the journalism school there was very good.

Pensoneau: Very good. No, it still is, very good. At that time, the journalism school called itself the best in the country, because I understand to this day its only rival is Northwestern [University] Medill School [of Journalism].

DePue: You learned about all those things that maybe you did a little bit wrong when you were—

Pensoneau: Well, I'm not going into all the mistakes I made, (DePue laughs) but I'm going to tell you about… I had a dandy covering football at Mizzou my senior year. So in my senior year in journalism school, an old crusty editor of the *East St. Louis Journal*, Thomas Duffy, had retired. He only had a high-school diploma but was given a job to come on down there and provide professional input to the School of Journalism. And when that guy came down there, everybody was scared of him—he was the real thing—and he took over the whole newsroom right away. They gave him a professor title or something, I guess, and he was running the show because he was a rough-and-tough guy. Well, okay. He kept a close eye on me. Should I tell you about one of my big-time experiences? You want to hear?

DePue: Sure.

Pensoneau: Okay. This is my senior year. I'm covering football. Duffy's been there a couple of months. Duffy's the boss; he sits right in the middle of the newsroom. All the journalism students had to spend time working for a newspaper, a daily—still going—the *Columbia* . This was not a school newspaper; this was a town newspaper. We covered the city of Columbia, all the region around there. On my beat, I was a sports writer for the *Missourian;* I covered the Tigers. Missouri was very good; the famous Dan Devine was the coach. Well, about halfway through the year we had a star halfback, a little guy named Norm Beal. He injured his ankle. He injured his ankle in the previous week's game, and it wasn't generally known, but we were playing Nebraska the following week.

Okay, all right. So every day I go to practice. I stand there and cover it, and I always talk to Dan Devine after every practice because I have to write a story every day for the *Missourian*. I knew Beal was standing on the sidelines with a wrap on his ankle. He was a little guy, star halfback, no bigger than me. After the practice was over, I said, "Coach Devine, I notice Beal is…" He said, "Yeah. He's not going to play Saturday against Nebraska. He should be ready the week after." And I said, "Well, boy, this is kind of like my story of the day." Devine took my arm and said, "I really would appreciate it if we don't write about Norm being hurt, because it will affect Saturday's game." He said, "I'm sure you know, Nebraska is right now reading everything you write; they're monitoring here. If they know that Norm is hurt, that's going to

affect their strategy for preparing for Mizzou for Saturday's game." Now I said, "Now, I guess I understand because I don't want to do anything to hurt the team's chances." So Devine said, "Well, I'd appreciate it if we just don't report that Norm Beal is hurt. In fact," he said, "Norm's going into the hospital tonight for some tests. We're sure he's going to be okay, but he's going in tonight and we'll know by tomorrow or the next day."

Well, okay, so I write my daily stories. I don't mention the fact that star halfback Norm Beal is hurt. About two days later—this would be about Thursday—every day we report the list of people who are released from the hospitals in Columbia, and here on the list of people released from Memorial—I think it was Memorial—well, I'm not sure if it was called Memorial Hospital, but one of the major hospitals in Columbia—here is Normal Beal, the name Norman Beal.

So the next morning, Friday morning, I'm in the news room and all of a sudden there's this tap on my shoulder. It's Duffy, and he said, "I want to talk to you." Now, he's the only one that has a private desk in this whole newsroom. Everybody sits out in the open, but he's got this kind of crude cubicle in the middle—these partitions or something—he's got a semi-private office. He said, "I want you to come into my office." "Sure, Mr. Duffy." So I go in there. So he's got the paper in front of him, and he says, "This is interesting. As I'm reading the paper here I see where Norman Beal was released from the hospital here in Columbia. Is that the Norman Beal that plays football?" I said, "Yeah, it is, Mr. Duffy." He said, "What's wrong with him?" I said, "He injured his ankle last week in the game against Oklahoma" or whatever, I said, "and he's not going to play Saturday." And he said, "Don't you think that's a news story?" I said, "Well…" He said, "Well, I read your stories all this week and you haven't mentioned Norman Beal being hurt at all. Why not?" I said, "Well" (DePue laughs)—my famous words that have lived in infamy ever since–the words were, "Coach Devine asked me not to because it might affect Nebraska's preparation for the game if they know Beal's hurt."

And with that, Duffy stood up and grabbed me, whatever I had on, and shook me. He said, "You didn't put this in the paper because Coach Devine asked you not to, and you call yourself a reporter?" And he shook me, honest to gosh. He said, "I am so damn mad at you I could—I don't know what to do." And he was shouting, and all through the big news room, everything stops. You could hear a pin drop. There must have been thirty-five other people there—you know, faculty editors and students and everybody all at their typewriters, you know? You could hear a pin drop. Duffy's shouting, "If you ever pull this again, I'll make sure you pay for it," and so on. "I am so damn disappointed in you. You report for the *Columbia Missourian*. I don't give a damn what Coach Devine says or doesn't say. Now, I want you to get out there, and I want a story tomorrow morning about"—there was one more morning before the Nebraska game—" I want a story tomorrow morning

about Norman Beal." Boy, did I write a story about Norman Beal (laughter) being hurt. That was one of my greatest lessons in journalism school. Okay, now—

DePue: Did you tell Devine?

Pensoneau: I did not. I did not. Devine never said a word to me about it. Never heard a word from Devine about it, but it was in the Friday paper that Norm Beal was hurt. Yeah, what a lesson, right? Okay, true story. So I go home for the Christmas break, I go in to see the managing editor of the *Post-Dispatch*, he says, "We want you to come back full-time after you graduate" late in the spring or whatever. I thought that was great; I'm on a cloud.

So I go back to Mizzou, and I'm covering basketball—that's my beat, the Missouri Tigers in basketball. Of course, that's not as important—football was a real big deal; basketball was mediocre then—not anymore, but it was then. So basketball season ends. So after basketball season ends, I then would wrap up my whole bit by obviously covering the baseball team.

Well, at that point Duffy calls me in—Duffy again. He says, "I want to talk to you." And he took me out to a little coffee shop on the edge of the journalism school across the street, just Duffy and I—and, of course, I'm shaking in my boots. Duffy says, "I know you're going to work for the *Post-Dispatch*, but you're not ready to go to work for the *Post-Dispatch*." He says, "And this is important to me and the journalism school." He said, "We don't want you to be an embarrassment at the *Post-Dispatch*." He says, "You've got a lot to learn. Number one, I'm telling you right now I really don't want you to continue to be a sports writer because I think you've got a chance to make something of yourself, but you won't do it writing sports. I want you to do news." The *Post-Dispatch* had given me a choice when I got there of going into sports or straight news and I told them I hadn't made up my mind yet, and they said, that's fine, either way. Duffy said, "You have a chance to maybe make something of yourself if you go into news. You don't as a sports writer. So what I want you to do, I want you to tell me you're going to go into news." I said, "Well, I've actually been kind of getting burned out on sports anyway, Mr. Duffy. I'm kind of glad I'm not covering baseball because I'm just kind of tired of it." He says, "Well, maybe you're coming to your senses."

I had about two and a half months left to go before I graduated. He said, "So what we're going to do, I'm going to try to help you get better prepared for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*." First of all, I pretty much had all my academic courses I needed to get a degree, so I was just kind of taking so-called electives, which are kind of easy. So I was actually kind of having some free time for the first time ever late in the afternoon. He said, "I know you're not overly busy now. I know what you're taking and all this, and you've got enough to graduate, but, I want these last two and a half months to be meaningful for you."

So every night he assigned me to a different news thing going on in Columbia or that part of Missouri. Everything was straight news. It was a crash course. One night it'd be the city council in Columbia; then it'd be the Boone County board of whatever-it-was, commissioners. Then he'd send me over to Stephens College—it was a girls' finishing school there—to cover concerts and so on. I didn't know anything about concerts or music. I had to cover a visiting symphony orchestra. If a famous person was coming down to speak, I was the one that had to cover it. Everything was news. You know, if there'd been a major fire or something like that at night, I would cover it. I would have to do follow-ups the next day. I spent some time with the police in Columbia. I had to go to the police department and start getting the police reports and doing all that kind of stuff, you know, because he said this is what I needed if I was going to cut it at the *Post-Dispatch*. And so that's what I did. That's how I spent my last two and a half months in college, basically working for Duffy at night. And—

DePue: Had you taken the right kind of electives your last couple years there to be prepared to be a hard-news reporter?

Pensoneau: No. I'm not sure there were such things, to be honest.

DePue: I would think political science, sociology…

Pensoneau: Oh, I had taken that stuff, yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I had taken some of those.

DePue: Economics classes?

Pensoneau: Maybe I should answer the question yes. Yeah, I had taken political science. The answer is yeah, I had. In fact, one of the courses I took since going to work for the *Post-Dispatch* was all on Missouri state government, and it was very good. In fact, I took a course that included the Missouri state constitution and history in Missouri and so on because I thought that's what I would be doing. I never knew I would be back in my home state of Illinois. So yeah, I guess the answer is partially yes. I had, yeah. Right, right. I did take some of those courses. They were pleasurable, actually.

I liked all that stuff, you know, but every night I had to cover something different. There were even disputes over slum properties and things like that, and I would have to get involved and go and interview people being evicted from slum properties and so on. Duffy had me on a collar where every night I was doing something different like that. Then I'd come in late at night. He never left. See, he wasn't married, and he sat there—he never left. He'd be there when I'd come in late in the afternoon, and then he'd be there when I'd come back ten, eleven o'clock at night from whatever he had me do, and then he'd just sit there—there was only a few of us there—and I'd write my story, and boy, he'd be sitting up there. Then I'd go up and he'd go over my story

with me. Usually it was about midnight, one o'clock in the morning before I'd get out of the J-school city room there, you know. But I could tell he was starting to like me a little bit. (DePue laughs) I could tell. A little bit, you know; I could tell. He did tell me before I graduated—he said, "You're now better prepared than you were to go to work for the *Post-Dispatch*." And the rest is history. I went to work for the *Post-Dispatch* right away; two or three days later I was there full-time after I got my degree from Mizzou. As I said, there were two marshals—well, first of all, I was vice president of my class, and then I was one of the two marshals of the class.

DePue: Okay, a couple different directions we can go here. I'm may just start with this: You mentioned you were in the Reserves. At what time did you get into the Reserves? How did that happen?

Pensoneau: All right. At that time the draft was still in play. I'm with the *Post-Dispatch;* I went to work for the *Post-Dispatch* full-time in June of 1962, just a few days after I graduated from Mizzou. I'm at the *Post*, just a regular general assignment reporter on the city staff doing all sorts of things—the youngest reporter on the staff, I might add. (pause) Let me think. Let me get it straight now. Okay, in the summer or at some point well into 1963, right down the street—I'm back living in my old bedroom at my mom and dad's house—I'm driving back and forth to St. Louis every day from Belleville. The woman who ran the draft board in Belleville lived about four houses from us. She called me down to her house one night and said, "I want to tell you, your number's coming up." She said, "You'll be drafted in probably two to four months."

DePue: This sounds like it would have been just shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis, even.

Pensoneau: Well, this was in 1963.

DePue: Yeah, that was November '62.

Pensoneau: Yeah, yeah. I want to make sure I'm straight on this date. So far we're okay in everything I've said now.

DePue: Well you don't need to be precise.

Pensoneau: Okay, all right. So she said, "You make a move on your own or you'll be drafted. So what I did is I went right to nearby Scott Air Force Base. Well, I enlisted. I enlisted in the Air Force Reserve. And what that entailed was I had to take a six-month leave of absence from the *Post-Dispatch* to go to basic training down at Lackland Air Force Base at San Antonio. Then I came back and I was assigned to a troop carrier group, which was a Reserve unit based right at Scott, right there. I came back, then I was an Air Force Airman Third Class.

DePue: With a six-year commitment.

Pensoneau: Six-year commitment, right, right. Now, and that required one weekend a month at Scott plus two or three weeks every year of training in the summer where we'd be activated for two or three weeks. We were a—I said troop transport—a troop carrier unit. What we did is we flew these old—I mean, I didn't; the officers, the pilots—we had a fleet of these big old C-119 Flying Boxcars.

DePue: Oh, yeah, I know that.

Pensoneau: Well, what we did is we would go to Fort Bragg and Fort Campbell on our activation in the summer, and we would have maneuvers with Regular Army troops, the paratroopers; we'd drop them out.

DePue: You were on the flight crew, then?

Pensoneau: Well, I was only an enlisted man, but this is interesting. I got to go up because I would write stories (DePue laughs) on our maneuvers—no, this is the truth—and ship the stories back to the papers in St. Louis, and they'd run them as well (DePue laughs).This is true. So I got to go up. It was really interesting. I got to go up and watch all the paratroopers go out the back of the… It was really interesting. Sometimes I would be down where they'd land, the landing zones, and I would interview them when they'd come down. It was fascinating. I mean, it really was.

DePue: Still the reporter, then.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah; I was even a reporter in uniform. Well anyway, I think I made airman first class finally. But I was approached—I'd been in probably about five years, and I was approached by the Navy, and the Navy—I can't remember who [made] the approach—this is vague—but the essence was that, We're giving direct commissions to a handful of people across the country to become involved in Navy public relations, naval public relations, and we have our eye on you for being one of two from the Midwest. I was astounded, you know. And what they said is, if you agree, we'll tell the Air Force… They knew everything. They knew how long my commitment was yet and everything else, and they said that, If you'll agree to our offer here, we'll arrange for you to be discharged from the Air Force, and you'll become a naval officer. I mean, here I'm an enlisted man in the Air Force, and now I've suddenly got an offer to become a naval officer.

DePue: Is this a full-time…?

Pensoneau: No, it was Reserve. It was a Reserve slot, okay, in the naval Reserve, so it was interesting. This was a direct commission, and I didn't have to go to Annapolis or anything like that. I said, "Well, I'll do it." So they were very pleased. There were only about a handful of us across the country that this

offer was made to at the time. And then I remember—this was interesting they set a certain date when this transfer would become official and they notified the Air Force.

Well, I got a call from the secretary, a woman, a civilian, in the colonel's office, who was the commanding officer of our Air Force Reserve unit, the troop carrier group, and she said, "The colonel wants you to report up here. The colonel wants to see you." Colonel Alan Beaumont was his name. I reported and I went in, and he was looking down at his desk as I stood at attention in front of his desk. He said, "We have received word, I'm sure you're aware, that you're to become a Navy officer." And I said, "That's right, sir." He said, "Well, none of us here knew (DePue laughs) that you wanted"—I remember this like yesterday. (laughs) You remember these things—"none of us here knew that you wanted to be an officer." (laughs) I said, "Well, the Navy approached me." "Yes," he said, "we've been informed. We know all the details. The only thing I want to tell you is we'd like to keep you in the Air Force, and I will make arrangements at your earliest disposal to send you back to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas to enter Officers Candidate School." And I said, "But sir," I said, "I'm getting a direct commission in the Navy." He said, "I know, but we thought you might want to stay in the Air Force." I said, "Well, no." "Well," he said, "I felt we should tell you that we were willing to do this for you." I said, "No." I remember he said, "This is really interesting. You're getting a direct commission. You know this is most unusual." And I said, "The Navy approached me, sir, and I think I can do what they want me to do." So basically it was, "Well, good luck," and that was that.

So I did. I became a naval officer. I was an ensign, the lowest rank, but right away I reported for my first tour of duty in the Pentagon. They had this little unit I'm talking about, around the country. They had us out there right away, and we were assigned to the Chief of Naval Information—the office was called CHINFO—and it was an admiral. Within a matter of days we were all sitting in this admiral's office just chatting about what he wanted, what they expected from us, and all this. This was in the Pentagon.

DePue: Now, you had, it sounds like, just a year or two left in your commitment.

Pensoneau: Yeah, about a year. And so it was great. We were there a couple days, and they wanted to take us over and give us a tour of Annapolis, the Naval Academy. You have to realize the feeling I had—and you have military in your background, I know. I'm aware of that. Here, up until two weeks ago, Airman Pensoneau, lowly Airman Pensoneau, is now walking across the grounds of the United States Naval Academy in an officer's uniform, and here are all the midshipmen: Good morning, sir; Good morning, sir. (laughter) Now, you talk about a cultural shock, my friend. Think about what I'm telling you. You've had the military. Isn't it incredible?

DePue: This is, if I get my timeline right—

Pensoneau: I can tell you, this—

DePue: —'66 or '67?

Pensoneau: This is '67. This is 1967.

DePue: And the Vietnam War is just heating up.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, yeah. This is 1967. And I remember, it was interesting because when I was out there at that time, my brother was then in Officers Candidate School at Quantico, [in Virginia] and I was able to make contact with him, and I got to see him one night briefly. They let him out. I could see him. I had a car, and I drove down to Quantico, and we got to see each other for a few minutes. Yeah. That was in late 1967. I was commissioned and I'd have active duty in places like New Orleans, Pensacola.

DePue: Not bad places.

Pensoneau: No. Oh, no. It was all fascinating. Always learning more, a lot about—I knew nothing about the Navy—but we got to go on ships, and it was fascinating. One thing, boy did I notice, I picked up real quick. In the Air Force, the disparity between officers and enlisted men was not that great, okay, but the Navy—different story completely. Boy was there a cultural divide between officers and enlisted men.

DePue: The Navy has the reputation of being the most tradition-bound of the branches.

Pensoneau: I was a witness to it. What a difference. The gulf was tremendous in the Navy. I mean, I was almost embarrassed because I had all those years as an enlisted man, and I really felt in my naval uniform, I felt for all these—I call them enlistees or the sailors and so on. Because in the Air Force, there was not a great gulf, at least in my situation, between the enlisted men and the officers because everybody was reservist. In the Air Force, our pilots would have to take training flights all the time to keep up their eligibility, and so they would fly to places like, you know, Miami or other places, and we were allowed to hop on for the weekend. This would be the weekend. We could hop on. We could sit in the back of these big old C-119s, and we could ride with them, and then once we got to, like, West Palm Beach Airport, we could get out of our fatigues right away, put on civilian clothes, and be civilians for like three days in Miami. Then we'd come back and join the officers. The officers wouldn't be with us; of course we would all separate. We were the enlisted; we would stick together. But the reason I'm mentioning this is sometimes in those situations, these officers would just say call them by their first names once we were away from Scott and all that. Now, you never saw that in the Navy, okay. There was nothing like that.

DePue: Nor would you have in the Army, and certainly not the Marines, either.

Pensoneau: Oh, no.

DePue: Well, I think we need to get back to your journalism career if you can.

Pensoneau: Okay, I know, but this is making me think of things I normally don't think about. But anyway.

DePue: And it's all good experience for a journalist who's just out there on—

Pensoneau: Oh, absolutely.

DePue: At the time when you started working for the *Post-Dispatch*, you were just doing hard news [which] was just a general beat?

Pensoneau: Hard news, general beat. I was a general-assignment reporter.

DePue: What were your aspirations at that time for the kind of reporting you wanted to do?

Pensoneau: My aspirations at that time: the holy grail was the Washington bureau of the *Post-Dispatch*. That was like the ultimate, and almost all young news reporters at the *Post-Dispatch* dreamed of, before they were dead and gone, getting to the Washington bureau of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. I really didn't want to be an editor, but I did think that if everything worked out I would someday get a shot at Washington, so that was the goal. Now, I was fortunate in that as a general-assignment reporter, after a certain time, I was asked to take something called the night beat. At that time, the *Post* was an afternoon paper, which meant it didn't have a staff at night. I became the only reporter at night for the *Post-Dispatch*. There was a photographer, and we got to do everything. I would report to work in the afternoon, about four o'clock, and I was supposed to get off about midnight, but I wasn't married, and I was ambitious and excited about the job. I mean, in those years my paychecks were small, but sometimes I didn't even cash them for a week or whatever. Money meant nothing. It was just a wonderful existence.

I got to do everything at night. I was the only night reporter for the *Post-Dispatch* in St. Louis. I got to do everything from fires to murders to controversial council meetings. Anything going on that was covered at night, it was me and the photographer, and it was a wonderful existence. I mean, what an education. That's when I really, really started to grow up.

I got to know some of the key police officers in the city and so on, and I got to spend time with the cops. The cops let me spend time with them; because I was so green I was no threat to them in terms of disclosures and so on, so I would go out with the cops to murder scenes. Oh, I got to see bodies. I'd go in the morgue. One time the cops—this was not long after I got out of

Mizzou when I was like third string police reporter at central police headquarters—and the cops had fun with me because they knew I was just out of school and green. Right next door was the city morgue, and they took me over (DePue laughs) to watch an autopsy, and that was interesting. I never forgot that. I couldn't get the smell out of my… I couldn't eat for about two days. They used to get a kick.

You remember the worst smell you've ever seen is when they take a floater out of the Mississippi River. Just like you see on the TV shows, they have a drawer, and they pull the drawer out. I don't want to tell you what that looks like, a floater from the Mississippi River. The smell—

DePue: That's something I don't want to dwell on too much, no.

Pensoneau: No, but I mean, this was all part of my education. I was right there. I could monitor all the police channels and everything—I was right there in headquarters—and if they were bringing in a murder victim or sometimes a well-known gangster or something like that to the morgue, I could run out and I could watch. I could watch them carry the carcass or the corpse into the morgue and so on. (laughs) A couple times I remember the driver—this would be a black city ambulance—would pull up behind the morgue, and the driver would get out, and there'd be no one with him. He'd say, "Can you give me help, buddy?" (laughs) He'd pull the body out—it was a stretcher; it was covered—but I'd take it in and carry it into the morgue.

DePue: But it sounds like at that time your goal was obviously to get to Washington, D.C., or perhaps to get to the political beat?

Pensoneau: Well, it was Washington, and if that meant politics, that was fine.

DePue: Well, isn't that what that would mean?

Pensoneau: Yeah, yeah, it did. Yeah, yeah. And I got to cover political stuff from St. Louis, right. It was from the lowest-level stuff to the highest level. For example, I remember Lyndon Johnson spoke at a rally right in—he was president—right in downtown St. Louis. I covered that. That was like a high-level political figure, right? But then if there was some big dispute between two council members disrupting life out in Normandy or a suburb, I would cover that at night, too. So I did a lot of political stuff, yeah. I didn't do much on the east side of the river, though, which is where I was from. That was interesting. At that point I knew a lot more about Missouri city politics and Missouri state government than I did about stuff going on in Illinois.

DePue: Gosh, what was I just going to ask you here? What was your political philosophy at the time? How would you describe yourself?

Pensoneau: My family: you would have to say it was a Democratic family. When I grew up, you always voted for the Democrat for president. Now, sometimes you

voted for a Republican at the state or local level but never for president, and that was because, it was drummed into me, that the Democrats were for the little guys—and we were little guys—and the Republicans were for the rich people. Okay, pretty simplistic, right? So you always voted for the Democrat for president, okay? That was, like, automatic. Of course, the *Post-Dispatch* insisted on neutrality. You didn't join political parties, you didn't run for office, you didn't go on boards, you didn't join civic groups, you didn't join the Lions Club. At that time, you were completely neutral about everything. You didn't join and you didn't declare your preferences. Now the *Post-Dispatch* editorial page was one of the most liberal in the United States, and the *Post* was considered a Democratic paper. The other then–St. Louis daily, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* was conservative and Republican. (DePue laughs) So I considered myself a kind of a young—not a card-carrying Democrat, but kind of a young Democrat, and rather liberal, although never extreme. And even as I was gradually changing through the years, especially when I got up here, I was really very much a middle-of-the-roader here philosophically. We can get into that later.

DePue: Well, we should mention where "here" is. We're in your home—

Pensoneau: Oh, Springfield. In Springfield. Oh, yeah, here covering state government.

DePue: We're in your home in New Berlin, but your beat eventually is going to be Springfield.

Pensoneau: Yeah. Well, my beat was state government, and all of Illinois. I was the top *Post-Dispatch* man in Illinois. I mean, this was—

DePue: When did you get to Springfield, or how did you come to end up in Springfield?

Pensoneau: For about three years I'd been this general-assignment reporter, I've had the night beat, I've done all these other things I've been talking about. The *Globe-Democrat* had an active bureau in the pressroom in the state house. The *Post-Dispatch* had had a bureau, but it was dormant; there was nobody in it. It had been vacant for, I don't know, I'm going to say two or three years. So in the summer of 1965 the editors called me in and said they were going to reactivate, reopen the Illinois state house bureau in Springfield, Illinois, in the pressroom in the state house, and would I take the assignment? And I thought about it for five seconds. First of all, it was an incredible opportunity for me, but number one, you never would turn down something like that or you'd never get another chance within the *Post-Dispatch* culture. So them asking me meant they were telling me Okay, but it was fantastic because at that time, local reporters didn't get bylines in the *Post-Dispatch*, it was so old-fashioned, but all these individuals in the Washington bureau and in Jefferson City—and we had a guy at United Nations—they got bylines. When you got out of the city of St. Louis, when you wrote from a bureau, you got a byline. And I

thought to myself—the first thing I thought about was, "I'm going to get bylines." (DePue laughs) This was such a big deal. One reason you're a newspaper reporter—bylines. You get your name out, you know.

DePue: I assume you got bylines when you were writing in the Belleville paper occasionally.

Pensoneau: Didn't. Did not.

DePue: Did not?

Pensoneau: They did not—never—they never gave bylines. No. Oh, no, uh-uh. So I thought, this is unbelievable, plus I'm going to have my own world. I'll be basically my own boss; I'll rise or fall on my own. It's like being out there in a major track race. You're on your own, and you're going to make it or not make it, but you're not going to be tied down. I thought, what an opportunity. Just fantastic. They were excited about me coming up here, and I got some pep talks before I left St. Louis. They moved me from St. Louis to—at the same time I was getting married to my first wife, this was all happening.

DePue: What was her name?

Pensoneau: Her maiden name was Judith Hopper. We were married in September of 1965, and my first day at the job here, I'd say it was October first of 1965.

DePue: How did you meet her?

Pensoneau: Tell you what, let me take a break.

DePue: Okay, that'll work.

(pause in recording)

Pensoneau: How I met my wife, the first wife. Okay.

DePue: Okay, we took a very quick break, but we just had mentioned that you had gotten married in I believe November of 1965.

Pensoneau: September of 1965.

DePue: September, okay.

Pensoneau: Right, and a few weeks later, I was moved literally up here by the *Post-Dispatch* to Springfield, and so I started on my political writing career here about the same time my marriage got underway.

DePue: Okay, so very briefly, how did you meet Judith?

Pensoneau: I knew who she was before she knew me. She was four years younger, and when I was a freshman at the junior college, she was a freshman at the high school, Belleville Township High School. I met her through my late brother. They were in the same class in high school, and they had had some dates; I met her when she had some dates with my brother. I can't remember, I think maybe they would go to dances, and sometimes he'd have her over to the house. It was kind of a joke—I would take pictures of them. But they were never serious. I mean, my brother dated a lot of different gals; Judy was one of them. But anyway, after I graduated from Missouri and came back and was working for the *Post-Dispatch* in the fall of 1962, I asked Judy for a date. I mean, I knew her, and I asked her for a date, and we started dating.We were married, as I said, in September of 1965.

DePue: Okay, so you had been dating for quite a while.

Pensoneau: We did. We did, right, yeah. We did. In the meantime, she had gone on and gotten an associate of arts degree from Belleville Junior College while we were dating, and she was going to continue going, I think maybe to SIU Edwardsville. Until I knew we were coming to Springfield, we had actually taken out an apartment in Edwardsville, and I was going to commute back and forth to St. Louis from there, and she was going to, I think, go to SIU Edwardsville. But obviously it didn't work out. She sacrificed that to come up here with me. So.

DePue: Okay, let's get you up to Springfield, then, and that new environment. Describe the adjustment process of getting up to Springfield.

Pensoneau: It was an adjustment process, but it was extremely exciting for me. I was very enthusiastic. I was riding on a cloud when I arrived here—again, to repeat—because now I had my own little world within the bigger world of the *Post-Dispatch*; I had been singled out for a bureau, which meant I was going to get by-lines while all my compatriots in the city room in St. Louis on most stories were still not getting by-lines. I had a wide and greatly varied world here to cover. It was like I had gun, could travel. I mean, there were never two days alike. You could pick and choose what you were going to do. The freedom was incredible. Obviously I was trusted by the editors in St. Louis or they would not have let me go out of St. Louis. They trusted me to quickly figure out what was important here and what wasn't. I had a dream assignment. It was terrific. Now, I always thought in the back of my mind when I got here that this would be a stepping-stone to Washington, to the Washington bureau. I should point that out. But I thought, gosh, this is great.

Now, as I said, when I came up here, I was very green about politics in my own state. I knew a lot about Missouri state government; I knew a lot about politics in Missouri. I really had interviewed or knew a number of the officials in Missouri. It was interesting that when I was still wrapping up in St. Louis and everyone knew I was coming up here to do this, that some of the

Missouri officials would try to give me tips about their counterparts in Illinois. (laughs) It was kind of funny—and this is where the prejudice comes in—they said, watch those Chicago people. (DePue laughs) They'll pick your pocket. Don't ever turn—no, this is true—don't ever turn your back on those Chicago politicians; they'll stab you in the back so quick it will make your head swim. And they said, Boy, we really wish you luck on having to deal with that Chicago machine and all that kind of stuff. I mean, all this… It was interesting.

DePue: Well, you came up here during the height of Richard J. Daley's reign.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Boy, you've got that right. He was at his peak.

DePue: And he didn't control just Chicago politics.

Pensoneau: Oh, of course not.

DePue: Well, I want to hear you—

Pensoneau: But so anyway, it was interesting, but I was very green. When I first came up here, the only Illinois political figures that I really knew things about were Alan Dixon and Paul Powell and Paul Simon and Clyde Choate and Otto Kerner, because Kerner was governor. Of course I read things. But it was interesting: In my last five or six, seven weeks in St. Louis, the editors would bring me back a lot of these wire stories coming out of Springfield and Chicago about what was going on in Illinois just to read. A lot of them were not getting into the *Post-Dispatch*, but they wanted me to read them. It was at that time I would read stories about Governor Kerner and Secretary of State Paul Powell and all this stuff. But that's when this name kept popping up of Arrington. I'd never heard of Arrington. Nobody in St. Louis had ever heard of Arrington, but I kept reading about this Republican leader of the Senate, W. Russell Arrington, who seemed to figure in every story. He was always in some kind of conflict with Kerner every day, and so on. So that's when I stumbled on the name Arrington. I never heard of Arrington until…

DePue: Russell Arrington.

Pensoneau: W. Russell Arrington, yeah, right.

DePue: Before we get too far into the names and the politics, I want to ask your reflections of the different nature of politics in Illinois versus Missouri.

Pensoneau: World of difference. Two completely different worlds. First of all, you could put the world of the Missouri state house in, like, one corner of the Illinois state house. In Missouri, I spent a couple weeks—well, not even a couple. One of my last weeks in St. Louis, they sent me down and I spent a week in Jefferson City with our Jefferson City bureau chief down there in the Missouri state house just to get my feet wet. For example, if you wanted to see the

governor of Missouri, you walk in. You go in, and there's like one outer office. I would go in with the bureau chief. The governor was Democrat Warren Hearnes. (laughs) I couldn't believe this. I really couldn't believe it once I got up here in Illinois and saw the great difference. But the secretary would go in then say, "Well, he's on the"—this is the governor—"Well, he's on the phone right now. Can you wait about ten minutes?"

Like the head of the Jefferson City bureau—his name was Ron Willnow. I found out he was a good friend with the lieutenant governor, who at the time was—either lieutenant governor or attorney general—Thomas Eagleton. So I'm sitting (laughs) in Willnow's office in the pressroom in the Missouri state house, and in walks Thomas Eagleton. He's either lieutenant governor or he's attorney general, I can't remember which. But he says, "Ron, you tied up for lunch?" (laughs) And I'm thinking… And Ron says, "Well, I don't know, Tom, I got to get a story…" He says, "Well, how long are you going to be?" "Well, what about—can we wait till 12:30?" "Yeah, sure." And then Ron says, "This is Taylor Pensoneau from the home office. He's going to be covering Springfield, Illinois for us, the Illinois government, but he's down here spending a week with me." Eagleton said, "Oh, how you doing?" And then Eagleton says to Ron, "Yeah, bring him along to lunch." (laughter) You never see that here.

Missouri was small-time compared to Illinois, that's the best way to put it—much more informal, much more loose. You didn't have security all over the place. Now, I never got—

DePue: The style of politics was different as well?

Pensoneau: Well, it was heavily a Democratic state then—not anymore—but it was then heavily Democratic, so the political rivalries were between suburban and rural Democrats, or rather big-city and rural Democrats. Republicans were an afterthought.

DePue: Was it as reliant on patronage as so much of Illinois politics was at the time?

Pensoneau: Not as big a deal; it just wasn't. Nothing was as big in Missouri. Everything was magnified in Illinois compared to Missouri. Missouri was just—I quickly ascertained—small -time. When I got up here, it was much more formal. Everything was a bigger deal. You didn't walk in hardly to see anybody without going through protocol and so on. It was much more formal here than it was in Missouri. Missouri was much more informal. It was a much smaller sandbox, playpen. Here in Illinois, there are people who can be here in different capacities and never see the governor or never talk to whoever's governor. But I just repeated an anecdote down there where we went in and I met Warren Hearnes right away. It was like one woman between the hallway and the governor, and us standing—you know.

DePue: Did it surprise you, then, when you got to Springfield?

Pensoneau: It did. It did a little bit. It did, because I quickly found out this is a much bigger scene. Maybe it wasn't fair, but I kind of felt it was much more hardball here, too, and it wasn't as hardball down in Missouri. I had that feeling, that it was more of a serious game up here. It was serious in Missouri, but you got the message here pretty quick it was pretty serious.

DePue: Hardball in terms of people were keeping score and…?

Pensoneau: Yeah, hardball in terms of it was just a bigger political scene. Illinois was just a much more important state, and that became obvious. You had to spend a little time in Jefferson City, Missouri or covering Missouri politics to appreciate what a bigger deal Illinois was. Just like everything—the size of the budget, the size of the bureaucracy, the number of state employees, the security, the size of the staffs—everything was bigger here. In a general, big-picture way, government is just in general a bigger deal in Illinois than it is in Missouri, and I think that's true in comparison to a number of other states, too. Never forget, Illinois has more units of government—I think still is the case—than any other state in the country.

DePue: I think maybe only a place like Texas would rival Illinois.

Pensoneau: Well, that may be true, but I know Illinois is right up there.

DePue: In terms of the county and city and local governments.

Pensoneau: Yeah, right. I had been a little bit mislead by the informality of Missouri, where if you got a question for the attorney general, you can generally go in and see the attorney general—if he's not tied up or whatever—to ask him the question. Here, you would have a spokesman and you would have two or three deputies, and then, maybe next week you can see the attorney general; he may have ten minutes free, but what do you want to know about? Tell us ahead of time. Just a completely different world. Illinois was just such a bigger deal in every regard.

DePue: After you got your feet on the ground, then, and you kind of got a feel for what was going on, what did you decide in terms of a strategy for how to do this job?

Pensoneau: Great question. I did figure out relatively early that coming up here from the *Post-Dispatch*, the *Post-Dispatch* was a prestige newspaper, so it did guarantee that I would have access—I don't want to say I didn't have access—and of course I had access to downstate legislators, and right away there was no problem having access to the Alan Dixons or the Paul Simons and so on who appreciated the *Post-Dispatch* and saw the *Post-Dispatch* and so on. It didn't mean much to Chicagoans or folks from northern Illinois. But I figured out early on—I had a lot of time—and I started cultivating middle-

level people in offices and agencies and departments and boards and commissions, and it didn't take me too long to figure out that that's where, to get away from run-of-the-mill stories, that that's where you had to know people. As you got to know them and as you gain their confidence, then they would start to feed you real stories, about nursing home inspections, about meat inspection regulations being enforced, environmental issues, things like that. It was one thing to be able to say for name-dropping purposes, Oh, I know the state auditor [of] public accounts personally, or, I've met the state treasurer, or, I know him, but in terms of becoming a penetrating reporter, you've got to develop sources other than the obvious big names, and I did. I did. I assiduously applied myself, and it paid off. It paid off.

I had a break over a lot of the other reporters here in that the *Post-Dispatch* took the Associated Press; we took United Press International, which was still going on then. So everybody covered the wire stories—the wires and all the individual reporters—it was all the same stuff. The *Post* didn't want me to duplicate the wires; they wanted me to develop stories that the wires weren't covering that affected downstate Illinois, not just the east side of the river down there. *Post* had a circulation through southern Illinois and to south central Illinois, even up to here, and they wanted me to get the stories behind the stories, which was good. So therefore, unlike some of the Chicago bureau people for the Chicago papers, I wasn't bugged constantly every minute about, oh, the wires are saying so-and-so said this. Did you hear him say this? Well, can you go find out if he said this or she said this? I didn't have to worry about things like that for a long time. I was free.

If I said, I want two days to go develop a story, or, I think we've got a situation where X-Y-Z is happening here, but I got to look at some records; there's an individual that will show me records, but I can't be rushed. I need the time; I want to be detached for two days—no phone calls—fine. I wouldn't be interrupted unless somebody took a shot at the governor or we had a major explosion, a whole town blew up or something like that. That was a luxury. It was. It's a luxury that very few reporters had then and very few have today, and that's why it was such a dream beat. If I said I wanted to spend a day driving over to Decatur to talk to somebody who wants to discuss a situation but doesn't want to be seen talking to me in the Capitol, that's fine, no problem. You're in Decatur today, that's it. This was really a luxury. It was a terrific beat, and that's why I was able from early on to start developing in-depth stories.

Plus the *Post* ran long stories. I mean, I didn't have to worry about these short takes and all that kind of stuff. In my in-depth stories, I had people who kind of welcomed someone like me, who wanted to go into depth about how the property tax system worked, how constitutional issues were resolved, about blue-ribbon panels, what they really were proposing in terms of reforming Illinois government, upgrading a general assembly. I hit town here at a time when there were all sorts of reform movements going on. I detail

them all in my Arrington book; it's all there. It was good because those are all stories the *Post-Dispatch* at that time wanted. A lot of papers didn't care about those stories; they thought they were too boring and people didn't read them—and maybe that was true—but the *Post* wanted those kinds of stories. They wanted detailed coverage, and it was great.

When a lot of people involved in these things—maybe they weren't headliners every day, but they saw that I was not only sincerely interviewing them on these things but that what I was getting from them was getting into print; Then that gave me a leg up as time was going on; it worked in my benefit. Not overnight, but as the years progressed, I developed a terrific network in places like the penal system and the state police and divisions of the secretary of state's office, for example, that regulated securities.

The *Post-Dispatch* was one of the first papers to pay serious attention to environmental issues from day one. I got a good play on every story I ever wrote on an environmental issue. At that time you didn't have a state EPA and Pollution Control Board, but you had basically a couple boards run by a guy named Clarence Klassen[5] who had the title chief state sanitary engineer, but this guy was on top of every environmental issue. He welcomed my interest and he liked publicity, so it was a dream situation. I was getting all sorts of stories about who was polluting and who was going to be hit with fines and what rivers needed cleaning up and who was illegally discharging into the Mississippi River by Chester or East St. Louis. I was really the only one writing a lot of this stuff, Mark, and it quickly progressed in a situation that was very favorable for me. I wrote it, and the paper ran it, and it was a good situation.

DePue: Let's put some flesh on the bones of a lot of these political personalities that you mentioned earlier. I want to get into much more detail on Otto Kerner, but gosh, you mentioned some fascinating people. Let's start with Paul Powell; he's a southern Illinoisan.

Pensoneau: All right. When I arrived here, Powell was secretary of state. He was already involved in little imbroglios. He had people on his payroll doing certain things that they should not have been doing, and in addition they had shady backgrounds; they shouldn't have been there to begin with. So I got involved in that sort of stuff. Powell was interesting. You could have access to Powell. I did.

DePue: Where was he from?

Pensoneau: Vienna[6] in Johnson County—deep southern Illinois.

DePue: And a Democrat.

[5] Clarence Klassen later became the first head of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.
[6] Vienna in Illinois is pronounced *vy-EN-a*, making it easy to recognize out-of-staters.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, yeah. He was the downstate Democratic powerhouse, literally.

DePue: Well, I'd always heard that he was the patronage guy for downstate Illinois.

Pensoneau: Yeah, yeah. He wasn't the only one, but the answer is yes. Even Chicago Democrats respected Powell; his wishes always had to be considered in terms of big-time Democratic political picture stuff . Powell was a genius on the legislative process, knew the mechanics of it, the nuts and bolts, inside and out. And even after he won statewide office—he got elected secretary of state—I mean, he still could manipulate the general assembly or whatever he wanted or didn't want, especially because there were Democratic majorities in those—except for the state Senate, where Arrington was in the saddle.

Powell was fascinating. I early on figured out Powell liked to play with reporters, and maybe others too, that he pretended he wasn't as smart as he was. (DePue laughs) He liked to engage in this folksy kind of stuff, this barnyard humor, you know; you kind of went along with it but you always knew he was always way ahead of you and you weren't going to put anything over on him. He made some mistakes, though, in terms of people he put on his payroll. They did do embarrassing things which embarrassed him.

DePue: Even in those early years when you were here?

Pensoneau: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. But he was very personable, though. He could be charming. I found him fascinating. I always had in my mind that if I would ever give a break to a major political figure, it would be to someone from the lower part of the state because that's my favorite part of the state; it's where I'm from, and I couldn't hide it sometimes. That's why oftentimes in roasts and in other things as I got known among Chicago politicians and so on, they would say that, we know if you can, you'll always give a break to Paul Simon or Alan Dixon or whatever. And there was some truth to it. I did my best, within journalistic bounds, to do what I could to aid and abet the political advancements of Dixon and Simon and so on.

DePue: Well, let's talk about Simon, then, because at least on what little I know, Simon has got a quite different personality from Paul Powell.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Oh, world of difference. And they didn't like each other. Powell didn't like Simon, and Simon never made any secret about the fact, to Simon's credit, that he thought Paul was a crook. Perhaps a likeable crook, but still a crook. (laughter)

DePue: He was proven right.

Pensoneau: And Powell—(laughs) Powell thought Simon was uppity and disrespectful of certain political peers. Powell always said that Simon's an example of something in life that has stripes and, regardless of what happens, those stripes

never will change; they're always there. That was not meant by Paul to be a compliment.

DePue: What was Simon's position when you got here?

Pensoneau: When I arrived here, Paul Simon was a state senator. His district basically was Madison County. Of course I had heard a lot about Paul Simon before I arrived up here, as I indicated.

DePue: Well, he was already married at the time, too, right?

Pensoneau: Yeah, he married the former Jeanne Hurley, who was a state rep when he married her. I think they got married about 1960.

DePue: That sounds right.

Pensoneau: Yeah. I lost my train of thought. Simon was really interesting. I really got into Simon, which wasn't hard to do because Simon really cultivated the press. First of all, Paul always kind of indicated that his political career was second; he was a writer and journalist first. Simon owned a whole string of small newspapers based in Troy, his hometown. The whole Simon story is really fascinating in terms of what can be an idyllic situation in big-time politics. But Simon was always willing to sit down with me—and other reporters—at any time of day when he was here. He was always available. In terms of legislative issues, he was pretty good. Although Democrats were usually on the losing side of things in those years in the state Senate, Simon would always give you a pretty straightforward account of who was who and where people came down, and Simon, to his credit, didn't pull punches in his interviews. If he thought somebody was doing something for the wrong reasons, he would indicate, "I don't understand his reasons; perhaps you should maybe look into why he's really pushing this situation for that."

Simon was the son of a Lutheran minister. I thought in my own mind he always maintained a degree of idealism, even up through the end. Paul fully understood the importance of the press—how you cooperate with it, how in some cases it can be used—and Paul was just terrific in relations with the press. I always said that in all my years here in the scene the two people who best knew how to deal with and get the most out of and have a top-notch relationship with the press, the two best were Paul Simon and Gov. Jim Thompson. I thought both of them were in a league by themselves in that regard.

DePue: At that point of time in the mid-sixties, though—correct me if I'm wrong—he was not the minority leader in the Senate, though, was he?

Pensoneau: Arrington?

DePue: No, minority, for…

Pensoneau: You talking about Simon?

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau: He never was minority leader.

DePue: How did he get to have such a prominence in politics?

Pensoneau: He was a state senator, but he wanted statewide office. What Paul wanted, he wanted to be the governor or United States senator. DePue: And he wasn't bashful about his ambitions.

Pensoneau: No. Oh, no, no, no, he was not. Oh, no, not at all. In those years, the Democratic state ticket was dictated by Mayor Daley. They had a process, a famous name called 'slatemaking,' which was basically one man… They had a little process they went through, but it was all window dressing. Daley literally, lock, stock, and barrel, dictated the ticket. Well, Simon wanted to get on the state ticket. In 1968—he was still state senator—in 1968, Kerner had left the governorship by that time for the federal judgeship; Sam Shapiro, who had been lieutenant governor, was governor. Simon wanted on the state ticket that year. Daley anointed Shapiro to be the candidate for governor to retain the office he held. Okay.

Simon, I think, that year wanted to be slated to run against then-incumbent United States Senator Everett Dirksen, a Republican, who was running for reelection in 1968. However, Daley didn't go along with that, obviously. That's all one could say, and nobody else can say anything differently. But when the slate-making procedure came out, Daley had slated Simon for the nomination for lieutenant governor. In those years, you still ran separately; it wasn't a combined ticket. That was before the 1970 constitution. And so Simon became the candidate for lieutenant governor.

Okay, now, there was a feeling at the time, and I know I wrote it, that Republicans were going into the 1968 election looking awfully strong, and their candidate was going to be Richard Ogilvie, then the head of the board of Cook County commissioners; he looked to be very strong. The Democrats in the country were in disarray over Johnson—well, not Johnson, but I mean—well, yeah, Johnson was still president, yeah, and the country was being torn asunder—

DePue: The Vietnam situation…

Pensoneau: —by civil rights and everything else. Democrats were considered to be very vulnerable in the state.

DePue: Not to mention the Democratic convention.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, right. So now, I thought that sometimes if the Democratic hierarchy, which is Chicago, doesn't think they are going to win, they sometimes will nominate individuals that they might not nominate in situations where they thought they were going to win. I think Simon was in that category in 1968. Ogilvie was considered a favorite in the race for governor against Shapiro, and the Republican nominee, Robert Dwyer. Everybody assumed he was going to win lieutenant governorship. He was Ogilvie's running mate.

DePue: We can get that in there later.

Pensoneau: Yeah, I'll get it. So Simon looked to have an uphill battle to get elected lieutenant governor, but of course as political history shows, the unpredictable happened in the fall general election. Ogilvie did defeat Shapiro—not by a great margin, but he did win—but Simon upset the Republican nominee.

DePue: And from what I've read, he comes away with this reputation that he's, to a certain extent, a giant-killer or a miracle worker in political scenes.

Pensoneau: Yeah, yeah, I will not argue with that. It was incredible. I really didn't expect Simon to win. In my heart, I was hoping he would win, but I didn't think he would. I was shocked. I was shocked when he won, because Republicans took about everything else, as I recall.

DePue: What was it about his persona? Because growing up in Iowa and being in the military at the time, I first encountered him when he was running for president. Okay, here's this guy kind of on the meekish-looking side with a little bowtie and—

Pensoneau: Looked like a choir boy, yeah.

DePue: So how do you explain his political success?

Pensoneau: A very innocent-looking choir boy. You know, I explain his success because, first of all, he played it straight and got publicity and attention for playing it straight. To his credit, he played it straight, and to his credit, he sought recognition for playing it straight. Those are two different things. He got favorable publicity continuously. He was always on the side of reformers—some would call them do-gooders and so on; although these were usually positions that didn't see fruition, he got good press and good vibes out of it. And, you know, he just achieved this reputation, this image, of being this extremely clean-cut, very highly principled yet gutsy individual who refused to accede to any kind of corruption or unethical behavior or whatever. Although he could only carry that so far here, because he'd run into the hardcore political folks who a lot of them didn't like him, but because he wasn't the only one achieving this stature—more than the others—he got a lot of publicity because he understood the press corps. He considered himself one of us, a journalist. He cultivated the press assiduously. He even continued to write his own column, which appeared in a number of small papers. Yeah,

even though he was in the legislature. This all finally came together and created a situation whereby he was separated from the body politic. He was actually elevated above it, like really almost no other person in state politics. People just accepted the fact that we have this unusually high-principled good guy in Paul Simon, and he looked the part. It always kind of came into play. He kind of put it all together; it all came together. He really kind of marched to his own drum beat, and he kind of existed in his own political world that he successfully—and rightfully so—made separate from the body politic in the state.

DePue: You mentioned that he had enemies—I don't know if you said it quite that way, but—

Pensoneau: Well, I don't want to say… Well—

DePue: What was it that—

Pensoneau: People didn't like him because a lot of them didn't like his piousness and so on, and they felt he sometimes took cheap shots at some people in his many press interviews and so on.

DePue: Cheap shots at…?

Pensoneau: Well, maybe questioning the motives of people that not always should be questioned on every issue and so on.

DePue: Was he trying to cultivate an image that was separate from the Democratic machine?

Pensoneau: Definitely. Oh, yeah, yeah, I would say so, at least certainly up to his run for governor.

DePue: Well, that's certainly not going to—

Pensoneau: Yeah, definitely. Yeah, yeah. Downstate, he was evolving as kind of a—I don't want to say political god—but certainly as a political icon, okay. But I think among the machine potentates in Chicago, he was just considered kind of a pain in the butt to be tolerated. Well, first of all, to be fair to Simon here, he got elected by bucking the very hard-line Democratic machine down in Madison County as a young state representative.

DePue: So he emerges from the first place as something of an anomaly.

Pensoneau: Right, right, right. Paul Simon didn't owe anything to the downstate machine types at all. He got elected as a young independent Democrat and did so by challenging in his little newspaper down there a lot of the political corruption going on down on the east side of the river, and it was mainly manifested by

Democrats—old-line, entrenched Democrats. DePue: Where Powell would represent those old-line Democrats.

Pensoneau: Right, very good, which was one reason from the start Powell had his eye on Simon and didn't like him from the start and knew he had to keep his eye on Simon. Right, good analysis. And it went back to that. So for years up here, Simon didn't take any cues from local Democratic honchos down in his legislative district. He just didn't. From day one here, he was an independent in the legislature. There was a group of Young Turks in the House in the middle 1950s; at that time Alan Dixon was one, Paul Simon was one. Other names I can throw in were Anthony Scariano from the south Chicago suburbs, a guy named Richard Stengel from the Quad Cities, Abner Mikva, a well-known name. They were a bunch of Young Turks who questioned the political establishment of both parties; Powell, back in those years, was the most powerful Democrat in the Illinois House, and he had no use for these guys. I mean, early on these guys were calling attention to the obvious ties, some unethical, between the old-line Democrats in the House and Senate and the horse-racing industry. They knew that for favorable legislation, the racing moguls or whatever that word is were feeding stock in racing associations and so on to the Powells and to other people, people like that. Powell and the other old guard types really found them to be impudent upstarts and out of line. And so that feeling there never dissolved where Powell was concerned. Simon was on record numerous times. Simon wrote this incredible magazine piece which came out in *Harper's*—I talk about it in the Arrington book—I think it was printed in 1964; that's my guess—in which he openly—this is *Harper's Magazine*—he openly wrote that the Illinois legislature was essentially a cesspool of corruption.

DePue: (laughs) You don't ingratiate yourself with anybody that way. (laughter)

Pensoneau: No, and for that, he was nominated for some mythical award in the Senate called (laughs) the Benedict Arnold award. (laughter) That was just before I arrived on the scene, but I was aware of the *Harper's* article even though I wasn't following Illinois politics. So that was Simon.

DePue: Alan Dixon is the next one I want you to talk a little bit about.

Pensoneau: Sure. Alan Dixon was from Belleville, grew up in Belleville, went to the same high school I went to. Alan Dixon got a law degree from Washington University in St. Louis, was just a kid when he got elected to a then-existing position called police magistrate in Belleville. I could double-check this—I'm sure I wrote it—but the word was he was almost too young to vote (laughs) when he got elected police magistrate. But anyway, Dixon in a few years ran for a state representative slot down there and again was not backed by the regular Democratic organization in St. Clair County and somehow got elected state rep. When he got up here was every bit the Young Turk that Simon was when Simon arrived here a few years later. Dixon was a young rebel at first. I

don't recall that Powell ever disliked Dixon as much as he disliked Simon. It was always my impression he did okay, but Dixon was a thorn in Powell's side early on when he was here. He was part of this gang I talked about, and Dixon got a lot of favorable publicity down in our area. He was considered kind of a political boy wonder at that time. Even from day one he was an eloquent speaker; very smart; and all of his years in the Senate, he was one of the few who always read all the bills, knew what was in the bills.

DePue: So disciplined, obviously, too.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, yeah. Dixon was the biggest name politically in my hometown. He was from Belleville, but he was a very big name there, and of course people talked about Alan Dixon all the time. Dixon was never, though, as close to the press as Simon. I had access to Dixon—I mean, Dixon knew my mom and dad, you know. In fact, my dad moved his clothing store—it was on West Main Street—and he moved to another location in downtown Belleville, and when he did so, Dixon set up his law offices in the space where my dad's clothing store had been located. (DePue laughs) So you talk about small world–ism. Dixon, though, did reach an understanding—earlier than Simon—with Democratic regulars in his backyard, though; I should say that. And Dixon did come to be more accepted by the Chicago Democrats quicker than Simon did. Dixon got away from the rebel Young Turk image earlier than Simon because Dixon was starting to get some good committee assignments, things like that, that allowed him to advance his career, become a real player here in the issues, and so…

DePue: Was he in the Senate at the time you arrived?

Pensoneau: Yes, he was. They were both senators. Yeah, he was. Yeah, yeah, mm-hmm, the answer is yes. Although I should point out that Dixon and Simon were extremely close, extremely close, and that—many people didn't know—I found out and wrote, which surprised many people—that when Simon had this string of daily newspapers—I think it was up to fourteen at one time—Dixon was involved as a business manager. I had never known that, which shows how close they were. They were very close, and I know that sometimes if one or the other were in a political bind or between … Politicians like to say you get caught between a rock and a hard place, so I'm going to mimic them and say if Dixon or Simon, later on as they were both rising through the ranks, found themselves suddenly on a given day between a rock and a hard place, I know that the one would call the other and at that point say, What do you think? What would you do? I know that. They were that close. Even when they were both in state offices, that relationship existed. Now, at the same time, though, they had no choice but become rivals because they were two of the downstate luminaries in terms of seeking state offices.

DePue: There can only be one governor.

Pensoneau: Yeah, right. I can tell you this about both of them—and I know people will be reading this someday and may question this—but both eventually got to be United States senators, but the first choice of both of them would have been to be governor.

DePue: Okay.

Pensoneau: I want that in there. And the same was true with Adlai Stevenson III, also.

DePue: I do want to keep moving along here. I know you've got a lot to say about Russell Arrington, and I want to hold off on most of that until we get to talking about Ogilvie's administration as well. It's probably about time to take a break for lunch, so if you don't mind, maybe we can do that and pick it up, and then we can get into Otto Kerner in a serious way.

Pensoneau: Sure, absolutely.

(end of interview #1 #2 continues)

Interview with Taylor Pensoneau

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Interview # 2: March 11, 2009

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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DePue: This is Mark DePue. I'm back with Taylor Pensoneau in the afternoon. We just had lunch. I think we're at the point in time, now, Taylor, we can actually start talking about Otto Kerner. I want to start by asking you this: You got to Springfield in '65. Before that time, you'd been paying more attention to Missouri politics from what you've already said. What did you know about Otto Kerner getting to town? Because he'd already been governor for about four years, three years.

Pensoneau: He was elected in 1960—

DePue: Yeah, four.

Pensoneau: —took office in '61 and had been reelected in 1964. I mainly had followed Kerner through wire stories out of Springfield. In his bid for reelection in 1964, I'm sure the *Post-Dispatch* supported him editorially. I remember that one of the older political writers of the *Post*, and I don't remember which one, was dispatched up here to do an interview with Kerner, a very favorable, long, almost feature story interview with Kerner that ran, I'm sure, prior to the 1964 election. That was the longest newspaper article I had read on Kerner at that point. I knew that Kerner had been supported in his run for the governorship in '60 by the Daley machine in Chicago, and I knew there had been a Democratic party fight in 1960. As I recall, it was a legitimate fight, I think a three-person fight, and of course, Kerner won. I did not know much about Kerner. I, for example, didn't know about his connection to Cermak's family and things like that. I know that the governor of Missouri that I earlier mentioned I'd met, Warren Hearnes, a Democrat, had indicated in that time when I saw him briefly in Jefferson City not long before coming to Springfield that the governor of Illinois, Kerner, is a, quote, "very nice gentleman." So. When I got up here, though, perhaps the first person of consequence that I encountered, was very receptive to me coming onto the scene, was Chris Vlahoplus. Does that name ring a bell with you?

DePue: It does not.

Pensoneau: Okay. Chris Vlahoplus. I'm pretty sure I'm right on that. Now, Chris—

DePue: It sounds like a Bohemian or—

Pensoneau: Greek.

DePue: Greek? Okay.

Pensoneau: Greek, yeah, Vlahoplus. Chris Vlahoplus literally greeted me upon my entrance into the state house in October of '65. He was to Kerner what Mike Lawrence was to Governor Edgar and what perhaps a guy named Smokey Downey in the 1950s was to then-governor William Stratton. He was the top aide. Now, Chris came out of journalism; he had been in the United Press International bureau in the state house. At some point after Kerner first got elected, Chris joined him in the governor's office. Chris soon became, as I just said, the closest and major aide and was very much—maybe he had the title press secretary, but he was much more than that. He was the top assistant, at least publicly, out in the open, and he was obviously close to Governor Kerner. So Chris right away tried to give me—well, and did—he gave me his view of how things were in the Illinois state house and so on.

Now, (laughs) it was interesting. Chris wanted me to, quote, "get off on the right foot," and so I did have—as did others—I had access to Chris about anytime I wanted to. He was the man closest to Kerner and it was interesting. There was at that time—as seemingly at every time—we were in a state budget crisis, right, and Chris at that time was explaining to me the ins and outs and how Kerner had proposed reasonable tax hikes that were not overly burdensome, but how the Republicans, (laughs) mainly in the Senate, had blocked meaningful fiscal reform and so on. It was interesting, because at that point Democrats had pretty solid control over the Illinois government, with the exception that the Illinois Senate had a solid Republican majority headed by this individual I mentioned, W. Russell Arrington. Very shortly in my conversations with Chris, we got into Russell Arrington, Senator Arrington, and what a problem he was. (laughter)

DePue: And he was a new player for you?

Pensoneau: Arrington?

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau: I had never heard of him on my own until I did this little crash course in the five or six weeks before moving from St. Louis to here, when I would read everything I could get out of Springfield, Illinois, because suddenly this was my new focus, and here was this name. Kerner was always mentioned, but here was this name Arrington always mentioned, and I had never heard of him

before then, but it seemed like he was mentioned in every article as a counterpoint to Governor Kerner and to the administration. Well, Chris Vlahoplus immediately started talking about him, too, picking up just where the articles… And—

DePue: In less than flattering terms, I suspect.

Pensoneau: Yes. Well, yeah, yeah, yeah, he's a real problem for us, and therefore he's a real problem for the people of Illinois. And (laughs) I was secretly looking forward to the time—because the legislature was not in session then, and those were in the years when it met only biennially, and the '65 session was already over and so it wasn't going to meet again until 1967, and so it was going to be quite a while until I would actually get to see this much-discussed W. Russell Arrington. But, you know, Chris outlined the backgrounds of some of the cabinet members and so on and indicated some issues that he knew the *Post-Dispatch* would be interested in—mainly downstate issues—and made some suggestions about… Oh, for example, at that time, what is now the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity—it goes through a name change every four or five years—it's the state's version of it's own state chamber of commerce, the economic promotion agency. It was in existence then, and it was headed by a younger gentleman—well, it was handled by a director who was personally close to Kerner named Gene Graves. He died not too long ago.

DePue: Is this at that time the Department of Business and Economic Development?

Pensoneau: That would be it, yeah, and this is 1965.

DePue: Yeah, he's credited for establishing that in 1964.

Pensoneau: I think that's accurate. Yeah, okay, that would add up, yeah. And Gene Graves was close to Governor Kerner. Chris made it known to me early on that Gene Graves was one of a handful who, if he ever wanted to talk to Kerner directly on any given day, that would happen. So, for example, Chris would suggest I go over and introduce myself to Gene Graves and get to meet Gene Graves because Gene Graves could tell me about all of the various economic programs incentive-wise, TIF[7]-like things—proposals, many on the planning charts, that would boost the economy of the lower part of the state in the area where the *Post-Dispatch* was interested in terms of coverage. That was an example. The state was setting up under Kerner a reorganization of the mental health department and the way it was operating; they had a young psychiatrist, I guess, obviously, a Doctor Harold Visotsky, was heading it. Chris said, "You should go talk to Visotsky and let him tell you all the really forward-looking things we're doing in terms of addressing mental health treatment in Illinois." At the time in the Kerner years I believe, the Illinois Board of

[7] TIF: Tax Increment Financing, a tax device to encourage development by subsidizing new business with the expected taxes the new business would produce.

Higher Education was established Chris would suggest that I get to know people there because we're having a whole revamping of the administration of higher education in Illinois, that schools are not supposedly lobbying on their own and causing cutthroat competition, competing for funds, but they would all have to go through this central clearinghouse agency, the Board of Higher Education; it was the board then that would deal with the governor's office and the general assembly, not the individual schools. Of course, that wasn't really happening, but that was the objective of it. Okay, things like this, and Chris was helpful. He would give me his take on Alan Dixon and Paul Simon and others. And Chris, to be fair, was very helpful. Of course, there was nothing critical or negative about Kerner in any of Chris's approaches to me or suggestions and so on and in his private welcoming me to the state house.

And it was interesting; I was here—I don't know—I guess I was maybe here a month before I actually… Kerner didn't have a lot of press conferences, and I think I had been here about a month, and Chris finally called and said, "You haven't really met the governor, have you?" I hadn't. He said, "He's got a little free time late this afternoon. Come on over and I'll run you in." And so (laughs) I went over and we went in. The governor's office has these different rooms, the complex, and every governor changes the arrangement or whatever. As I recall, Kerner's desk was in front of this fake fireplace. I walked in, and it was Chris and the governor and myself, and that's how I met Otto Kerner. He was dressed very well, as I recall. I always recall him in three-piece suits with a vest. He was not as tall as I thought he might be. I'm pretty sure he was, I'm going to say an inch, maybe an inch and a half—somewhere between an inch and two inches shorter than me, very handsome. He always looked handsome in his pictures, and he was every bit as handsome and came across right away as debonair in person. You know, he was an Ivy League guy—Brown University.

DePue: But a rugged type of look to him.

Pensoneau: Yeah, okay, yes. Okay, I'll agree with that. Kind of a rugged handsomeness. I think that's fair. That's good—a rugged handsomeness. And so there were some brief, perfunctory questions about, Oh, you're here with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and Chris tells me you're getting established here, and all this. It was pleasant. Well, I was with him no longer than a matter of minutes—and I think I've got this—it's in the Arrington book before we get into Russell Arrington. (laughter) Right away about, "This state's got problems, and I'm trying to solve the problems, and I'm a reasonable person, but there's this W. Russell Arring—have you met this W. Russell Arrington yet?" (laughter) And I said, "No, governor, I haven't." "Well, I'm sure you're going to meet him, and Russ just doesn't understand what we're trying to do and how we're trying to (laughs) deal with problems in this state and so on." I just thought it was interesting looking back that I bet I was in Kerner's presence no longer than five minutes, and here we're into Arrington again, you know, (laughs) just like that. I remember one thing he said was, "Well, you know, "Russ is

extremely wealthy." He called him Russ. "Russ is extremely wealthy, and, I've even tried to go so far as to suggest if he won't go along with anything we're proposing to get us out of this budget situation that maybe he can just loan or give us some of his millions to try to…" (laughter) I remember he definitely said that. So anyway, that was about it in terms of my first remembrances of Kerner, really.

DePue: Now, his emphasis on Arrington—both of their emphases on Arrington—

Pensoneau: Both of them, yeah.

DePue: —would also suggest he had a much easier go with the House.

Pensoneau: Mm-hmm, yeah, because the House was under Democratic control, right.

DePue: Now, this is after the—

Pensoneau: That changed in the '66 election, but this is still '65.

DePue: Yeah, this is before the time you got there, but one of the things I've always been fascinated with was the nature of the House and the bedsheet ballot. Can you talk about that?

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, that was '64. Well, I can talk about, of course, my own research—I've written about it in my books. They could not agree on redistricting, and—

DePue: Well, let's go back even further than that.

Pensoneau: Even further? Okay.

DePue: The nature of the membership in the House, because that part always surprises me, too.

Pensoneau: The nature?

DePue: Yeah, that each one of the Senate districts had three repre—

Pensoneau: Oh, that. Oh, sure, sure, sure. Yeah, right, correct. Yeah, each House district elected three persons, and it was a cumulative voting system. When you went in, in terms of the House, there would be four candidates on the ballot, two Republicans and two Democrats, and you had three votes. Each person, who went in there, had three votes. You could cast all three votes for one of the four, you could cast one and a half votes for two of the four, or you could cast one vote [each] for three of the four. You follow me on this, I hope?

DePue: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Pensoneau: Okay, and so therefore, if you figure this out, you're always going to elect two Democrats and one Republican or two Republicans and one Democrat. It's

just the way it works. It's called the cumulative voting system. It guarantees from each district, minority representation. Especially this was important in Chicago because Chicago districts were heavily Democratic for the most part, and if not for this, you'd never elect any Republicans from Chicago. Now—

DePue: What does a young reporter from Missouri think about this system?

Pensoneau: I had no idea what it was until I hit the Illinois state house. I had never heard of such a thing, (laughs) and yet I grew to appreciate it because I thought it brought about forcibly not just minority representation, but more of a balanced governing system, more of a balanced performance in the House. I didn't vote for the so-called Cutback Amendment in 1980 when it was abolished. I opposed it for a lot of reasons, all of which have turned out to be true. But that's probably another story. But I thought it was great. Now, I will point out, though, that in a lot of the Chicago districts, the Republican would be really a Democrat in disguise. It'd be one of the proverbial wolves in sheep's clothing, okay, and when the chips were down in House votes affecting Chicago—not all, but in some of the Chicago House districts—when the money was on the table, the Republican would vote with his two Democratic counterparts in the district.

Some of those Republicans, especially from the ones on the West Side, (laughs) were all kind of hung together; they became known as the West Side Bloc, (laughter) and it was not complimentary. First of all, when the money was on the table, they always voted with the Democrats, so they were not really Republicans. Also, a number of them actually had known associations with organized crime, too—bad elements in Chicago. So that was another interesting situation. True-blue Republicans running for state office always had one campaign issue; they were always going to—I remember Percy was one and others—a priority of any Republican elected to statewide office was to, quote, purge the West Side Bloc. (laughter) It's right. Yeah, it was great. So anyway, okay.

DePue: So the bedsheet ballot, yeah.

Pensoneau: Yeah, so what the bedsheet ballot did was—Democrats had a heyday, as you recall, in the 1964 election, starting with the presidency and going right on down. And the bedsheet ballot left the House with really, really lopsided Democratic control. There were some famous names running, though, in the bedsheet ballot. Adlai Stevenson III, that's when he entered the scene. I'm pretty sure one of Dwight Eisenhower's—

DePue: Yeah, that's right.

Pensoneau: —brothers was a successful Republican candidate. A Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter in the state house pressroom ran and was elected, George Thiem, formerly of the *Chicago Daily News*. It was a once-in-a-

political-lifetime situation, and it was quite a collection of individuals. I know Gene Callahan, an old friend of mine, his father ran and got elected; Gene always said his father got elected because all the Democratic voters just assumed because of his name he was an Irish Catholic, and that was an automatic vote, and he wasn't. I think the Callahans were Lutheran—I think Gene is, at least—Lutheran or Presbyterian. Maybe that shouldn't go in; Gene might object to that. Okay, but anyway, Gene always kind of laughed and said that's why his father won over from Iroquois County, around the Milford area. It was quite a collection of people that won on the bedsheet ballot. A number of them were never seen again, of course, after that.

DePue: But I don't know if we've really explained—

Pensoneau: What it was?

DePue: Yeah, what it was and why it happened the way it happened.

Pensoneau: Okay, well, I know why it happened. It happened because we were going into an election year when redistricting was supposed to have taken place and be in place.

DePue: From the 1960 census, I would guess.

Pensoneau: I assume the '60 census, right. And it didn't happen. It didn't happen.

DePue: Well, from what I've read—and I don't want to put you on the spot here—but what I've read is that the Republicans were controlling the redistricting. They obviously favored it in such a way that it would enhance their position for the general elections and that Kerner vetoed it, and that left them with, Okay, what do we do now? And so I guess what they did is, they put two hundred and some names on one ballot, and there were no names assigned to a specific district, it was just—

Pensoneau: Right, everybody was elected at large, or statewide. Yeah, correct, yeah.

DePue: Another anomaly that I suspect you're thinking, Man, we wouldn't be doing it this way in Missouri.

Pensoneau: No, of course not. Yeah, I mean, it was very bitter, the redistricting, the back-and-forth situation that led to an impasse on redistricting of the House. I remember there were a lot of hard feelings. Now, that all occurred right before I got here, of course, but people still were talking about it and so on.

DePue: Well, I would think that the Republicans going into the bedsheet ballot are feeling pretty bad about their chances, and the way it turned out—

Pensoneau: Because of the national picture, part of it yeah. It was a big Democratic year.

DePue: Yeah, and the way it turned out, the Democrats walked away with two thirds of the House.

Pensoneau: Yeah, literally, yeah.

DePue: And just the way it would work if it was three people running for two seats—I'm sorry, four people running for three seats.

Pensoneau: Yeah, exactly. It was two to one.

DePue: Who was the Speaker of the House at that time?

Pensoneau: John Touhy.

DePue: Now, you hadn't mentioned him before.

Pensoneau: He was, of course, obviously, a Chicago Democrat, very close to Mayor Daley. I remember he had a booming voice, distinguished looking, white hair kind of slicked back. Traditional Chicago Democrat. I did talk to him. He was rather accommodating where he could be in discussions with me—had no reason to be—the *Post-Dispatch* didn't mean anything to him—but he was reasonable when I talked to him. I found him to be rather, I thought, forthright, at least talking about downstate issues. He was known in that session—he was Speaker, of course—as very amiable and very conciliatory, but then those who pointed that out also said he could afford to be with a two-to-one majority, okay, (laughter) which, of course, was true. But that's when, of course, Arrington was in control in the Senate. When did Arrington become—in those days the majority leader of the Senate was called the president *pro tem*, *tempore*.

DePue: Because the—

Pensoneau: Is '64…? Let me think on this. I got to think. This is all in my Arrington book, which we can grab here, but—

DePue: And I should know that, too, off the tip of—

Pensoneau: But no, Arrington was of course a different story in the Senate. You know, the truth of the matter is, even before Arrington had the title president *pro tempore* of the Senate, he was effectively running the Senate majority. The individual that had the title was—

DePue: Well, the lieutenant governor was the president.

Pensoneau: Yeah, but that was a token—

DePue: A figurehead.

Pensoneau: —situation, figurehead situation, yeah, and no lieutenant… In my time covering the Senate when that was still in play, of course, Shapiro presided and then Paul Simon. I watched them both. But neither Shapiro nor Simon… I mean, what Arrington wanted, Arrington got. Arrington was running the Senate. If Arrington would look up and suddenly decide, it's time to adjourn, Shapiro or Simon would say, "The Senate's adjourned."

DePue: Was Arrington kind of a domineering kind of personality?

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, gosh, yes. Absolutely—incredibly so.

DePue: Did he realize that? Did he play that to his benefit?

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Well, he was a real smart guy on everything else. Yeah, no, Arrington was extremely dominant, yeah, very domineering, very intolerant of those who he thought were slackers or not living up to their potential. Didn't matter whether they were Republican or Democrat; he would give you tongue-lashing out in the open. Just like I feared a Duffy tongue-lashing, almost every Senator, Democrat or Republican, feared an Arrington tongue-lashing. And Arrington had what we called a quicksilver temper. He could be amiable for a few minutes; all of a sudden something would strike him the wrong way and he'd take off on somebody. Arrington, I always said he was so great for newspaper coverage because he was just so volatile, and his quotes were great—not that he always intended them to be, but he said what he thought. Arrington pulled no punches. He was in total control in his years in the Illinois Senate—total.

DePue: Would it be a fair comparison with LBJ when he was in his congressional years?

Pensoneau: It may be a fair comparison. I don't think LBJ outwardly—from what I've read with the Caro books and so on, a little bit of Robert Caro—I don't think LBJ, though, openly ostracized or said what he thought openly about everybody, I don't think, did he?

DePue: The way that Arrington would.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Oh, if you were supposed to have had a report on something, it didn't matter whether it was in his own caucus or the Democrats, he'd want to know why, right out in the open. "Well, Senator, you've had all morning to do this. What have you been doing?" (DePue laughs) Stuff like this. He would humiliate people. But he was straight. He wasn't on the take. He was a multi-millionaire, didn't need the money, wanted to improve the legislative process, wanted it to become more of an active part of Illinois government. He succeeded in all that; he's responsib—

DePue: It sounds like nobody was willing to take him on, to challenge him.

Pensoneau: No, the Democratic leader was Sen. Thomas McGloon from Chicago, who was a very mild-mannered attorney, and actually was a fairly decent friend of Arrington's behind the scenes. And McGloon didn't really like to, on a day-to-day basis, take on Arrington in debates and arguing, so that was often delegated to the assistant minority leader, Alan Dixon—state senator Alan Dixon. Dixon was an excellent orator, and Dixon, like Arrington, really read the bills, and so there were some classic debates between Arrington and Dixon. Dixon was the designated debater on the Democratic side. Of course, Dixon, the position he was espousing would usually lose because they were so heavily outnumbered by the Republicans, but Dixon was a very enlightened great orator who could verbally exchange blows with Arrington.

DePue: Let's go back to Kerner and also to Touhy and both of their relationships with Daley and the Chicago machine. How close were they aligned? Let's start with Touhy first.

Pensoneau: Kerner and Touhy?

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau: Oh, I think they were aligned. I never actually saw Touhy operate, because Touhy was Speaker when I got here, but the legislature never was in session while Touhy was still Speaker. The first Speaker of the House I had seen—in 1966, the Republicans captured control of the House, so that meant in my first session covering as a reporter in 1967, there was a Republican speaker. So never really saw Touhy in action as Speaker, but I think that Touhy… There were very few things that the Kerner administration proposed that were not signed off on by Chicago, and obviously the political allegiance of both Kerner and Touhy was to City Hall in Chicago. So, yeah, they cooperated. I don't think I've ever heard anything otherwise. I'm not aware of anything otherwise; I assume there wasn't anything otherwise.

DePue: The other power brokers in Springfield at the time, then? Paul Powell would sound to be one of them.

Pensoneau: Yeah, Powell was still a player. Powell—

DePue: He was secretary of state then?

Pensoneau: He was secretary of state, yeah. He was then secretary of state, no longer in the House, but Powell could make calls on certain issues. Whatever issues were in the House, if Powell made calls, especially downstate Democrats would just change their votes if they received a call from Powell on something. See, remember, the secretary of state had then—still does, to some extent—a lot of patronage, and Powell of course knew how… You mentioned Powell and patronage before, and I think probably whoever discussed that with you was probably referring to when he was secretary of state because secretary of state had a lot of patronage; Powell would know how to run with

that and to make the patronage count in terms of rewarding political friends and allies and those he needed and all this kind of stuff. So obviously Powell was in a good position to put—if not a legislator's wife—his mistress, his Springfield girlfriend, on the payroll someplace, and that could be a big deal. And when a guy like Powell would call state representative XYZ and say, People I know and trust need a vote on this issue, this thing here. I know you're undecided on it and so on; if you can see fit, they're okay people and I know them, and I think you ought to consider a vote on this. And by the way, how is Helen liking her state position? Is she comfortable? Does she like it?

DePue: You mentioned something—maybe you don't want to go here, but I'll take you there anyway, at least try to take you there: the Springfield girlfriends. Was that part of the culture at the time in the legislature?

Pensoneau: I think more so than many people care to admit. The answer is yes.

DePue: Wasn't there a name that they had.

Pensoneau: And some weren't even subtle about it. What?

DePue: Wasn't there a name that they had, a somewhat derogatory term towards the mistresses that a lot of these members had in Springfield?

Pensoneau: Well, they were mistresses in the dictionary sense of the word. Springfield Sweethearts? I don't know. I'm not sure I…

DePue: Okay. I probably picked that up someplace…

Pensoneau: What did you hear?

DePue: I can't recall now; that's why I was hoping that… But anyway, that was a part of the culture, to a certain extent?

Pensoneau: It was, to a certain extent; the answer is yes. Because most of the wives spent minimal time here with their legislator husbands. And, of course, when I first came here, women were still a real minority. In fact, there was only one woman in the Senate, Esther Saperstein from Chicago, so that would give you an idea right there of the breakdown. There were a few more in the House. Some of the legislators did not even make any attempt to camouflage their relationships here in Springfield. You know, you could go out late at night to places like Southern Aire, which is now a seafood house out on the East Side; the Black Angus; the Mill Restaurant was still going, you know, and you'd see legislators eating the same night, 11:30 at night with this secretary or that gal who maybe worked over here for financial institutions or something. You know, you could certainly draw your own conclusion.

If I can digress on kind of a more modern-day Joe, later on in my coal industry years when, of course, I got to know a number of legislators in a

different light, I remember we would have these sessions whereby they would be held here on issues and they, quote, couldn't go home; they weren't allowed to go home for the weekend; they would be here a week longer. Sometimes the younger, naïve reporters would write, It's just so awful; these guys can't get home to tend to their duties. (laughs) These young reporters would come in, write these analyses that say, For another weekend they're going to be deprived of their wives and their children (laughter) and so on. And knowing what was going on, I would say to those in conversation—we'd laugh, and I'd say, "Baloney! A lot of these guys, that's the last thing they want to do is go home this weekend (laughter) to worry about their wives, cutting grass, maybe grocery shopping at home, having to do things with their wives and so on. (laughs) No! Get serious."

That's not fair to all legislators, and it's probably not fair to a majority, but it was certainly fair to a good number of them. Like a legislator would get a reporter aside and say, "Oh, it's just awful. I got to get out of here. I got to go home. There's a parade I'm supposed to be marching in this weekend, and I'm stuck here, and I just can't get away, and this is the wear and tear of having to be a legislator," and yet you know inside that he's got a girlfriend up in an apartment on the North Side and that's where he's spending all of his free time; there's no way he wants to abandon his girlfriend for the weekend and have to go back to his wife and to his kids and, quote, cutting grass and all the other things that go with being home. That's an aside.

DePue: This is also the time, and you said yourself that the Legislature's only in session every other year, so I would assume these people have a full-time job back in their district.

Pensoneau: They did—a very good point. Well, the whole idea of it originally in the United States, in America, was for members of legislative bodies to be citizen legislators, at least at the state level, not full-time lawmakers or legislators.

DePue: Not professional politicians.

Pensoneau: Right, exactly. And when I first arrived here, many, many legislators did have full-time jobs doing other things. I mean, there were farmers; there were insurance agents; you had some medical folks; obviously you always had a number of lawyers; you had the merchants; druggists; you had some that were teachers. Yeah, they had what you would call certainly part-time or full-time employment of something other than Illinois government. But that gradually changed, and, of course, Arrington, the stuff he insisted on and brought about played a role in this, in that as they became more and more full-time—in other words, Arrington, more than anybody, is literally responsible for annual sessions. He's the one that broke the mold of biennial sessions and brought about annual sessions. He was doing it even before the 1970 constitution was passed. But when they were required to be here more and more, they would—and this was honest; this was an honest discussion—they would indicate that

some of their professional pursuits back in the districts were suffering because they had to be here all the time, which is expected. And so that's why more and more we gravitated towards so-called full-time legislators, or, as they would put it, individuals dependant on their legislative salaries for their basic incomes. Of course, commensurate with what we're talking about, legislative salaries were increasing dramatically. They were still very low when I first hit the scene here—very, very low. The vast majority had income from other sources. There were automobile dealers, you know, and… But that gradually changed to where, more and more, as they were required to be here more and more with the increasing role of the general assembly in day-to-day governance and with the salaries steadily rising, the situation gravitated towards professional politicians holding legislative seats, more and more of them than had been the case at an earlier point in history.

DePue: How would you describe the atmosphere within the legislature, especially across the aisle, how they treated each other?

Pensoneau: Okay, well, I mean, the Senate: it was our version—still is, I guess—of the House of Lords, and the House was always more the proletariat, and there were distinctions. It was commonly assumed if a state representative advanced from the House to the Senate that he or she received a political promotion. The Senate was considered to be more of an exclusive domain than the House. The Senate was always run, in my time, at least, as a more orderly place. Disruptions of the procedures were not as virulent and as frequent as in the House. The House was always more chaotic. The House may be in session and if you go peek in or walk in and take a look out in the gallery, you'll think you're looking at the New York Stock Exchange sometimes, and that never was the way in the Senate. The Senate was more dignified. There was more of a collective effort in the Senate to maintain a dignified presence. If you were a visitor coming in from the outside and you compared both in the same day, you would notice a radical difference in perception. I mean, the House: it seemed there were always groups in the House never paying attention to what was going on up at the podium.

DePue: How about the relationship between Republicans and Democrats?

Pensoneau: Well, it depended. It depended.

DePue: It seemed like today a lot of people are nostalgic about those good old days when—

Pensoneau: I think I landed here just about the time a period of political harmony or working together was ending. I remember the 1967 session in the House. It was then back under Republican control, but it was very fractious and very political. Of course the black legislators, most of whom were Democrats, were then really rebelling against legislators, not only on the other side of the aisle, but against their own Democratic leaders, too.

DePue: I would think a southern Illinois Democrat was kind of akin to a southern Democrat.

Pensoneau: Very good. And southern Illinois Democrats, some were starting to bridle a little bit at the Daley control, too. That's a good point. You brought up a point, and it's a good one. Yeah, there were frictions. As I said, the Republicans, in the House had a majority, but there were some personality differences there that erupted sometimes on issues and so on. Ralph Smith, an Alton attorney, was the Speaker. He was pretty good in knowing the mechanics of the House. He was not nearly as adept, though, in keeping control in the body as his counterpart, Arrington, was over across the way in the Senate. It was like two different worlds. And I think with the progression of years, the political standoffs have gotten more extreme—more frequent and more extreme and more volatile.

DePue: More ideologically based?

Pensoneau: Well, again, you raise a good point. Ideological, perhaps, but also just for the sake of maintaining your own hegemony. It's just like it's kind of personal, and the first resort of many is to point fingers and accuse rather than sitting down to try to work something out right away. It's automatically questioning the other's motives in trying to do anything and automatically opposing instead of ever saying, you know, this is an interesting ten-point program you put out here. Three or four or five, we've got to talk about these next three, but this is a good start and we know you're addressing a problem, and let's see how much of it we can support. We think we already support some of it, maybe some of the rest if we talk it out. You haven't seen that in the last twenty years. It's much more polarized.

DePue: Let's get into some of the issues, then, that Kerner was dealing with. Apparently, right from the start—I can't pronounce this gentleman's name—Chris Vlahoplus?

Pensoneau: Mm-hmm.

DePue: That first conversation, he's telling you, "This is the governor's agenda," and it sounds like he was very much cultivating it.

Pensoneau: Yeah, a lot of what the Kerner administration accomplished and pointed to with pride occurred before I got here. Remember, Kerner took office early in 1961—elected in 1960, took office early in 1961—and I started here October of '65, so he had been governor for a decent number of years before I got here. Much of what he had accomplished, wanted to accomplish and did get accomplished, had either occurred, or the groundwork for such was laid before I got here.

DePue: Was some of that economic development, economic issues?

Pensoneau: Yeah, it was. It goes back to this department we have mentioned, whatever the name was this, and Gene Graves.

DePue: Department of Business and Economic Development.

Pensoneau: Yeah, right. Yeah. I mean, they had resolved issues. For example, a lot of public aid issues had hit the fan including birth control and things like that, and so the Department of Public Aid was created in the early sixties before I got here, although actually Arrington wrote the legislation. They had reorganized the state mental health system; they had set up the Board of Higher Education; they had laid the groundwork for a statewide community college system. We had had isolated junior colleges around the state like the one I went to in Belleville, but there was no statewide coordination, and many parts of the state were not part of any junior college district. But Kerner fostered that, brought that about.

DePue: When you arrived, did Kerner have a reputation for being able to work with the legislature and to achieve his goals, his agenda?

Pensoneau: He was respected. Kerner was kind of… Well, let's go back. Before I got here, there were Democratic majorities when this happened, so when you're a governor of a certain party and the general assembly is completely controlled by the same party, the rule of thumb here is that that governor should do okay in that kind of situation. He had that situation I guess for part of his first term, and he made hay; the general assembly gave him what he wanted, so I guess we'd have to say he did okay with some of these things I've talked about here. It wasn't the same way after I got here in the remaining years of his governorship, again, mainly because—well, starting at '67, the Republicans had both houses, but Arrington was always there night and day when Kerner was governor in the time I was here, and Kerner just had a rough row to hoe. I don't think he accomplished, if that's the right word, got as much of what he wanted in the latter part of his governorship as he did in several of those earlier years, again, partly because of Republican recalcitrance in the Senate spearheaded by Arrington.

DePue: After having observed him for a couple years, then, how did you assess his political skills?

Pensoneau: I didn't fully understand. First of all, he held few press conferences. But the one thing I always noticed about Kerner was—and this was also noticed by those in the legislature and some other situations who dealt with him—that he seemed to go on the defensive very quickly in his presence. I don't think he liked press conferences. I think that Chris Vlahoplus pretty much insisted that he have some periodically. Kerner seemed to me, at least in press conferences, to be quite uncomfortable with the press. He was not a natural with the press. He had come from a background where he didn't have to deal with the press too much. He had been U.S. Attorney in Chicago; he had extensive military in

his background. He was in a lot of situations where he did not have to deal directly with a questioning press corps. So I think Kerner was not comfortable with the press. In other words, you would only be in his office, for a few minutes when suddenly one question would put him on the defensive, and it was something that he'd be like, well, Why do you ask that? Haven't I done enough here? Don't you think I've…? You know, right away we're into this kind of stuff. I always noticed that about Kerner, that he so quickly took something kind of personally and right away was on the defensive.

DePue: Did he try to cultivate his relations with Arrington and the folks in the Senate to push through his agenda?

Pensoneau: You certainly didn't see it publicly. Now, in doing the Arrington book, I had access to all of the senator's scrapbooks; personal letters; personal, political files; everything, and it was surprising in there that I saw a lot of notes, short letters and things to Arrington from like Mayor Daley of Chicago; McGloon, the Senate leader; I know he and Dixon were friends at night, Arrington and so on; Paul Simon would write him nice things. A lot of correspondence around the times of his birthday and other occasions when his political opponents, some of whom were openly antagonistic, seemingly, in public, when people like me were around, were writing him very conciliatory things behind the scenes about, Hope you have a great birthday, Really hope you have a lot more, Nice job here. Daley would lambaste him publicly, but then I'd see about the same timeframe a little note that'd say, "Russ, I hope you're feeling well. If you've got time, see me sometime up here," signed Dick—Dick, short for Daley—something like that. Okay, here's why I tell you this: I never saw anything from Kerner in all those files like that—nothing. I didn't see any conciliatory little behind-the-scene notes or any indication that they were anything but sincerely antagonistic toward each other.

Now, if you get my Arrington book, one chapter starts off with something that's really poignant. It's after Kerner gets out of prison, and he's dying—I think it was lung cancer. He was a heavy smoker. And Arrington has had the incredible stroke which has ended his political effectiveness. This is in winter, I think, '75–'76, and there's this very poignant scene. Arrington dictated his memoirs of his life as part of his therapy recovering from the stroke, and he did it in a tape recorder. Then secretaries in his Chicago law office transcribed them in a written manuscript. I was provided with that manuscript in my doing the Arrington book. So I got this out of Arrington's manuscript, where in the winter, on a freezing night in Chicago, a minister named Bradley, regarded as a major Protestant spokesman in Chicago, had just a little dinner thing. He and his wife had this party; they invited Kerner and Arrington, and they came, and Arrington talks about it in poignant terms. It was Kerner and Arrington. Kerner's dying, and Arrington walks with a cane and is partially paralyzed from a stroke. I depicted it that here's these two old political antagonists, now in the end for both of them, helping each other into—I think Bradley lived in an apartment or condo or something in

Chicago—helping each other get in to spend the night with Dr. Bradley. It's kind of poignant. It's a good chapter; it starts off with this. Arrington says, "I asked him if there was anything I could do." And he said, "No, Russ, I'm dying, but I appreciate it. There's nothing you can do." Then Arrington said, "Kerner looked very weak, but then I needed help with my cane and getting my leg over something, and Kerner, even as weak as he was, helped me," and so on. So that kind of stuff. That's in the book. But in looking in all their scrapbooks I was given, and all these notes are in there—even from like Richard Nixon and so on—to Arrington, nothing from Kerner. So that's my answer.

DePue: Well, some of the stuff that I've read about Kerner—and it's not that much, I must confess—that he was described as somewhat naïve. You described him as being thin-skinned.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, definitely, in my opinion, yeah—and you're getting my opinion; that's what you're getting. No, he was regarded by state government experts here—Democratic staffers, operatives, as well as Republicans—as not understanding state government, and never did get a grasp of it.

DePue: So naïve or ignorant?

Pensoneau: Of course, a lot of them said the same thing about Adlai Stevenson back when he took office in 1949, too, Governor Stevenson. But that was the opinion, yes, that he was naïve. In fact, they even tried to bring his alleged naiveté into the situation when he was on trial later in Chicago on the racetrack stock dealings. This is when he was a federal judge, and even in his defense, they tried to subtly indicate, You got to keep in mind that he was kind of hoodwinked; he was taken in; he didn't understand that what he was doing was wrong. I mean, these were his defenders trying to gently invoke the naïve thing as, you know, he didn't really understand there might be something wrong with what was going on here in this stock situation.

DePue: Do you believe that was actually the case?

Pensoneau: Well, I personally, I can't believe any—very few of us know you have to pay taxes on money you receive.

DePue: Well, we're going to get to that in a little bit. But the thing that strikes me about that comment, though, was this was a guy who, okay, he grew up in Chicago; he married Helena Cermak, for God sakes, Anton Cermak's daughter. Cermak is credited as the originator of the Chicago Democratic machine. So how ignorant or naïve could he be about the nature of Chicago politics? He was raised in that.

Pensoneau: I know, and I agree. But he was a political blue-blood. His father was Attorney General of Illinois. As I understand it—in the book by Barnhart and Schlickman, they counter this, of course—but I don't think he ever had

engaged in grassroots political groundwork, working a precinct and things like that. I don't think so.

DePue: In Howard's book, *Mostly Good and Competent Men*, I think the way they described this was that Kerner was the convenient ethical face of the Machine.

Pensoneau: I would agree with that, yeah. That's a good description. I knew Bob Howard well, of course, and I will tell you, he did not like Kerner.

DePue: And that came across in the—

Pensoneau: He didn't.

DePue: —chapter. But then—

Pensoneau: He didn't like Kerner.

DePue: —you're talking about a guy that ends up spending the end of his life in jail, too, so.

Pensoneau: Yeah. He had a little bit of time after he got out. Bob did not like Kerner.

DePue: Do you think Kerner was effective in getting some of his economic goals accomplished? For example, the accelerator[8], landing that in Illinois?

Pensoneau: Yeah. The atomic accelerator up there, around, what's it, Batavia or wherever?

DePue: Yes.

Pensoneau: That was interesting. I think he's got to get credit on that. That was the one time I got to spend time with Kerner, and this was something I agreed to do. Chris Vlahoplus lined it up. You want to hear about it?

DePue: Sure.

Pensoneau: Okay. What was this, about 1966, '67, I'm guessing?

DePue: Yeah, I think so.

Pensoneau: I'm going to say '66. I have a reason for saying 1966. Okay, Chris said that I ought to get a chance to get to know Kerner better. By that time, I was writing stories; I was pretty much on my own two feet. I'd gotten my sea legs and all that stuff, and obviously some things I wrote about Kerner, my observations, weren't all—I considered them straightforward but they didn't sit well with the administration.

[8] He refers to the nuclear research facility called Fermilab, named in honor of Enrico Fermi, a famous physicist who was involved in the original atomic bomb experiments.

So Chris said, "You know, you really ought to spend a little bit of time"—I think he called him "the boss," or "the old man"—you ought to really spend a little time with him." He said. "Here's the deal, with some qualifications." This is when we were a candidate for this accelerator. Kerner was going to fly to Chicago in a state plane, and he was going to be spending the night and good part of the next day with Glenn Seaborg,[9] who then was kind of a big honcho for the Atomic Energy Commission.[10] Remember the name Glenn Seaborg? Okay. Kerner was going to personally pitch the Illinois site to Seaborg. I guess Seaborg had some say in the site selection.

So Chris said, "I'd like you to ride along on this, but you got to remember that you're going to have the governor right there with you, but you just can't question him freely. But I want you to watch him operate and so on. Now, just kind of get a chance to spend some time with him and maybe do a little small talk with him, but get to know him a little bit better." I said, "Fine," so I did this.

Okay, so, as I recall, in the state plane, it's Kerner and Gene Graves. I'm not positive if Chris went. It was definitely Kerner and Gene Graves and myself. We go up there and we just have the small talk on the plane—"How do you like living in Springfield," you know, this kind of stuff and so on. I remember Gene Graves talking quite a bit. So we get up there, and we're all in the same motel. That evening at dinner, here comes Seaborg alone. I recognize him from pictures; I've seen his picture in the paper a lot. So I sit there at dinner—and I can't remember if Chris Vlahoplus was there or not—but anyway, Gene said, "Now, this is kind of delicate. You're here to listen, and maybe you can write something later, but don't butt into the conversation of Kerner and Seaborg, because Kerner's going to tell Seaborg why Illinois should be the site for the accelerator."

DePue: Which is probably the juiciest piece of pork then being considered.

Pensoneau: Right, it got a lot of play. And then the other thing, too, was Chris said, "One thing: you're not to tell anybody that you're riding along because then all the other pressroom reporters would not like that, which is understandable, that you're getting to do this." So I sat there, they talked—and I think they probably talked after I was out of it—but, I mean, I sat there for the dinner part of it and hardly ever said a word. (laughter)

I'm listening to Glenn Seaborg and Governor Kerner and Gene Graves talk about this. It was an all above-board conversation about the different advantages and how there'd be no tax problems; there'd be concessions here and incentives here; and this road would be improved here and a new entrance road would be built over here; all this kind of stuff. Seaborg, I remember, was

[9] Seaborg won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1951 for work relating to nuclear elements in the periodic table.
[10] He was Chairman of the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission.

taking some notes. He appeared very scientific-like. This was interesting: he paid no attention to me whatsoever. I can't even remember how I was introduced as to why I was sitting there, but he paid no attention to me at all. But Gene Graves would look at me a little bit every now and then and kind of wink, stuff like this. But anyway, then—

DePue: (laughs) They're roping you in, huh?

Pensoneau: Yeah, this was really interesting. Oh, and I wasn't supposed to take notes, that was the other thing. I could take notes when I got back to my motel room or whatever but not take notes in front of Seaborg; that was the other deal. I agreed. I thought, Well, rare inside…

So then I remember the next morning we met for breakfast again, and Kerner was going to meet with Seaborg alone. But I had breakfast again (laughs) with Kerner and Graves. Very little discussion about the—and really, I do have to say this, I don't remember Kerner mentioning Arrington at all, okay? (laughter) I don't. But anyway, then he had another meeting with Seaborg, and I remember we took a motor tour of the (laughs) site. It was like a caravan with probably five or six cars; Kerner was in one with Seaborg, and then I think at that time I was in, like, the second or third car with Gene Graves.

And then some Chicago reporters obviously had surfaced from like the *Tribune* and the *Sun-Times* because here's Seaborg. This is a big deal, and word got out he's here to meet with our Governor Kerner and so on. I didn't know hardly any Chicago reporters then outside of the ones in Springfield, but I remember one was trying to figure out, "What are you doing? Are you with these guys, or what?" (laughter) I said, "Well, I'm doing an in-depth story on that later. I'm not writing anything right now, but more in-depth…" I could tell they're trying to figure out who the heck I was, because it was rather unusual.

Sometime that afternoon I flew back on the state plane to Springfield with Kerner. That's the most time I ever spent with him. But to be fair, I did not get a lot of insight out of it, though. But I mean, I did write an article. I wrote the article in a very straight, newsworthy fashion. There was very little indication in the article that I had been sitting listening to all this stuff, you know.

DePue: Did you approach them, or they approached you?

Pensoneau: They approached me, Chris did.

DePue: Well, if that's the case, it sounds like they were trying to convince you that Kerner was an effective operator at this level.

Pensoneau: Yes, you're definitely right, no question. He said in approaching me, in reading my stories in the *Post-Dispatch*, that I really hadn't spent much time with Kerner, which was true—no reporters did, to my knowledge. I mean, Bob Howard was head of the *Chicago Tribune* bureau, and he only would talk to him like at press conferences. I don't think he ever had any… Kerner was not accessible to the press, generally speaking. But Chris said, "You should spend more time getting to know the governor a little bit better; you haven't spent much time with the governor." By that time I'd been in Springfield well over a year or whatever. So then I remember Chris called and said, "Why don't you come on down a second? I want to mention something to you." When I went down, he said—Chris talked in a street-wise kind of slang guy—"Here's the skinny on this," he said, "Kerner's going to meet with this guy Seaborg. You know who Seaborg is? Big wheel, Atomic Energy Commission. We're trying to get this accelerator. We got a real shot at it. So Seaborg's coming out, we think we're doing real good on this, but he wants to talk to the governor, wants to get some assurances from the governor, and this is kind of a saleable thing." So Chris says, (laughs) "How'd you like to go along?" And at first, I didn't quite grasp what exactly—I thought, Well, are they saying—I didn't quite grasp the fact that I was going to be going with Kerner, literally, to this thing back and forth. Then Chris said, "Well, I talked to the boss," and he said, "It's okay with him. Why don't you ride along and get to watch Kerner and maybe get to understand him a little bit better and get—"

DePue: Had you been especially critical of him before that time?

Pensoneau: Well, I very soon—I'm not saying super-critical, but by that time I was certainly giving the Republican viewpoint on some of these issues too and so on. Yeah, and I had written some pretty direct stuff. See, the *Post* wanted me to develop here—among the avenues, one was the investigative realm. And of course I was starting to get involved in some small, petty stuff—I mean picayune stuff—but the beginning of getting involved in the investigative stuff, Naturally, since the Democrats controlled everything, the ones I would be critical of or who would be hurt were Democrats. So it was inevitable. So Vlahoplus was picking up on this, and I think he kind of felt that maybe I had not been indoctrinated enough in terms of Kerner. Of course, I was still only about twenty-five years old at the time, so you know—

DePue: Did you walk away with a different perspective of Kerner?

Pensoneau: Not much. We hardly talked. We sat on this airplane, like—he sat here, and I was here—we were as close as you and I—and then Gene Graves was sitting here. I don't think Chris was on the plane with us. I'm looking at Kerner and he's looking at me, and yet… Chris had said, "I want you to watch him, but don't exploit it. Really, it wouldn't be fair to the other reporters if you get into a lot of the issues that you might want to talk about. Just watch the boss in action." So I kind of accepted that condition. I mean, Kerner would say, "How long have you been here now?" stuff like that, and I'd say, "Well, I've been

about a year, governor, a little over a year." "Oh, yeah, well, do you like Springfield?" (laughs) or something.

DePue: So maybe you were—

Pensoneau: It was at that level. But then he and Graves started talking about some stuff, and it involved, I know one certain project, and I did interrupt; I said to Gene, "Well, can I ask the governor about this?" and Gene said, "Yeah." Then I asked Kerner, and I remember that became a separate story. I can't remember what it was on; it was something to do with some downstate economic deal, some—I don't know, I can't remember—one of the man-made lakes or something, which were on the books and a lot of the lakes we now have. I asked Kerner about that, and he said, "Gene, where are we on that situation?" Graves would say, "Well, the last thing, governor, is so-and-so did this," and Kerner said, "Didn't I ask for that report?" Gene says, "Yeah, I got it. I'll get it to you." Conversations like that, you know, and then I was able to say, "Well, this is going to be in fruition?" and then Graves says, "Oh, yeah, definitely," and so on. Then Graves would say, "Yeah, if you wanted to write you ought to quote the governor on it, that we're doing this, or we're at this stage on it." I said, "Fine." Kerner looked at me and I looked at Kerner, and it was just understood that I was going to write a story on it, and I was going to quote Kerner, which I did.

DePue: Do you know if they were doing that, this kind of cultivation of certain reporters, with other people who were in the state house?

Pensoneau: I don't know. That's a good question. I can't say for sure they were. Now, all governors always have favorite reporters in Chicago; it's just the way it goes. They don't admit it, but they do. And I do know, in spite of what I said about Kerner, Kerner did have some reporters in Chicago that he would see privately when he was in Chicago. He always liked to eat at the Cape Cod Room at the Drake Hotel. When he was in Chicago, you could almost find him there every evening eating. I know that there was a reporter you'd see him there with sometimes, and I know that reporter would always be the one to break Kerner's take on a certain issue. I think he was named Jack Mabley. And there were others. But in terms of the state house press corps, I was not aware of any similar situation, I'll be honest.

I wrote it several days later for the Sunday paper. I wrote it from an insider account, but I did not frankly disclose that I was flying on the plane with Kerner. I didn't do that because I was thinking to myself a little bit here that that might start creating some problems with me with some of the other reporters in the pressroom, and I thought it might start to generate charges of favoritism and stuff like this. You've always got to watch stuff like that. So I wrote it. It got a decent play. It wasn't front page, but it was somewhere inside the *Post-Dispatch* on Sunday. It was a pretty thorough account of Kerner meeting with Glenn Seaborg, who I think was—he was head of the Atomic

Energy Commission—about the accelerator. And subsequently we got it, "we" meaning Illinois; Illinois got it.

DePue: Yeah, and from what I read, there was something like forty-plus states—

Pensoneau: Oh, it was a big deal. Yeah, oh, yeah.

DePue: —that were vying for it. Let's move on here to—this couldn't have been too much later than what we had just been talking about. July of 1967, LBJ selects Kerner to head up the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Do you know how that came about? Why Kerner?

Pensoneau: I do not. I don't recall knowing at the time. The initial stories on that were written out of Washington by the Washington bureau. That was announced in Washington.

DePue: So that took Kerner out to D.C. to work on this?

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. He was gone quite a bit of time. He was absent from the scene. Yeah, the answer is yes. Oh, yeah.

DePue: So apparently you weren't privy to see what was happening in that particular commission.

Pensoneau: I was not. I think almost all of the spade work on that, all of the real work, upfront, behind the scenes, I don't think any of that was done in Illinois. That was my impression.

DePue: Well, it's interesting because it ends up being one of the seminal pieces of literature that's chronicling the civil rights movement in the United States.

Pensoneau: I agree with you. I agree.

DePue: And Kerner.

Pensoneau: And Kerner, right. Yeah.

DePue: Okay, just wanted to get this in record here because Kerner is pivotal in this sense. This is the report where it says that they declared in the report when it finally came out—and it's usually called the Kerner Commission, the Kerner Report—that America is "two societies, one black, one white, separate but unequal."

Pensoneau: Mm-hmm. I remember the wording; I remember it got a lot of play. The challenge I had with that—and the same applied to every other reporter on the scene here covering the state house—was that everything with that was released in Washington, not here. Kerner was the chairman. I recall—surprising in looking back, although it was, as you say, a seminal event or

aspect of his time as governor—I recall personally writing very little about it because his participation was initially announced in Washington and all the press stuff was all released in Washington. Very little here, as I recall, if memory serves me right. When there would be progress reports about what was being accumulated, how it was going, that was always all in Washington. I know the outcome of it was all released in Washington and not here. Whatever role—and here I have to lump myself with the other reporters; we were all equal on this—we would only kind of get a reaction, but the only principal figure involved in the thing was Kerner. Kerner would be in Washington, as I recall, when major things would happen in regard to this whole undertaking, and he would be quizzed out there. We had seven or eight people in the Washington bureau, and they would talk to him out there, so there were really meager scraps left for me back here in terms of freshness or anything else.

DePue: Was he still serving as governor, or—

Pensoneau: Mm-hmm.

DePue: —did Shapiro step forward to take over some of that load?

Pensoneau: Again, depending on my memory here, and if my memory serves me right, he was still serving as governor, if my memory serves me right. That would have to be near the end, because, let's see—the first riots were in Detroit, and they were in '67. Then came Watts, I think.

DePue: Yeah, all of the riots across the country in '67 were what brought about the commission in the first place.

Pensoneau: Right, okay. We both know he definitely was governor when he was named, but I will not swear that he was still governor when the work of the commission culminated and this final report, which was actually a small book, was issued.

DePue: A bestseller at that time. Well, it's about that time, and we're at that point in his career, in 1968, where LBJ nominates him for the Seventh District Court of Appeals. I think you mentioned before, his father had served in the Seventh District Court of Appeals.

Pensoneau: That's what I wrote.

DePue: Why would Kerner take that? Why would he step down from being governor? Maybe it's my perception that's a step down; maybe he didn't see it that way.

Pensoneau: I'm not sure he did. To me—and perhaps to you—to me, it was a step down, but apparently it was something I was led to believe he coveted, that or something like that. Republicans both assumed and were apprehensive that he would run for election to a third term in 1968, and in spite of perhaps his

shortcomings or maybe negative assessments that might be applied to him, he was still regarded as politically popular among rank-and-file Illinoisans. I know I wrote and believe that he would have been a very potent, perhaps hard-to-beat candidate for a third term in 1968. So in view of that, and since being governor is the ultimate office you deal with when you're covering Illinois government out of the state house, it was a bit of a surprise to everybody on the scene when he accepted this thing. As I recall, it all came about rather suddenly; there was not a lot of advance notice that it was going to happen.

DePue: Was there any rumor of corruption within the administration at that time?

Pensoneau: No, no, certainly—no, the answer is no. Certainly nothing of the magnitude that would discourage him from relinquishing the governor's office. He had had one scandal situation that was back—the after-effects of it were still lingering when I came here—but it actually occurred before I got here. I think it hit the fan in 1964. It was the so-called envelope scandal. You'll see it in the book there. That was the most serious public skirmish he had survived. It involved his very close friend and state revenue director, Theodore Isaacs, the same individual who later on would be involved in Kerner's downfall.

DePue: And maybe that's why—

Pensoneau: Well, okay, look, maybe Kerner had some inkling that his maneuverings over racetrack stock and racetrack racing dates were going to be looked at by federal investigators; I don't know. But at the time, the way it was presented to people like me was that, He's been governor now for let's say seven years or whatever; he's done a great job, but he's tired. He needs to get a little bit out of the spotlight, but he still wants to play a big-time role. He can think of nothing more honorable to cap his public life with than to fill a seat on the same federal appellate court on which his father served. That's the way it was presented, and that this is something that apparently has been, we were led to believe, discussed with Johnson, and that the governor is absolutely delighted that this is going to happen, and this is what he feels he really wants at this stage of the game, and it's a proud moment for him, and there's not a better way for him to finish the better part of his lifelong commitment to public life than on this federal appellate bench in Chicago on which his father served. There was not much more that surfaced at the time than that, as I recall.

DePue: And it's going to be a couple, three years before the problems about the racetrack dealings did surface. I'd like to have you talk about that in a little bit more detail, what the nature of those problems were. But let's start by asking you this question: Were you surprised when you heard that he was under investigation, that there were some problems?

Pensoneau: I was, okay, I was. Here's why: because I came to accept, to some extent, the insistence upon his incessant critics that he never got a grasp on state

government, that he never really secured a thorough understanding of the key aspects of state government—how the legislature worked and things like that. Okay, I came to accept some of that, but I thought he was personally honest. I did. And I don't think that I had ever written a word, initiated anything on my own, that indicated in analyzing Kerner that there was any personal dishonesty aspect involved in anything, so therefore, I was surprised. I was surprised. I found out about it, as did others here, because the justice department leaked it in Washington. I got a call from one of my compatriots in my Washington bureau and he said, "What do you know about this? What's going on here? Former Governor Kerner, he's on the appellate bench, he's been named in a press release. It's something about either he's been indicted, or an indictment's imminent, on something to do with racetrack stock deals in Illinois when he was governor?"

DePue: That would have probably been in 1972, because—

Pensoneau: I was going to say '71, but it might have been '72.

DePue: It could very well be. He was convicted in February '73.

Pensoneau: But there was a time lapse in there. Now, here was, as I recall, why I was further surprised. After [Paul] Powell died in October of '70, and then in January of '71, right at the end of '70, like New Year's Eve or December thirtieth, that's when the bombshell was made public about the money in the shoeboxes and all that, and that just took over everything here in terms of interest. Everything else went on hold—legislation, everything else—while for the next month, January of '71, for all people like me, press people and even some officials in investigative capacities, that was the rage: Where did all that money come from? Oh my God, how…?

DePue: How much money was in that…?

Pensoneau: Roughly eight hundred thousand dollars, which looking back today, I mean, is not that much. A lot of the legislators have that in their own treasuries—legal—there's nothing illegal about it—but the amount of money is not stupendous today.

DePue: But this wasn't checks; this was cash?

Pensoneau: It was certainly a lot of cash, but there may have been checks, too, I don't know. But it's just that it was allegedly found in his suite at the St. Nicholas Hotel. Believe me, there's still a lot of mystery about this as you and I talk right now, and no definitive answers will ever be forthcoming, okay? But that disclosure then triggered all sorts of investigations of every kind. And it was at that time that in looking for where this money came from, the full force of public scrutiny, of investigative scrutiny, finally came down on Powell's ties with the whole horseracing industry. That unleashed a whole new wave of investigations and reexaminations of racing dates, relationships, actions of the

racing board members, who held stock in different racing associations. Seemingly for a month, every day there was a new revelation of, This legislator, through the name of his daughter or his sister-in-law, holding eight hundred shares of valuable stock in such-and-such a racing association that raced at Cahokia Downs or at Sportsman's Park, whatever.

This was just like it was a frenzy; it was like a feeding frenzy here with reporters on this. I didn't sleep for a month, and neither did other reporters here. Reporters came in from the outside, and everybody every day was trying to score a different beat. There was so much coming uncovered all of a sudden that had been hushed up for years—a lot of the stuff that Simon and Dixon and Scariano had kind of talked about back in the mid-fifties—now , in January of '71 was just completely coming out in the open in unadulterated pell-mell fashion. So suddenly at last the whole journalistic investigative spotlight is now finally focused—maybe it should have been years earlier—but now finally, belatedly, it was focused on this whole interlocking relationship between major political figures in Illinois and the horseracing industry.

DePue: Well, and Theodore Isaacs, I know, was right at the heart of a lot of that.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, yeah. By that time, of course, I was well-connected with the whole journalistic community in Illinois, at least that did the things I did. I think it was a conversation with a guy I was extremely close to in Chicago, the best investigative reporter I ever knew—we were very close… What he told me was, "The Nixon crowd—Nixon was president—"The Nixon crowd is looking at something with Otto Kerner." I think that's the first I heard of it. And he said, "I don't have my finger on it, but Kerner…" This guy had incredible contacts. Well, I'll tell you who his contact was: it was Jim Thompson.

DePue: I was going to say.

Pensoneau: Thompson was U.S. Attorney in Chicago, and he said, "I think if there's something doing there, Thompson will give it to me." This guy had incredible contacts, and he's still going today. He said, "Nixon people in the Justice Department are looking at Otto Kerner." That's the first I heard of it, and then at some point later, there was this big release in Washington about it. The initial release either was that Kerner is going to be indicted or Kerner has been indicted, and that just magnified the whole thing going on, you know, with story after story about relationships between the political figures in Illinois and the horseracing industry.

DePue: Did these stories break before Watergate started to build some steam?

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, yeah. I always pointed that out, too. I've said that in several of my books, that Woodward and Bernstein get all the credit in the world for what they did and the fact that they triggered a whole interest across the country in

investigative reporting, investigative journalism, but I pointed out that here in Illinois, investigative journalism in terms of state officials had been going on heatedly for a good number of years before Woodward and Bernstein made national headlines. I stand by that today, but, you know, you can't convince any national pundits or others of taking the time to really discern the truth of that.

DePue: Well, I think just to get it into the record that the ultimate charges, as I understand it—and you can correct me here when I get this wrong—that a woman by the name of Marjorie Everett had secretly sold some racetrack stock to Governor Kerner and to this Theodore Isaacs for bargain-basement prices, and then they had very shortly or immediately after sold it back to her for a nice, hefty profit. And, of course, there's a *quid pro quo* kind of arrangement; this was going to be beneficial for her in some other sense, and is—

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, racing dates were the lifeblood of the horseracing setup. The dates—

DePue: This is before casinos and other competition in the gambling business. So Kerner and Isaac both were both convicted of conspiracy, income tax evasion, mail fraud, making false statements, and I believe in Kerner's case, of perjury as well. So off he goes to jail in 1973. Your response when here you have the former governor of Illinois—before it was a tradition, mind you—going to jail.

Pensoneau: Right, right. It was regarded as a political tragedy at the time because regardless of what you thought about Kerner, people thought he was—maybe not all the press corps folks that tried to cover him—but the general impression of Kerner is that he was honest and that he was classy and that he was decent and that he was above political corruption. He was one of the last individuals that most on the scene ever would suspect of getting entangled in something like this. And it was considered political tragedy because of his family, because of the fact that he had been governor of Illinois, that his father had been attorney general, that he had married into the Cermak family. It just felt that here was this man of considerable accomplishment, and now this was all going down the drain. It was like, how could he let this happen? Why did he let this happen? He had to know better. And there was genuine sadness, I think.

I would go around the state at the time. People would talk to me—I was the only Illinois political writer for the *Post-Dispatch*—and they'd say, Boy, weren't you surprised at the Kerner thing? It was common, at least downstate, to hear people say, Boy, that's the last guy I thought would be tied up in something like that. So I think in a way, you know, you're a reporter and you're supposed to be hard-boiled and all this stuff, but I think in the end, I did feel sorry for Kerner, I got to say that, a little bit. I saw him once after he

got out of prison. He was at a restaurant in Springfield and I went up and said hi. Actually, he asked me to sit down. He looked very weak. He wouldn't live much longer.

DePue: He was released early because of his cancer?

Pensoneau: I understand he was, yeah. I'm sure he was. I assume it was cancer. He was quite ill. He looked ill when I saw him, and that wasn't too long before he died. But I think he just asked, like, some vague, How've you been, or something like that, and I said, "Well, governor, I've been just fine." But I remember what it was; I think it was at that restaurant across from the governor's mansion, the Mansion View Complex, something like that. The restaurant has had different names. It was in that restaurant. Yeah, he was sitting there alone. But anyway.

There was also, among the journalistic community—I mean, you take the *Post-Dispatch*. We covered, of course, Missouri state government, and we covered Washington—and there was always a little jealousy once I had firmly established myself with the bureau in Springfield, being on equal par with Jefferson City, Missouri, and in some ways, getting the same respect as the vaunted Washington bureau. There was always jealousy within the *Post-Dispatch*, a little bit, about, among these three bureaus, I was the upstart, because Washington had had a big national reputation for years. Jefferson City, of course, had never had a dormant period; it had been a strong bastion of the newspaper for years. Springfield had been a wholly different situation which would take the rest of the afternoon to get into here. But there was some jealousy because when we would cover national conventions, for example, the Illinois delegation was so much more important than the Missouri delegation, I mean, in terms of national politics. My objectivity was well-known, so I can say this: Hey, I had Daley, okay, and not even Washington had Daley, and so it was like I had more ammunition to write with and to play with than certainly Missouri ever did at a national convention or even than these Washington guys did, because Daley was such a power broker. I mean, he was in my opinion the single most powerful politician in the United States. Even these Washington guys who were covering senators and all this stuff, they noticed how much attention Daley got at all the national conventions, and so much revolved around Daley, and I was the guy covering Daley; it wasn't the chief of the Washington bureau and it wasn't the Missouri political correspondent from Jefferson City.

So when Kerner got indicted, some of the guys in Washington kind of rubbed it in to me a little bit about, well, we see one of your stars is getting it; what do you think of that? Didn't you think he was a good guy? You know, this kind of stuff. And it was kind of like, we're kind of glad to see this because it knocks Illinois down a little bit, you know. And that was one of the reasons I had, after it was all over, felt a little sad for Kerner, because Kerner had gotten a lot of favorable national attention with the Kerner Commission,

and to the outside world he had still a pretty good reputation, clean and all that kind of stuff. So it was kind of like you, meaning me, you realize you've kind of been knocked down a notch or two or something in terms of big-time Illinois. You follow me here at all, a little bit? Okay.

DePue: That parallels the situation we have right now, because now we have an Illinois president—[11]

Pensoneau: Can you imagine…

DePue: —a different Daley is up in Chicago, and the length between that president and the Chicago political base?

Pensoneau: This is the biggest political situation in the United States right now.

DePue: Yeah, (laughs) it's amazing.

Pensoneau: So anyway, there was a little bit of that.

DePue: But how ironic is it in view of what's happening at the national level? He's convicted just about the time that Watergate[12] begins to heat up seriously.

Pensoneau: Yeah, yeah, yeah, right. Yeah. And I don't know when you want to get into this, but then I went out to Washington different periods to help with Watergate coverage. Another time.

DePue: Well, I think this is probably a clean break for Kerner, and our next session is on the Ogilvie years—

Pensoneau: Sure, any way you want to…

DePue: —and the Arrington years. It just happens to be the same timeframe we're talking about here, so there's a lot more fascinating (laughter) Illinois history to talk about, huh? (laughter) It has been a blast to hear these stories, and I sit here and shake my head sometimes listening to some of this stuff, but…

Pensoneau: (laughs) I know.

DePue: Thank you very much. Part one is done.

Pensoneau: I've thoroughly enjoyed it, and I can't wait for part two.

DePue: Okay, thank you, Taylor.

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[11] At the time of this interview the President of the United States was Barack Obama, a Democrat.

[12] A scandal during the presidency of Richard M. Nixon. Republican operatives stole documents from Democrat files in the Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C. After long denials in Senate hearings, Nixon resigned in disgrace.

(end of interview #2 #3 continues) Interview with Taylor Pensoneau
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Interview # 3: March 20, 2009
Interviewer: Mark DePue

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DePue: Today is Friday, March 20, 2009. My name is Mark DePue, and I'm an oral historian with Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. We're here for our second session with Taylor Pensoneau of New Berlin, Illinois. It's New Berlin [BURR-luhn]; it's not Berlin [ber-LINN].

Pensoneau: It is, it's New Berlin.

DePue: It's one of those many towns in Illinois (Pensoneau laughs) we happen to say a different way because we're stubborn that way, I guess.

Pensoneau: That's right.

DePue: As we mentioned before, this is part of the Jim Edgar series, but we're covering an awful lot of terrain that doesn't directly deal with Jim Edgar at all. The wonderful thing is today's subject is Russell Arrington, but especially Richard Ogilvie. It's appropriate that we're talking about those two because, of course, Edgar got his political start as an intern for Arrington during those crucial Ogilvie years, during the '68–'69 timeframe, so it's a great place to start. I think what I'd like to have you do—and we talked a little bit about Arrington last time, Taylor—but let me start with this. The book that you wrote, *Powerhouse: Arrington from Illinois*—if we can plug the book on Arrington—has a wonderful preface by none other than Jim Edgar; it wasn't hard to figure out why you decided to select him, nor was it hard to figure out that he was eager to do that, I would imagine.

Pensoneau: Governor Edgar was a logical choice to write the preface or introduction to my book on Arrington. Governor Edgar never made any secret through the years that he owed a lot politically to Arrington. In fact, I think it's fair to say that Governor Edgar almost considered himself a political protégé of Arrington and that Arrington, far more than any other major figure, was Governor Edgar's mentor.

You know, a little bit of an anecdote: I know that as I was writing the book on Governor Ogilvie in the 1990s, Jim Edgar then was governor of Illinois. In my role with the Illinois Coal Association, of course there was legislation and there were bill signings that were intended to benefit or affect coal favorably. I would have to say that almost every time on the podium when then-governor Edgar would be there for a bill signing or something, as the front man for the industry, I would be with him up on the podium. Invariably Governor Edgar—who knew I was writing the book on Governor Ogilvie—Governor Edgar would always draw me aside and say, "How is the Ogilvie book coming?" I would say, "Fine, Governor." Then he would always add, "Now, you're giving Senator Arrington his due, aren't you?" (laughter) I always thought that was interesting because Governor Edgar always said, "You know that much of Ogilvie's success would not have occurred without Arrington," and of course that is true. So I think that sort of illustrates the feeling and depth with which Governor Edgar regarded Arrington.

DePue: Well, to get a little bit more flavor of who W. Russell Arrington was, let me quote Jim Edgar and get your reaction to his quote. He describes Arrington as being "smarter, better informed, more intense, more resolute, more aggressive, more abrasive, and brassier than any of them," "them" being the rest of the senators in the Illinois Senate. Fair assessment of the man?

Pensoneau: Oh, absolutely. Governor Edgar's absolutely right. Almost every adjective there would apply to Arrington. In my book, Arrington just stood head and shoulders above everybody else in the Senate in those very important years.

DePue: But having said all that, how did he manage not to alienate and to anger everybody? How was he so successful?

Pensoneau: Oh, but he did. He alienated many individuals, and he didn't care one whit about doing so. It was just that, as Jim Edgar said, Arrington was smarter and better prepared and more prepared to take the bull by the horns on almost every issue of the day and move forward. Arrington could be arrogant, could be ruthless; in some cases, he used intimidation to get what he wanted, which he always felt was in the best interest of the people of Illinois and the Illinois general assembly. In answer to your question, Arrington did alienate many people. In a secret ballot, he never would have won a popularity contest among the senators. But he was highly respected, by Democrats as well as Republicans, and maybe more importantly, they were intimidated by him. Some were just downright scared of him. None of them wanted to be the subject of an Arrington tongue-lashing (DePue laughs) or an Arrington lecture to the effect that, You're a laggard and you're not doing your part; you're here to get something done and to address problems and (laughs) you're not fulfilling your role. He would give this lecture to fellow Republicans as well as Democrats. You did not want to incur the wrath of Arrington; it was that simple. I think that he was by far the most intimidating legislative leader that I certainly got to watch and cover in my time.

DePue: And yet each and every term at the beginning of the term, the members of the Senate had to decide who was going to be their leader, and he always won those elections, right?

Pensoneau: Well, it was always going to be a Republican because they were in the majority almost until the end of Arrington's legislative career; the GOP had a majority in the Illinois Senate, so it was obviously always going to be a Republican. No, Arrington was the unquestioned leader, no question about it.

DePue: So even the folks who got tongue-lashings—

Pensoneau: Voted for him.

DePue: —voted for him?

Pensoneau: Absolutely. Oh, yeah, yeah.

DePue: Because…?

Pensoneau: Well, I think because they realized that he made the Republican majority in the Senate into a very formidable bloc.. And I think that they realized that under his hard-fisted leadership, they, the Republican senators, became very instrumental—not just in the policy-making in Illinois government—but in the actual conduct of state government itself. Arrington brought that Republican majority into great relevance—a group that had to be dealt with on every issue facing Illinois government.

DePue: Now, the interesting thing is the Senate is only half of the legislative equation. Is there a counterpart on the House side?

Pensoneau: Well, in the late sixties the counterpart was Republican Ralph Smith of Alton; Smith was very skilled and very solid in understanding the mechanics of the legislative process. He was a good so-called nuts-and-bolts operator in the general assembly. He didn't have the foresight that Arrington had. He didn't have the omnipresence—if that's the right word—that Arrington had, but Smith took his cues from Arrington. It was interesting that when Smith was Speaker, there would be joint appearances and things like that, and it was one of the few times Arrington showed tact, in that he kept himself under control in joint appearances with Smith so as not to show up Smith or to appear to be bullying Smith or to appear to be totally hogging the stage. But yet there was no question that Arrington was the keynote or was the driving force and that whenever anything meaningful had to be done, it started in the Senate, then Smith would usually pick up the ball and carry it in the House.

DePue: How would you describe Arrington's political philosophy?

Pensoneau: Good question. He was a Republican. He was a fiscal conservative. Of course, that's one reason it made him almost physically ill to have to agree to be the

sponsor of the income tax legislation in 1969. However, he was also a moderate—I thought he was a moderate—on social issues, and I thought he was a middle-of-the-road pragmatist on many of the issues facing Illinois. He was not a conservative Republican; he was more of a middle-of-the-road pragmatist, as I said.

For example, in 1967 he astounded the whole political world in the Illinois State House by trying to get through a modest open housing bill, which was incredible since almost all members of his Republican caucus were staunchly opposed to any such legislation and it was a hallmark of the Democrats' program—such as it was—in that 1967 session. In addition, Arrington was the sponsor in '67 of the Firearm Owner's Identification Card law in Illinois, which was the closest we've come to gun registration in Illinois; that was strongly opposed by downstate Illinois politicians, including Republicans; Arrington, as I said, was the sponsor of that legislation. Now, granted, in the greater Chicago area, there was considerable support for some kind of control, if that's the right word, or some kind of accountability in terms of gun ownership in the state. But still, that was a Democratic issue; it was a liberal or quasi-liberal issue, and the fact that Arrington was the sponsor of it really just didn't sit well with the downstate Republicans at all, in both houses.

DePue: Your book does a wonderful job of explaining the near-revolt of a lot of the Senate Republicans over the issue of open occupancy, so could you explain a little bit more about what that was?

Pensoneau: Sure.

DePue: And you hear a term that we're hearing a lot right now with our current banking crisis: redlining, for example.

Pensoneau: Well, I think redlining certainly was going on. I think everybody acknowledged that; there was no question about that.

DePue: Redlining being described as…?

Pensoneau: Well, as I understood it, in certain neighborhoods, minorities couldn't get loans. There was an understanding that savings and loans and other financial institutions that lent money for home purchases would not loan for one reason or another to minorities in certain neighborhoods that were all-white or only mildly integrated.

DePue: Were there neighborhood covenants? I especially would think this would be politics that plays out in Chicago.

Pensoneau: This issue was most heated in then-white neighborhoods of Chicago and in some parts of the suburbs, but mainly in white neighborhoods in Chicago. For a while, believe it or not, those white neighborhoods had Republican senators.

I mean, they were almost violently opposed to any kind of so-called open housing legislation, even of the mildest sort.

DePue: Where was Arrington himself from?

Pensoneau: Evanston.

DePue: Was that a dynamic that was playing out in Evanston?

Pensoneau: Yeah, it was. Evanston had a sizeable and stable minority population—mainly talking about African-Americans. Looking back and doing the Arrington book, some of his aides did remind me that it was not as if there was not an open housing issue or potential open housing issue in Arrington's district, because it was not a totally all-white district. They said that politically speaking, there was reason on that ground for Arrington to try and recognize the open housing issue as a legitimate issue and perhaps to try to do something to resolve the issue, if only modestly. His proposed legislation was fairly weak in comparison to what Democrats in both houses wanted, but it would have prevented some aspects of discrimination in terms of minorities trying to move ahead in getting housing or apartments, and so therefore it still would have been groundbreaking.

DePue: He certainly made this move thinking that this could have a political backlash for him, I would think.

Pensoneau: I know, he did, he did, and it was the most dramatic development of the 1967 session of the Illinois general assembly, and it came near the end of the session. There was a Senate committee on registration and miscellany headed by a very conservative senator, Frank Ozinga, from Evergreen Park. That committee had made a name for itself during that session by bottling up any legislation that smelled of open housing. What Arrington did, he made a maneuver to get legislation out on the Senate floor through another committee; he bypassed a committee that he had set up to deal with that and other issues. That was considered traitorous, and that inflamed, infuriated, his fellow Republican senators, almost to the man. For a brief period, those who cowered at Arrington's feet or who had never crossed Arrington actually stood up and said, Enough is enough. He knows better, and this cannot be shoved down our throat, and this is apostasy, and this is (laughs) political insurrectionism that we can't condone even from our strong leader.

As I point out in the book, in that long, closed-door caucus of Republican senators, Arrington felt if he had ever had to leave that caucus to go to the bathroom, if he'd come back, he no longer may have been the Republican leader.

DePue: (laughs) Well, as you explain in that, five hours is how long they were—

Pensoneau: It was incredible. Everything stopped in the state house—everything. Everybody stood around. You could hear a pin drop. Everybody stood around just looking down at the—I guess it was in one of the mezzanine rooms—at the closed door behind which Republicans were caucusing. Other legislators, Democrats, House members—everything stopped. You could hear a pin drop in the State House because everyone knew what was going on. This was momentous, that Arrington was actually on the griddle with his own Republican caucus. This is the man who arguably was the most powerful figure in the state house, including then-governor Otto Kerner, and here he was facing an incredible revolt against his leadership.

DePue: Did the members of the press corps—all of your buddies who were on the outside of this room, I would think—did they have any idea what was going on inside?

Pensoneau: I was still one of them. We had an idea—didn't know the details—and of course when they came out, nobody would discuss what happened outside of the fact we simply were told that Arrington is still the leader. Several Republican senators, I remember, told me, If you want to find out what happened, you can talk to Senator Arrington. I don't recall Arrington going into detail; his composure was obviously shaken, and as I recall—and whatever I've got in the book is what happened—but as I recall, he just said something to the effect, We had a frank discussion of a lot of things, and I'm still the leader of the Republicans in the Senate.

DePue: (laughs) All those juicy details you'd love to hear about weren't coming out, obviously.

Pensoneau: Well, some came out later, and they're in my book. At the time, you couldn't get any of the details out, I mean, except everybody knew it was a momentous—it was the most dramatic situation in the whole session.

DePue: One of the terms you used for some of those Republican senators were the Old Bourbons or the Bourbons?

Pensoneau: Well, that was a phrase I decided upon. I wanted a word to describe them.

DePue: So this is your alliteration.

Pensoneau: I guess I'll claim credit for using the term. I know I did get the adjective in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, which was unusual because in those days the *Post-Dispatch* didn't believe in adjectives, certainly not in news stories. I did succeed in labeling the bloc the Bourbons in the *Post-Dispatch;* then of course I picked it up when I did the books on Ogilvie and Arrington. You know, I could have said "the old guard"; in some cases I could have said "old-timers."

DePue: Did any of your colleagues adopt the term?

Pensoneau: I doubt it. I doubt it.

DePue: One of the things that fascinates me about Arrington is how he changed governance in Illinois, how he changed the role of the legislature. What was his goal in that?

Pensoneau: His goal was very clear: his goal was to make the Illinois general assembly much more of an active part of Illinois governance. He wanted the general assembly not only to play a bigger role in policymaking but actually to be more active in monitoring the actual day-to-day operations of Illinois government. His feeling was that the general assembly had so much more potential than the reality of the situation showed. He just developed a passion for the Illinois general assembly and made it his goal to make it, in his words, much more meaningful, much more responsive to the needs and necessary welfare of the people of Illinois; in that regard he was very idealistic. He just felt that the general assembly had to get more involved in the nitty-gritty of it; it had to be much more hands-on; it had to be much more responsible in its own operations. And it had to be much more demanding in terms of what it expected—especially from the executive branch—because it probably couldn't have affected the third branch, judiciary, very much. He just felt that when he started this big-picture crusade that the general assembly was not an equal partner among the three branches of Illinois government and that he was damn determined to make the general assembly every bit as meaningful and powerful as he felt it had the potential to be, and he largely succeeded.

DePue: Well, part of that, I would think, would be just the fact that before, during his early years in the Senate, how long was the legislature meeting?

Pensoneau: Good point, and that's essential to what we're talking about. All through the years, traditionally the Illinois general assembly met biennially—every other year—for six months. The only deviation from that pattern would be now and then a governor would call a special session, but it'd be very limited, for only a few days, and devoted to just one subject; that really didn't detract from the fact, basically, that the Illinois general assembly only met every other year for six months. Arrington changed that, and that in itself would have made him a terrific trailblazer in terms of not only Illinois legislative history but Illinois governmental history. Arrington was the driving force behind the general assembly gradually meeting annually instead of biennially.

DePue: Here's what I don't understand, Taylor, and maybe you can help—and maybe I'm just seeing this wrong—but a traditional conservative would say that the less government, the better. This sounds like we're heading in the wrong direction, that he was leading Republicans in the Senate towards more government.

Pensoneau: Absolutely. You're right, and believe me, a lot of the old-time Republican conservatives said that privately, off the Senate floor or in the bars at night or

the restaurants at night, and they just didn't have the energy and the will and the dedication to combat what Arrington was doing, but that aspect that you've mentioned was not ignored. Arrington obviously did not profess to be a big-government person, but in effect, his policies and the things he nurtured and wrought (clears throat) and brought about led to bigger government. Yeah, I mean, that's true. He would have never acknowledged that was the end product, but it was more than a byproduct of everything he brought about.

DePue: His goal, though, to get the legislature much more involved was to counter the power of the executive branch?

Pensoneau: Right, mm-hmm, yeah.

DePue: Was there a complaint at that time, then, the governor's office had way too much power?

Pensoneau: I don't recall that there were any complaints. I felt that you could hear from Governor Kerner and his emissaries, and some Democratic legislative leaders, that Arrington is pushing the general assembly role too much; he's getting the general assembly into areas that needn't go into, and that he's sticking his legislative nose into things where it doesn't belong, and in that regard he is upsetting the traditional balance of power we have in Illinois. So yeah As I said, Kerner himself and his emissaries definitely objected to the aggressiveness of Arrington on these things we're talking about. The answer is yes.

DePue: But the other irony I see in this—and I'm kind of jumping ahead here, but what the heck—one of the areas that the legislature was always preeminent in before this time—and this was following the federal model as well—is in the purse strings, is in crafting the budget—

Pensoneau: Okay, good point.

DePue: —and yet he's going to be sitting there when Ogilvie—

Pensoneau: Creates the Bureau of the Budget, right.

DePue: —creates the Bureau of Budget, takes over that role.

Pensoneau: That's a good point. That's a good point. Now, whenever you want to get into the Arrington vis-à-vis Ogilvie stuff, just tell me. But no, you're right, and as I was just outlining to you what I just did, I had in mind the fact, though, (laughter) Ogilvie—with the surprising acquiescence of Arrington—Ogilvie made the budget an executive budget, made the state budget definitely almost a total product of the executive. That had not been the case before Ogilvie became governor and we started annual budgeting.

Up till then, basically the budget was a legislative budget. The governor would propose it, and that would be almost the end of it in terms of the governor's say-so in what finally was passed in terms of appropriations and so on. I know basically there was a unit, an entity called the Illinois Budgetary Commission, (laughs) which was always dominated by the old-liners running the general assembly; basically that budgetary commission decided the basic framework and the distribution of money in the biennial budget. I should point out that for years, that commission was led by—spearheaded, dominated by—the legendary Paul Powell in the House and Everett "Nubby" Peters, a powerful Republican senator from a small town outside Champaign; those two guys more than anybody else fashioned the final shape of the Illinois budget every other year.

DePue: And again, that would be somewhat along the models at the federal level, where the House of Representatives at that level was the body that was constitutionally required to initiate budgets.

Pensoneau: I guess, I guess. Yeah.

DePue: We can pick up this budget issue, as you mentioned, getting into Ogilvie himself. A little bit more about Arrington and the role of interns, the role of staff assistants. That's part and parcel to becoming a much more active and engaged legislature, I would think.

Pensoneau: Absolutely, and that was another major hallmark of Arrington's record and program. Arrington decided even before he was the formal leader of the Senate Republicans that the workings of the general assembly lacked the kind of help and staffing that was necessary to be effective. He felt it was unreasonable and impractical to expect that legislators with no staff help, with no secretaries, with no offices to speak of outside of their desks on the respective chamber floors, that they were adequately prepared to deal with all the increasingly complex issues of Illinois government, and he felt it was unfair for the general assembly to continue to operate in this mode.

He saw early on that some professional staffing was necessary; he saw early on that internship programs were necessary to groom promising young individuals—women and men—for future roles in government, whether as appointed or elected officials. He felt that there was really nothing on the table to encourage bright young people to enter the governmental process in Illinois at a level where they could have responsible roles and perhaps mature into productive participants in the governance of Illinois. So he saw all these things; a few others did, too, but again, he had the energy and the sheer will to do something about it. So actually going into the early 1960s, he fostered the early internship programs.

Now, obviously he needed to get these promising individuals for the most part from the academic world. So he formed kind of a partnership early

on with the legendary Sam Gove. Gove was a political science professor at University of Illinois, a long-time recognized expert in the Illinois legislative process, one who was always in the forefront whenever academic input or study was needed on an issue or whatever, Sam basically implemented, provided the academic structuring or input that was necessary to come up with these young people at that end that Arrington wanted.. Arrington then provided the raw political muscle needed to get this infusion of young individuals incorporated into the workings of the Illinois general assembly process.

Again, I would say, a lot of the opposition to this came from old-line conservatives in Arrington's caucus, but he said, "No, we've got to move ahead in this regard." So he's the father of the whole internship/staffing entity of the legislative process. My book on Arrington points that out, that the current Speaker of the Illinois House, Michael Madigan, and others upfront give him total credit for that, which they say is an element now indispensable to the legislative process in Illinois. Where would be without all this professional staffing and internship help?

DePue: Were these paid interns?

Pensoneau: Good question. There's a little bit of a differentiation here we have to keep in mind that a lot of people don't: there was a difference between the interns and the staffers. If the early interns were paid, I think it would have been through the academic aspect of it, something through university appropriations or—a lot of the interns through the 1960s were so-called Ford Fellows, and therefore I assume Ford Fellows meant that the money was coming from the Ford Foundation, and that's where Gove came into play. He knew how to interact with the Ford Foundation and other entities that would provide money through the university channels to help finance these young interns.

Now, the staffing. There was definitely no money in the state budget for legislative staffers, and that is really interesting, because I think it was in, I'm guessing—'64 '65, right in there—we had the first presence on the scene of several young professional staffers. Okay—and this is great—Arrington paid for them personally. Arrington was very wealthy. (DePue laughs) Arrington paid for them personally; they were not paid by the state, by taxpayers. (laughter) Can you believe this? Arrington paid them very modest salaries, but paid their—

DePue: He paid his personal staff, not for other—

Pensoneau: No, no, that's right. They only were working for the Republican senators. (laughter) No, that part's also true—we've got to point that out. But there were some very bright young individuals that, again, are mentioned in the Arrington book. They came in and they were paid by Arrington; their travel expenses were paid by Arrington; if they were to be lodged down here, that

was paid for by Arrington; their meals were paid for by Arrington. (laughs) They were totally financed by Arrington, and this went on for several years. (laughs) Now, I will point out that he didn't rent the fanciest hotel rooms (DePue laughs) in Springfield for these individuals, okay. I think—

DePue: Where were the Republicans staying at that time?

Pensoneau: You mean the senators?

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau: Oh, some had permanent rooms and some were in hotels; others rented apartments. They got *per diem*.

DePue: Well, the Democrats seemed to favor one hotel in particular.

Pensoneau: Well, the Democrats always associated with the old St. Nicholas Hotel, and the Republicans were always associated with the old Leland Hotel. (laughs)

DePue: Okay, that's what I was looking for.

Pensoneau: Okay, yeah, yeah. There are a whole bunch of comical stories involved with those two situations, too, but—

DePue: Should I draw any conclusions when journalists who were visiting, or oftentimes come and stay in Springfield, would stay in one hotel or the other?

Pensoneau: Good question. I've never thought of that. I would have to try to really, really stretch my memory to try to remember where the journalists coming in from the outside stayed. DePue: I've talked to one recently who stayed at the St. Nicholas, and I wonder if that's a matter of political philosophy or networking and trying to get contacts.

Pensoneau: Well, it certainly wouldn't hurt networking; there's no question about that. When you want to get into the whole pressroom journalistic aspect, with a few exceptions, most of the journalists may not have admitted they were Democrats, but they were philosophically. That was the reality. Most working reporters felt that they were out there to help the little guy, the underdogs, and in those days, that always meant the Democrats. (laughter) And Republicans always represented, you know, the so-called rich and the corporations. So if you want to get into the journalistic aspect of it, I always felt that, with a few exceptions, most of the journalists favored the Democratic point of view on things. Also, it was easy to do in those years because the Democrats, through a good part of the sixties, were in the minority in both houses, not just the Senate; so it was easy if you rooted for underdogs to kind of root for the Democrats.

I think most reporters, for example, all during the sixties, wanted to see the passage of some sort of open housing legislation, and most working journalists were sympathetic to the civil rights movement. Many working journalists were sympathetic to the anti–Vietnam War demonstrations and so on. I always felt that journalists weren't supposed to vote in primaries, and I don't know how many did or didn't, but…

DePue: Weren't supposed to as a matter of ethics?

Pensoneau: Well, you vote in a primary in Illinois, that's like declaring what party you support. You have to declare when you take a ballot; you have to ask for a Democrat or Republican ballot. At least until the next primary two years later, that labels you as a Democrat or Republican. You're registered. And so I always felt that—although I violated it once, which we can get into later, maybe (laughs)—but I didn't vote in primaries because I always felt a journalist should nominally be nonpartisan or objective, and that would cast doubt on one's objectivity.

DePue: One of the things I wanted to ask you about in terms of Arrington—and this fascinates me, just the dynamics of this—he ate breakfast every morning at the same place, and staffers and interns were expected to be there?

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. You didn't want to not be there, no. (laughs) Even then, I knew. I was a young reporter here. I was about the same age then as a lot of the young Arrington staffers and interns, and we became friends. It was easy to become friends with them because, for the most part, they were the sharpest young kids on the block, and they all knew what was going on. They got their marching orders and knew what was going on on a day-to-day basis earlier and more so than the other Republican Senators did, because the decisions that Arrington would make and announce for the day at these early morning breakfasts came before the Republican senators would caucus before the Senate would go into session. It was only at the caucuses where he would lay out what he had in mind for the day to his fellow Republican senators. Yeah, these breakfasts were—

DePue: When and where?

Pensoneau: —crucial to Arrington's *modus operandi*. You didn't want to be late. If you were late once, you would never be late again. You not only didn't want to be late, but everybody was assigned an area of responsibility, and you'd better be totally up to date on what was happening or what was about to happen in the subject area that you were responsible for. I mean, if the Democrats were going to make a surprise move that day, maybe coming out of left field with some amendment or something, you had better have had some wind of it or word about it and so on.

DePue: Where they were meeting, and when were they meeting?

Pensoneau: The State House Inn. It was then called the State House Inn. I'm not sure what it's called today. It's open again, remodeled. But it was just about a block north of the state house, and that's where Arrington stayed. DePue: Could a young journalist sneak into the meeting?

Pensoneau: Oh, no, uh-uh, you didn't dare. Not even an old journalist had that kind of nerve. (laughter) No, that took the kind of courage that most journalists didn't have. No, no, no, you didn't want to get caught hovering around the fringes of even the area of the restaurant where Arrington and the—could be ten, twelve, fifteen individuals—were sitting. No. Now, sometimes you'd be waiting when they'd all wander over to the state house, (DePue laughs) and then, of course, the conversations in the hallways would start and, you know, "How'd it go?" If an intern or a staffer knew that you were interested in a particular issue, legislation on the counter for that day—some environmental legislation, something to do with gun control or public aid or whatever—they'd say, "Stay awake. Maybe by 2:00 this afternoon we may be getting to that bill that you're interested in," or "I think we're going to try to move this bill today; it might even be this morning, so you ought to kind of make sure you're in the press box," that kind of stuff. I made friends with these individuals, and these friendships have remained to this day; some are very strong.

DePue: Can you name some names of those.

Pensoneau: Oh, sure, sure. Absolutely, it's no secret. Richard Dunn, Richard Carlson, John Alexander—

DePue: He was one of the staffers?

Pensoneau: Mm-hmm, yeah. John Alexander, uh-huh. Tom Easterly.

DePue: Now, obviously—

Pensoneau: Robert Cahill. (laughs) And let's include this name: Jim Edgar. (laughs)

DePue: Well, that was on my tongue, yeah. (Pensoneau laughs)

Pensoneau: Donald Tolva. And last but not least, the irrepressible John Dailey. (laughs)

DePue: But a different Daley than the Daley family up in Chicago.

Pensoneau: Yes, yes. Yeah, no relationship at all. These were sharp individuals. They knew much more then what was going on than almost all the Republican senators, and they were all very straight, straight shooters in those years; most remained so for the rest of their political and public lives, I mean, they read the bills. They knew what was in the legislation, (DePue laughs) which made them really unusual, okay? (laughter)

They were invaluable to an individual like myself because they knew that—the *Post-Dispatch*, my role—I wasn't so much interested in the gossip of the day or the quick hit or whatever; I did a lot of things in depth. I had a luxury, as I told you last time when we talked. I was able to take the time to explore issues in depth and go into details, and they appreciated that because that's what they wanted to do. So as long as I wrote it in a balanced fashion, which I tried to do, I would get as much time as I needed to go into the depth and the real details in individual bills and packages of bills. And sometimes the real upshot, the real things that are going to really affect the people of Illinois, were in those minute details way down in the bill. You know the old saying, "the devil's in the details," and it was true; it was certainly true with the bills in the Illinois general assembly. And I was in a position to be able to take the time to sit down with these individuals like I'm talking about here on the side or whatever and go into depth on the details with I would say, more academic analysis—I guess I'll use that—than a lot of the other reporters.

I'm not being critical of the other reporters, but it wasn't demanded of them. They were more expected to keep up with every little development that the wire services were also covering in those years, and I was not here to duplicate the wire services. We took all the wire services in St. Louis. So I had a bit of a leg up in being able to foster relationships with the Dick Dunns and the Richard Carlsons and so on. Another name that I should mention there, add, is Thomas Corcoran.

DePue: Wasn't what you just described, though, the same true with some of the Chicago papers, where they were expected to do more in-depth analysis?

Pensoneau: I was a one-man bureau. The Chicago papers had multiple individuals involved in their coverage of Illinois state government, especially during legislative sessions. There would always be one full-time bureau person here for each Chicago paper, but then they would send down their political editors as well as sometimes even another reporter to help out. Outside of the *Tribune* and the *Sun-Times*, the Chicago papers didn't often do a lot of things in great depth. They were more into personalities and political conflicts—not that I wasn't—but they liked to emphasize things like that. I mean, sure—

DePue: Connections or frictions with the Daley machine?

Pensoneau: —people connected with the Chicago paper bureaus certainly did interact with the Tom Corcorans and the Dick Dunns, I don't want to say that, but I would say mine was on a more consistent basis; it wasn't one shot, or it wasn't for one week, or it wasn't for the last two weeks of a session and things like that; mine was ongoing, and it paid off.

DePue: How did the political reporting game differ when you're talking about television and radio reporters?

Pensoneau: Well, it was interesting. Up until the time that Ogilvie became governor, there were, believe it or not, discriminatory policies against the so-called broadcast media. The whole coverage situation was dominated by the print journalists. First of all, there were not that many; there wasn't much radio coverage, and there was very limited television coverage, and what they had to do was pretty much settle for scraps or react. Or, a lot of times, they were fed their basic information from people like me and other reporters. For example, when Governor Kerner had a press conference, when Kerner was governor, you couldn't tape or film the press conference. Now, when it was over, if they could persuade Kerner to come outside his office and stand in a hallway to give a few quotes to a radio newsman, that was one thing; a radio newsperson could sit in on it, but he couldn't tape, and there was no live television. It's hard to believe.

That all changed within a matter of minutes after Ogilvie became governor, because Ogilvie really knew the value… Ogilvie was very shrewd in terms of the media. Ogilvie understood the media. He was very shrewd in utilizing the media and interacting with the media. The minute Ogilvie got his hands on the governorship, it only took him a matter of minutes before television became much more of a factor in the coverage of the governor's office.

DePue: Well, that gets us to Richard Ogilvie finally.

Pensoneau: If you want to go there now, sure.

DePue: Yeah. Let's start with his running for office in 1968 against Sam Shapiro, who was obviously the governor for only that very short period of time. Anything stick in your mind in terms of that election campaign between those two?

Pensoneau: Yeah.

DePue: We're talking about 1968.

Pensoneau: We're talking about 1968, which was an incredible year in the history of the United States for all sorts of reasons: the assassinations, the increasing intensity of the Vietnam War and our participation in it, the civil rights demonstrations, the upheaval of so much in society as we have known it, probably the throwing overboard of the last vestiges of the so-called peaceful existence of the remnants of the 1950s and so on. Nineteen sixty-eight was just a tumultuous year for the country and for virtually everybody living in the country.

Now, when you look at the 1968 gubernatorial election, the Democrats ended up going into the final months of that campaign—Shapiro versus Ogilvie—Shapiro had a lot of monkeys on his back. There were all of the negatives emanating out of that disastrous 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. There was a great feeling in many parts of Illinois that

we needed to have a stronger person in the governor's office. So-called law and order then was a major campaign theme, and it was very difficult for the Democrats with their policies and individuals in the forefront of Democratic politics to promote so-called law-and-order issues. The Democrats were sort of trapped in a lot of situations, some of which were of their own doing.

Ogilvie ran as a strong law-and-order candidate. He had been sheriff of Cook County; he was a former United States special prosecutor in Chicago; he was a president of the board of Cook County commissioners, where he had run that with a firm hand and had gotten all sorts of favorable reviews from everybody in that role. Ogilvie looked to be someone who could kind of bring a sense of calm to the state, could kind of get a handle on things and maybe could clamp down on all of the disorder and unrest, or at least confront it. There was a growing feeling then that both nationally and at the state level, Democrats could not, and so Ogilvie kind of benefited from this general feeling, this really significant backlash in Illinois against all of the protests and the disruptions and everything else that was going on. So Ogilvie benefited from that; there was a climate that favored Ogilvie. And Ogilvie was considered the favorite in the election. There was also the feeling that Shapiro—which I certainly agreed with—was not by any means the strongest candidate the Democrats could have had running for governor that year. I mean—

DePue: So how did they end up with Shapiro?

Pensoneau: Well, Daley insisted on it, Mayor Daley. It was totally his decision.

DePue: So we're talking the slatemaker?

Pensoneau: Yeah, right, it was very much a closed-door slatemaking decision then, no question about it. I know that then–state treasurer Adlai Stevenson would have been a strong candidate and would have certainly wanted to run for governor, but he was denied. There were other major names thrown around. I remember one was Sargent Shriver who was then a big name at the time. All the political reporters like myself, we were all told—I didn't have access to Sargent Shriver—we were told that he was interested. He had lived in Chicago for a good time running the Kennedy family's Merchandise Mart. And Shriver was popular with a lot of Democrats in Chicago, he had a big name, and we were told that he was making overtures that he was willing to come back and run for governor of Illinois. Now, that didn't happen, but my point is if that would have happened, Ogilvie would have had a much tougher opponent if it had been Shriver or Stevenson. As it turned out, even Paul Simon and there were other Democrats we could talk about who would have been stronger opponents than Shapiro turned out to be. But again, the boss, Mayor Daley, decreed that Sam Shapiro, who was, of course, the incumbent governor at the time, was going to be the candidate for governor. That went back to the old political axiom to which Daley was loyal, that if a political figure is loyal to

you at some crucial time in the past, you don't forget that, and that was the case with Daley and Shapiro.

DePue: I think we need to describe exactly how the slatemaking process worked and how it had so much clout, because there was nothing technically that would prevent people like Stevenson or Sargent Shriver to run in a—

Pensoneau: Oh, no.

DePue: —Democratic primary.

Pensoneau: Absolutely, you're right. No, of course you're right, but everybody recognized that the Democratic Party was controlled by Mayor Daley of Chicago, and it was a very autocratic rule. One of the many ways in which the mayor's iron fist had controlled the party's surface was in the party's slates in elections. It was really a hat-in-hand situation. The slatemaking process was fascinating to cover. There would be a token session down here in Springfield, maybe at the St. Nicholas hotel, where they would go through the motions of interviewing. All Democrats who wanted to be slated stood outside this closed-door room where Daley and other members—I guess of the state central committee—would be ensconced in this room.

DePue: Was Daley the chair of the Illinois Democratic Party?

Pensoneau: He was not, technically, (DePue laughs) but it was a Daley person.

DePue: Okay. (laughter)

Pensoneau: No question about that. You would go in, and you would sit there before Daley and basically his other lieutenants, and—

DePue: Smoke-filled room?

Pensoneau: I'm sure it was. And then I think they would ask you questions. I was always told—someone whispered to me the questions were like—Okay , you're in here, you want to be slated for secretary of state. If you're not slated, will you then support the Democratic Party? If we slate you, will you be able to raise funds to finance your campaign? Basic questions like that, then, Thank you for coming in, and that would be it. It was always interesting because it was one time when all these major Democratic figures were reduced to the level of reporters and others. (laughs) You stood outside this closed room with hat in hand. We stood with them. (laughs) If a guy like Alan Dixon or somebody else was going on in, the reporters would say, Good luck. (laughter)

Now, they would always start out with this slatemaking session first in Springfield, which was only token. Then the slatemakers would reconvene in Chicago, and that's where it had meaning, and that's where the decisions, of course, would be made—not that, in my mind, I don't think, that Daley didn't

know all along who was going to be on the slate. I remember it was always in the—I've got it in my book—it may be going back to the Dan Walker book—the Emerald Room in the LaSalle Hotel. And it was interesting. It was always great for a downstate reporter like myself to watch all these old Chicago pols coming in in the morning, walking into the room—these legendary aldermanic figures, these ward committeemen that you hear about all your life—here they are all coming in with their big cigars. (laughs) Some of the Chicago reporters would say hi, and there'd be a guttural response back, and it was always like, quote, nobody knew nothing. What's the outlook today for who might be slated for governor? "Don't know nothing" was always an automatic reply. Nobody would dare say a word about anything because it was all Daley.

Then you'd repeat the same process you'd had in Springfield. The same people that had interviewed in Springfield were also there in Chicago. The whole thing was repeated, except in Chicago it meant something. Then afterwards, after it was over, you'd see some of these individuals coming out, and they'd be kind of downcast or kind of walking away quickly or whatever, or I remember some would be sweating. But everybody was—certainly for the record—was afraid to say anything because if you dared get quoted about something and Daley read it, you were dead meat in the water, because there was no open second-guessing or anything; it was that serious and that much controlled. But then afterwards, someone would come out—I don't recall if someone would come out or maybe everybody else would leave and then the reporters were allowed to go in, and Daley and one of his assistants would be sitting there. They'd have a piece of paper, and they'd read, "This is the Democratic slate." I remember it was a lot of surprise in '68 that Shapiro was to be the nominee for governor.

DePue: Did that preclude the Democratic primary from occurring?

Pensoneau: Oh, no. Oh, no, no, Illinois election law dictates there's a primary—

DePue: So how does—

Pensoneau: —but there were no challenges. At least in terms of the state offices, that was it. Now, the challenges of course came in 1972, four years later, with Dan Walker. I know we'll get into later, but no, not in 1968, no, unh-uh.

DePue: I guess what I'm looking for, though, is what's the other half of the discipline that Daley's political machine had to make sure that their nominee emerged from the primary process? The voting—

Pensoneau: Well, up until 1972, and certainly including 1968, no dissident or maverick Democrat had the wherewithal to challenge the Daley slate.

DePue: So they would drop out of the primary race entirely?

Pensoneau: Well, they wouldn't file. Oh, I should point out that in terms of the Democrats in the primary, no one filed until they were slated by Daley, so if anybody had filed, they either dropped out or knew they weren't going to win—and they didn't—because, you know…

DePue: Well, I've always heard that the other part of the political clout of the Daley machine was turning out the vote or managing the vote.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

DePue: And that's what I'm looking to have you explain.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Oh, sure. Yeah, I agree. Oh, yeah, the Daley machine would turn out a massive vote in support of the Daley slate.

DePue: How?

Pensoneau: That's a good question. That question's been asked eternally, and it still goes on to this day. Basically, the Daley machine was a carefully crafted interchangeable-part political structure. It was machinery in which everybody had a role to play. The most important individuals were the ward committeemen. They were more important than state legislators or senators or representatives or whatever. Even being an alderman was a bigger deal up there. But those ward committeemen were expected… I mean, this was a job. They had to produce the votes. They had to have command of all of their—from there you went down to all their precinct captains. It was so closely structured and monitored and implemented that the shrewdest ward committeeman knew exactly how many votes each precinct committeeman was to produce.

DePue: Produce?

Pensoneau: Produce, right, come up with. Of course, Daley knew exactly how many votes were expected from each ward and the committeemen had to produce. You had to understand that just as no Republican senator wanted to get crosswise with Arrington, no ward committeeman in 98 percent of the Chicago wards—I think there were fifty of them—wanted to get crosswise with Daley. You didn't get crosswise with Daley as long as you normally produced your incredible plurality in your ward. So it's just the way it worked.

The Republicans didn't have any way to combat that. The Republicans were very weak in Chicago because they didn't hold any of the offices; they had almost literally none of the extensive city patronage. All the city workers who went on and worked were all political appointees. Just as important as their jobs—be they driving a garbage truck or working for the water system or whatever—the important part of their existence in life was to produce the votes that nourish and fed the machine, and they did. And the Republicans

were just… Oftentimes there was no Republican opposition in many of the wards to even speak of. The GOP virtually didn't exist.

DePue: Well, I know there are legends—

Pensoneau: If you look at the culture and the history of political machines in big American cities, this control factor starting at the top was always instrumental. Now, in many political machines, the top dog wasn't the mayor of the city, it was just the political boss, like Pendergast in Kansas City—I don't think he was ever mayor—or Crump in Memphis, a lot of the Tammany Hall people in New York City. But it was even much more of a controlled situation in Daley because Daley not only headed the Democratic Party, he headed city government. Now, they were one and the same, but it still is saying something here.

You had to understand that when one man has this much control, it's very difficult to defy him. He has control in the governmental end of it, and he has control in the political end of it, so he is the complete master of the situation; he is the complete master of his world. In those years, when those ward committeemen and all their precinct captains produced, there was no way, at least in the Democratic Primary, at least through 1968, that there was any Democratic mechanism or organization or whatever anywhere else in the state to combat it, that could overcome it. They couldn't produce—numerically, it was considered impossible. Now, as it turned out, four years later, it was not impossible, but at least while we were still in 1968, it was considered impossible; nobody that thought they had a future in the Democratic Party, like Adlai Stevenson, at that point would have thought of crossing Daley. They might have some veiled public criticisms of the feudal nature of the party and so on—which Stevenson did—but you wouldn't go so far as to openly challenge the Daley slate in a primary fight.

DePue: There are lots of stories that percolate around Illinois politics, Chicago politics, talking about the shenanigans going on at the election booth and the polling places as well. Can you talk about any of those specific elements?

Pensoneau: I don't know any of it firsthand. I was never actually up there for any of it; I can only repeat what everyone else assumed, that the total Democrat control of the whole electoral process in Chicago—even down to polling places where Republican watchers were really Democrats—paved the way for anything and everything.

DePue: Can you explain to me why Richard J. Daley, the mayor of Chicago, ends up not only having this incredible role in state politics but also at the national level?

Pensoneau: Illinois was and remains an important state politically. Back when Richard J. Daley was alive, the electoral vote count from Illinois was larger than it is

now. We've lost some with each new census. But in terms of the Democratic Party, Illinois was considered very important because the Democrat primary was very important in terms of the selection of the party's presidential nominee. Daley was like the last of the so-called big city machine bosses—maybe not, but that's how he was depicted—and so as opposed to other states, even California and New York, if you're running for president, you could count on winning the Illinois primary, which was very important in Democrat circles, if you had Daley's support.

There was no longer in California and New York and most other states a Richard J. Daley. It was a much more open process there, but you knew that you could save money and circumvent actual campaigning if you just had the thumbs-up in Illinois from Mayor Daley of Chicago, because that's how much his control still meant; you didn't have this in many other parts of the United States. Illinois was important, and if you were assured of having the Illinois delegates in your column in your race for the Democratic nomination for president, that was a big leg up because it could have an influence on other states.

DePue: How did that manifest itself at the Democratic conventions, then? Was Richard J. Daley a…?

Pensoneau: Richard J. Daley—I can tell you, and I got to witness this, and I think we got into it last time a little bit. Maybe we did.

DePue: We did, but not on record, so I definitely want to get that story on the record.

Pensoneau: The power of Richard J. Daley. I was still pretty young then; I was impressionable. I was amazed at the incredible respect and almost genuflecting that I saw people both give and do to Richard J. Daley at national Democratic gatherings, national conventions and even other national gatherings. The man was simply the center of attention. I'm here to tell you that you would go to these things and I would be there as part of the *Post-Dispatch* team covering these national gatherings. I was at a number of them, and I was amazed at the fact that Daley was the single most sought-after individual to engage in a conversation with or to get the attention of or to get any kind of recognition from.

These were rare occasions where you could stand around and have access to Senator Edward Kennedy, any United States senators—they'd be milling around, normal protocol broke down and so on—but not with Mayor Daley. You didn't just walk up and talk to Mayor Daley; you had to stand in line to talk to Mayor Daley, and believe me, Mark, United States senators and governors from other states did. I can just tell you what I witnessed. Obviously Mayor Daley was something special because everybody wanted his or her picture taken with Mayor Daley; everybody wanted to get in a few

words with Mayor Daley; everybody wanted to be seen getting to talk to Mayor Daley. I would sit at these things.

I can remember in the, what, the Muehlebach Hotel in Kansas City in 1974 where the Democrats had a so-called once-in-a-lifetime mini national convention—it was not in the year of a presidential election—when Daley sat on like a little throne on a chair, always surrounded by lieutenants, and people would stand in line to pay homage to him—literally to pay homage to Mayor Daley. And I (laughs)—

DePue: This sounds like right out of *The Godfather*.

Pensoneau: Believe me, it is. I watched governors of other states stand in line, waiting their turn, to be able to be ushered forward to have a few words with Mayor Daley. Maybe it might be a minute, it might be two minutes, maybe it might be thirty seconds. But I think I told you last time, Massachusetts had this young, attractive governor then, Michael Dukakis, who was considered by many a rising star in the party. I was a friend of one of his aides. The aide was with him at this 1974 convention in Kansas City, and the aide said the big moment for Dukakis was getting to meet—he had not met—getting to meet and introducing himself to Mayor Daley, because Dukakis recognized that his long-range political future, if he wanted to go beyond Massachusetts, had to encompass Mayor Daley of Chicago. (laughs) I never will forget that.

I stood with this aide while we watched Governor Dukakis standing in line, and then finally the big moment came when Dukakis was ushered up to meet Mayor Daley. But as Dukakis was being ushered up into the presence of Mayor Daley, one of Mayor Daley's aides was obviously whispering something important in his ear that was of some importance because Daley was looking around and talking to the aide; I could see Daley was suddenly preoccupied. Well, then Daley turned and was introduced to Dukakis, and I think they shook hands. I was close enough to hear Daley say something to the effect of, "Nice to meet you. Thanks for coming in." (laughter) And that was it. He kind of waved his hand, (laughter) and that was the end of Dukakis's audience. That was it. Something was obviously going on or something that Daley had to be aware of, and Daley turned around to one of two of the aides and just turned right away from Dukakis and was looking back and was talking to the aides. And here is Dukakis, just standing there. And then that's it; he turned around and walked off. I witnessed that, and I saw this kind of thing repeated time and again.

DePue: Well, I think that's—

Pensoneau: Daley was the absolute center of attention at national Democratic gatherings. The only one who might outshine him would have been the individual who was going on to win the Democratic nomination for president. But like in New York City in 1976, which was Daley's last national convention—he died

before the end of that year—I mean, Daley got as much attention as Jimmy Carter, who was the nominee.

DePue: So all political roads went through Chicago.

Pensoneau: Oh, they really did. They really did. (laughs) And everybody knew in 19—I'm jumping around here, excuse me, but everybody knew in 1972—

DePue: No, I was leading you there.

Pensoneau: —at Miami Beach, (laughs) when supporters of George McGovern were part of the movement to deny Mayor Daley a seat at the Democratic National Convention. I mean, it didn't matter where you were coming from, what your political stripe was, everybody knew the McGovern nomination was completely dead in the water, did not have a prayer. You just didn't deny Daley his seat at the Democratic National Convention. Since you're interested in this, I think a lot of the respect and manner in which Daley was held in awe went back to the 1960 election, when Kennedy narrowly defeated Nixon. Of course, Kennedy's winning margin in Illinois was razor thin. Now, it's a misnomer, though—I believe historians and others have written that without Illinois, Kennedy would not have won the presidency—and I do not believe that's true, because at the time the voting was going on in Illinois, everybody assumed that Nixon would carry California, which came in last. As it turned out, Kennedy carried California, and I believe that would have guaranteed Kennedy the presidency even without Illinois. Okay, but, having said that, the impression in Illinois—I learned this early on in my young reporting days with the *Post-Dispatch* and this will be great for those who are interested in this later on—was that Nixon carried Illinois but they stole it from him, and they did it, of course, in several Chicago wards. And I had—well, we can talk if you want to get into this.

DePue: Yes.

Pensoneau: I was told reliably that Kennedy did not carry Illinois, but I also qualify that by saying, That still would not have deprived John F. Kennedy of the presidency. But I think the fact that Daley forces manipulated the tally in several wards to make sure Kennedy had a razor-thin victory, and Daley artfully was given a lot of credit for this. I think that political power brokers recognized—that was Daley's big coming on the national stage there in 1960, and that's when he achieved this. This big reputation came out of it for whatever reason, and it never left him; there was always this feeling that—it wasn't technically accurate—but many people believed that Daley delivered the presidency to John F. Kennedy. I know that the Kennedys themselves did not discourage this feeling because I know that in the things that have followed, Daley always had a prominent place at Kennedy gatherings and so on. It was obvious there was something tremendous—probably before, but certainly after that—there was obvious tremendous respect from the Kennedys

for Daley. I think that aided and abetted this feeling that, well, JFK wouldn't have been president if not for Mayor Daley in Chicago.

DePue: Well, if there was another political power broker at the time, it would have been Joe Kennedy.

Pensoneau: Yeah, right, right. There you go. I think that's fair to say. So I think that was part of it, that Daley achieved this immense reputation that came out of the 1960 election, whether deserved or not. Now it was always felt that Nixon—as maybe he should have—sorely resented the Illinois outcome in 1960. Never forgot it. Good political figures never forget, and they don't forgive. (laughter) You know how it works, okay.

I was always told by Republican opinion-makers who I respected that that was a reason that the Nixon justice department—when Nixon was president—went after Otto Kerner. That was one of the reasons, that Nixon never forgot the 1960 election in Illinois and that later on Otto Kerner was considered sort of a blue-blood, high-class representative of the Chicago machine, and that the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago learned that Kerner was vulnerable for the situation that did bring about his downfall, and that the Nixon justice department pushed the button to go full speed ahead on whatever we can do to pursue then–Federal Judge Kerner in Chicago. Because, remember—

DePue: Pursued by…?

Pensoneau: Well, he was indicted by the United States attorney's office in Chicago.

DePue: And the United States attorney…?

Pensoneau: Who was then Jim Thompson.

DePue: Jim Thompson.

Pensoneau: Yeah, right. I mean, you're getting here my opinions; others who you've interviewed may argue with this, but the feeling among a lot of people was that that was part of Nixon's revenge for the 1960 vote in Illinois.

DePue: Well, let me put a journalist on the spot—divulging sources, exactly what you don't want to do.

Pensoneau: Shoot.

DePue: You said you got some of this information from "reliable sources," that Daley made sure those wards turned out votes, and probably some shenanigans going on in those votes. The reliable sources you were hearing this from…?

Pensoneau: Were not journalists.

DePue: They were not? Okay.

Pensoneau: No, no. A good friend of my family's in Belleville was then the state's attorney of St. Clair County later on. His father had been a circuit judge. There were protests filed about the vote outcome in Illinois, although I was told Nixon himself surprisingly didn't push a challenge of the outcome in Illinois, but there was some sort of investigation or post-election analysis. I don't remember the exact mechanism for it, but they brought in a so-called outside judge to have a final say in what was being looked at. The judge signed off on Kennedy having just very narrowly, by a razor-thin margin, carried Illinois. But I think that judge knew in his heart that may not have been the case.

But Mayor Daley never forgot that judge, and then that's why, a decade later, at the Illinois Constitutional Convention, that judge's son was elected a delegate from the Metro East area; I'm talking about John Marshall Karns Jr. The word went out immediately, whatever committee John Marshall Karns wanted at the convention, he was to get. I think he wanted revenue, and that's what he got. There was no question about it; he was chairman of the revenue committee at the 1970 Constitutional Convention. Now, what I'm relating here is my impression. I did not know Judge Karns; I knew his son, who himself went on to become a judge, but I met him when he was still the state's attorney of St. Clair County.

DePue: What was Judge Karns's first name, do you recall?

Pensoneau: Well, I can only guess. I think it was John Marshall Karns.

DePue: Okay, that would make sense.

Pensoneau: So I'm assuming that, yeah. I was flatly told that Mayor Daley was very appreciative of the role Judge Karns played in ruling or administering whatever was that post-election analysis of the presidential vote in Chicago. Okay?

DePue: Mm-hmm.

Pensoneau: Many people felt at the time, including a lot of Democrats, that the Chicago machine stole the Illinois vote from Nixon in the election. I guess I don't want to say that Judge Karns ever flatly said that, but I definitely was told that Mayor Daley was very appreciative of the post-electoral role that Judge Karns played when he came in from the outside and presided over whatever was this post-election analysis or second-guessing of the presidential vote in Illinois. I was definitely told that at the constitutional convention, when Judge Karns's son—who is also now dead, John Marshall Karns Jr.—was elected one of the two delegates from that Metro East district down there—he was a Democrat, of course—that he was to get whatever committee chairmanship he wanted at

the Constitutional Convention. I'm sure he wanted revenue, so he was the revenue committee chairman.

DePue: Was Junior then the one that you knew personally?

Pensoneau: Yeah. Oh, yeah, I knew him well.

DePue: Okay. Well, that's a fascinating and a very important aside.

Pensoneau: Yeah, interesting as time goes on to see who reads this and maybe has some interest in it.

DePue: Well, again, we kind of touched on this last time: the names we're talking about here aren't just limited to significance in Illinois' history but the national level as well.

Pensoneau: Of course, absolutely.

DePue: And Mayor Daley is right at the center of all that. It's just fascinating for me to kind of wrap my own brain around that in terms of how it actually works. But that gets us back to Richard Ogilvie. So he's running against Shapiro, who we've said before is probably not the strongest candidate.

Pensoneau: Not in my opinion.

DePue: But it was still a fairly close election, was it not?

Pensoneau: It was, it was, yeah. I don't remember the exact margins in my book, but it was fairly close. What was it, probably about 51–49, something like that? Fifty-one percent, 49 percent.

DePue: Tell me how it ended up that you have Ogilvie win as governor, but lieutenant governor goes to Paul Simon.

Pensoneau: Okay. Again, a most unexpected, surprising, almost shocking development. I now remember the name of the Republican candidate; it was Robert Dwyer, who was a North Shore businessman, as I recall—very personable. And everybody just assumed, not only that Ogilvie would win, but that Dwyer would defeat Simon in the race for lieutenant governor. They were so confident that I can remember in the times I'd be covering the Ogilvie campaign, you'd be sitting in a restaurant at night after the day was over, and maybe Ogilvie himself wouldn't be sitting there, but Dwyer would kind of wander in. He was always accessible, always available to talk as long as you wanted.

Dwyer would come in, and there would be conversations like—the feeling was that Dwyer would say, "I know you know Paul Simon quite well," which I did, and Dwyer would say, "It's just kind of a shame that we have to

be up against each other in this lieutenant governor's race, because I expect to beat Paul, and Paul's been such an exemplary figure down there in Springfield that it's just kind of a shame to see his political career take a fall like this." And Dwyer would say things like, "I wish I was running against almost anybody else except for Paul because he's such a decent fellow, and I just kind of hate the way this is going to turn out, assuming I'm going to win and Paul's going to lose." And most of us agreed. It never before had happened in Illinois where the successful gubernatorial candidate of one party didn't get the lieutenant governor candidate of his own party. This had never happened before and, of course, would never happen again.

In fact, Dwyer was so confident that we would sit at night, and he would scratch down on a piece of paper things that Ogilvie was going to let him do as lieutenant governor. He was going to be an active lieutenant governor, he was going to be a meaningful lieutenant governor, and there were different areas that, quote, "Dick's already agreed I'll go into and handle like economic development and things like that because I'm a businessman" and all this. We were already at that stage with Dwyer, that he was so assured of victory.

Most of the reporters kind of felt bad about it because all of us really liked Paul Simon. As I said earlier, in some ways, Simon was one of us, and I think almost all the reporters wanted Simon to win—I sort of did, but yet I had to face reality and be objective, and I thought Dwyer was going to win, and I thought it was interesting to hear what… We'd be sitting having these conversations where he's almost assuming that he's already won and what are the things he's going to do as lieutenant governor.

DePue: So how did he pull it off? How did Simon pull it off?

Pensoneau: I still think it was a political miracle, and—

DePue: Was it a Daley thing?

Pensoneau: Well, yeah, obviously he was slated by the machine, and—

DePue: But you don't think that his—

Pensoneau: I mean, the machine didn't slate him—I always felt about Simon—if you want to talk about this, we'll do it here. Okay, this was really weird, Mark. Daley insisted on slating Shapiro, and then he obviously dictated, decided that Simon would be Shapiro's running mate. I always felt at the time, as did some others, that Daley didn't have a lot of confidence in the ticket, because if he had, he would not have slated Paul Simon to be the candidate for lieutenant governor, because I think it's a similar situation like back in 1948 with Adlai Stevenson. Stevenson was only slated then for the Democratic nomination for governor because the Democratic hierarchy then—this was pre-Daley—

thought it had no chance to win the election in 1948, and many considered Stevenson a throwaway candidate.

Now, I'll take the rest of the day if we start getting into that, but I thought, in looking back, there were some similarities between 1948 and 1968, twenty years later, that if the Democrat hierarchy in Chicago was cocksure it was going to prevail in the 1968 election, I don't think Simon would have been slated for lieutenant governor, because it was more than him not being one of them. He had been very independent through the years, and his political cachet or strength was his independence, and that was something the Chicago machine frowned upon and certainly in no way encouraged. Again, I repeat, if the Democrats were pretty sure of victory in 1968, which I don't think they were, they wouldn't have slated Simon, and—

DePue: Who would they have slated?

Pensoneau: Oh, it could have been one of a number of…

DePue: Somebody who was loyal yo the machine.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Yeah, it obviously would have been somebody that was totally loyal to the machine.

DePue: So Simon is the lieutenant governor, Ogilvie is the governor—of opposite parties; that's going to solve some problems. So now you've got the president of the Senate, who is also the lieutenant governor, being Paul Simon, with Russell Arrington obviously the force in the Senate. Arrington's got a sizeable majority in the Senate, doesn't he?

Pensoneau: Sizeable, correct.

DePue: Let's go on to Ogilvie, though. I'm going to read you a quote that Walter Jacobson—this is from your book, obviously—Walter Jacobson had for Richard Ogilvie: "Richard Ogilvie is very likely one of the most all-business, no-froth governors ever to occupy the mansion in Springfield." Would you say that's an accurate assessment?

Pensoneau: Yeah, I would. I think the answer's yes. I would agree with this.

DePue: Describe your thumbnail sketch of his personality, then.

Pensoneau: Okay, very interesting. Ogilvie actually came across in some regards as mildly shy. In private conversation—well, okay, let me start over. I viewed Ogilvie as a two-fisted, no-nonsense guy, okay, both in his personal life and in his professional life and political life.

DePue: But you've just described Russell Arrington.

Pensoneau: Well, we're going to get into that, (DePue laughs) because, believe me, when Ogilvie got elected governor, everybody wondered how the state house would be big enough for both Ogilvie and Arrington. You don't want to get into that yet, though, do you?

DePue: No, go ahead.

Pensoneau: Okay. Ogilvie definitely seemed to be all business. Certainly was not charismatic, and there were very serious reasons for that. He didn't always look real great in his suits and so on—not like Otto Kerner who looked like a walking mannequin he was so immaculately dressed. Ogilvie was kind of frumpy, dumpy. It was kind of funny. The first time I saw Ogilvie, the first time I really ever talked to him—want to hear this anecdote?

DePue: Oh, yeah.

Pensoneau: Okay. The first time was when he was running for governor, he was president of the board of Cook County commissioners. I joined him somewhere in the campaign. I don't recall if it was the primary, because he had a serious primary fight in 1968 to get the nomination; so this was either in the primary or right afterwards, in the early part of the general election campaign. But I joined him, and I remember he had just finished spending a couple days with a *Wall Street Journal* reporter; I think his name was Alan Large. In that long story on Ogilvie in the *Wall Street Journal*, Large described Ogilvie as (laughs) dumpy, d-u-m-p-y, dumpy. (laughter) Here's Richard Ogilvie's first meeting with me; it came up almost right away, and this was right after the story appeared. Ogilvie said, "I'm glad to meet you, and I'm glad you're covering my campaign," and then Ogilvie almost immediately says, "And whatever you're going to write about me, can I say that I hope you don't call me dumpy?" (laughter) And I knew what he meant because I had been furnished and had read Alan—I would say his name was Alan Large—the *Wall Street Journal* story, and I saw that in there, and it jumped out at me, too. I don't recall if Ogilvie actually laughed when he said that. Well, no, he didn't laugh, because that was another matter with Ogilvie. I remember that was one of the first things Ogilvie said to me, and I don't recall if I had a reply, I really don't, but I remember that's what he said.

DePue: Would you describe him today as dumpy?

Pensoneau: Well… Yeah, I would say he was short and stocky—how's that? He was short and stocky. He did lose a lot of weight during his campaign for reelection in 1972. He really slimmed down, but then near the end of his life, he really put the weight back on. It probably was a factor in his early death. But, okay, the Ogilvie that came across to a mass audience or on television was far different from the Ogilvie in one-on-one. He came across as certainly not charismatic, not having much of a personality. It was difficult for him to smile. When he did smile, it was kind of this awkward, crooked smile out of the one side of

his face, because as you and almost everybody else reading this transcript will know, he had half his face shot off by an exploding German shell in World War II; I go into great detail in that in my book.

DePue: A tank commander during World War II as a sergeant, I think.

Pensoneau: Yeah, he was a sergeant, Sergeant Ogilvie, right—of which he was very proud. He wasn't in action very long, and this was in December of 1944. He'd only been at the front not long at all when he stuck his head out of the turret of the tank and that was the last thing he remembered. As he later described it, it felt like someone taking a sledgehammer and hitting him in the teeth with a sledgehammer. But almost half of his face had been painstakingly reconstructed, and the man really couldn't smile. I learned this early on.

Later in the campaign, when I saw an example of it, I was covering him in deep southern Illinois; we were in one of the counties overlooking the Ohio River, and a local Republican organization had a reception for him. It was kind of in the dusk, we're sitting. I sat with him, actually, at this, and they were serving barbecue they had made just for him, their own special local barbecue brand. He told me, "I've got to eat some of this, but I shouldn't. I'm not supposed to eat this kind of spicy food because of my face." I mean, I knew there was a problem. "But'=," he said, "I should eat some of it to honor their hospitality and the fact that they say they made this for me." When he did eat it, Mark, I noticed beads of perspiration or water were starting to come out of his face. And then I remember he had to kind of not eat the rest of it, and he said, "Well, see what I mean?" I never forgot that. I always thought of things like that later on when people, not just Democrats, but critics said, He's so sour. He never smiles. He has no personality and so on. That was so unfair, as we all should have known, because of the war wound and what it did to his face and the fact that it was so difficult for him to smile.

DePue: Did that not come out in the campaign?

Pensoneau: It did, it did. I don't think it ever got the play it should have. I wrote about it in the *Post-Dispatch* because I thought it was important, and others did, too, but I don't think the general populace recognized it, though, I don't think. He was not a television candidate. Ogilvie later on probably would have had almost no chance in the electoral life of the United States because he just wasn't photogenic and all that stuff. But in private, he was far different; he was very witty and very observant, and he was really cute with the one-liners. He was interesting to talk to, and he remembered things. With me, he remembered little times we'd been together when he ran. He never, of course, forgot my brother was killed in Vietnam, you know, things like that. I could not help but end up liking him personally. I would say of all the governors I actually covered, in terms of what I personally felt, I liked him much more than any of the others. I mean, I liked him.

DePue: Was that deliberate on his part, that he was cultivating journalists?

Pensoneau: I think it was partly, yeah, because Ogilvie really was interested in the press. Ogilvie knew how the big dailies operated in Chicago; he knew about their deadlines. He knew when was the best time, if you had favorable news, when to try to get it out. He knew if he had something unfavorable that was going to come out, if he had some control over it, he knew how to try to release it at the time when it would get the least play, like late on a Friday when it would only appear in the Saturday paper. The feeling always was that of all the papers each week, the one less read was the Saturday paper. That's why press releases with bad news from whoever's governor generally come out about five o'clock on a Friday.

Yeah, I think there was some of that, and Ogilvie was very good in dealing with the press. He had press secretaries, and they were interesting individuals. But Ogilvie himself, when the chips were down, liked to deal with the press one-on-one. He was accessible, and he always was very straightforward. It was always like, This is the way it is. You can write whatever you want, but the facts show this, you know this, and this is what I've got to do. If I don't do this, I'm not doing the responsible thing. How can I see it any other way, and maybe you can't either. This kind of stuff, you know. But you cannot say this about a lot of political figures: I felt that if everybody could have met Richard Ogilvie one-on-one, there would have been no stopping him politically. Okay?

DePue: I'm wondering if he had cultivated that relationship, that he had a real sense and savvy about dealing with the media, but part of that was to counter what he knew his public image was as this not being charismatic.

Pensoneau: Oh, I think so. I don't think Ogilvie had any illusions about being charismatic or anything like that. He didn't even try. He didn't pretend that he was, and I don't think he even tried.

DePue: Do you think he liked dealing with the press?

Pensoneau: I think he did to some extent. I don't think he disliked it.

DePue: He didn't see the press as his natural enemy?

Pensoneau: No, no, no. Kerner did not like dealing with the press. I said that last time; I stand by that analysis. Shapiro was very easygoing; he was easy to deal with. The thing with Shapiro is I think a lot of press people never took him fully seriously. Ogilvie I think liked dealing with the press. Dan Walker—and that will be a whole different subject we'll get into sometime. Dan Walker, I think, in the end, did not like dealing with the press. Thompson was fantastic with the press. Thompson preferred to be more around the press on a day-to-day basis than a lot of his own assistants and lieutenants. I know we're getting far afield here. Can we take a time-out?

DePue: You bet.

Pensoneau: Okay.

(pause in recording)

DePue: Okay, we've just taken a very quick break. What I'd like to turn our attention to here, since we've been talking about Richard Ogilvie, is some of his lieutenants, and then we'll get into the meat of the subject. I think we probably should start with Tom Drennan.

Pensoneau: Tom Drennan would be, in my opinion, the single most important—we'll call him a lieutenant. Now, technically, he never went on the so-called state payroll; however, though, I'm pretty sure that the public relations firm he headed did get some taxpayer-funded contracts up in the Chicago area, I'm pretty sure. Tom Drennan and Ogilvie hooked up with each other way back when. Drennan had been a hardboiled political reporter, I think for the *Sun-Times* or maybe the old *Sun* or *Times* before it all became one paper. Drennan, who I think actually had been a young Democrat, too, at one time, took an early liking to Ogilvie—they liked each other—and Drennan turned out to be invaluable in advising Ogilvie about the ins and outs of political realities in the greater Chicago area. So Drennan just became his closest advisor.

DePue: Strictly on political affairs?

Pensoneau: As far as I know. I don't know if it went beyond political stuff. But they were close. It was always interesting: in my pressroom years, you never saw Tom Drennan—Tom wasn't in Springfield on a daily basis—but if I was doing a story that had some critical implications or maybe it wasn't positive to the Ogilvie governorship, it was kind of funny. You'd be sitting in the pressroom maybe a day later as you're working on this story, but of course the Ogilvie crowd would know you were doing a story because you'd want to be interviewing somebody, and word got around quickly about who was talking to who about what. But it was kind of funny, if I was ever doing that kind of story, all the sudden I would look up and there would be Tom Drennan standing in the doorway to my little press cubicle—we called them cubicles—my little *Post-Dispatch* cubicle—and Drennan would always say something to the effect: How you doing, Taylor? I understand you're working on a story that the governor may be interested in, and I thought I'd come around and see you; is there any way I can help you clear up anything (laughter) in terms of what you're doing? And it was miraculous the way he always would surface at that time when the chips might be down, you know. Well, that's the end of the anecdote. Then he, of course, would try to maybe explain: Well, you've got to keep in mind when you look at this situation, you know, what about this over here or what if we did do this, but what if we didn't do it, what would be the repercussions in this part of the state? You know, stuff like that. He was so

very shrewd. Tom Drennan really was always somebody there. You never saw him unless the chips were down.

DePue: Did you appreciate those visits, or you figure he was just working you?

Pensoneau: Yes and no, because I like to proceed with what I was doing; I didn't want anybody to try to talk me out of what tack I was taking or try to tell me where I might be on the wrong tack or was even doing something that was going to be unfair or whatever. I could just as well do without that, but, of course, when Tom Drennan wanted to talk to you, you talked to Tom. Sometimes—it was interesting—he would say, Well, I know that you haven't had a chance—the governor isn't here, and he's not going to be here before your story comes out, but if he was here, here's what he would tell you, (laughter) and he would proceed to say. He was that close.

DePue: How about Brian Whalen?

Pensoneau: Brian Whalen has turned out to be one of my extremely close friends. Brian Whalen came down here as a boy wonder. I had heard of Brian Whalen. When Ogilvie was president of the board of Cook County commissioners and I was covering the Ogilvie campaign, I never saw Brian Whalen. I heard about Brian Whalen, that he was kind of the guy minding the store up in Chicago, their elected office, while Ogilvie was campaigning for governor.

DePue: What was his official role in the governor's office?

Pensoneau: Well, his official role was he was deputy governor. I think he had the title; if not—I wrote that he was deputy governor. I always called him deputy governor, and he never argued with it. I think his title was deputy governor.

DePue: So he would have been on payroll?

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah, he was. Yeah, Drennan was the only one we would talk about here that was not on the payroll.

I remember Whalen was twenty-nine years old when I met him. I met him when they were moving physically into the governor's office. He looked very officious, very serious, extremely clean-cut looking, very articulate, very meticulous, and looked like he fit the Ogilvie motif of being all business. I was impressed. Let's see, when Ogilvie was was taking office, I was twenty-eight years old. I was a year younger than Brian, and human nature being what it is, I had to look at Brian Whalen and say, Wow, that's really something. Here's the guy twenty-nine years old, and he's deputy governor of Illinois. I thought—

DePue: Some people were saying, Wow, he's already got his own deal open in Springfield now; he's doing great. (laughter)

Pensoneau: So anyway, Brian never volunteered anything, but would answer questions. Now, as the years went by during the four years of the Ogilvie governorship, Brian became more open with me. I would say that a lot of the downstate reporters considered Brian aloof and maybe too much for one young individual that early in life. As the years went on—not that Brian agreed with everything I wrote—shouldn't have, and he didn't—but Brian and I did strike up a relationship. In terms of getting Ogilvie's side of issues—especially as the '72 campaign got heated—if I couldn't talk to Ogilvie, I would talk to Brian, and I would get more from Brian than I would from the press office. And I will say this: in the years after Ogilvie was no longer governor, Brian and I became close friends, and we are to this day.

DePue: Where does he live now?

Pensoneau: He's inland from the [Chicago] North Shore, in one of the suburbs like, oh, maybe Northbrook? Northbrook, Northfield, one of those.

DePue: How about Jeremiah Marsh, special counsel?

Pensoneau: Jeremiah Marsh. Before we get to Marsh, I might say that in my interviews for the Ogilvie book, probably the two best in-depth interviews I had were with Brian Whalen and Jeremiah Marsh. Okay, Jeremiah Marsh was right there with Brian Whalen. The three closest people unquestionably were Tom Drennan, Brian Whalen, and Jeremiah Marsh. Marsh was a brilliant guy, an attorney. Later on—and he's gone now—later on in life, headed one of the major Chicago law firms. Marsh had the title legal counsel to Ogilvie. He was his legal counsel. Didn't see Marsh a lot in Springfield, but when I did see him, he was accessible; he would talk to me. I knew who he was. I do know that in any estimation, if anybody was ever evaluating the chain of command—the palace guard in terms of Ogilvie—Jeremiah Marsh was always mentioned right away. He was obviously close to Ogilvie; they went back a pretty long way in Chicago—I don't think as far back as Ogilvie went with Drennan, but pretty far with Marsh. Marsh was there before he became governor, that's the important thing, as was Whalen.

Marsh was just kind of an expert on constitutional law. Marsh understood corruption. He had a history of trying to deal with it in certain positions he'd had I think in Chicago and so on. Marsh would have kind of a good-guy reputation. He was a straight shooter. I respected Marsh a lot. I couldn't call Marsh a friend when Ogilvie was governor. I could end up kind of calling Brian Whalen a friend—a friendship that, again, became much closer later on. I never could have that with Marsh, although in doing the Ogilvie book many years after Ogilvie was governor, Marsh was incredibly helpful. In fact, one of the most valuable documents I had in doing the Ogilvie book was something Marsh gave me. Marsh had been taped, like you're doing here with me. I'm not sure who did it, but I don't know that it ever was—well, I had a written manuscript—it was very thick—on the Ogilvie governorship,

and it was very good. I interviewed Marsh three or four times in doing the Ogilvie book, and—

DePue: Would it have been Cullom Davis's project at the Sangamon State?

Pensoneau: It could have been, and it probably was, but I can't swear to it. I just can't remember. I just don't remember if there was like a title page to it or anything. But he gave me this thing, and I carried it around with me during the whole timeframe, for several years, as I was doing the Ogilvie book. Marsh was kind of a good-government guy, and I know people have a lot of respect for Marsh. The lower-level ones always felt that Marsh was a very confident big-picture guy and that he and Ogilvie were quite a team.

DePue: Anybody else in his administration that stands out that you'd like to mention?

Pensoneau: Well, in terms of press secretaries, he went through several. He started off with a young, handsome, debonair guy named Joe Mathewson; Joe didn't hang around very long. Eventually the two press secretaries were John Kolbe and Fred Bird. Now, Bird was an incredible character. The presidential library had that retrospective on Ogilvie. Were you there?

DePue: Mm-hmm.

Pensoneau: Well, I spoke, remember?

DePue: Mm-hmm.

Pensoneau: Okay, well, in my speech that day, I talked about Bird extensively—I didn't hardly mention John Kolbe—and I said that Bird became press secretary. That night, there was a follow-up reception at the museum. I remember Brian Whaley and John Dailey got me aside and said, You know, just for the record, we know that you've always said that Bird succeeded Mathewson, but that technically John Kolbe had the title of press secretary and Bird was assistant press secretary. They said—it was kind of jokingly—Not that after all these years you care, but—

DePue: (laughs) Well, you've got a chance to correct the record.

Pensoneau: They had just heard me speak at—yeah, I'm doing it right now. But I will say this, I just always thought John Kolbe was basically writing speeches for Ogilvie. I didn't really remember he had the title press secretary. Bird was the one who dealt with all the reporters, and Bird was quite a character. It was a lot of fun, and it was an adventure dealing with Fred Bird. But I remember that night John and Brian both laughingly said, We know that Fred was the one you talked to all the time; they said, Fred considered himself the press secretary, and because he was the one that dealt with all the reporters, who was to have an impression otherwise? But still, officially, totally accurately

speaking, it was John Kolbe who had the title press secretary, and Bird was assistant press secretary. And so we were laughing about it.

DePue: Was Fred the kind of person that would stop by the cubicle and chat with the reporters?

Pensoneau: Not much, not much. Fred was crabby as hell, (DePue laughs) a curmudgeon if you ever met one. If you were writing something unfair to Ogilvie, Fred would just as soon level you out, punch you down, as try to talk you out of it. (laughs) Now, I had some encounters with Fred. Fred remained in his position because Ogilvie insisted upon it. If it would have been left up to Brian and Jerry Marsh—maybe even Tom Drennan—Fred would not have been in that position, but Ogilvie liked Fred; he liked his crusty, again, two-fisted nature. Ogilvie said, "He stays there," and that's why Fred survived. Now, as I pointed out in the book, and I thought it was cute as all get-out, Marsh and Brian both said Fred was kind of the lonesome end in the governor's office.

DePue: Good analogy.

Pensoneau: He was out there by himself, yeah. (laughs) Fred was not controllable. Fred was totally straight, totally incorruptible. I will say now—Fred's dead—I would be doing something and Fred would say, "Well, you know, I'd like to talk you out of it, but you know what you're doing; you're not all wrong.," Then Fred would say something like, You want to know who really pulled that off, why don't you make a phone call to so-and-so down here in this lower level of the Department of Transportation. He's got this buddy, and this buddy wanted this. Well, you call that guy. See what he says about the situation. Fred was that kind of guy, okay? Fred said, "I'm not going to comment, but I think you should call that guy." (DePue laughs) Fred made it clear to me that his loyalty was only to Ogilvie, as it should have been, and that he worked for Ogilvie because he was convinced Ogilvie was honest, and Fred said, "I'm honest, and that's why we get along so well, and I don't give a damn about all these other guys around, what they say, what they're doing, what their private agendas are. I'm straight, Ogilvie's straight, and I'm doing a job for Ogilvie, and that's what I'm doing, and that's it." And sometimes Fred would directly or indirectly cast aspersions on some others even in the palace guard, and they didn't like it, but they couldn't get rid… If they had their way, Fred would have been out the door, but it didn't happen.

But Fred was incredible. You heard my remarks that day at the luncheon. There's a whole lot about Fred in the book. I mean, what a character. I mean, oh, God, he (laughs) was great. For a while he had an office that was placed in a way whereby you could sit in his office and you could see who was coming in through the back door leading into Ogilvie's office when Ogilvie was governor; this was incredible for a reporter. You would sit there, and Fred would say, "I don't want to tell you who's coming in and out, but just sit here, act like you're talking to me, but be looking at who's coming in

and out, and you write your own story and draw your own conclusions, you know." (laughs) And I think it was Brian—Brian and I laugh to this day—I think Brian figured that out, (laughs) and so I think it was Brian who—they moved Fred to some out-of-the-way part of the governor's complex (laughter) where you could no longer see, you know.

Fred was great. Fred was a red-blooded guy, and the Ogilvie office, the governor's office, had a number of good-looking gals working in there, having different roles. Fred would say, (laughs) "Now, if you just sit here another minute, so-and-so will be walking down this way through the hallway and you're get a good look at her." (laughter) We were down at that level.

Fred had a bottle in his drawer he'd pull out, and if you were there for a late-night session, he'd be sitting there, and he's have his shoes off. He wore some kind of house slippers, or I call them hush puppies or something like that—they weren't shoes—and he'd prop those up, and he'd pull out a bottle. He had a little paper cup, (laughs) and he'd pour a shot. (laughs) He'd say, "Here, you may need this. It's going to be a long night." (laughter) No, I will say in my defense, I never took it. I didn't. I don't know if the other guys did either. But Fred would do that. He never wore a tie. He had a tie in a drawer that he would only wear if the governor had a press conference. He'd take it off right away; you could see him taking it off as he'd be leaving the press conference. As I wrote in my book, Fred was not known for his sartorial splendor. (laughter) Really, you could write a short humorous story about Fred Bird.

DePue: Maybe that's a good place to kind of take a break, grab some lunch, and then come back and talk about some of the more serious sides of what Ogilvie was trying to accomplish.

Pensoneau: Absolutely.

(end of interview #3 #4 continues)

Interview with Taylor Pensoneau

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Interview # 4: March 20, 2009

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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DePue: It is still Friday, the twentieth of March 2009. This is Mark DePue, once again with Taylor Pensoneau in the afternoon. We're on part two of our discussion about the Ogilvie administration. Just got back from a very good lunch, so thank you very much for that, Taylor.

We talked about Ogilvie's lieutenants, if you will, and we've already talked quite a bit about his relationship with the press corps also. So let's get to his relationship with the legislature itself. Obviously that gets us back in the realm of Arrington but also with Speaker Jack Walker, because Walker was his…

Pensoneau: Right, for a short time.

DePue: Walker was the second one. We already talked about Ralph Smith.

Pensoneau: Ralph Smith, mm-hmm.

DePue: I don't know that we've talked much in terms of how Ogilvie interacted with Smith.

Pensoneau: Well, on paper, they had a good relationship. In Ogilvie's campaign for governor, Smith had a title in the campaign. It might have been something as significant as downstate campaign chairman. I won't swear to what it was. He had a title; he had a role. Now, the way it works with major political figures with each other, they lend their names to these fancy campaign titles for each other, and normally they don't really do anything—and that may have been the case. But nevertheless, Smith was an Ogilvie supporter. Smith was already Speaker of the House while Ogilvie was running for governor in 1968, and Smith had a role in the Ogilvie campaign. He had some sort of title in terms of the downstate aspect of the campaign. Okay, when Dirksen died in, I think September of 1969, that opened up the Dirksen Senate seat. Smith wanted the seat.

This gets more than a little complicated and more than a little controversial. The seat could have gone to then–Illinois Attorney General William Scott, a Republican who had been very close to Ogilvie. They had been very close since they were both young Republicans up in Cook County. Some disagree with this, but I'm pretty straight on this because I got this from Jeremiah Marsh—and the Ogilvie hierarchy, meaning the governor himself, Marsh, and Whalen, and I guess Drennan, were prepared to give it to Scott and thought Scott would take it and felt they had been led to believe by Scott that he would take the appointment to fill Dirksen's vacant seat in the United States Senate. On the day they had scheduled to announce it in Springfield—and I get this from Marsh—Marsh had flown to Springfield because the game plan that day was to also announce then—by Scott taking the Senate seat, it would open up the attorney general's office, and Ogilvie was going to appoint Marsh to the attorney generalship.

Well, when Marsh told me that when he arrived in Springfield, when he drove from the airport to Ogilvie's office in the state house, when he walked in, he said there were long faces. Ogilvie was there, obviously, and Brian Whalen, and I'm not sure if Drennan was there or not, but Marsh sensed something was wrong right away. What had happened is, Scott had earlier that morning in Chicago called a quick press conference to say that he was turning down the offer by Governor Ogilvie to appoint him to the Dirksen Senate seat vacancy, and they were stunned at that. While they were going to offer it to him, it hadn't been finalized—well, no, I take that back. Marsh said as far as they were concerned, it was finalized, and the only thing that was left, the mechanics of it; was he going to come down to Springfield or whatever. They thought he would take it, and he had not told them to tell them he was not going to take it. He called a press conference in Chicago and announced there, revealed there, that he was offered it but was turning it down. Well—

DePue: That's bad form.

Pensoneau: It was very bad. Okay, now, so the upshot then is that they had to do a real quick reevaluation there to try to save face in Ogilvie's office. It was then decided, I think, virtually on the spot—again, Brian Whalen is certainly in a position to correct this or elaborate or say, Well, that's not all it was—but as I understand it from Marsh, it was then they quickly decided, We got to offer it to Ralph Smith. The line would be that Smith was, in spite of what Scott was saying and wasn't saying, Smith was really our first choice all the way down the line. Of course, everybody else knows what follows, then. Smith was immediately contacted and immediately accepted, and so the rest is history. Then as more of a face-saving aspect of it, I think they said, Well, no, Smith was going to get it all the way anyway because he had been promised it because of what he did for us in the campaign, that if something like this happened, he'd be given an opportunity to take advantage of it.

DePue: Was there concern that Smith wouldn't be able to retain the seat to win reelection?

Pensoneau: There was. Now, that was not acknowledged by the Ogilvie crowd, but that was quickly voiced by other Republicans. The answer to that is yes, mm-hmm. Yeah, the answer is yes.

DePue: And in that kind of a sense, it has national implications, not just state, so…

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: The next one then is Ogilvie's relationship with the Senate. I'm thinking that perhaps the way to discuss that is, rather than as an abstraction, perhaps we should get into our discussion about the income tax, because that might reveal quite a bit about that relationship.

Pensoneau: Absolutely. On the income tax in the campaign, neither Shapiro nor Ogilvie obviously said if elected they were going to call for enactment of the income tax.

DePue: Weren't they being asked that question?

Pensoneau: I think they were. I can't remember specifically, but I'm sure it came up, and I'm sure the answer, if not no, would be, Well, that would be a bridge way too far in the distance. We'd have to cross that bridge when we come to it. I'm sure they both had the same answer, I'm assuming. I know that neither one said they were going to call for a state income tax. Now, everybody knew that the state was in terrible shape financially and that a major source of revenue was needed or else there was going to be a drastic cutback in state services and other essential aspects of state government.

DePue: What had changed in the state's finances that the old model of taxation wasn't working any longer?

Pensoneau: Good question. Increasingly, the state government was being expanded: new, broader entities taking on more responsibilities, sometimes getting into areas that were mandated by the federal government.

DePue: Well, I'm thinking the War on Poverty. Was that part of it?

Pensoneau: I can't honestly say it was. I always thought that was, as I recall, more of a federal program, but it seemed like that was in play when I first came here, But I think the people I would interview in regard to that were paid by the federal government, I thought.

DePue: Medicaid was a fairly new program at the time, no?

Pensoneau: Was it here that early? I don't recall. Did Medicaid come before Medicare or vice versa? I just don't remember. But the scope and the breadth of state government was increasing, but not the revenue base. Employees were increasing; salaries were increasing; costs of running prisons and mental hospitals and so on; all those things were increasing as we had increased patient loads, increased prisoner populations. Yet the costs of running Illinois government were far outstripping the revenue that was brought in. At that time, the major source of revenue was the state sales tax; of course that was not always a firm figure because that depended on the health of the economy to some extent. So everybody kind of recognized that someone was going to have to bite the bullet on the income tax, but nobody wanted to do it politically, with good reason.

So anyway, Ogilvie is elected, takes office in January of 1969. Within several months, as they were looking forward to their first budget presentation, which was going to be, ironically, on April Fools' Day of 1969, I and others were told that the governor was seriously looking at calling for the imposition of the first state income tax. So it had pretty much gotten around and was pretty solid. Didn't know for sure how much he was going to ask for. Everyone assumed it was going to be 1.5 percent, maybe 2 percent. When it came out in the budget address, it came out it was 4 percent—4 percent for both individuals and corporations. I remember that was considered pretty hefty for a first-time shot at hitting Illinois residents on state income tax. Of course it ended up being, what? 2.5 percent for individuals but I think—

DePue: Four percent.

Pensoneau: —4 percent for corporations. Yeah, okay. The reaction was much stronger, I think, than some thought it would be. Well, first of all, in very closed-door maneuvering leading up to it Arrington had always been an opponent of an income tax.

DePue: Well, you started his description with the words "fiscal conservative."

Pensoneau: Yeah, Arrington was an anti-tax guy. He drove Kerner nuts throughout the 1960s. Kerner never called for an income tax, but Kerner did call for hikes in other things, more piecemeal-type hikes and smaller levies—I think he'd hike on the sales tax and other things. Arrington absolutely gave him almost nothing of what he wanted, and it drove Kerner nuts. But there was this famous meeting with I guess the Republican legislative leaders. I don't know if it was in the mansion or in Ogilvie's office but that is where the much-repeated classic conversation ensued where Ogilvie said, "I'm going to call for passage of a state income tax." Arrington said something to the effect, "What fool is going to handle that bill for you, governor? Who would introduce that?" And Ogilvie probably looked at Arrington and said, quote, "You, Russ." I guess there was silence and nobody said a word, and then I

guess Arrington's classic quote was, "If that's what you think is necessary, governor, then I guess I will," or whatever.

DePue: You've done a great job of telling that in the book here.

Pensoneau: Yeah, and stick by, because many people have different versions of it. I got my version from I think John Dailey who was present, okay?

DePue: Okay.

Pensoneau: And I will stand by my version. I've seen that version reprinted or cast out in different kinds of writings through the years. Whatever—I can't remember the exact wording—whatever is in that book is exactly what was said. It's in my Ogilvie book, too. There was no certainty that it could be passed, because right away almost every Republican in both houses said, Oh, no way. There's no way we're going to vote for a state income tax. And there were GOP majorities in both chambers. The Democrats didn't say a lot, but the thing was that Daley was in favor of it, and so the Democrats were in a good position—and this would get more interesting as the session went along. So the Democrats—

DePue: I imagine they're loving seeing the Republicans twist and spin on this.

Pensoneau: Oh, they were. They really were. Nobody had any illusions about this politically. We were reliably told that a Republican governor was proposing it, Republican legislative leaders would be sponsoring it, and that the basic votes needed for passage would have to come from Republicans. If and when it became evident that not enough Republican votes were available in each house to get it passed, then basically Daley would see that enough Democrats from so-called "safe" districts went on to give them the votes necessary. That strategy never changed throughout the long ordeal involved on getting it passed. But I was told Arrington was, quote, sick to his stomach over it and was physically upset for two or three days afterwards but agreed to do it. And I think that everyone—Democrats, Republicans—acknowledged that if it could get done, the only person who could possibly get it through the Senate was Russell Arrington. And everybody in the state house knew that; there was no argument on that point at all. But at first, for Republicans it was like, Hey, even with all of Russ Arrington's persuasive powers and all of his clout, he can't make me do this. Well…

DePue: My question here is one of motives. Maybe you won't have a good feel for this, but you've described Arrington as sick to his stomach. That would suggest he was philosophically opposed to the whole concept in the first place.

Pensoneau: He was.

DePue: So why did he do it?

Pensoneau: I think he did it because he recognized the state had to get more money from someplace, and he wanted Ogilvie to succeed as governor. When Ogilvie came in the state house—we mentioned this earlier—everyone wondered how they were going to coexist. Well, Arrington—I don't want to say "swallowed his pride"—but Arrington made a decision that was evident that he was going to cede center stage to the new Republican governor, Richard Ogilvie, and that he did sincerely want Ogilvie to succeed as governor; he recognized that Ogilvie was not going to be a dynamic governor if he didn't have the revenue available to finance his extensive plans for governmental reorganization and an upgrading of the whole scope of the Illinois government. Arrington just felt that it was a political necessity, even perhaps expediency, and that he just had to… Remember, he was not rock-ribbed, although he was a fiscal conservative, as I said earlier, but he was also in this regard a pragmatist; I think that he felt that the chances of Ogilvie's governorship succeeding would be even less certain if Ogilvie didn't have a brand-new significant source of revenue with which to work.

DePue: How would you describe Ogilvie's political philosophy?

Pensoneau: Ogilvie I think was definitely, as it turned out, a moderate, a moderate Republican. It turned out that Illinois government grew significantly under Ogilvie's watch, and it left many people, especially downstate, shaking their heads and saying, We thought we were just electing a law-and-order guy who was going to keep the lid on all the unrest and who would not rock the boat, and of course they were very wrong. When that happened, there were people saying to people like me, Is this guy really a Republican, because when you added everything into the equation—the call for state income tax, the reorganization of Illinois government that meant new agencies and broadened functions, I think my figures in there would show there would be a large growth of state employment under Ogilvie. Another thing, too, eventually the public employee unions in Illinois made their initial big breakthroughs when Ogilvie was governor, not a Democrat. I think I'm right on that, and that was another thing that left people questioning, Is he really a Republican? He was also very environmentally minded, too.

DePue: And we'll get into that. Let me ask you this question.

Pensoneau: But Ogilvie was a moderate and a pragmatist and an individual who, when he saw problems or needs or shortcomings, sort of plunged ahead to address those things without thought of what party might in the long run benefit most or whose political careers would be boosted or sabotaged.

DePue: This might be a poor analogy, but I'm thinking about tank commander Sergeant Ogilvie in Europe, just plunging ahead, sticking his head out of the turret to see what's going on, and damn the consequences.

Pensoneau: Pretty good. Good wording. I should have said it.

DePue: (laughs) Well, you're welcome to it here. Whenever you talk about income tax in the state of Illinois, you inevitably get into a discussion about property tax, and in this era, also about personal property tax. Talk about the dynamics of those three kinds of taxes and how it played out.

Pensoneau: Well, as I recall, the personal property tax was a joke.

DePue: What was that? Because I don't think many people know what that means.

Pensoneau: No, and I've almost forgotten myself, although for a few years, I along with others were supposed to pay it. I paid a nominal sum. Some were honest about it; others fudged. If I remember—and don't laugh—you were supposed to pay a tax on the value of furniture in your house, a lot of your personal possessions and so on.

DePue: Cars, boats.

Pensoneau: I can't remember if cars or boats were included or not.

DePue: Jewelry.

Pensoneau: I know that in some extreme cases, assessors or collectors I think had the right to demand to go in your house and look around. I don't think hardly anybody ever did it, and I'm not going to say what I'm saying here is carved in granite; if some tax experts contravene me here, so be it, but it was a joke. What I recall is that I had my first house out in the little village of Southern View on the south side of Springfield, and I guess a local assessor did come around—it was a woman—knocked on the door, and said, "I'm assessing for the personal property tax. Can you tell me the value of things inside the house?" I'm sure I really low-balled it; I gave her minimal figures. I think she basically said, "Okay, thank you, sir." I think that was typical. But somewhere along the line, it was tacked on. I don't think it was very much, but the problem was it was ridiculously uneven in the way it was both assessed and collected, and it was kind of a joke; it was just kind of an irritant. A lot of government reformers for years had wanted to get rid of it, but there had to be some big offset, and the income tax, I guess—that was all in the same cycle there—the income tax obviously served that purpose.

DePue: The other part of that equation is the property tax; how much was the value of your home in the first place? Traditionally, local governments and educational systems had been financed through property tax.

Pensoneau: Yeah, those are major beneficiaries. Oh, yeah, absolutely. Well, the assessments of course varied depending on personalities and assessors and so on, but at least one can walk around and see what's being assessed; it's just your house and your property: what was visible.

DePue: Was there some growing angst among certain areas of the state about property tax?

Pensoneau: Oh, there always has been. There's always been disputes at any given time: farmers versus urban residents, how you assess farmland as opposed to residential subdivisions, how you assessed mined-out properties of mining companies versus industrial sites. I mean, the disparities were incredible. They were not only greatly different from one county to another but sometimes from one township to another in the same counties, and there had to be much more uniformity. A lot of that came to be with the so-called equalizer formula that the Illinois Department of Revenue administers and things like that. All I know is that gradually through the years, the assessments have become, shall I say, much more uniform and much more equitable.

DePue: Was there dialogue at that time, though, that if you impose an income tax, you're going to do the reverse to decrease local property tax rates or at least put a cap on property tax?

Pensoneau: I don't recall. I do not recall that. Off the top of my head, I do not recall that.

DePue: That was very much the discussion for Edgar's administration.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, under Jim Edgar, the answer is yeah. Oh, yeah, I agree with that, but I don't recall back then that that was part of the agreement as the income tax progressed through the chambers. The whole aspect of disparity in assessment of the property tax was always a separate subject from the income tax; that was like two different worlds. The grievances there were being aired out long before the income tax was proposed, and the disparities and the debate over aspects of the property tax continued well after the income tax was in place. In other words, I don't recall—perhaps until Jim Edgar was governor—that there was a significant effort to link the two, really. There may have been, but I can't off the top of my head remember. So property tax was always treated as a pretty separate subject, and the debate on the property tax didn't so much… Well, the debate was over the fact that it was assessed and collected in such a disparate fashion throughout the state.

DePue: Well, I can imagine the outcry in the legislature at that time. As you've described it here, you're not necessarily diminishing any other tax except perhaps this personal property tax that doesn't sound like it was generating that much income in the first place.

Pensoneau: I don't think it was. I don't have any figures, but I don't believe it was.

DePue: Then the governor comes out and says, Okay, how about a four percent income tax on both individuals and corporations? That's a huge chunk, if I can characterize it that way.

Pensoneau: Absolutely. I agree, and it absolutely was… I mean, calling for 1.5 or maybe as much as two was one thing, but four was a big amount in the first lick.

DePue: Was that Ogilvie strategizing, saying, I'm never going to get four percent, but let's put the mark on the wall and we can negotiate from there?

Pensoneau: That's the way it eventually was explained, and that's the way people like myself eventually wrote it. Yeah, I'd have to answer the question that way. Ogilvie had been in accord, as I always understood it, with Daley on the original proposal. It was easy for Daley to go along with it because the Republican governor was proposing it, not the Democratic mayor of Chicago. But the Democratic mayor of Chicago really needed it, really wanted it, and politically would provide the votes to get whatever the percentage was.

DePue: Well, that would suggest that Chicago was getting a piece of it.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, yeah. I can't remember the breakdown. Oh, yeah, municipalities benefited from it. Chicago was a big beneficiary, sure.

DePue: Well, talk about the different philosophies and how the parties would line up on the issue of personal income tax versus corporate income tax.

Pensoneau: Okay. A group of downstate Democrats led by the late Representative Clyde Choate from Anna, a very potent downstate Democrat—kind of a Paul Powell Democrat—early on made it clear that a lot of downstate Democrats, irrespective of what the Chicago mayor wanted, would not vote for 4 percent on individuals and would never vote for the same rate for individuals as for corporations. I got to tell you, on that one they stuck to their guns, and it became obvious that it was not debatable in their book. In fact, I don't even think they wanted it as 2.5 percent. I can remember myself interviewing Choate where Choate would frankly say, "I don't care who wants 4 percent; there's no way we're going to tax individuals the same as corporations." Choate made it kind of a populist thing, and a lot of downstate Democrats sided with him, I mean, fearing for their own political welfare, safety, because the public reaction to the call for income tax was not positive.

Right away there were outcries. Even though everybody said the state needed more revenue, when a solid proposal finally was on the table by the governor of Illinois, right away everybody just thought it was outlandish. This is typical, Mark, it's always typical with taxes. I always had this in the coal industry. People always want more from government agencies. They want environmental enforcement, they want more crime enforcement, they want more government regulation, and so on, and I always say, Are you willing to pay for it? Oh, sure. But when a specific tax or a specific fee is either proposed or increased to implement what they want, then it's a different story. They bitch. And this time, when you had a specific income tax proposal on the table out there, it was like, No way.

Tom Drennan was one of the first individuals to use polling in determining political public policy. He was kind of a pioneer. I think he had actually started back when he was with the Chicago *Sun-Times*. I think he was maybe the first, among the first, to use newspaper polling to determine a likely outcome of a political race and things like that. Drennan was good at private polling. He told me confidentially later on—not in 1969, but later on in life—that he didn't even tell Ogilvie how much his popularity slipped in a matter of weeks after the income tax. Drennan said he was prepared to right away do the polling, and he said it was unbelievable how the Ogilvie honeymoon in office and his perceived popularity with voters went in the tank. Long after it's over—in fact, it's when I'm writing the book—Drennan said, "Dick"—he called him Dick—"Dick never recovered from it completely." Not to get too far afield here, but…

DePue: Never recovered in terms of political popularity?

Pensoneau: Right, right.

DePue: I have to believe there was significant pushback among Republicans, especially Republican senators and institutions like the Chamber of Commerce, though, about a high corporate income tax rate. Or were they stuck because their leader was pushing for this in the first place?

Pensoneau: I think they were stuck. Yeah, yeah. I'm sure the corporations tried to maneuver to see if there was some way they could get something under 4 percent—I'm sure they tried—but I just can't remember in my own mind any specifics of how the business world maneuvered to try to avoid the 4 percent. I remember a lot about the Choate movement and so on and then finally Daley and Ogilvie agreeing to lower the rate. It seems to me—and again, I'm sure this is in my book—it seems to me at first they agreed to lower it to 3 percent for both, maybe, and then Choate and this cadre of downstate mainly Democrats said, Nope, no way, not 3 percent. It's got to be different. Individuals are not going to be asked to pay as much as corporations.

DePue: I love your discussion in the book about how the vote actually played out, when they actually had both the House and the Senate, but I think especially in the House.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. I know what you're going to say.

DePue: Well, why don't you go ahead and talk us through that?

Pensoneau: In the House, it's like agreed upon ahead of time. Okay, once it passed the Senate, everybody knew it was going to pass the House. Okay, that was almost an afterthought. The only question was, Democrats, Republicans tried to recognize likely votes on each side of the aisle and I think informed each other as to putting on enough votes to get it passed. Consideration was given to those in so-called "safe districts," individuals that can pass it and probably

not pay politically as opposed to those who would be putting their reelection chances on the line by voting for it. It was agreed a number of extra Democrats would be recruited to vote for it in the Senate in addition to the majority of Republicans. Okay, well here's—

DePue: Who's the recruiter? Arrington? Daley? Ogilvie?

Pensoneau: Yes, all of them. The real battle was the Senate, and once it passed the Senate, everyone knew it was going to pass. But still the question was who was going to vote for it and who wasn't. Based on the way the voting had been in the Senate, you knew that was going to be a consideration in the House, because in the Senate, key downstate Democrats were not required to vote for it because it was thought it would threaten them politically. For example, I don't think Alan Dixon voted for it. He was then a state senator from St. Clair County, and I don't think Dixon voted for it, as I recall. Again, it's in the book. So they had this number of people that are going to give them a safe vote.

Well, so the voting progresses in the House, and you can read it on the voting board. Everyone can read it—the press, everybody else. It had plenty of votes, and then right before they took the final tally, a certain number of the Democratic green lights went out. And I knew it then. We're all sitting here late at night, and we all knew that means they were being let off the hook; they were taking themselves off the hook. There was enough votes to pass, whatever they needed—whatever the number is—but the extra votes, which were all supposed to come from Democrats… As I recall, almost all the Republicans that were supposed to vote for it did vote for it; the Democrats, no, no. Then, to add insult to injury, about two days later they want to sign it right away. They had agreed there'd be a signing ceremony in Ogilvie's office.

DePue: Just the kind of thing that you want to have for the press release, etc.

Pensoneau: Yeah. I mean, not one Democrat—Democrats boycotted it. The leadership didn't come down—none. Ogilvie signed the bill—and there was a great picture of this with my article at the time—Ogilvie signed it with only Arrington and Ralph Smith and only one or two others standing behind him. And to make matters worse, I think Smith and one of the others were smiling, and you didn't want to be smiling when you're signing (DePue laughs) a bill imposing an income tax on residents of the state, you know.

At that time, everybody knew that the Democrats were going to play this thing to the hilt: the Republican governor got it passed, the Republican Senate leader forced it through, it was a Republican bill. Daley backed off on praising Ogilvie—of course, he never praised Arrington openly—but Daley backed off. And then in the 1970 election, Republicans paid dearly in the legislative races at the ballot box—dearly. The GOP lost its majority in the

Senate. I think they kept a slim majority in the House, but all sorts of Republican legislators bit the dust. The Democrat literature in the 1970 election was all to the effect that your Republican incumbents gave you the state income tax.

DePue: Let's go to the philosophical versus the political motivations of the Democrats, especially those Democrats who voted against it. Philosophically, do you think they were opposed?

Pensoneau: No, actually a lot of them weren't, which made this even more ironic.

DePue: Well, this is the world turned upside down.

Pensoneau: Of course it is, and especially Chicago Democrats, because Chicago legislative Democrats almost never had anything to fear. Once your name was on the ballot, your election was automatic. It wasn't true for downstate legislators, Democrat or Republican, where there were real races. There were very seldom serious challenges to any incumbent Democratic senators or reps from Chicago because 99 percent were beholden to the machine, and who was going to buck a machine? We talked about this earlier, and that applied to legislative races, too. Chicago Democrats have never had to worry about electoral repercussions from tax increases; the mayor, their leader said they needed it, they wanted the added revenue, and that's what it took, so that was okay, you know. They would have said very little to a guy like myself questioning them. They would have always said the city needs it; the city's share of the revenue is needed and stuff like that. They wouldn't have said anything to cross Daley's position, and Daley really wanted it. Daley wanted it as bad as Ogilvie. But it was just ironic.

Now, in the orchestration ahead of time, a number of downstate Democrats in situations where the machine didn't control the primaries, they could face serious challenges, so they were let off the hook. They didn't vote for it. But as it turned out, even a lot of other Democrats didn't either. Even then, they didn't want their name on it, and everybody kind of understood. But it was just another example of where Republicans did the brave thing, (laughs) and then they took the fall. And a number of them lashed out ahead of time and were actually starting to say some things critically of Arrington on the eve of the 1970 election. And I remember Arrington wrote a letter to every one of them on how to try to explain it to angry constituents; it was like a 'Keep your chin up, boys; we'll be okay' letter, you know. Then the election was a disaster for them. That was the first sign the public had to respond at the ballot box to the passage of the income tax, and every loser to the man was a Republican.

DePue: We keep going back to Arrington so much, but I guess it strikes me that Arrington must have had incredible power to have survived first this issue about open—

Pensoneau: Housing?

DePue: —open housing, and now the income tax, and still retain at least nominal control over the Republicans in the Senate.

Pensoneau: Yeah. Well, everything happened at once. Okay, they get clobbered in the election, so we have a situation whereby the Democrats picked up so many House seats that it became, as I recall, a tie, and Paul Simon, who was still presiding over the Senate, was in a position to cast a deciding vote. There was some kind of funny maneuvering… There was no way to deny the Democrats control of the Senate, but they didn't want Simon to cast the deciding vote, so as I recall, a Republican—I'm sure he was hand-picked, but I can't remember which one—actually voted for the Democrat candidate for Senate leader, so the Democrat got it. There was no doubt that a Democrat was going to get it, but it wasn't because of Simon's vote. I can't recall what their reasoning was for not wanting Simon to cast the deciding vote that gave the leadership slot to a Democrat, so therefore it only took one Republican to vote for the Democrat to elect the Democrat—since all the Democrats were voting for the Democrat—and one did. I can't remember which one; it's in my book.

DePue: Did Cecil Partee then become the…?

Pensoneau: Mm-hmm, right. Then in January of '71, a few weeks later, Arrington suffered the debilitating stroke.

DePue: This is probably a natural place to go after we've talked about income tax—we've alluded to this already—but Ogilvie deciding he wants to get control of the budget process as well. How did he manage to do that?

Pensoneau: He got Arrington to go along with it. I can't remember how much of it was legislatively and how much of it was by executive order or executive fiat that would not be stonewalled by the general assembly. I can't remember the exact breakdown there. Arrington again went along with it. That was considered by many a major concession by Arrington to Ogilvie. Ogilvie set up almost right away an entity called the Bureau of the Budget, which took command of preparation of budget. This made sure it was going to be an executive budget, which it became at that point and has been ever since. Ogilvie brought in an additional number of young whiz kids to staff the BOB, and these guys were, as Halberstam would write—was it Halberstam?—"the best and the brightest?"

DePue: Right.

Pensoneau: These guys were names like John McCarter, George Ranney. I'll tell you who—another one was young Bill Taft from Ohio, the same one that later went on to become first secretary of state and then governor of Ohio.

DePue: John McCarter being the director?

Pensoneau: Yeah, John McCarter was the director, correct; John McCarter was a brilliant, personable, handsome young guy.

DePue: What was wrong with the way the legislature had been doing the budgeting process before this time?

Pensoneau: Well, it depended on who was looking at it. You'd get different opinions from different people.

DePue: But you could say the same thing when the governor takes over the budget.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. You can, that's right. I agree, you can. Well, in the old Illinois Budgetary Commission days, which as I said usually was controlled by Powell and Peters—

DePue: Paul Powell as the secretary of the state.

Pensoneau: Yeah, Paul Powell and Senator Everett Peters. I think he was from St. Joseph, a little bit outside Champaign. A lot of what you would call the state version of pork-barrel projects went in the districts where there were great loyalists, people loyal to either Powell or Peters. Powell and Peters would essentially, quote, split the pie. They always had enough votes on each side of their aisle—Peters in the Senate, Powell in the House—to enforce their decisions. Now, it's just that an inordinate amount of money—appropriation-wise, capital project–wise—would go into certain districts where people were very loyal to Paul Powell, close to Powell, and where there were Powell supporters. The same thing was true on the Senate side with Peters. It was like the budget was their own little kingdom within the bigger kingdom.

DePue: It all ended up being pork for their district, then.

Pensoneau: Well, as much as could be allocated to pork.

DePue: Yeah, they would squeeze out as much pork as they could.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Oh, sure, sure. Now, I want to say right away, though, pork isn't automatically a negative in all regards, though. For example, you take a lot of sparsely populated parts of downstate Illinois. So-called pork projects have helped those areas economically and have provided jobs and spurred the economy. I'm talking about some of these big man-made lakes and the creation of new state parks and the establishment of certain community colleges and things like this, and certainly the allocation of prisons.

Now, see, if you're sitting up in downtown Chicago and, okay, we give the green light to the building of a prison down in Jefferson County outside Mt. Vernon, that's pork in the eyes of the family living on the north side of Chicago, on the North Shore. That's a pork project, and that's just for the benefit of a few people or the legislative honchos in that part of the state.

DePue: So pork is not necessarily bad, as you're describing it; it's a fact of life. But getting the governor now to control the budget through the Bureau of the Budget—

Pensoneau: Is supposed to be a more statewide approach to it. We still have capital projects and so on, but they're supposed to be allocated more in areas where they're, quote, really needed.

DePue: You alluded to it before, but one of the other things that Ogilvie surprised people on was his environmental initiatives.

Pensoneau: Absolutely.

DePue: His stance on the environment. Why do you think he was so strong on wanting to make some qualitative differences in Illinois's environment? And again, we're talking 1970, '71.

Pensoneau: Yeah. Well, Illinois established its EPA before Nixon and the federal government did. We beat the feds to the punch. I think this was just a good example of Ogilvie feeling that environmental improvements in the quality of air and water were necessary. I think he bought the arguments—I'm sure they were justified—that pollution had just gone on for too long in some areas; it was too rapid, it had to be addressed; that the environmental movement was not only legitimate but was long overdue; and that Illinois had to really upgrade its approach to addressing environmental problems. Now, we were not ignoring those issues, I should say. Illinois had a board that addressed air quality issues and a board on water pollution; these were appointed boards, and there was a small staff. The same staff essentially served, as I recall, both boards.

The whole state of Illinois pollution program was basically, when I got here, run by a delightfully interesting, fascinating guy named Clarence Klassen. As I recall, his official title was state sanitary engineer, and he was essentially literally the state's antipollution program. Again, there's all sorts of stuff on him in the Ogilvie book. A truly remarkable guy—a recognized international authority in his field; had served interests all over the world, off and on, for the World Health Organization. He was a reporter's dream.

He was a dream for me because, number one, the *Post-Dispatch* was one of the first papers to want to go into depth in covering environmental issues—some papers didn't—the *Post-Dispatch* did, in line with its liberal philosophy. And Klassen absolutely loved newspersons. He was always available. Usually it was a rare situation when you interviewed him on a subject where the reporter had to end the conversation before the official did, which was a reverse of the norm. Klassen and I immediately latched on to each other because, again, I did things in depth.

The *Post-Dispatch* was vitally interested in the areas in which he operated. He got all sorts of publicity in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, which he absolutely loved. He just reveled at seeing his name in the papers. Klassen and I were a match made in heaven. We were great for each other, because the *Post-Dispatch*, in those years, publicized everything, even the most minute finding of a coal mine drainage lake that had a leak and was polluting a stream or of a plant, any plant, near the Mississippi River that was discharging untreated waste into the river. There was a lot of that going on: pollution of rivers, lake pollution, fish kills, all sorts of violations of what at the time were very weak air and water quality regulations, very weak. I would say I averaged one good story a month alone in that walk of life. If Klassen found a violation downstate, he called me, and I would run over after hours. He had a small staff, but they weren't as interested in talking to me as he was so they would go by; then we'd sit there, and I would just look at the whole report. This is the state report on such-and-such. Take it and, hey, next morning call an attorney or an executive of the company involved and say, What say you? The state chief sanitary engineer is filing this complaint down there in circuit court in your county about such-and-such, and that was it. The rest of the day, it'd be in the *Post-Dispatch*. It was a great situation, you know. And of course you had all sorts of industries on the so-called east side of the river—St. Clair, Madison Counties—so-called smokestack industries—and you had the coal mines, and…

DePue: And there are lots of other pockets of industry around the state—obviously Chicago, but Rockford area, Rock Island area.

Pensoneau: Quad Cities, absolutely.

DePue: Quad Cities, Decatur.

Pensoneau: Decatur's big—still is.

DePue: Were there any specific incidents, trouble spots that seemed to kind of highlight the problems that the state was having with pollution at the time?

Pensoneau: There were many if you took pollution issues seriously, which the *Post-Dispatch* did, which Klassen did, and as it turned out, as Ogilvie did.

DePue: But again, we're flying in the face of political logic here, because—

Pensoneau: Oh, I agree. I agree, I agree.

DePue: —normally you're looking at—

Pensoneau: And you're right. Let me tell you. Again, you're sharp, you're thinking straight, because as I was writing these stories, politically speaking, there would be mainly Republican county chairmen saying, We got a problem. In this county, the whole executive core of industry XYZ has been a major

contributor of the GOP forever in this county. They are big contributors to me personally, to the party's county treasury, and they're mad. They're mad about Governor Ogilvie coming after them or sic'ing this guy Klassen on us for some little smoke coming out of a little smokestack three miles east of town or something like that. I heard that a lot, so yeah, there was some of that. And industrialists, again, were starting to say, of all the governors, can you believe this is the one that's really stepping up the pressure, putting on the heat on this kind of issue?

DePue: First he's imposed a corporate income tax that's pretty hefty, and now we're imposing another expense on these companies.

Pensoneau: That's right.

DePue: I've got to believe that the Chamber of Commerce and these companies are going straight to their representatives and saying—

Pensoneau: Oh, they are.

DePue: —we can't compete; we're moving out of the state.

Pensoneau: Oh, they are. Oh, no, this is starting. Now, in the early days, the enforcement in the end wasn't that stringent that they did move out of state, okay, but there were those that were threatening to do so; noises along this line were being heard as early as actually the late 1960s. The Illinois EPA[13] was set up in 1970—yeah, '70—then the outcries were becoming much more widespread, much louder, and in some regards, the threats becoming more serious. It wasn't so much that they were going to move out of state; it was threats like, Why the heck are we spending all this money supporting Republicans when the Democratic guy sitting over here in my hometown, he's a good guy, I know him well, he's a friend of the family, but I don't vote for him because he's a Democrat. Well, I might as well just start voting for him too. He's a friend, you know. (DePue laughs) You heard a lot of that. You did, Mark. So yeah, there was a backlash; there was a backlash on Ogilvie's vigorous approach. Ironically, when the EPA was first set up, he named Klassen (laughs) the first director of the state EPA, but that didn't last too long (DePue laughs) because—that'd be a whole day we could talk about… I mean, I could write a book on Clarence Klassen. But anyway, go on.

DePue: Tell us about the Fox.

Pensoneau: The Fox?

DePue: The Fox.

Pensoneau: I never knew who the fox was. I don't know if he was ever…

[13] EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

DePue: Well, as you described in the book, I don't know that anybody did, did they?

Pensoneau: Well, I didn't. Now, the Fox mainly operated up in Chicago and Chicago suburbs, but I did allude to him because he was (laughs)—he turned out to be quite a rascal. He was great copy. He would sneak in at night, and he would block stuff up, block the outlets, the pipe outlets, over streams and rivers that were discharging effluence or wastewater or waste from plants and so on, and then he'd leave little notes: "The Fox has been here" (laughter) or something like that. I think he mainly operated around the Fox and the Rock rivers up in that area, up around Batavia and Geneva and Aurora, up through there. I think that's where he was most visible. But, oh, no. I used to ask Klassen if he knew who the Fox was, and Klassen would always give me this sly reply about—no pun intended—sly, fox—Klassen would always kind of say, "I'm not sure, but if I knew, I couldn't tell you." (laughter) That's funny you ask that question. This is the first time since I wrote the Ogilvie book I've even thought of the Fox.

DePue: Well, he sounds like an environmental version of Robin Hood, if you will.

Pensoneau: I was going to say that. You beat me to it. I was going to say he was kind of a Robin Hood type, yeah, mm-hmm. Yeah.

DePue: Great. I can imagine the glee that all of you reporters get when you find out there's another strike, another incident that you get to write about, because what better kind of text—

Pensoneau: Oh, it was great. Oh, it was great. Yeah, yeah. And the Fox always made sure the press knew about it; now, to be fair, not downstaters, but Chicago papers.

DePue: Well, if there's anything else that Ogilvie is oftentimes associated with, more in an indirect sense, it's the Constitutional Convention, so let's take a couple steps back here and set the stage for the Constitutional Convention. At the same time Ogilvie is running for the governorship, there's also an initiative whether or not there's going to be a convening of the new Constitutional Convention. I'll let you pick it up.

Pensoneau: Whether it should be submitted to the electorate.

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau: Yeah. That was Arrington again. Arrington was the sponsor of the resolution submitting the question.

DePue: What was it about the 1870 constitution that Arrington didn't like?

Pensoneau: Oh, I think there were a lot of things. It had a lot of outmoded language in there involving horse and buggies. It was just kind of outmoded completely. As we talk right now, I can't remember. I mean, my mind has gone a little

blank on the details of it. Again, there's really, I think, a good chapter in the Ogilvie book on all of that. But it was just considered outmoded, not up to allowing the flexibility needed to address Illinois society in that segment of the twentieth century. It was approved in 1870, before we even had automobiles, or when railroads were still extremely powerful in the state. It was just a different world entirely. It had all sorts of cumbersome language in it. Don't hold me to this, but I think there was stuff in there providing for, like, a world's fair that took place in 1893. You know, it was just sort of outmoded.

DePue: Again, though, Arrington's the big force pushing this.

Pensoneau: He wanted it; he really did.

DePue: This is consistent with his desire to reform the legislature and have them play a more equal role with the executive branch, as you described it.

Pensoneau: Yeah. By the time Ogilvie got to the governorship, Arrington had pretty much brought the general assembly into, quote, the twentieth century, and he had achieved by his own force of will and strong-arming a lot of what he wanted to do to make the general assembly more of a meaningful partner in Illinois government. By that time, the annual sessions were in effect; he had streamlined the machinery of the legislative process: the way committees operated, the working schedules, the way the Senate convened, actually carried out its duties on a day-to-day basis. He had eliminated a lot of the dilettante aspects you saw in much of the legislative process. He had forced individual senators to be more accountable for what they were going to do or not do, on both sides of the aisle. So he had pretty much done a lot of what he envisioned doing in terms of the general assembly itself, and then he was taking a broader picture of a more magnanimous view of Illinois government as a whole. He was looking at improvements that involved more than the general assembly: the workings of government itself, of the departments or the agencies, of the policies and machineries that allowed the Illinois government to respond to the radically different changes in society and the makeup of Illinois. So he was taking a more cosmopolitan view of government as a whole, and in that vein, he felt part of it necessitated a new constitution.

DePue: And of course the way this played out, you have the selection of delegates in a special election in 1969, and there are no political affiliations on this.

Pensoneau: On paper.

DePue: On paper. We probably should say that Daley had the candidates he was pushing for, though.

Pensoneau: Of course. Of course.

DePue: And there were a couple of occasions that he was successful and a couple of occasions he didn't win out. You might know that I've already interviewed

Mary Lee Leahy. She was one of the newcomers at that time, and she was definitely not on the slate. Dawn Clark Netsch was another one of those?

Pensoneau: Okay, I cannot tell you exactly… I mean, Dawn Clark Netsch was considered one of the enlightened liberals in the Chicago political community, which never—to be fair to them—never was completely part and parcel of the Daley machinery. The world of Daley kind of tolerated them. I mean, they never had the votes to threaten the mayor on anything that counted to the mayor and his organization, but they had their own little world, much of it centered around Hyde Park and the University of Chicago and the South Side and so on. But Dawn Clark Netsch was kind of in that vein. You know, she had been a key member of Kerner's staff when he was governor; she was regarded as one of the brightest persons Kerner brought into the governor's office. She was highly regarded, and she had never really retreated from the scene. So yeah, you're right. I would classify her as a relatively independent Democrat.

DePue: I don't think this person was a delegate to the convention but certainly in that same category of independent Democrat, and that would be Abner Mikva. Is that another one that Daley kind of tolerated?

Pensoneau: Yeah, yeah, a good word for it. I can't beat your word. Yeah. Yeah, they tolerated Mikva.

DePue: Was this at the same time that Richard M. Daley first emerged in a political sense?

Pensoneau: Yeah, he was a delegate. Yeah. I'm sure it was the first time I ever saw him physically. Well, the same goes true for Michael Madigan. Both of them.

DePue: Okay, so Madigan was a delegate as well.

Pensoneau: Mm-hmm, as was young Daley. Right.

DePue: So it has some heavy hitters in here, but at the very beginning of their political careers. Let's talk about the issues, then. Well, let's take one other person—there are a couple other people. I know Wayne Whalen was a member, and you can hardly talk about Wayne Whalen unless you talk about Paula Wolff—who was not a delegate, was she?

Pensoneau: No, she was not a delegate, but that's when I met Paula Wolff. That's when she surfaced. I met Paula Wolff when she was a young, bright, and I thought quite pretty operative in Ogilvie's office. I met her because Paula Wolff became the eyes and ears of the governor's office at the Constitutional Convention. She reported to Jeremiah Marsh, who in turn reported to Ogilvie. Ogilvie and Arrington, either together or separately, reached the same conclusion: they did not want to be seen physically hardly at all at the convention because it would be thought that they were strong-arming the delegates.

Ogilvie I think addressed the convention when it opened, as I recall, and that was about it, and Arrington maybe appeared once before the delegates or at least a committee on one of the issues. But it was so noticeable that you never saw Ogilvie or Arrington around the convention physically or, in my opinion, mingling at night with the delegates in the restaurants or the bars or so on. Well, you never saw Ogilvie anyway doing that, but Arrington sometimes a little bit. But you never saw that. But Ogilvie obviously had to keep close tab on the convention, and for that, his emissary was Paula Wolff. Paula was almost always there, always standing around; she would, I think almost on a daily or nightly basis, report back to Jeremiah Marsh, Jerry Marsh, about what she was observing.

Wayne Whalen from day one was an independent Democrat—there was no way he was ever part of… First of all, he didn't come from Chicago then; he came from far northwestern Illinois—I think the village of Hanover. I'm sure it was Hanover. I think it was in Jo Daviess County.

DePue: And no relation to Brian?

Pensoneau: No, none at all. No, none at all. And, of course, it was interesting. (laughs) You heard me talk about that day at the Ogilvie thing about—I mean, a lot of us didn't notice those kinds of things—nobody did—but she met Wayne Whalen there. (DePue laughs) One thing led to another, and you know what? Am I right? I think before the convention completed its work, they were married, I think—it's in the book there—and they didn't tell anybody.I think maybe like the marriage license was in the *State Journal-Register* or—it was still two separate papers then, the *Journal* and the *Register*—in one of them. And that was one of the interesting offshoots of the Constitutional Convention, the marriage of Wayne Whalen and Paula Wolff. But anyway, that's when I met Paula Wolff. I didn't get to know her very well. I got to know her better when Thompson was governor and she had a significant staff role then.

DePue: Well, we can pick her up at that time, then.

Pensoneau: Yeah, sure.

DePue: I do want to talk about a couple of the issues. There are so many that you can address in terms of the result of the constitution itself, which was adopted, of course. But there were a couple that were sticking points, if you will, and one of them was the election of judges—whether or not to elect or to have the governor appoint.

Pensoneau: Right. Now, as I recall, both Daley and Ogilvie wanted selection through appointment. I think I'm right on that. Again, excuse my foggy memory. Again, it's all there.

DePue: I can't remember what you mention in the book about Ogilvie, but certainly Daley did.

Pensoneau: Yeah. I think Ogilvie did, too. I think they would call it support for the, quote, non-partisan selection of judges. It ended up being a compromise, but I'm trying to remember… Let's see, how do we do it? Initially they're elected in a partisan election, and then after that they only run for retention.

DePue: I think ten-year terms.

Pensoneau: Yeah, that sounds right.

DePue: Another one was representation: whether or not it should be single-member districts, and I think that one was also an issue that was taken to the general public.

Pensoneau: I'm sure it was, and I've got to be honest, I just can't remember. I know it was an issue, but I cannot remember how Con-Con dealt with it.

DePue: I don't think we'd be well-served, then, to kind of belabor the point, if that's the case—

Pensoneau: Yeah, I just don't remember.

DePue: —because there's plenty else here, Taylor, that we can talk about. (laughs) Ogilvie's administration happened also to coincide with some controversial issues.

Pensoneau: Big-time, and they served, probably unfairly, to make his political survival even more difficult, to steepen the hill that he had to climb to survive politically. The most damaging—

DePue: Now, we're sitting here talking about it in 2009, and we know, okay, that of the last seven governors, I think four have ended up in jail or having been—

Pensoneau: Five of the last nine have been either indicted or served with formal criminal complaints, yeah.

DePue: So Illinois has quite a reputation, but normally we don't think of Richard Ogilvie, and yet…

Pensoneau: Well, Ogilvie himself—and this is upfront—Ogilvie himself was never tainted in any way by any scandal.

DePue: But there were plenty of scandals during his time.

Pensoneau: Plenty of scandal during his time—that's the way to phrase it.

DePue: Where would you like to start on these?

Pensoneau: Where do we begin?

DePue: How about the Supreme Court?

Pensoneau: Okay, the Supreme Court was probably the biggest, or should have been the biggest in terms of its impact. The Supreme Court—gosh, where do I begin? What turned out to be at issue there was the fact that Theodore Isaacs—the same guy that if we have to say one person did it, he did it—brought down Otto Kerner. Isaacs was involved in a case involving Isaacs that ended up before the supreme court, and in layman's language, the court ruled as such—whatever the court did or didn't do, the path was paved for Isaacs to get off the hook, okay? All right. Subsequently it was learned that before the justices, before the Isaacs matter was resolved in terms of the supreme court, that he had funneled stock, bank stock, to at least two of the judges, one of whom was the chief justice.

DePue: That would be Solfisburg.

Pensoneau: Solfisburg, right. And that—

DePue: Roy Solfisburg.

Pensoneau: —that they had camouflaged the stock. The stock had been camouflaged. It was bank stock. I think it was in something called the Civic Center Bank in Chicago. It was a newer bank, and a lot of stock was available in it. Isaacs funneled—there was an intermediary involved, but Isaacs—I mean, I'm really simplifying this thing, but basically, they did accept the stock.

DePue: And Ray Klingbiel—

Pensoneau: He was the other one. He was from East Moline. Both Republican. Solfisburg was chief justice; Klingbiel was one of the other six justices. They were integral parts of the then–GOP majority on the Illinois Supreme Court, and they were forced to resign in disgrace.

DePue: So Theodore Isaacs. That's two interview sessions in a row he comes up with scandal.

Pensoneau: Yeah, every sit-down we have, his name comes up. An amazing gentleman.

DePue: State Fair—there's one you normally don't associate with scandal.

Pensoneau: All right, State Fair was a dandy. The state fair scandal was brewing before Ogilvie took office. Ogilvie knew about it. Ogilvie knew when he took office it was, quote, "going to hit the fan in terms of the Illinois State Fair in terms of who got concession contracts," who was getting breaks, different types of manipulations that were unethical in the operation of the fair, things like that. Ogilvie knew ahead of time—and this is an instance of where Ogilvie was

really good—Ogilvie took the initiative on that one. While he couldn't prevent the scandal from breaking because it was leaking out, he initiated an investigation of it on his own which showed he was ahead of the game or on top of the situation. So his investigation actually hastened the various disclosures that led to some court actions and other things about mismanagement of the apple pie Illinois State Fair. But Ogilvie could claim, A lot of this came out because I initiated the investigations. The disclosures came out because of machinery I set up to investigate it. He jumped the gun, and this is where he was sharp. He had been a prosecutor. He spent a lot of time working with the Better Government Association of Chicago. He was very close to the BGA—we didn't point that earlier; we should have—this is Ogilvie. And the BGA was doing a lot of his investigations, and Ogilvie was close to a lot of members of the BGA. Ogilvie had always cooperated back in his Cook County days with the BGA.

DePue: BGA is a private—

Pensoneau: Yes, privately funded. It's exactly what the name says, Better Government Association. It's mainly financed by Chicago businesses, and Ogilvie had been a fellow traveler of the BGA for years. Ogilvie exactly knew what the BGA was coming up with in this regard, and he jumped the gun and set up his own investigation before stuff really hit the fan big-time and therefore was in the position to… Now, it probably still hurt him in the long run because later on, people would just say, Oh my God. He's governor. Look, they had a scandal in the Illinois State Fair when Ogilvie's governor, but it all went back to things set in place long before Ogilvie was governor, and Ogilvie actually hastened the disclosures by initiating his own investigation.

DePue: How about the stink that came out with the Supreme Court scandal? Because to me, that's much more serious.

Pensoneau: Oh, it is, no argument.

DePue: Did any of that stick on Ogilvie?

Pensoneau: No, no, uh-uh.

DePue: Let me share a quote with you that I'm sure I got from one of your books here. This is a quote that somebody else attributed to Ogilvie himself, and it deals with the ultimate issue with scandal and corruption in Illinois politics, and that's that patronage, that *P* word. Here's what Ogilvie himself said about patronage: "The only trouble with patronage is there's not enough of it."

Pensoneau: I think he said that, yeah. That's in one of my books. Yeah.

DePue: But from everything we've heard so far, this is quite contrary to the person that you've been describing.

Pensoneau: Yeah, but… Okay, this is an area where Ogilvie tried to be a good Republican, and I think that individuals, Democrat or Republican, get a hold of the governorship and find out that there are not nearly as many jobs available for filling through appointment as they would have thought, and the number's becoming fewer all the time because as the Civil Service Code expands, as the union presence increases among public state and other public employees, appointed officials, bureaucrats, rank-and-file employees are to a great extent frozen in. It's like the federal government. I am not a liberal on this.

I mean, I can enter some of my own personal feelings here. As a reporter—I've said this a number of times, and I'll say it here—as a reporter going around to an agency, to a board, to a commission, to any governmental entity to look at records or to get a discussion going or to investigate or look at records or interviews or whatever, I always found patronage employees more cooperative than [those] frozen in civil service. That may surprise you. It surprises a lot of people. Because I thought a lot of the bureaucrats frozen in, they're locked in, and I'm sorry, they lose track of the fact that they're responsible to rank-and-file taxpayers, sometimes whose interests are represented by an inquisitive reporter coming in. Patronage people always knew their jobs were always on the line, and they were often much more cooperative in going in and bringing out records and so on.

I know that flies counter to conventional wisdom, and I have found very few other people that have ever agreed or they just listen when I say that, but I'm recounting my experiences as a lot of times an investigative reporter for the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, and I often found patronage people—you know, you can say a lot of times they weren't qualified or they—there's always a lot of criticism of patronage folks. I'm not saying a lot of it was justified, but I will say they were often much more responsive in an agency than the so-called civil servants who were frozen in; really their main objective in many cases was just you never rock the boat. They didn't run to dig records out of files or whatever. If there was a way to get a runaround, or later on in life it became common to always blame the computer—always the computer. That's my personal experience. And a lot of the people who are frozen in, it doesn't matter who's governor or who the director may be, they are really reluctant to change policies or change procedures even when a governor dictates it. Everybody I've known who's been governor—I know Dan Walker agrees with this; I'm guessing—I can't say Jim Edgar does—I've never had this conversation with Jim Edgar, but he might agree with it; I think Mike Lawrence does—I'd be surprised if Mike doesn't—is that the people that you appoint are much more flexible in terms of trying to implement changes than the people you inherit that you can't get rid of. Now, that's a view you don't normally hear, I agree. So that's my view on patronage. But the flexibility is decreasing more all the time as we freeze more and more people in.

Tantamount to that always, I felt, were these proposals by extreme reformers to continually shorten the ballot. Like, you only elect maybe the governor and the attorney general, and the governor appoints the treasurer, the governor appoints the comptroller and so on. I have always been opposed to that. I'm among those that I'm not in favor of decreasing the number of elected officials at all.

DePue: To include justices, judges?

Pensoneau: I don't have strong opinions on that. I never have had. I will say this, though: I've never studied the judiciary as close as I have the general assembly and the executive branch, but certainly I think we've had a number of good justices who have worn the robes after being elected in partisan elections. I really do think that. I'm just hesitant to completely surrender to—if not to two parties—these independent judicial commissions or whatever, even in the first instance, the appointment of a judge. That's my opinion—and you didn't maybe bargain for all this. Ogilvie did make that quote, and I understood it, even then when I was working for a very liberal newspaper, a liberal newspaper that just loved more and more appointment and less and less election of government officials. And I even then was not in accord with the editorial page. Now, obviously there are abuses in the patronage system; you get a lot of nepotism. We see it. We still see it today and so on, so I'm not in a position to dismiss those or to say they don't exist, but on the other hand, I think I'm one of the few individuals who is not ready to just sit down enjoying the herd and say, Oh, man, we got to get rid of patronage. It's just a big waste; it's just an abuse of the system and everything else. I've never agreed with that.

DePue: There's one other scandal that we can't ignore here. We're talking about patronage, so maybe it's appropriate to talk about Paul Powell, the patronage boss of southern Illinois.

Pensoneau: Sure, that's all true. Well, I was part—in fact, Mike Lawrence set it up, his institute at SIU[14] did a retrospective on Paul Powell. We did it actually down at Vienna High School in Powell's hometown, and it was interesting. I was among those that Mike brought in to—

DePue: See, "Vienna" [VIE-en-na]—that's another one of those names we can't seem to get right.

Pensoneau: There you go. Right, right. There you go. I was one of those that Mike brought in to reflect back on Paul Powell and his legacy. It was one of the few moments during the whole day when I kind of defended Paul Powell, and I threw Clyde Choate in, too, for good measure. I said, "Those individuals had to maneuver and conspire and cut corners and do whatever was necessary to get things for their part of the state because they never had the votes in terms

[14] SIU: Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

of numbers in the general assembly or even in the populace. They were always outnumbered, not just by Chicago but by this part of the state and the Metro East area and the Quad Cities. How many people live down there? It was amazing that so much got done for southern Illinois, and it was only because of people like Powell and Choate and people down there that they controlled who made it a point of understanding how the system works and could exploit it and so on."

Now, that met with a bit of a backlash down there that day. You know, there's a few saying, Are you talking about under-the-table stuff as if…? And I said, "Call it under-the-table if you want, but it's the way you got this college over here; it's the way you got that prison two counties over," and so on, "because if not for the maneuverability and the knowledge of the inner workings of a Powell or Choate, you wouldn't ever get those things, because Chicago is not going to willingly initiate on its own a prison for Jackson County. Right? Not even for here they're not going to." So that was my bit of a defense.

Now, Powell obviously in the end exemplified a mixed morality. I think Powell's take was, I do good for a lot of people; I'm responsible for the welfare of a lot of people; I've done very well for my part of the state; I've brought home the bacon for downstate Illinois, so why am I not entitled to share in it? I have control over all these programs; I have influence over all these things going on that make it so easy for me to cut myself in for a rightful share of the pie. Why would I not benefit from it? Why should I keep using my expert knowledge of manipulating the system to benefit the pocketbooks of XYZ over here or ABC up in Chicago and so on? I'm kind of entitled to it myself. I mean, I'm the one that's orchestrating things and getting it done. It wouldn't get done without me. Why shouldn't I come in for a share of it? And that was his attitude.

DePue: As you described him during his legislative years, he's in that key position of controlling the budgetary process and getting all those plums for southern Illinois, and then becomes secretary of state and now he's sitting on the biggest pool of patronage jobs in the state.

Pensoneau: That's right. Very good, you said it. It still is a big pool. It's probably the biggest pool of patronage jobs in the state. Well, when Paul had it, it was a pool of anywhere from, I'd say, three to four thousand people—pure patronage, and Powell played it to the max. He had his own patronage army, and he knew what to do with it. And, you know, it was amazing. I was always told that Daley did not accept Powell voluntarily—Powell wasn't his kind of guy. They were from two different worlds altogether. But Daley had to—

DePue: That surprises me because—

Pensoneau: Daley had to, quote, "stomach Powell" because Powell was one of the few people who can manipulate just enough of a political power base on his own to be a problem for Daley.

DePue: On the surface they sound so much alike, though.

Pensoneau: Oh, I know, I know. But Daley—

DePue: There was too much competitor?

Pensoneau: Yeah. It's hard to see how Powell was competitive with Daley. I don't see that either. I just know that—people made sure I knew things. That was my job, to have people tell me things, and—

DePue: Did Daley just not want to deal with another power broker in the state?

Pensoneau: I think that was part of it, right. Yeah, yeah. Even though Powell was certainly no threat to Daley in Daley's empire. If Daley didn't have to deal with somebody, he didn't want to deal with somebody—you know, the less dealing, the better and easier it was—and Powell was someone you couldn't ignore. Even going back to as early as Adlai Stevenson when he was governor, he didn't like Powell and found out that he couldn't ignore Powell, and Daley found out the same thing, at least in terms when you started dealing with Springfield and the Illinois state house.

DePue: Well, we haven't gotten to the point where Powell is now infamous in the state of Illinois. We're enticing the people who are listening or reading this and saying, what's that all about? Why is he important? besides the things we've already talked about.

Pensoneau: Well, Powell died in October of 1970, right about in the middle of Ogilvie's four-year term of governor—good for Ogilvie, right? (DePue laughs) And he was buried. He exited with a lot of fanfare. His body lay in state in the rotunda of the state house. It was an incredible day down in southern Illinois in Vienna when he was buried down there at his funeral. Daley himself was there, can you believe that? Jay Bryant was an Ogilvie staffer, and at the time Ogilvie was to be part of the eulogy to Powell in the state house, and Jay Bryant was designated to write it. And I think Jay told me—I think it's in the book—that at that time either Ogilvie or Fred Bird or somebody right there said, Don't go too heavy because we still don't know in the long run, after his estate's probated and so on, what's maybe going to come out. Let's not go too heavy. We'll honor him for his service, but we're not ready to say yet he's one of the great Illinoisans of all time and so on.

But what happened was—of course, in retrospect—that shortly after he died—the person in charge of administering his estate, his affairs, was John Rendleman. John was either then already, or about to become the chancellor of SIU at Edwardsville. John's father Ford Rendleman and Powell were very

close—and John Rendleman's an interesting story in itself—but at this point, let's just say that John Rendleman was the administrator of Powell's estate. Well, in trying to tidy up quickly in the wake of Powell's death, Rendleman and several others discovered the money at the St. Nick, and—

DePue: The St. Nicholas hotel in Springfield.

Pensoneau: At the St. Nicholas hotel in Springfield in the suite that Powell lived in, right. And if we were to believe in what we've been told to believe or led to believe through the years, it amounted to something in the neighborhood of eight hundred thousand dollars. Some of it was in a shoebox—not all of it. There were also boxes, and I'm told there was at least one briefcase and so on. It was stuffed in a closet in the hotel suite. So they didn't know what to do about it, what to do. Two people were told about it. The important thing is the governor of the state, Richard Ogilvie, was not told about it.

Rendleman talked to two people: Attorney General Scott, who had to know, apparently under some regulatory or even lawful procedure because something to do with the probating of the estate that the attorney general had to know about it; Scott was sworn to secrecy, which he maintained. It ticked off Ogilvie to no end later on to find out his good buddy Scott knew about it all along and didn't even tell Ogilvie; and then Paul Simon. Rendleman went to Paul Simon for advice. He said he was there confidentially, and Paul would honor his confidence. Rendleman wanted to know what to do. Paul Simon's advice, according to Rendleman, was, "Before you do anything, you better check around and see if there's money other places. Has he got a home down in Vienna? You better go down and check his home; there may be a few other places," Paul supposedly suggested he look to see before we go any further, if there's more money. Well, those things were done, and apparently nobody knows if they found any more money. It was said that they found no more money. So anyway, Simon and Scott knew about it, but it wasn't Simon's problem. Simon was then lieutenant governor; Scott was attorney general.

So Rendleman didn't know what to do, how to get this out. He knew it had to be made public—it was going to be made public sooner or later—but to lessen the impact of it he thought he had to get it out some way. So Rendleman, who lived—I'm not sure if he'd moved to Edwardsville or not, but certainly his base had been Carbondale—Rendleman was close socially to a guy named John Gardner, who was then editor of the *Southern Illinoisan* newspaper in Carbondale. John was either editor or managing editor, or maybe publisher. He ran the show, okay, at the newspaper; he was probably either publisher, editor, managing editor. Okay. He had a Christmas party at his house on the Christmas holidays and invited John Gardner, and it was at that party at Gardner's house that Rendleman asked if he could talk to John about something—they were good friends—and according to the story that went out, they went into Gardner's kitchen, the two of them. At that point Rendleman told John Gardner, We found eight hundred thousand dollars in

Powell's suite at the St. Nicholas hotel, and it's never come out, and nobody knows about it. I want to get it out. What do you think I should do? Any advice? John Gardner being the good newspaper guy he was obviously said, "Well, we're going to have to disclose it, and of course we'll disclose it in my newspaper, the *Southern Illinoisan*."

And that's exactly what happened. The *Southern Illinoisan* in Carbondale broke the story on either December thirtieth or December thirty-first, which was New Year's Eve. I remember I was on vacation that week, and the *Post-Dispatch* tracked me down. For some reason I was in the Quad Cities—I don't remember what I was doing there—and they tracked me down in the Quad Cities and said, You got to come back to work—I was going to come back to work anyway in a couple days—but you got to get back right away. Did you know that Paul Powell left eight hundred thousand dollars — they found eight hundred thousand dollars sitting in his hotel suite—and nobody knows where the money came from. Everybody's on this, and we have to get you back here right away.

Which they did, of course. I came back, and then for the next four or five weeks, that's all any of us in the pressroom did, day and night. It was bedlam. It was incredible, as we explored leads, and everybody's tripping over everybody else and consulting. Everybody had an idea, and all sorts of leads were followed, and all sorts of stuff came out about where Powell had gotten money from and so on. But the definitive answers—answer or answers—on where the eight hundred thousand came from has never been answered and I don't think ever will be.

DePue: Was there any doubt, though, among you and your peers that this was dirty money?

Pensoneau: There was some doubt in my mind. For instance, in those days campaign contributions did not have to be disclosed, and people often contributed just in cash, and Powell—like I found to be true of a lot of high-level elected officials—never picked up a tab. Never. All through the years, he didn't spend much money. He did not live extravagantly. His home was the house he was born and raised in; it was his family home down in Vienna. He was not ostentatious. He was not showy. As I recall, he drove his own car. He had a big, black limo, but he was not ostentatious. A lot of the money could have come just from the natural course of collecting cash from contributors.

DePue: Was he the kind of political boss who would distribute to other campaign funds?

Pensoneau: Not that I knew of. He might of, but no one will ever know. I didn't know, and no one every will know. But see—

DePue: This is what—

Pensoneau: —when you go with these guys to a fundraiser, you can watch them. People come up and, Hey, Paul, how you doing, man? Mr. Secretary—Secretary of State—how are you? I've admired you for a long time. Sir, I know you're busy, but I wanted to see you, and I want to make a little contribution. Here's maybe a thousand dollars or whatever—just give it to them and put it in your pocket. I've witnessed stuff like that. It happens all the time. I didn't mean that—it doesn't happen all the time—but I witnessed stuff like that.

DePue: And at the time you're witnessing, there's nothing illegal about that.

Pensoneau: No. Oh, no, this goes way back. When I was a young kid with the *Post-Dispatch*, I used to watch it.

DePue: This might be—

Pensoneau: He collected a—he had a—they call a flower fund. All of his employees paid him tribute, and as I said, you're talking—let's be modest here and say he's just got three thousand. If he's got three thousand, two thousand nine hundred of them are contributing to him. Maybe it's only fifty bucks a year, but it starts to add up. I mean, I think the money could have come from twenty-five different sources, I really do. And he didn't spend it; he hoarded it. It was a hoard, obviously.

DePue: Well, here's my speculation, and this is maybe totally out to lunch, but he is, after all, like all of these people of his age at that time would be, a survivor of the Great Depression when you watched the banks go belly-up, too, and say, well, that's not where I want to put my money.

Pensoneau: Of course, of course, of course. And as we sit here right now, the eight-hundred-thousand-dollar figure in a politician's kitty does not look that huge. It really isn't. I mean, a number of the current legislators have campaign funds that have at least that amount in. Nobody thinks—

DePue: But that'd be seven million dollars of money today.

Pensoneau: Okay, well, that's a good point. Okay, that's a good point. All right, fair point. Well, it was a national story. Johnny Carson—

DePue: It was?

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, Johnny Carson[15] was lampooning it nationally; others—

DePue: Because of the shoebox.

Pensoneau: Yeah, because of the shoebox angle, right. There were humorous moments in the press room in terms of trying to track down where it came from. The

[15] Johnny Carson was a very popular evening comedy/talk show host on TV for many years.

humorous aspects of it were that some of the what you call money bands around some of the cash—it had money bands on it that banks put on it, and it had something to do with the word Swiss, (laughter) S-w-i-s-s. And I remember having to spend a whole damn weekend along with every other reporter trying to track down somehow if this was money from a secret Swiss banking account or something. (laughter) But of course it all turned out to be nutso, but this is an example of how far this thing went.

Now, here was a serious point of it. In tracking down where the money came from, it was never determined, but what did finally come out in excruciating detail was the stock and the secret financial ties that Paul Powell had to a number of racing associations and racetracks in Illinois; that had been suspected for years but never flatly confirmed. Everyone just kind of assumed but never confirmed, but now, in view of this, it became a big issue, and he had a lot of stock.

So this opened up for the first time the lists of stockholders in racing associations and so on. This is where it really ballooned and became a big deal, because it turned out that many of the major political figures in Illinois—not many in their own name, but in a cousin's name or in a daughter-in-law's name or in a sister-in-law's name—also had stock. A number of political careers were ruined because of that.

DePue: Well, Otto Kerner being the prime example, but…

Pensoneau: Yeah. Now, I don't think Kerner used any other name. Kerner was a little different situation. Yeah, it was. Yeah. It was a different situation. But this was—

DePue: What was it about the racing business that led to all this?

Pensoneau: Well, first of all, it was lucrative, and second, the state regulated horse racing. (DePue laughs) Everything in horse racing is the allocation of so-called racing dates. There are prime times when you want to have races, be they flat racing or harness races; the success of your season depended on your racing dates. The more powerful, potent tracks got the better racing dates, and they made a lot more money; we're talking about millions of dollars here. The state decided the racing dates, not the industry itself, and this gave the state fantastic say in the governance of horse racing in Illinois. This was also before we had any other kind of legalized gambling. I mean, even bingo wasn't, I don't think, legal then, so this is a really big deal

DePue: Were all of these racetracks in the Chicago area?

Pensoneau: Not all of them. (laughs) Two were downstate. (laughs) One's still going—Fairmount Park in Collinsville. I just drove by it the other day. And the other one, now it's gone, was called Cahokia Downs. It was down right on the east edge of East St. Louis.

Cahokia Downs was built in the early 1950s, and it was lock, stock, and barrel a (laughs) politician's racetrack. I was always proud of the fact, because in all this intense investigative reporting that followed the $800,000 discovery, I was the one that did finally break the story, what was called the Cahokia Downs Land Trust, (laughs) and that was the real power behind the Cahokia Downs racetrack. In there, half the legislators all had shares in the thing. I mean, it was never any secret that it was set up at the instigation of Paul Powell and some other political names I'm not going to mention now—they're all dead—but this was the verbatim, literal truth of the matter. What it brought out was some of the other political figures who had never been tied to any of this stuff; there they were, shareholders (laughter) in the Cahokia Downs Land Trust. It was interesting. See, that was the real power behind Cahokia Downs, this trust, which really was the basic ownership, the foundation of the track; that's where the real money was concerned in terms of the operation of Cahokia Downs. And, I mean, where do we begin? It was a widely read story.

So none of this would have been forced out or squeezed out or brought to the surface if not for Powell leaving the eight hundred grand which instigated this feeding frenzy among reporters like myself to come up with answers. Where did he get the money? Well, we never definitely determined where the money came from, but there were all these other spin-offs that ended up through the racing stock deals, and all that implicated a lot of other people who never dreamed they'd ever be discovered.

DePue: Well, the only elements that you're mentioned here so far is sex in terms of selling newspapers. (laughter)

Pensoneau: Well, let me think about this… (laughter) Oh, I tell you. I will say this. I will say this: a number—a **number**—a number of legislators had girlfriends. A few you could go so far as to say they were outright mistresses. There was more than one example through the years of where they didn't like to be dumped, and when they would be dumped, then they would like to meet someone like me (DePue laughs)—not at the state house, mind you, but in some little out-of-the-way diner in some innocuous part of Springfield—and say, You know what that son-of-a-gun's been doing?

DePue: And I bet they say it just like that, too.

Pensoneau: They do say it just like that. Let me tell you, in terms of investigative reporting, more major stories that have led to the downfall of politicians, both in Illinois and nationally, have come because of either wives or girlfriends that have felt jilted. True.

DePue: I don't suppose you want to flesh that out with any meat in any of these stories.

Pensoneau: Well, no.

DePue: Okay. These are interesting times, and I can't help but think that all this stuff about Powell and all these other juicy scandals and stories that are going on to a certain extent are wonderful distractions from what the hard news would be of the day.

Pensoneau: Absolutely.

DePue: Something else that Ogilvie had to deal with were the campus riots of the period, '69 and '70 especially.

Pensoneau: Yeah. Oh, yeah, that wasn't funny at all. Of course, the breakdown of law and order at U of I or Carbondale. I had a statewide beat; I had to drive rapidly down to those scenes. They were not much fun for a reporter—not as much fun as looking into the Powell stuff.

DePue: Why was it Ogilvie that ended up being such a target for the protestors?

Pensoneau: That's a really good question. Part of it may have been nothing more than coincidence, that he was governor at the time they reached a peak. Just like you'd wonder with Lyndon Johnson: you would think in terms of national civil rights stuff that they would rather hurt a Republican president than a Democrat, but it turned out that Johnson happened to be the president when the stuff all hit the fan big-time nationally, and he was a Democrat. So I don't know that it was all personal against Ogilvie. The way I tried to couch it was that Ogilvie just happened to be governor at the time this was all hitting the fan, but he had to deal with it. I mean, one of his roles is to preserve law and order in the state, and so therefore it was necessary for him to repeatedly call out the National Guard. I was at the University of Illinois for some of the worst of it; I was at Carbondale for some of the worst of it.

DePue: When the Old Main burned down?

Pensoneau: I was not there when that happened. I think it was 1969.

DePue: Yeah, I believe it was.

Pensoneau: No, I was not down there when that happened, but I was there when these places were under martial law and curfews were in effect. If I wanted to go out at night to see for myself for the stories I was filing, I'd have to go drive in a National Guard Jeep with a driver and a National Guardsman with fixed bayonet sitting in the back seat of the open-air Jeep.

You got used to a lot as a reporter, but I saw things that really disgusted me. It's what the kids were doing. I mean, I watched them randomly throw bricks through windows of buildings in Champaign-Urbana at the campus. I watched widespread destruction. I saw them hurl stones through

windows of merchants, innocent merchants, down in Carbondale along U.S. 51, the north and south artery down there. I watched wanton destruction—pounding on cars, breaking window, just anything—just total disregard for property. I saw in Carbondale where the police station was under siege. They were putting up sandbags or something around the police station in Carbondale. I saw stuff I never… Of course, I already told you about 1968 Chicago. Nothing was like that.

DePue: Were you there?

Pensoneau: In Chicago? Oh, yeah.

DePue: What was your…?

Pensoneau: I did not talk about that last time? I thought I did.

DePue: No, we didn't.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, I was. You know, Bernie did that big front-page spread on me. Do you have a copy?

DePue: Yeah, I have a copy of that, but no, we haven't talked about that.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, I was there for that.

DePue: And my question here for you is: From what you've described up to this point, your reaction, your visceral reaction, is to what the students are doing; it's not to the excesses, perhaps, of the police themselves—

Pensoneau: Well, I didn't—

DePue: —and that's what I wanted to ask you about Chicago in '68.

Pensoneau: Well, Chicago '68 was a whole different matter. There I saw the police actively reacting to the protest, I mean, and vigorously so, with billy clubs and fists and feet kicking protestors on the ground. I saw just outright fistfights and everything in Chicago I didn't see downstate.

National guardsmen were mobilized, and like in Champaign they would make a stand on Green Street, and they would tell the rioting students, This far—no farther. We're not going to be breaking any more windows. This is enough. There were thousands of them. They would keep them bottled up on that part of Green Street in front of the Illini Union or whatever it is and so on. There were also state police, too, coming in in riot gear—not just National Guard, but state police. I never personally saw them ever rough up a student. I really got to think about this. I never personally saw them rough up a student. I saw some students throwing rocks at some of them, you know, but I don't recall ever seeing… I mean, bayonets were fixed, and the guardsmen looked

pretty ominous, but I never saw them ever have to move besides a designated area where an officer would say, Okay, we form a line here, and that's it. There'd be people with bullhorns and so on and scream. You know, like have your fun, but no farther. So I didn't see a pushback. There may have been things going on when I wasn't there. I mean, I wasn't there all the time, but I was there for some of the worst stuff. Now, I wasn't at Northwestern and I wasn't at any other campus where this was going on, but as I said, I was at the U of I and I was at SIU.

DePue: This incident at the U of I, which struck me—if I have my timeline correct, this is like March or sometime in that timeframe of 1970, so that would have been before Cambodia—

Pensoneau: Seventy was a peak year in college.

DePue: That would have been before Cambodia, before Kent State, and it was already going on in Illinois.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Oh, definitely, yeah, sure.

DePue: And no doubt, after Kent State it exploded, I would think.

Pensoneau: It exploded, yeah. Yeah.

DePue: Would you describe what you saw at the Democratic National Convention, what was going on in the streets, as a police riot? As you know, that's the way that Walker reported this one.

Pensoneau: That's the way Walker reported it, and I would have to say—I mean, without commenting on the merits of the issues at stake—the protestors really egged the cops on. They really did. But once the cops said, Enough's enough, then it became pretty vicious; the backlash was pretty vicious. I mean, boy, I watched them beat the hell, literally, out of girls as well as guys and so on. Boy, they really let them have it. I saw a lot of bloody heads, you know, a lot of blood coming out of noses, a lot of people holding arms, crying, screaming, moaning. It was indelible memories. I saw the cops start to take after some of it. You get away from the main drag, Michigan Avenue and so on, you'd be back in some of the side streets and the cops there would come actively… Maybe there would be fifteen protestors huddled down beside some building, licking wounds or whatever, and I'd see two police cars screech up and stop and about four or five uniformed men would come running out with the billy clubs and start slamming heads and all this kind of stuff.

DePue: Do you think—

Pensoneau: So yeah, I saw those things, yeah.

DePue: What do you think was different then in the way the police and the National Guard conducted themselves in '70 at places like the University of Illinois and SIU and these other places where you were observing it?

Pensoneau: Well, as I said, the National Guard was very much in control at Champaign-Urbana and at Carbondale. At some point I lost track in Chicago of the differentiation between the National Guard and the 82nd Airborne or whatever. They were flown in—either the 101st or 82nd, I'm sure one of the two, and you had both the Illinois National Guard and the airborne. Almost all of what I saw in terms of the physical encounters in Chicago was between the protesters and the Chicago police. I cannot honestly remember in Chicago ever seeing one of the regular Army or National guardsmen do anything. They were there; it was a formidable presence. When they were there, everybody gave them wide berth.

DePue: The National Guard.

Pensoneau: Yes, and the regular Army. I know there were airborne flown in in Chicago.

DePue: For that or for the Martin Luther King riots or both?

Pensoneau: Probably came too, but I thought for this, too. I'm sure I'm right—if I'm wrong, I'm wrong—but if my memory serves me correct, regular Army—and I'm sure they were airborne—were flown into Chicago to supplement the Illinois National Guard.

DePue: Were you sent up to Chicago during the Martin Luther King riots?

Pensoneau: You know, I was not. I was not, I was not, I was not. I did not go up there for that.

DePue: Everything we've been talking about today suggests that as a journalist, there is a lot going on.

Pensoneau: I was in the right place at the right time. I was a very lucky individual. I got to cover things, people, incidents, situations, places, transition periods in American life. Even in St. Louis as a young kid before they moved me from St. Louis to Springfield, I got to cover some of the early civil rights demonstrations in downtown streets in St. Louis back in 1963, '64.

DePue: Well, there are just a few more things I want to finish up with in terms of talking about Ogilvie. I already told you before we got started that I'm going to save the '72 gubernatorial election for the next session, since that's the intersection, obviously, between Ogilvie and Walker.

Pensoneau: And that's a great one to talk about.

DePue: Oh, man. But now that Ogilvie has a lot more money to work with—and we already talked about environmental issues—where's his money going? What's he doing with all these extra funds?

Pensoneau: Oh, he did a lot of work on the infrastructure of the state.

DePue: Road construction.

Pensoneau: Road construction, oh, yeah. Road construction, other aspects of the infrastructure, bridge improvements, things like that. They greatly increased the efforts at conservation: improving, upgrading state park facilities and acquiring more land for state parks, preserving more open land, curtailing development in scenic areas. I mean, all these things came into play. It seems like they were involved. Although East St. Louis was a heavily Democratic city, Ogilvie put a lot of money into East St. Louis. Again, a lot of Republican strategists couldn't figure out why, but he did. We had the only community college in Illinois that wasn't supported by local taxpayers' funds in East St. Louis: State Community College. That was an Ogilvie creation, paid for entirely by statewide taxpayers, not local taxpayers. He did all sorts of things. He—

DePue: Did Sangamon State get a start at that time, too?

Pensoneau: No, that was started before he became governor. It probably—

DePue: In Springfield, we should say.

Pensoneau: In Springfield. Now, I don't recall when talking about Kerner if we gave Kerner credit on this. No, Kerner deserves credit for being the godfather of Sangamon State—both Sangamon State and the—is it Governors State in the south suburbs of Chicago? They were a package. And we could talk about that, too. I remember that I knew what was going on there at that time, how Sangamon State came to be. Now, Sangamon State may not have enrolled its first students—

DePue: I'm thinking it would have been in the early seventies.

Pensoneau: —until Ogilvie was governor or maybe even a little later, but in terms of the initiative and the credit for providing the wherewithal, the groundwork, and the authority for the founding of Sangamon State, that was Otto Kerner. It was Otto Kerner and his chief aide, who I talked about last time, Chris Vlahoplus.

DePue: But certainly founding new institutions like Sangamon State and Governors State take a lot of money, and now Ogilvie has made it possible that you'd get the funds for it.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's true, although I should point out,—it's interesting you bring up something here—while Ogilvie was governor,

though, one of the things he called attention to in his opinion was the lavish, sometimes unjustified spending at major public universities in the state. I think it was his phrase—I know I used it in writing, and I think I got the phrase from Ogilvie or his budget people—they closed down the "free spigot" for higher public education. He thought a lot of it was wasteful and that the public wasn't getting its money worth, and he forced them to tighten their belts. That gets into a whole other area with the legendary James Holderman, who was the director of the Board of Higher Education under Ogilvie. Holderman became very unpopular at places like the U of I and SIU and other places because Holderman was the one that had to carry out Ogilvie's mandates in that regard.

DePue: Well, maybe that was one of the reasons, then, that the students focused in on him as a target.

Pensoneau: Okay, again, you raise a valid point. I don't recall, though, if the students—

DePue: Or he was just the authority figure to lash out against.

Pensoneau: Yeah, I think that was it. Yeah, yeah, I think that was it. I don't think the students were up to snuff enough on those kinds of things (DePue laughs) or cared or paid attention to realize that the governor was tightening the belt spending-wise of the higher education community in Illinois.

DePue: Well, another one of the things that he had a reputation for is a crime-fighter, and he certainly tried to do some things in that regard.

Pensoneau: Yes, he did. Yes, he did. He really beefed up the state police. He brought in some very competent people in law enforcement. Of course, that was one of his specialties. He set up the state's "Little FBI."

DePue: Well, in the climate of times, that would be another thing to decide you don't like somebody for if you're a student protestor.

Pensoneau: Oh, the Little FBI?

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau: Yeah. (laughs) Again, I don't know if the students were up to snuff enough.

DePue: Well, let's just talk about the Little FBI, though.

Pensoneau: Okay. I don't think they paid enough attention to realize all these things, but I definitely agree with your statement on the authority figure, though. I think that's valid. He appointed a very aggressive guy, a former Chicago TV reporter who either was an attorney or would be an attorney, Mitchell Ware, W-a-r-e, the head of the FBI, and—

DePue: The Illinois Bureau of Investigation.

Pensoneau: Yeah, right. Well, actually, they called it the IBI. I'm sorry, I should have said that. It was called the Illinois Bureau of Investigation, which was the state's "Little FBI." Of course, it never achieved… It was eventually absorbed back into the state law enforcement structure, but it had a brief but colorful reign, mainly under Ogilvie. If it wasn't gone by the time Walker became governor, Walker merged it or altered it significantly so that it was, in effect, no longer the state's Little FBI. But it had a brief but colorful reign under Ogilvie, mainly because of Mitchell Ware, who was a very interesting individual. He liked to make these raids, again (laughs)—well, maybe there's something, back to what you said—because some of his raids were on campuses, anti-drug raids—

DePue: Uh-oh. (laughs)

Pensoneau: —and he liked to take—

DePue: (laughter) I think we're getting to something now.

Pensoneau: He liked to take TV cameramen with him right on the raid. I mean, it was wild. It was wild. And then, of course, this backfired, and pretty soon Ware was involved in all sorts of controversies. A very nice guy and interesting guy to talk to, very open in his assessments of situation, kind of quick to be accusatory in terms of anything he didn't like, and pretty much spoke first and worried about backup materials later, if indeed they were available. You know, that kind of stuff. It was a brief but wild ride, and it was again, of course, great stuff for a reporter like myself. But it petered out. Yeah. But part of the Ogilvie mentality was beefed-up law enforcement. But I will say this, though, that he also tried to change the culture, the interior culture in the penal institutions; he brought in some very enlightened people who tried to make them more humane and institute more so-called modern penal programs.

DePue: Was he credited with actually the formation of the Department of Corrections?

Pensoneau: I think he was.

DePue: Just the term "corrections" of course suggests that.

Pensoneau: Yeah, yeah, right. Okay, I think he was. Yeah, yeah. I think organizationally, it did become the Department of Corrections under Ogilvie. The answer is yes. Yeah. And he also—as of course we have mentioned—he set up the Illinois Department of Transportation, too.

DePue: Well, that's huge.

Pensoneau: That's huge. Yeah, that was Ogilvie, too.

DePue: Well, and we haven't mentioned, then, somebody who's crucial in the Department of Transportation. (laughs) You're smiling because I'm thinking of Bill Cellini.

Pensoneau: Bill Cellini was one of the first persons I met when I arrived on the scene. At that time, Bill was a member of the old city commission in Springfield that governed the city. Bill was kind of a young boy wonder here. Bill Cellini was a Republican. Bill got involved in the 1968 gubernatorial primary fight in the Republican Party between Ogilvie and John Altorfer from Peoria, a Peoria industrialist; Cellini was a supporter of Altorfer. Ogilvie, of course, won that primary fight for the nomination, but Altorfer made a much stronger showing than anybody predicted, especially downstate. There, the Ogilvie people deemed, I think accurately, that Altorfer benefited greatly from the organizational and cerebral support of Bill Cellini. After the primary was over, Tom Drennan told me that they wasted no time offering Cellini a position in their own campaign, and the rest is history. Cellini was, of course, put over Public Works and Buildings under Ogilvie. Then when IDOT was set up—again, it was either '70 or '71—Cellini was named its first secretary, and that's when Bill built a statewide reputation. There was even a lot of speculation that when Paul Powell died—of course the governor would name a successor, and of course it would be a Republican—a lot of us thought that Bill Cellini might get the nod. It didn't happen, but that's what we thought. I've known Bill and watched Bill my whole adult life here.

DePue: Well, again, to complete the record here, his status at present?

Pensoneau: Yeah. As we talk right now, Bill's under indictment for alleged manipulation of the awarding of business of one of those major state boards, either the one over the teachers' retirement system—

DePue: Teacher retirement system, I think that's it. And his connections with the Blagojevich administration, which is kind of a curiosity.

Pensoneau: Yeah, it really is. I think on Bill we'll just have to see what happens when it come to trial, you know. It's kind of tough for me to talk about Bill. He is a friend of mine. He's been a friend. He's a classic story, Mark, in the life of a boy—let's say a person—who's come from an extremely modest start to achieve significant things and considerable wealth. I think Bill Cellini, irrespective now of how it winds up or where it goes from here, I really think the Bill Cellini story has the makings of a book.

DePue: Maybe this is a good point to stop, because, let's see, who have we been talking about today? We've been talking about W. Russell Arrington, who got his start—the stockyards, meatpacking. His father is a coal miner.

Pensoneau: Yeah. Arrington himself told me once when he was still alive his father was a coal miner, and then when I really got into it and doing the book, his father

worked for a coal company, but the miners would not have considered him a miner because he worked above ground. But he was a coal miner, but yet—

DePue: He got his start with modest beginnings.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah.

DePue: And Richard J. Daley—modest beginnings. Richard Ogilvie.

Pensoneau: Okay, now, Ogilvie was more well-financed than the other guys you mentioned. Ogilvie was one of two boys of a successful insurance industry executive. I mean, Ogilvie went to Yale, so…

DePue: But here's one of the things I find interesting about him. He was a sergeant—not an officer, but a sergeant—

Pensoneau: Right, I agree.

DePue: —in a front-line unit.

Pensoneau: I wondered that myself.

DePue: Clyde Choate, who—

Pensoneau: Clyde Choate came from a dirt poor background. Clyde Choate was one of about fourteen kids—

DePue: The winner of the Medal of Honor.

Pensoneau: Clyde Choate was a coal miner's kid, literally.

DePue: Paul Powell.

Pensoneau: Oh, I'm sure that was modest. Choate definitely was.

DePue: So except for maybe Ogilvie, there is a theme here.

Pensoneau: Mm-hmm. Dan Walker. Dan Walker came from a situation where sometimes at night—his father was out to sea, a sailor—there was Dan, his brother, and the mother—they weren't sure where the food was going to come from that night on their table if Dan didn't go out and peddle vegetables during the day and make enough to…

DePue: Yeah, especially when his father was kind of getting a modest retirement check during the Great Depression and they had practically no other income.

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: So that's a good place to leave off with this whole discussion and entice people to pick up the next transcript as we get into talking about Dan Walker and the election.

Pensoneau: Seventy-two and Walker, sure.

DePue: Okay. Well, once again, (laughs) it's been fun.

Pensoneau: Yeah, absolutely.

DePue: You keep coming across things that just astound me in this whole process.

Pensoneau: Well, amazing—sitting with you, I realize—now, are we still on?

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau: It just makes me realize how long I've been around—a long time.

DePue: Well, the years slip by, and before you know it, you've seen a lot of history. Thank you, Taylor.

Pensoneau: Sure. Thank you, Mark.

(end of interview #4 #5 continues)

Interview with Taylor Pensoneau
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Interview # 5: March 26, 2009
Interviewer: Mark R. DePue

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DePue: Today is March 26, 2009. My name is Mark DePue. I am a volunteer with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. I am here again talking with Taylor Pensoneau. This is our third session. It depends on how you count this up because we have a morning session and an afternoon session each time we meet, but this is the third day we have met. Today's subject is Dan Walker.

Pensoneau: Good morning Mark.

DePue: One of those fascinating, enigmatic kind of personalities in Illinois history, would you say?

Pensoneau: Absolutely. Where do we begin?

DePue: Well what I want to do since we hadn't quite left with Ogilvie last time, before we get to that 1972 campaign, I thought it would be important that we set the stage by talking a little bit more about Dan Walker as well. We should mention right up front that you have written the book on Dan Walker.

Pensoneau: I am his biographer.

DePue: Did he ask you? He certainly cooperated with you on this.

Pensoneau: Oh yes. Yes, yes. Actually, the other co-author, Bob Ellis, a fine gentleman, had started doing a book on Walker when Walker was still in prison. Ellis had visited him at least several times up at the federal penitentiary at Duluth, Minnesota. Bob had started working on a book on Walker; hadn't got very far though. Bob was a newspaperman down in West Frankfort, Illinois at the Daily American newspaper. Bob was handicapped, admittedly, because he had never covered Illinois government in Springfield. And really had not covered the Walker administration. I think he had met Walker back on his famous walk up through the state in 1971 and had been quite fascinated with Walker since that point. But again, Bob didn't have the background to really do an authoritative book on a governor's administration. And so after Walker was out of prison, I was contacted by my old college roommate and confidante who I have remained

very close to throughout my life, Jeff Pugh. Jeff Prugh was then in an editor's position with the Glendale, California – I think it was called the News Press – and also several other papers in the suburbs ringing Los Angeles. Jeff knew that former Governor Walker of Illinois, after getting out of prison, had returned to his home area of San Diego where Walker grew up. Jeff asked me if I would write a guest column on former Illinois Governor Dan Walker having gotten out of prison and living now in San Diego. I said I would if I could make contact. I did.

I went through Walker's one daughter, Kathleen, living in the Chicago area and got a phone number for him. I made the contact. I was actually going out to the west coast on some coal industry business but I said I would be in a position to see you if you were willing to see me. A confidante of mine, who is basically running the papers up in Glendale and several other suburbs, would like me to do a column on you. And Walker said, well, at the time his attorney – I think it was Tom Foran – said he doesn't want me to be quoted directly. I am still in a delicate position having gotten out. I'm not sure whether there were provisions of parole involved or not. I don't recall but, he said, I'd be willing to sit with you but we can't have direct quotes. It would be like an old fashioned backgrounder. I said that would be fine.

Perhaps I talked last time – I don't recall, Mark – but it turned out to be quite an adventure. We agreed to meet very late on a Friday afternoon in a hotel in downtown San Diego. I was in Los Angeles. Through a series of misadventures, I had a hell of a time getting down to San Diego from Los Angeles late on a Friday afternoon. The terrible traffic situation, of course, was problem enough but then I allowed the situation to become even more complicated by letting a third or fourth cousin who has a sailboat berthed at Manhattan Beach or Redondo Beach, convince me to go out with him for a short sail in the Pacific Ocean. He tricked me in to going way, way out and I said repeatedly that I have this interview with former Governor Walker of Illinois down in San Diego. And he said, Well that will be no big deal. You can just get back and down in an hour. I'll make sure you get back on Pacific Coast Highway or the Interstate and get you down there. Of course, that turned out to be pure folly. Here I am out on his very nice sailboat, very expensive, in the Pacific Ocean heading for what turned out to be Catalina Island. And I said, Turn this damn thing around, Ron. I've got to get back. I have a commitment to a former Governor of my state, who is waiting down there in San Diego.

Well, by the time I got back I was actually in the car of an Illinois state employee who was with me in Los Angeles – I'm not going to mention his name. We actually were driving a car that belonged to an aunt or great aunt of his living out there in southern California, so he was driving. We broke about every traffic rule you can have in trying to get from what they call the South Bay area down to San Diego. We were quite late and missed Walker. But then I had this phone number. I called Walker. Had gone back to his apartment. It was like, Well, where were you? I was there waiting for you. I waited an extra

hour. And I said, Oh, Governor, you know, I just can't believe how embarrassing this is. You wouldn't believe what transpired this afternoon for me trying to get down to you.

Anyway, he said, Well, we can still see each other. We agreed to meet at a motel – may have been a Holiday Inn – up around Mission Bay which is where his apartment was. He said he thought he had maybe about an hour at the most to spend with me. I did get up there. I remember he was there sitting waiting for me at a restaurant on the side of the lobby. I still had my good friend, the state employee, with me; he was kind of all aghast. He couldn't believe he was going to be in the presence of former Governor Dan Walker. (laugh) He ended up being with Walker about – gee, let's see – about a good eight hours. I don't think he ever said more than two sentences. But that's another story. But anyway, he was quite in awe of the situation.

Anyway, it went well. I said the way we were going to play it –Walker agreed – was here is former Governor Dan Walker now back in his home area of San Diego, trying to rebuild his life, and here is Pensoneau, the one time Illinois political writer for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, who covered Governor Walker when he was Governor. I said, We'll play it this way, as if it's a meeting between two people who knew each other in previous lives – when you were Governor and when I was a political writer. I'm no longer the political writer and you are no longer Governor, but it's just like reminiscence and I'll write it that way. He said, Fine, I trust you to do it, no direct quotes and so we proceeded. Well, it went very well. Walker had a woman with him and at that point basically he said, Let me take my friend here home and I'm going back to my apartment but why don't we continue this at my apartment.

So we did rendezvous probably about ten o'clock that night at his apartment. I think it overlooked Mission Bay. It's on the north side of San Diego and it was fascinating. We didn't leave – the state employee and myself – didn't leave that apartment until I think the sun was … I mean, it was almost bordering on daybreak. We talked all through the night and it was one of the most fascinating times. We relived things. I was amazed at Governor Walker, the things we talked about that night. We relived so much of it. I couldn't believe how sharp he was. He resurrected some of my stories, my investigative pieces, and indicated where I was close but not quite. Or you were partially right, if you had known to talk to two more persons over here you would have had a lot more. It was amazing. It was just incredible.

Well, anyway, came back. The column ran. He said he was going to read it and he saw it. Then at some point in June or early July he called me and indicated would I consider getting involved in the book that Bob Ellis was wanting to write on him. Would I get involved. He said he had already talked to Bob and told Bob that's what he wanted and Bob said, fine whatever. Walker said, I'd like you to do it.

At the time I was heavily involved in a big issue with the coal industry and the Illinois General Assembly. We were in a long overtime session which was not as common in those years. This is 1991. I remember I told Governor Walker, I really can't think about this at all until this session is over. The coal industry was involved in a big deal about negotiating a state program to help the struggling Illinois coal industry. The session went into overtime literally because of two issues: the coal industry legislation and the legislation involving the expansion of McCormick Place in Chicago. Of course, it was going to end up being a trade-off that the Chicago area folks got what they wanted for McCormick Place; the downstate legislators got what they wanted to try to help the coal industry. But that session didn't end until some point well into July, so I couldn't think about doing anything but that. It was an intense thing – every day being involved in the back and forth negotiations with the legislators. But after that was finally done out of the way, I got back to Walker. I said, I'd like to give it a shot. He said, Fine.

I started what we call work on the Walker book – which was my first book – around Labor Day of 1991. I undertook it as a personal challenge because I probably told you earlier, the big unmet goal I had in my life was to write a book; I never knew quite where to jump in the water, where to begin, what to do. It just hit me that this is my chance. Right here. It's a subject I knew about – Walker and the Walker administration, the Walker story. And I said I'll do it. I don't recall if I told Governor Walker this, but to me it was a challenge to see if I could do it. And it turned out that I did.

We agreed from day one that Bob Ellis' name would appear on the book with me. Bob is a fine guy but I wrote the entire book, every word of it. Bob did a little of what you call leg work for me as the book went along. Of course, as with all my books, I told Walker, Now I'm going to have to write this the way I see it. You know, I've got to be honest and, of course, when you were Governor I wrote a lot of things that weren't complimentary about you. I think his comment was, I understand, I didn't agree with all the things maybe you wrote but I understand. I said, So it's going to be straightforward objective and I felt it was. There are things in the book he doesn't like but we talked about a lot of things. But, anyway, I went to work on the book.

I was in a position to take long weekends and fly out to San Diego and spend weekends with Walker. Usually I would stay. He had this apartment. By that time he had moved to Salina Beach, which is I think is just right on the north side of Delmar. Actually when I was doing the book, he was basically living in a small apartment in Salina Beach. It was just fascinating. I got to know him very well. This is kind of a reverse situation of what we have between you and me. I would take notes assiduously and he would finally tire out and say, Now is enough. Let's think about dinner tonight or can we maybe do something else. He always had a phrase, I'm tired Tay. We reminisced enough. Let's do something else. What I consider a really good meaningful friendship blossomed out of my doing the book on Walker. But

again – I want to point out in fairness to myself – the book was objective. I have stuff in there that indicates that many people thought he was not a very good governor. He didn't agree with that. He was obviously one heck of a campaigner. One of the best we've seen in modern Illinois politics. But, you know, there was a very divisive debate over his governorship. Few people were in the middle on it. You either really liked Walker or disliked him and hated him, and it's all in the book.

It was a fascinating, rewarding experience for me. The basic thing being I proved to myself that I could write a book and I was pleased. The book got a very good reception for the most part. I know Steve Neal in the Chicago Sun Times, the late Steve Neal, wrote in his political column in the Chicago Sun-Times that it was the best book written on an Illinois governor since the book in the middle seventies that John Bartlow Martin had written on Governor Adlai Stevenson. The book got a lot of play. I went in to incredible depth on Walker's personal life; if you want to know what I mean, you just have to read the book. It was a very rewarding experience. And then it wasn't long after the Walker book came out in June of 1993, the rest of that year that followed there are a lot of different book signings and events related to the Walker book.

But then late in 1993 old acquaintances from the days and the administration of the late Governor Richard Ogilvie approached me; their basic theme was always pretty much the same: Okay, you did the book on Walker; what about a book on the good governor? I'm not saying I agree with that, but that was almost the same approach from the Ogilvie camp in terms of whoever approached me. I think late in '93 I agreed to go ahead and do a biography of Ogilvie. It was sort of a natural follow-up to the Walker book. There was a lot of overlap between the two. A lot of my research also applied to Ogilvie or to parts of the Ogilvie administration and it was kind of like a natural. So I agreed and as I recall, I formally started work on the Ogilvie book in January of 1994.

DePue: But I have to believe that it was a much different exercise. First of all, you didn't have Ogilvie there. Second of all, you didn't have the colorful, quirky story that Dan Walker presented to you.

Pensoneau: No, no I didn't. And you're right. It was a different type of undertaking. I did have the cooperation of Mrs. Ogilvie. I met with her, spent a lot of time with her in Chicago. She was very giving and very forthright and very different one-on-one with me than I had remembered her as the first lady of Illinois – much more of a live wire than I anticipated. In many ways, a lot of fun to be with, a truly delightful woman. But you're right. You're right. It was different doing the book because I didn't have the man himself available for one-on-one interview. He had died in 1988. But, of course, there were a lot of Ogilvie people who wanted a book on the governor whom they feared was being forgotten or unfairly relegated to the dust bins of Illinois history, and I agreed with that. So it was not difficult getting worthwhile interviews for the book. Of course—as with Walker—I had all my own articles to fall back on, all my own

personal resources. I've been a keeper; I've always kept a lot of my notebooks. I went over to the Institute of Government andPublic Affairs at University of Illinois, then still being run by the legendary Sam Gove. Gove had a very well organized pile on Ogilvie which he just physically handed to me and said, Have at it. That was a big plus.

DePue: Did you record any of the interviews that you did with any of these people for either one of the books?

Pensoneau: I have never recorded. I have no recordings of any interview. I didn't use a tape recorder.

DePue: That just a matter of personal style in your case?

Pensoneau: Personal style. Goes back to my first major interview for the Walker book. It was with the late Victor de Grazia, Walker's closest confidante, in Chicago. When I sat down with de Grazia I had tape recorder plus I had a notepad and pen. I turned the recorder on and I started off with a bit about here I am sitting in the downtown Chicago office with Victor de Grazia on such and such a date – it was probably late 1991 – and de Grazia looked at the tape recorder and he looked at me and he looked back at the tape recorder. He finally said, Do we really have to have that on? I do want to make this worthwhile and I told Dan I will talk to you but I don't want to be recorded because you're going to get some straight stuff. I don't want it recorded. And, so he said again, Is that necessary? With that, I said, Not at all. I turned it off and proceeded to have a very meaningful interview and I never again took a tape recorder to an interview with anybody – be it a governor or the former elevator operator in the Illinois State House.

DePue: Probably for the record here, I should state the name of the book – Dan Walker, The Glory and the Tragedy. Also for the record I should say that I too have had the opportunity to meet Governor Walker, not nearly to the extent that you have, but that one of my first interviews for the Illinois Statecraft series was with the Governor himself down in Rosarita, Mexico in his condo. He was most gracious when we had an opportunity to meet; I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it.

You've already illuminated quite a bit about Dan Walker's personality, but just give us a thumbnail sketch of your view of Governor Walker's early life, his upbringing, etc., especially those parts that seemed to influence him for the rest of his life.

Pensoneau: Absolutely. I feel that Dan Walker is a classic American story of the poor boy making good. You know, you can almost say he was a modern day Horatio Alger character. You know, he is our modern day version of the Erie train boy. Dan Walker – and I'll call him Dan because he insists in dealing with him in situations like this, you just call him Dan – Dan grew up in sometimes

impoverished situations. His father, of course, was a seaman in the Navy, spent a lot of time out in ships away from the US. It was basically Dan, his brother and their mother, and times were tough.

Dan was born in 1922, so he was still a pretty young man in the Depression years. I think he graduated from San Diego High School in 1940. Again, it's all in my book. He did very well in his class. You know, he might have been valedictorian of his high school graduating class at San Diego High School. But, you know, but Dan had it tough. He followed his father's path in early years and joined the Navy; World War II was either still in progress or near an end.

But I felt later on – and being aware of the difficult nature of his growing up, of his boyhood of the way he was reared under the circumstances that – and Dan may not agree with this if he hears it or reads it – but I notice in life that some people who make it big in whatever, government, business, what have you – if they have a very poor, maybe even unstable background as they were growing up it becomes like a shadow in their background. They are always sort of looking over their shoulder to make sure it's not there or they are not going to be enveloped in that kind of situation again. I'm not a psychologist, obviously, but I've noticed this and I'm probably not phrasing this very adequately but, it's like it creates an uncertainty that you never can relax completely. You don't have confidence perhaps in the world and in your situation in the world even though you have made it big – and Walker became Governor of Illinois – it's always like a factor there that continues to maybe haunt you. I haven't seen that with some others who have made it big but have silver spoon upbringings or they were born into wealth, or raised in wealth, or had famous fathers, or well-to- do families and they went to Ivy League schools and really had the best of everything education-wise, travel-wise. Just on my own, in my reportorial days and since, I notice differences in individuals depending on where they have come from and their backgrounds. And I think Walker was haunted in his early formative years because of the very stiff challenges that he and his brother and mother had to face in growing up.

DePue: I know that for most of those years during the Great Depression it was tough times for almost everybody.

Pensoneau: True.

DePue: His father had retired from the Navy and was kind of living on a pension if I recall.

Pensoneau: Okay, I don't recall that exactly myself. I'm sure what you are saying is accurate. I just don't recall that. I just know they never had … it wasn't a matter of much money, it was hardly any money.

DePue: Yeah. Well, and that's why I mention that because on a pension you are getting much less than if you are actually serving.

Pensoneau: Oh yeah.

DePue: And he was just an enlisted man in the Navy, so tough times. Yet Walker emerged from that in 1942, getting admitted into the Naval Academy.

Pensoneau: Yeah, it was incredible. As he explained it, a few slots in each entering class at the Academy were reserved for seaman from the fleet, if they passed a certain test. Walker was on board somewhere in the Pacific, as I recall, and took a test. In a way not totally caring how he did, but he took it, I think, maybe out of boredom or whatever. He found out he did very well and if he so chose he was eligible to enter the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland and, hey, well, let's do it. And then that led to an interesting chapter in his life.

His anecdotes about being at the Academy are more than interesting; they are fascinating. He was very different as opposed to many of the bright young American men entering the Naval Academy. Walker had already been to sea. He had worn an enlisted man's uniform. He had been an enlisted man. He had, of course, seen more of real life than they had. The war was in progress. He had been in the Pacific. You know, I think that to Walker a lot of the regulations and the rituals you were put through – I'm going to use a real trite term – bordered on Mickey Mouse stuff. He didn't take it seriously and he didn't do very well academically. Not well at all. Now that changed later on when he was in Northwestern University Law School. He was an outstanding student there. But he did graduate and then he returned briefly in what – 1945, '46, somewhere in there for shipboard duty. Again, in the Pacific, I think. I don't recall the exact progression that led him, in the very near future, to Northwestern University Law School. I think part of the reason was, of course, while still in the Academy he had met Roberta Dowse, who came from either Racine or Kenosha, Wisconsin.

DePue: Kenosha, I believe.

Pensoneau: He fell in love with her and at some point in there they got married. That was, I think, a factor for him going to law school in the Chicago area.

DePue: Well, we want to move through this fairly quickly because there is so much to talk about in terms of his administration and the election of '72.

Pensoneau: Sure.

DePue: You mentioned he decided to pursue law as a career. I want you to just think about how you would describe his personality.

Pensoneau: Very aggressive, with an unending tone or touch of morality and ethical standards.

DePue: Now that's going to surprise anybody who hears this and know that he ended up in prison.

Pensoneau: I agree. I agree. But Walker was, I felt, extremely straight. Uh-huh, very smart. Obviously ambitious, had decided relatively early on that he wanted to get into big-time political involvement, wanted elective office. Most people don't know that as early, I think, in 1960 – again, it's all in the book – in 1960, he appeared before the Democratic slate-making committee headed by, of course, Mayor [Richard J.] Daley. I believe he wanted the party's nod or nomination as its candidate for Attorney Genera and he was rebuffed. I think he resented it and, I think, he vowed to himself there had to be other ways to get ahead politically as opposed to having to pay homage and quote, kiss the fanny of these pompous party leaders.

At that point he was not already involved in independent Democratic activities, but I think it certainly spurred him in that direction. He became very visible and very active in an independent Democratic movement that certainly caught the attention of reporters and others. But, of course, they were obviously labeled mavericks by the regular party types. There was a very sincere, devoted cadre of Walker-like people, not just in Chicago area but in some parts of downstate also. They formed a bond, a network and they surfaced here and there in some places in local elections. Their basic modus operandi, their basic objective, was to challenge the established party structure in many places, especially where the established party structure had the appearance, or in reality was a machine – a political machine. I went in to great detail in my book on Walker on the people involved in the maverick movement in different parts of the state. It's interesting, because later on when he made his serious bid for the nomination for governor, many of these people resurfaced then in support of Walker's candidacy and they brought a lot of other people along with him who had never been involved in politics one way or the other before. And that was the secret to the success of the Walker successful quest for the governorship in 1972.

DePue: I do want to expand on this a little bit more – quite a bit more actually. You have described him as an independent Democrat. How would you describe his political philosophy?

Pensoneau: Alright. I would say, okay, the Walker that I know now – and here we are in 2009 and Walker and I have become, if nothing else, just very good friends and we talk frequently by telephone – I can tell you the Walker that I know now, all these years later, and that I have known for the last five, six, seven, eight, nine years, remains a Democrat, but not a liberal Democrat. I don't want to say he is a conservative Democrat, but I'm going to say he is not a liberal Democrat and he is not comfortable with, nor supportive in his own mind, with so much of the modern Democratic Party and its platforms and the programs it pushes and so on.

DePue: More of a JFK Democrat than a Humphrey Democrat perhaps?

Pensoneau: I would say so. If, indeed, JFK was not a liberal Democrat. I'm not an authority on JFK. Humphrey, no question Humphrey was a traditional liberal Democrat.

DePue: Okay.

Pensoneau: Was then, would be today if he were with us. I'm trying to rack my memory here … I guess Walker would be somewhat of a JFK Democrat. I guess I'll say that, loosely speaking.

DePue: Probably not a fair question on my part.

Pensoneau: Well, it's a fair question. Walker, I think, tried to be more of a pragmatic Democrat than either a liberal or conservative Democrat. I mean, there is no way you can call Walker a conservative. There are very few Democrats you can call conservatives except, of course, for some from southern Illinois. But Walker, I think, maintains in conversations that even looking back when he was in the saddle, that he was not a traditional liberal Democrat.

DePue: Where was he on the social issues, especially on human rights. Or civil rights I should say.

Pensoneau: Well, I think he took – you call it traditional line there – I think he was certainly supportive of what was going on then, the movements in those directions, I think. You know, so were actually in Illinois a lot of Republicans, I mean, for that matter, especially suburban Chicago Republicans. But, uh-huh, I think Walker was – I use a word, okay – on those issues.

DePue: You describe him, or he described himself as an independent Democrat and that's what I really want to dive into.

Pensoneau: You say he described himself as an independent Democrat?

DePue: Yeah. What does that mean?

Pensoneau: Well, I think it means that he got elected independent of the established party leadership in Illinois. He would not, he did not in the end, kowtow to them. Actually, he never did. I think when you say independent, is that he was his own man. If you weren't independent, then what were you? Well, then, Republicans would say you were a lackey of Mayor Daley and if you weren't independent everything about your political being – your beliefs, your career – was dependent on recognizing the leadership of, and seeking the good will of Mayor Daley. I think, at that time when you said you were an independent Democrat that was code language for saying you didn't acknowledge the dominating leadership of Daley.

DePue: Let me quote something he wrote in his book. His book, you know, is probably worth mentioning here, *The Maverick and The Machine: Governor Dan Walker Tells His Story.* The Maverick and The Machine – so it's appropriate that we throw this comment in here from his book about the Machine. This is from his experiences as he told it as an assistant precinct captain in Chicago when he was a young, hustling lawyer out there getting into politics and having ambitions, as you've already said. Here is his quote: "The machine was totally absorbed in self-perpetuation and thrived on voter ignorance and dependency. So, it kept the blacks and other poor people down. Without a dependent constituency the machine would become irrelevant. So the party hacks had no interest in curtailing crime, making schools better, or fighting for civil rights." I wonder if you can flesh out a little bit more in terms of the way the machine actually operated.

Pensoneau: Well, there is no question, the basic objective of the machine was for its own political preservation. No argument about that at all. Now, that can be said though about most political structures that I have observed in my lifetime – both in terms of individual political figures and in terms of political organizations, even the Republican organizations in some parts of the state where your own preservation is paramount. That is the guiding factor or guiding influence in everything you do as an individual political figure or in accord with your party. So that is not unusual. It's just that the machine, the Chicago Machine, has carried it to a much more lengthy degree and to greater degree of success than would-be political machines in other parts of Illinois. But, in terms of those realities a lot of what he says, of course, is true. He mentioned crime. Well, obviously in some wards in Chicago, the very obvious, visible crime figures were supporters of the Democratic organization in those wards; they were part and parcel of it. I guess that is part of what he was alluding to there. The important thing, in terms of the political operatives in those wards, or neighborhoods, was not that these criminals were criminals, but that they were supportive financially and in other ways of the Democratic political organization. So the machine operatives in these areas, certain wards in Chicago, didn't really care that they were criminals. They only cared as to whether or not they contributed and supported the local political structure; they were not about to, in any way, try to rock the boat and turn state's evidence or initiate investigations of mob activities in certain wards.

DePue: Let me read you another quote that he had about the same portion of the book where he is talking about the machine and the way it functioned. "I saw that if I wanted to enter into state government, I would not, and could not, do it by rising through the ranks in machine politics. My only avenue would be as an independent Democrat." The thing that came across very strongly to me in reading that book and talking to him was how much he truly loathed the machine politics and the way Mayor Daley operated it. Would you say that this is a correct assessment?

Pensoneau: Yeah, I would. Yeah, he obviously – I can only just repeat what you just said – I mean, I agree. He had made a stab, as I said back in 1960, in getting ahead through the machine-dictated process. And he was rebuffed. He was rebuffed because I think, in their opinion he didn't bring anything to the table that they wanted. You know, he was not one of them, okay. He wasn't brought up in Chicago.

DePue: By his own accounts he wasn't willing to do what they thought was necessary to turn out the vote.

Pensoneau: That's probably true. Yeah. They ask those questions in slate-making sessions and he maybe didn't give the right answers. But Walker just wasn't … this gets kind of sensitive and touchy when you consider, especially Democratic politics in those years. But, you know, he didn't go to the right church. He wasn't one of them. He was kind of a WASP.[16] How many WASP's do you see in the big city machine organization? We're being honest here, rather blunt. Victor de Grazia himself, in my interviews with him from the book, said these things, that there was no way Dan could make headway with Daley and his lieutenants because he just wasn't one of them. And he didn't have – at least they didn't perceive that he had – any kind of a following or standing on his own that would allow him to challenge them. They did support other people through the years who weren't like them, like Adlai Stevenson, III, for example, okay. But, the perception that a guy like Adlai Stevenson, III, had the name and maybe the wherewithal to overcome being rebuffed by the machine if you wanted to move ahead politically. So that's why they, the machine, Daley, would make an accommodation with someone like Adlai Stevenson, III, but they didn't have to do that with a Dan Walker. Basically to him he was just some impudent upstart who came in, hadn't paid his dues, wasn't one of them, and here he wants the nomination for Attorney General.

DePue: Well, in 1960 he still would have been a very young man as well.

Pensoneau: Right. Right. You know, it's like the old joke up there. Who sent you? You know. What's that book Royko or somebody wrote. It had a great title: Don't Send Us Nobody Sent, or something like that. It's really very appropriate. Walker was in that category; I mean, he just didn't fit. He had no leverage at all in trying to deal with the machines. And so, most individuals would simply go out, their head hanging down, hat in hand and leave the slate-making room and say, Well, that's it. I realize I can't buck this incredible structure. I got an interview. I'm flattered I got an interview and that was it. Well, Walker didn't take it lying down. It took a number of years for him to get up the gumption, I guess you would say, and the desire – the burning desire – to get ahead, and to do so he had to challenge the machine because nothing changed. Certainly nothing was going to change after he had his name on the famous Walker report in the wake of the 1968 Democratic Convention when one part of the report

[16] WASP: White Anglo-Saxon Protestant

says it was a police riot. But, of course, that's the part that jumps out and that was the part that the press gave heaviest play to and, of course, that would have been the part that would have most ticked off Daley. Okay. So, I mean, not that Walker had much of a prayer anyway of ever getting the sanction of Mayor Daley, but after that, there was no hope or prayer. I don't think that Walker realistically knew this – maybe knew it when he authored or coordinated the writing of the Walker report. And because at that point, I don't know, I'm sure it's a question … I'm not sure I recall this being ever being discussed but maybe at that time he knew in his mind, in his heart, that he was going to make a bid for high office in Illinois, probably the governorship. And knew he would never have Daley's support. Knew that his only prayer was to appeal to all of that latent dissatisfaction out there among Democrats and Independents with Daley domination and in order to position himself as the logical recipient of all that support from the dissatisfaction, this report would help serve that purpose. It would identify him as a major Daley opponent, an individual both ambitious and at the same time not afraid to challenge Daley. Walker has never laid that out for me in the way I'm saying it here, but I think the way it worked out we have a dovetailing situation here.

DePue: From what you have described then, again this is part of why I think Walker is an enigma, so he has this serious disagreement as you explained with the machine – the way the machine operates. You have described him earlier as a pragmatist. You also described him as a very ethical person.

Pensoneau: Uh-hm, in my opinion. Right.

DePue: Much of that I would assume is because of his distain for the way the machine worked, for corruption that it tolerated, for the voting process that they are known for – notorious for.

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: Is he also an opportunist by saying that this is his opportunity to compel himself into the public eye?

Pensoneau: Oh I think so. I think so. So you are back on the Walker report now?

DePue: His desire eventually to take on the Daley machine in the process of running for governor.

Pensoneau: Right. Well, I think you have to be an opportunist and, as some thought, almost a Don Quixote to take on what he took on. I know that I first learned of Walker's ambitions – I knew that in the 1970 election when Adlai Stevenson III was the Democratic candidate for the United States Senate against then-incumbent Republican Ralph Smith—Walker had a top role, maybe the top role in the Stephenson campaign. It was only a few days after the election Stevenson had won and, I think, it was like in maybe in November of 1970 when I got this

call. I think maybe it was from Norton Kay. Does the name Norton Kay ring a bell?

DePue: Yes.

Pensoneau: Okay. Norton Kay, of course, I knew very well. And Norton said, "I want you to be among the first to know." Of course, he was calling all the other political reporters too, not just me. I was among the political reporters he was calling saying, Dan is going to run for governor and I remember I was in the press room that night when Kay called from Chicago and said, You know, you might want to keep up with the boys up here – meaning the political writers for the Trib and Sun Times – and get something on record in the Post-Dispatch: Dan's going to run for governor. I was like amazed. I had no inkling that that was in the works or that it was coming and, I mean, my feeling at that point was Ogilvie was governor. Simon was Lieutenant governor. Everybody in the world knew that Simon wanted to be the Democratic nominee for governor in 1972 and, I mean, I just felt … I remember that night I told Kay on the phone, Well, I think Paul Simon is certainly going to have his hat in the ring. And I remember Kay's comeback was, We all know Paul is a fine gentleman and so on but Dan's going to run and we really are not concerned about what Paul is going to do or not do. Dan is going to run.

At that point I wrote an article – it wasn't front page in the Post-Dispatch, it was in the back pages – mainly it was news because he was the author of the Walker report. Not because he had a top position in the Stevenson campaign but because he was known as the author of the Walker Report. That is what made it news.

I remember in 1971 a few months later, Kay called and said, Dan is going to be coming on down through Springfield. He would like to meet you. I said, Well, that would be great, sure. And so I remember we met at – there was a tavern right on the north side of the downtown area – and Dan came in with Kay; I had never met Walker before. Don't know that I had ever seen him to be honest. I knew who he was but, of course, I knew Norton very well. We came in and I thought that first night Dan was very formal. He was dressed in immaculate suit and looked very much like the Montgomery Ward counsel, secretary, maybe the vice president, whatever.

DePue: Vice President.

Pensoneau: Okay. He looked the role. Very, very formal, very dignified. That deep voice, you know. I remember we sat down at this tavern; it would serve food and it was always crowded but we were there at a table – Dan, Norton, myself. I remember Walker telling me that Norton tells me that you are very close to Paul Simon. Actually Paul's an old friend of mine; we've been together at Democratic movements through the years and I'm sure Paul wants to be governor but I want to be governor too. I remember he said, I know you don't

think I can beat Paul Simon but I'm here tonight to tell you I can. And he said, I'm glad I met you because I'm going to be doing a lot of things down state and I know that you are read extensively downstate, not Chicago, but downstate. We will be in contact and I want you to always feel free you can call me. If not call Nortie. Nortie will get a hold of me because I'm going to be very visible.

Well, then, I guess it was a short time after that that it was announced he was going to undertake his walk through Illinois.

DePue: Before we get to that point though, how well known was Dan Walker?

Pensoneau: Downstate? Virtually not at all.

DePue: How much visibility did the Walker Report give him?

Pensoneau: A lot in Chicago and it gave him visibility but it's not the kind of thing that people retain in making judgments, okay. It gave him visibility. It did get his name out there. But he still had little recognition downstate. I'm going to say that.

DePue: Had he held any kind of political office?

Pensoneau: No, no. Had he? No, no. He had never held elective office. I mean, a publicly elective office.

DePue: How much of a dark horse did you think he was, and the other reporters think he was?

Pensoneau: I didn't think he had a prayer. And neither did anybody else in the State House press room. I mean I was so convinced that Simon was going to be the candidate I didn't think anybody else had a prayer. In the pressroom down here we all assumed … we knew Daley wasn't crazy about Simon but we thought that … but, in my mind, it was just … I just had this strong feeling that Simon was going to be the Democratic nominee and that the Daley people would go along with Simon. I didn't think – if that was the case – I didn't think anybody had a chance in beating Simon. That night I didn't go so far as to look at Walker. I didn't have the nerve to look at him and say, I think you are undertaking a fool's errand but I think in my own mind, I thought, I just know the situation better than you do, sir. And quote "there ain't no way." Okay, so I don't know that I saw Walker again before the walk.

DePue: Was it conventional wisdom then that reporters would have said, there is no way that anybody who does not have the blessing of the slate-makers is going to win.

Pensoneau: Yeah, that's fair to say. Certainly among downstate reporters. We were all in awe of Daley, I mean, you know, like Daley was so powerful. If he said he walked on water, we would probably believe it. I had this very formal …

Walker appeared to me on that first night at the tavern – what the hell was the name of it? It was somebody's lounge. It was real common, but anyway … He was very formal that night and very dignified and that made me even think more so that he didn't have a prayer of a chance.

DePue: You've described in the book, talking about Paul Simon, what an amazing political career he had. I didn't know him in politics. I certainly never met the gentleman but I didn't know him until he ran for president many, many years later.

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: And he had this personality that came across that struck me as not this kind of dynamic, political figure that apparently he was seeing in 1970, '71. Can you flesh out a little bit more about his reputation?

Pensoneau: Well, Simon had this reputation as being a high-minded, very moralistic, highly ethical rebel. Not beholding to any machine type. Because Simon came out of a political area down there where there was also a Democratic machine, obviously smaller because of the population disparity, but Madison, St. Clair counties also were pretty much controlled by two very compatible machines down there in each county. Simon had bucked the Madison county organization to get elected as a young state rep back in the 1950's. And Simon had not been hesitant as a member of the Illinois House of Representatives to take all sorts of positions that were counter to the prevailing Democratic power brokers, starting off with the Democratic leader in the House, Paul Powell. Simon was part of a group of young Turks in the House that established very independent reputations for themselves. And, again, to repeat, we are talking about Simon, we're talking about Alan Dixon from Belleville, we're talking about Richard Stengel from Rock Island, talking about Anthony Scariano from one of the south Chicago suburbs, throw in the name Abner Mikva. These were young people who were real burrs under the saddle for the Chicago Democratic leadership and for the Democratic leadership in the Illinois General Assembly. Now in addition Simon had this established string of small newspapers. He considered himself a newspaperman first and a legislator second. I mean, he always made clear, or tried to say – and did say with people like me – I'm one of you, you know; I'm a newspaper guy.

DePue: Well, it's easier to do it.

Pensoneau: Yeah, sure. This was smart. And Simon was very adept at dealing with reporters like myself. Simon had established a tremendous reputation as a young man down in my old home area, St. Clair County and Belleville and East St. Louis and so on. Because gradually, when the machine types down there finally realized they could not beat him at the ballot box, then they kind of threw their support behind him. They didn't oppose him and that guaranteed he would never be defeated in any legislative race down there. So eventually, to

Simon's credit, he won them over on his own accord because they couldn't beat him. It was that simple. And he probably could have remained a state rep but then he went on to state senate. He could have remained in the General Assembly for the rest of his life from that area, I'm sure, without any serious challenges. But even though he became more integrated into the regular party structure, at least downstate wide – in terms of downstate, he still nourished and did not forsake this reputation of being a young independent who was his own man politically. He had been that – and I'm not saying he wasn't that. Now as the years progressed politically, as he went on to the Illinois State Senate, he did become more and more, if you looked at his record, in accord with regular Democratic establishment positions.

DePue: Do you recall why it was that the slate-makers backed him for 1968 as the Lieutenant Governor?

Pensoneau: Okay. Yeah, I'll get to that in a second. But let me say first though, Simon still did things that indicated he was not run of the mill or not a regular member of the gang based on the well known articles in Harper's magazine in – I think they ran in 1964, a little bit before I arrived in Springfield – in which he basically alleged that corruption was rampant in the Illinois General Assembly. This was in a national magazine and it created a furor and this was Simon. It was why you could never take him completely for granted; he was always capable of pulling off a surprise, a surprise that kept him in the forefront of the news. Kept his name prominent and still nourished and bolstered his reputation as a political independent. And a very high minded and ethical one. Okay. Now back to what you said.

DePue: Okay, go ahead.

Pensoneau: In 1968? Okay. When you mentioned '68 I have a view there. In 1968, the Daley slate-making process decreed that sitting governor, Democrat Samuel Shapiro, would be the party's nominee for governor in the 1968 election. He was the incumbent. Okay. Many of us felt, in looking at the Democratic party then and who was available, that he was not the strongest candidate the party could nominate. Adlai Stevenson wanted the nomination. He was then State Treasurer. Adlai III. We were told that a big name like Sergeant Shriver wanted to come back and run for governor of Illinois. Actually there were other Democrats who would have been stronger at the head of the ticket than Shapiro.

DePue: I think we talked a little bit about this last time.

Pensoneau: I think we did, okay. And yet, Daley insisted on Shapiro. Okay. But there was a feeling that the Republicans were nominating Richard Ogilvie and there was a feeling that it was shaping up as a difficult year for Democrats because of all the dissension, the Johnson presidency, the 1968 riotous national convention in Chicago. All of these things. And, Simon – surprisingly to most of us – got the nod for the nomination for Lieutenant Governor. But I always felt that it was a

case of where the Chicago hierarchy will support somebody for state office if they want to get rid of him in a year when it appears the ticket is not going to do very well. That's my view. It was then; it remains so to this day. I don't think that Daley and his lieutenants thought that the state ticket was going to do very well in 1968, okay? But I think they felt they couldn't not nominate Shapiro because of his past loyalty back in his legislative days to Daley and to the Chicago machine, even though he was from Kankakee. Okay. But that was appreciated, so under the rules, the way you play, Shapiro, because of an old loyalty factor, had earned the right if he wanted to try to retain the governorship, that was fine. It was going to be difficult. But in their hearts, I don't think they thought that they were going to win. Okay.

So therefore we've got this guy Simon who is kind of a pain. He is an irritant. You know, again, he's not one of us, okay? So, hey, let's give him the Lieutenant … and going to throw him the nomination. He loses. I don't recall if his senate seat was up or not that year. I don't recall but obviously if he loses Lieutenant Governor, that kills off his continual lobbying for a nomination for statewide office and so on. So in a way, the way it works, we kind of get rid of him. Okay, we put out that little brush fire. I don't think they expected Simon to win. That's my opinion. Okay. They didn't expect the ticket to win. And, of course, as it turned out we all know the historic outcome of the election. Ogilvie did win the governorship but Simon won the lieutenant governorship.

DePue: Which certainly improves his image as this giant killer then?

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah. Oh absolutely, yeah. Absolutely. Everybody was shocked. Even though downstate Simon had this really fantastic reputation. He was a really big name politically downstate and highly respected for the right reasons. But still, everybody, a lot of the reporters and others were sort of sad going in to the 1968 election because they thought that Simon was going to lose and that would curtail his future opportunities. It would be a big devastating loss. Well, here they gave him his chance. He's the nominee for lieutenant governor but he's going to lose, so it's too bad. Good guy but he just couldn't cut it. That was the assumption, you know, and everybody kind of at that time thought that the Paul Simon political story was an ideal one. It was like the balloon is going to pop here in this 1968 election. I mean some even, I think, said, Gee, Paul, why did you take it because it is such a long shot. It's looking so good for the Republicans, both nationally and even in Illinois this year.

DePue: I want to take one other quick diversion here. You were talking about Simon castigating the Illinois legislature for some of the shenanigans going on there for their corruption.

Pensoneau: Right, right.

DePue: Was one of those now known as fetcher bills?

Pensoneau: I'm sure it was. I'm sure it was. DePue: Can you explain what that is?

Pensoneau: Oh yeah. Yeah, I used to write about them. Oh sure. You'll get somebody like some innocuous state rep from Chicago will come out of the blue and introduce a bill that indicates that everybody operating a landfill south of Joliet has to start paying a fee to the state of ten, twenty thousand dollars. Something they don't pay now, and obviously land fill operators don't want to pay. And all of a sudden this state rep – this kind of happened is why I'm telling you this – I would go to this state rep and I would say, Well, what do you care. You know you represent this northwest side district in Chicago; what do you care about landfills south of Joliet? Well, you know, I did a little drive once in downstate Illinois and I saw those things. They are very unsightly and those people have got to be more regulated and they got to pay a fee. You know, they are not regulated now and they don't pay anything and that's not right.

Well, obviously there would be an association or a group of landfill operators who would quickly have a meeting with this state rep in a hotel room in Springfield, most likely. At that point, contributions did not have to be disclosed then. At that point, I mean theoretically, they would indicate, we would raise this little fund among us. Maybe it's not much. It's fifteen, it's eighteen thousand dollars. We would like you to have it though because we have always respected your sincerity in your career in the Illinois House and we know you are sincere in your bills. This one bill you have introduced though is a problem for us and we appreciate the fact that you are letting us voice our opposition to it here in this room with you. And, yet we respect you, and that is why we want you to have this little contribution and then when the bill is scheduled for a committee hearing, uh-huh, the legislator will simply say, unh-uh, unh-uh I want that issue studied more. So lets it go in what is called the interim study calendar. Which means it's not going anywhere and which means it is being assigned to a legislative graveyard. Okay. That is an exact example of what I'm talking about. It's a fetching bill.

DePue: Were these campaign contributions? Were they presented as campaign contributions?

Pensoneau: They didn't have to be because nothing was … No, they were just contributions to the legislator because this theoretical group of ten or fifteen landfill operators in downstate Illinois were aware that this was an outstanding legislator and they wanted to support legislators. If you would have asked them – if this would have come out, they would have said, Well, he's a fine individual and we're as interested in positive good government as you are. And therefore we want to support legislators around the state who stand for good government. And he would say, Well, what do you care about Representative Jones in this northwest side district of Chicago. The fact that he introduced this bill that would tax you guys, or impose this big annual fee on you have anything to do with it? No, of course not. I mean, you know, it's just that … But we appreciate the fact that he is interested in downstate issues and we want more individuals like him. I

wasn't entitled to know that they had made a fifteen or eighteen thousand payoff to him to drop a bill. But you knew they did. Couldn't write it that flatly but you knew it.

DePue: Were there other practices that we're going on in the legislature?

Pensoneau: Oh sure.

DePue: Can you think of any?

Pensoneau: Yeah. Well, every major industry – the bulk of the major industries are the bulk of the major interests, not just industries – of interest in Illinois contributed. I mean, that's just the way it's played. That goes on today. Yeah, I'll make that ballpark statement.

One reason the coal industry didn't do very well, as I found out quickly when I got involved, was that they didn't really contribute. They were very naive politically. At that time, of course, it was all much more regulated and all the disclosure rules were in effect. But I was involved in setting up the PAC[17] for the coal industry. I only wanted our PAC to be legally allowed to contribute to state candidates. I never broadened it to the federal sphere because there is just too much paperwork and red tape involved in making contributions to congressional candidates and so on. Individuals I dealt with could do so, but I never wanted our PAC to contribute. But, yeah, we set it up.

We were never one of the major PACs and it was always pointed out to me that you do very well for the small amount of money in your PAC. The coal industry was getting killed politically, legislatively and I was only involved maybe a year or two when we set up this PAC because we had to start contributing. We never gave that much as was pointed out to me (laugh) time and time again, Mark. I had to live with that but, you know, we did the best we could to get a lot out of our small dollars. But now I will say this though: I insisted on ethical administration of our PAC. I mean I never used it to try to buy somebody off. Our contributions went to legislators who supported us, or were sympathetic to our issues. We had a lot of antagonists, especially in Chicago and the North Shore and so on. And, I said, No, no way, we're not going … I mean, we would get overtures where their emissaries would indicate, Why don't you contribute here and contribute there. I didn't do it because dollars were scarce and I had to make the most of them and I also felt that might look like we were buying them off and I didn't want that impression.

But, back on your question, yeah, gee, dollars – back before contributions had to be disclosed. I want to emphasize that in my years everything had to be disclosed, everything, and we did down to the last penny, as the law required. But, back in the years that we are talking about here, I mean, disclosure didn't actually start until I think during the time Walker was in

[17] PAC: Political Action Committee

office. Okay. Yeah, the money flowed freely. There is just no question about that, and often times it was just outright cash. We talked about this last time, but I think in terms of where the cash hoard of Powell came into play, I think a lot of it just came from the routine donations. I mean Powell had to rake in the dough in bushel baskets when he was in control in the Illinois House; he had to. There is no question about it. He was very, very tight and very parsimonious and I just think he didn't ever have to spend hardly any money to retain his house seat. He had a safe house seat. I just think that a lot of Powell's just came from the routine process of donating to major political figures in Illinois. I still think that to this day. You know, there is no question that major interests – I mean all the industries and the teachers groups and, oh my god, the lawyers… Oh come on, the trial lawyers and the medical society.

DePue: The unions were players?

Pensoneau: And unions, of course unions. I mean they all contributed. The spigot was never off in terms of big money interests, in terms of them supporting the legislators who carried the water for them..

DePue: Well, that's quite a diversion here. I appreciate your taking us there. It's enlightening to me.

Pensoneau: These things you don't hear very often.

DePue: Getting back to Walker – and you had already mentioned it – but how much of a surprise it was when you and other journalists heard that Walker was intending to go after the governorship. Was it in late '70, '71 that you first heard?

Pensoneau: I heard it only a few days after the 1970 election. I got a call from Norton Kay

DePue: Let's talk about the walk…

Pensoneau: Sure. Like to.

DePue: …and how closely you were following that. Also in conjunction with the walk, what's he telling the people of Illinois? So start us off with laying the groundwork for what the walk was about.

Pensoneau: Well, absolutely. The walk turned out to be a brilliant move. Now, he said that he got the idea from Lawton Chiles in Florida – that Chiles had undertaken a similar thing and had been successful. Walker and Chiles were friends and Walker basically said that the Chiles walk in Florida inspired his famous walk in Illinois. I thought it was a brilliant move in terms of getting name recognition; I recognized that at the start. I still didn't think it would generate enough support or interest for him to have much of a chance against Paul Simon. But, I knew that it was a great move to get publicity to draw attention to himself.

There had to be a lot of self-sacrifice involved in it, which there was. This was a tremendous thing to think you were going to start at the bottom of the state and walk in a zig zag fashion in a northerly direction through the state eventually ending up, of course, in downtown Chicago.[18] I found it fascinating from a reportorial point of view; I thought, god, that it is great. You know, Walker is really going to generate ink. This is unusual and was almost like a fun diversion for a guy like me to get to cover parts of the walk and to get away from the daily humdrum of the state house.

There were some in the press room who were skeptical and still chose to ignore. They were ignoring Walker anyway and they even tried to ignore him on his walk. But I thought that was a mistake, and to be fair, a good number of the press did pick up on the walk. He not only got statewide publicity, but when he would go through specific areas, local newspapers and local radio stations would give it a big play wherever he went and that turned out to be really smart, really productive and it really paid off. Okay. Norton Kay called me and said, When are you going to spend time with us on the walk? So I finally agreed. They had walked a good deal before I joined them. I joined them, as I recall, in Clinton County – either Carlisle or Trenton – it was on US 50 and I was with them for two, two and a half days. I was with them just about until they got to O'Fallon, Illinois in St. Clair County.

Walker says – and who am I to argue – that I walked more miles than any other reporter as it turned out. It was sort of funny– I'm not sure he thought it was funny –I read the manuscript of his autobiography before it surfaced. In there, he credits me with walking more miles than any other media person and whatever he credits me for – I don't know, it's in the book – nineteen, twenty, twenty-one miles. It was at least that. I think it was more. But I told him jokingly just a couple of years ago, I had a shot at your manuscript and now I wish I had changed that to about thirty miles. (laugh) He laughed a little bit. He didn't laugh a whole lot. He laughed a little bit at that but that was my attempt at a joke. I point this out to you to indicate that I did take the walk seriously and I did walk with him a good deal there in Clinton County and then we went in to St. Clair County through Lebanon on and so on.

The change in Walker was incredible. I couldn't believe this was the same guy I had sat down with about a half year earlier in that tavern in Springfield that night. The formal bearing was gone. He was more relaxed, down to earth. Of course, he was no longer in the famous Montgomery Ward business suit. He had on the famous khakis the blue denim shirt, the red bandanna (laugh) around his neck. The famous boots, you know. And really it was only Walker, myself, Dan Junior was there, one of the other sons was there and then Norton Kay.

[18] The straight-line distance from north to south in Illinois is about 600 miles. From the south to Chicago would be about 500 straight miles.

There was always a van going ahead. He didn't go in the van – sometimes he would stay in the van at night – but there was a van going ahead announcing that Walker was coming on his famous walk. He is coming to your town. He is in this part of the county. He'll be there. They had signs like, If you pass Dan, stop and wave. Stop and talk to him if you want. But at least honk at him, wave. Things like this, you know. It was fascinating. I found a completely different Walker and, uh-huh. We were walking through territory that was solidly – at least on the surface – for Paul Simon. We weren't far from Simon. I mean we were just a few miles east of Simon's home neck of the woods. We would go in taverns or beauty shops: I'm Dan Walker on the walk. And they would say, Well, Dan, we are really proud of what you are doing. But many people said, I'm sorry, but we've known Paul a long time and we're going to have to vote for Paul; but really, Dan, we appreciate what you are doing and we don't like that Mayor Daley any more than you do. I mean, I heard this conversation one hundred times in my two and half days on the walk with Walker.

But I'll tell what I want to say: I remember the first night. Okay, we stopped at a motel in Aviston, right on the highway. I remember the name of the motel but I'm not going to say it because of what I'm going to say, because it was one of two times in my life that the beds had bed bugs. Wow, what a miserable night. I'll never forget that. But Walker was in one room. I was in another room. I had spent the whole day talking to him but I had a few more things to go over. Going over my notes in my room, he had said if you've got questions, come on over in my room. So I knock on his door in this motel and I went in. It was about ten o'clock at night and here he was – and this was unrehearsed because he didn't know I was coming – he had the boots off and he had white socks. The white socks were covered in blood. And he was soaking his feet in a bucket of whatever it was, I don't know. Some sort of liquid – water, saltwater – I don't know. And his feet were just covered with sores and open cuts and everything else. I couldn't believe it. I said, How do you walk? He said, It's very painful. He said sometimes I think I've just got to stop, I can't keep going. And it was like, I'm sorry you're seeing this. And I said, Well, it's very illustrative for me. This is not making this up. I mean, the socks were covered in blood laying there by the boots that had become the famous boots. And his feet – I mean, they were a mess. How are you walking? He said, it's very painful; I didn't dream it was going to be this excruciating doing this, but I can't quit. Sometimes I just wish I could lay down by the side of the road and that's it.

I thought that night, you don't forget something… I didn't forget something like that. He really wants this. I mean this is really something. I never forgot that. Then the next morning I got up pretty early and there he was out walking around the perimeter of the motel dictating into some kind of microphone stuff. I remember I took a picture of him doing it which I think appears in my book on him. I took some of my own pictures of him on the walk and they do appear in my book. But he was up and at it again. I remember, I

think I had to say – even though I was suppose to be an objective reporter – How are your feet this morning, Dan? He said to call him Dan. I said, How are your feet this morning? He said, They hurt, but I'll make it. That's how he was. I'll make it. I'll make it. He said, We're going to be starting off about eight o'clock. Will you be ready? I said, Oh yeah, I'll be ready. But I never forgot that.

DePue: What was he saying during the walk? What was he saying about the Daley administration, about Paul Simon, about his platform?

Pensoneau: Okay. At that time, during my part of the walk, the Democratic slate makers had not yet formally endorsed Simon. But, of course, everybody knew Simon wanted the nomination. So it was like, Paul Simon is a fine fellow. Okay, the basic theme was: Are you tired of Mayor Daley's domination of Illinois? I am. The state is in sad shape. We have all these issues, all this corruption in Springfield. We talked last time about coming out of the Paul Powell disclosure and all the horse racing liaisons and relationships between elected officials and the horse racing industry, a lot of other things.

Okay, Walker's pitch was: I am an independent. I am my own man. I'm going to be governor of Illinois. I'm going to make us proud of our state. Paul Simon is a fine public servant. He is a fine gentleman. But Paul has become beholden like almost every other Democrat in office to the Chicago machine and Paul can no longer be what he has been; Paul now has to toe the line. He will be towing the line. Paul is probably going to be endorsed by the machine. You watch; when he is, that means Paul owes his political hopes, lock, stock and barrel, to the machine. Paul will no longer be the Paul that you knew. You know, I'm on this crash program for you to get to know me. You won't be disappointed in me. I guarantee things will not be the same in Springfield. Mayor Daley will have to wait in line just like everybody else. This is a whole new ballgame. I am a breath of fresh air in Illinois politics. You can't deny we need this. I want your support. I'm going to win. I'm going to win this thing with or without your support but I sure would like your support.

That was his pitch. I heard it a million times.

DePue: Did it resonate with you?

Pensoneau: With me?

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau: I went so far as to write that the man is mounting a legitimate challenge to Paul Simon for the Democratic nomination for governor. But even up until the primary itself in – what was it, March or … I guess it was March of 1972 – I had my last long analysis piece in the Post-Dispatch on the Sunday before the Tuesday primary. I still said that everybody expects Paul Simon to win.

DePue: Did you think his criticisms, his comments about Paul Simon were fair?

Pensoneau: I thought they were a little unfair. Although I had detected on my own that Paul was no longer a problem for Daley in his positions and public statements and in his public demeanor. That Paul was aiming most of his political barbs, although respectful – Paul was never underhanded in political discourse – but he was aiming his fire, when he did so, at incumbent Governor Ogilvie. Because I thought Paul assumed, as did everybody else, that he would be the Democratic nominee for governor, and he was always trying to lay groundwork for the campaign against Ogilvie. And Paul – actually to be honest, as I recall – the approach of Simon basically was not to acknowledge Walker.

DePue: How big a risk was he running during the primary campaign?

Pensoneau: He was not running as vigorously as he normally did and that turned out to be true. I do remember that about a month before the primary, I thought Simon would win but there were signs that Walker was going to do much better than anybody had originally anticipated. Because one thing, Walker had brought in all of these people who were coming out of the woodwork, many of them quite young, to work for Walker. And they were really working for Walker. They were canvassing. They were going door-to-door. They were appearing at rallies for Walker. They were vociferous. They were getting publicity.

I thought Simon would win, as I wrote on the eve of the election, but I was starting to think Simon was making a mistake in never answering Walker or trying to ignore Walker. And Walker was making pretty serious charges. He was getting more aggressive in his criticism of Simon. He was doing things. For example, Walker had challenged Simon to debates. Simon refused to acknowledge it. Wouldn't do it. Didn't even acknowledge the invitation. So, I covered several of these.

Walker had these debates where he would be in a meeting room at a motel; there would be a table, and he would have a chair there. And he would have an empty chair with a tape recorder at it; the tape recorder was there for Simon's positions. Walker would say, Paul won't debate me today but we have enough of Paul on tape that we can argue. So Walker would spell out what he felt about issue A, B, C and then he would say, Now, Paul what do you think? And then Walker would turn on the tape; they would have it there where you would hear Simon's voice talking about where he stood on the issue. I say Mayor Daley is wrong about this, What do you say, Paul? And then they would turn on the tape recorder and it would be some Simon quote about Chicago machine and how we Democrats all have to respect each other regardless of our past positions and things like this.

Then Simon made what turned out to be this incredible honest blunder of which he indicated that if need be, he would consider an increase in the state income tax. And Walker really pounced on that and would say, Under no

circumstances will I support an increase of state income tax. We'll balance the state budget but we will cut all sorts of waste. Walker identified like five hundred million dollars of obvious waste just by looking at the budget in a cursory fashion. And then he said, but what does Paul feel? And then there would be the famous Simon quote about reluctantly, if need be, I would have to look at an increase in the income tax or maybe the sales tax, or both. And he would play it. And then reporters like me would be writing this down.

He would be getting play. He would be getting coverage. Well, in view of the kinds of things I'm telling you, I thought Walker had gone beyond being a legitimate challenger to Simon. I thought that he was going to get a much bigger part of the vote than expected and that it might actually weaken… Simon would win but would not come out of the primary as impregnable as you would have expected originally, and that this could work to Ogilvie's advantage in the general election campaign.

DePue: That Simon would be weakened coming out of the primary?

Pensoneau: Right, right. I thought that. So I remember one specific incident whereby Gene Callahan – Simon's two principle advisors were Gene Callahan and a guy, I think, Bill Colson in Chicago. Okay. As it later became clear to me – I think as I wrote in the book – Colson in Chicago insisted Simon not acknowledge Walker's existence. He was the one really digging in his heels on this. We don't acknowledge this guy's existence. He is an irritant. He is not legitimate. Don't worry. It will all pass – the stuff he is saying – after the election is over. Gene Callahan was not agreeing with that. Callahan and I talked. There had been a very devastating so-called truth squad, a Walker truth squad that came through the state house press room headed by a guy I knew very well, former states attorney Dick Mudge of Madison County who had been an early supporter of Simon but had turned vigorously against Simon at some point in local politics down there and now was comprising a three or four person Walker truth squad that was going around and further trying to undermine Simon by pointing out that the Paul Simon you see today is not the Paul Simon that got elected to the house back in the 1950s and so on. Mudge came through late one afternoon with some pretty damaging stuff on Simon, getting pretty personal about local stuff down there in Madison County. The Post-Dispatch knew he was doing it.

Post-Dispatch wanted me to write a pretty extensive article for the next day. Well, I felt that this really needed some come-back from Simon in this article. He should be aware of this and should say something, although he had refused to comment or acknowledge Walker's existence. Well, Callahan was in Springfield and we talked. Callahan said, I agree with you; Paul should answer this guy back. We can't keep ignoring him. Callahan said, Why don't you give Paul a call and see … If you call Paul directly on this, maybe just tell Paul that Dick Mudge has just come through the press room and he has said these things which are ridiculously unfair but that you have got to write a story that is

understandable and that Paul really should say something about it. And, I said, Well, Paul has refused to ever comment with me, Gene, on the Walker insurgency. Callahan said, I'll tell you where Paul is right now. He's at this private reception for him in some prominent person's home on the North Shore. I know he's right there; hey, here's the number. Call the place and tell them you have got to talk to Simon.

So I called. I think a woman answered and, well, of course he was lieutenant governor. Governor Simon is here but he can't be bothered. I said, Well, he should be bothered, because obviously you all support Governor Simon. I'm writing a story down here; it's going to be very critical of Governor Simon. I want to talk to Governor Simon to get his input. So then it was like, Okay, what's your name again and this kind of stuff, you know. So about a minute later, Paul is on the line. You know, Hi Taylor and what's going on. I said, Well Paul, Dick Mudge has just been through here. He said, I'm sure it wasn't favorable, right? And I said, No, Mudge is heading the truth squad and they have got some pretty desultory things to say about you, Paul Now I know your position has been you have never answered Walker but, I really think… Paul, let me tell you a few things that he said and let's see what your comeback is. I've got to write a story. And I remember Simon said, Taylor, I appreciate you tracking me down here but I'm not going to do it. I'm sticking to my position on this that I don't engage an unfair opponent; I'm sorry that our campaign has taken this tack but I'm sorry I'm just not going to reply to Walker. You know I've maintained that position and they can say what they want. My record speaks for itself. I think you know that and I'm just not going to get in to a give-and- take with Walker. I just have no desire to engage in this sort of political discourse. And I said, Well, Paul, I'm giving you a chance here. Gene actually down here felt, on this one I should call you, and thought you might reconsider. I think Simon kind of laughed and said, Well, I know Gene feels one way about it, but I'm not deviating from my approach to the primary. Primary voters will have their say and we'll see who they think is the person they want to be their candidate for governor. And I said, Well, thanks Paul.

That was about two weeks before the primary election.

DePue: I know that just a few days before the primary election, a panel of federal judges invalidated a part of the Illinois constitution which allowed for cross-over voting in the election itself.

Pensoneau: I think that's fair to point out.

DePue: Explain what that is in first person.

Pensoneau: Well, that allowed, you've already answered it. It allowed cross-over voting where individuals who had taken a Republican ballot in the primary, say the last election, they couldn't be challenged if they came in and said I want a Democratic ballot here two years later or whatever. In other words,

Republicans can vote freely – without any repercussions take Democratic ballots. The results show that a lot of them did in certain counties; where Republicans are strong, they did. Walker did very, very well. So there was no question about it. These were Republicans voting in the Democratic primary wanting Walker to win, thinking that he would be a far weaker candidate against Ogilvie than would Paul Simon. Absolutely. Because Ogilvie, you know, was a sure shot. He might have had token opposition, but Ogilvie was obviously going to easily be the Republican candidate for re-election as Governor. So it was safe for Republicans to proceed in this manner in trying to create what they thought would be the best situation for their man, Ogilvie, by doing what they could to help Walker win or make a good showing in the Democratic primary.

DePue: Do you think it did make the difference?

Pensoneau: I'm not sure it made **the** difference but it certainly helped Walker. There is no question about it in my mind.

DePue: What was your personal reaction among the press corps when you got the news that Walker had actually pulled it off?

Pensoneau: I was stunned. I was stunned. I was actually in Chicago. I would go to Chicago on election nights because you got results quicker up there. In terms of getting results it was the central clearing house. Far more efficient than sitting down here in Springfield or going in to the home office in St. Louis. So I would write my election stories out of Chicago. In fact I would go to the United Press International Bureau there – that's where results were coming in – and there was kind of an old traditional newspaper guy running that Bureau, or at least kind of overseeing the election coverage that night, kind of a colorful older gentleman. I had a little side desk they let me sit at. They would do it because the Post-Dispatch, of course, was a big client of United Press International – UPI. So, therefore, if I wanted to be right there directly to get the most first-hand reports I could of how the vote was coming in, it was OK with them. Not all newspapers took UPI but the Post-Dispatch did, so we were a customer, a client. Therefore, that entitled me, if I wanted, to have a little desk or a side chair there. They gave me a little side desk, I could sit there, which was the best place to be sitting for results coming in in terms of media coverage of the election.

I remember this elderly gentleman – his name was Jess Bogue or Bogey or something like that – would come over to me and would indicate that, We're getting these votes from these downstate counties and this man, Walker is really running well. I don't recall at what time, but at some point there was a meeting of others in the UPI bureau and they decided that Walker was winning the election and I was astounded. I was sitting there, and I remember we were up, way into the wee hours of the night when all the results came in. I don't recall at what point in early morning hours when I was confident that I could start writing my story for that morning's paper coming out at nine o'clock in the

morning – first edition in St. Louis. But I was astounded and, boy, when it finally became clear I telephoned.

Of course, there was a night editor at the Post-Dispatch and I said, I'll probably be filing about between five and six o'clock in the morning. Obviously you can see there was no going to bed. And, I said, Walker has won this thing. I know he said, Well, we're getting disjointed reports here from the east side and some of the lower level bureaus and some of the places and he said, Yeah, this guy, this Dan Walker is really doing well. He's apparently carried these three counties over here in southern Illinois. They are reporting he is doing well in a lot of counties where there are university campuses and so on.The guy said, Well, we haven't got the Chicago votes in. You're up there, you're in Chicago, but, down here, well, we thought Paul would be doing a lot better than he is doing. And so this was the pattern. I said, Walker has won; UPI is going to declare it about three in the morning or something like that. I'll be writing, so just in the morning when the editors come on between seven and eight o'clock, you can tell them that Walker has won and that there will be a very, of course detailed story, I said, because I've got all the latest results right here on this desk up here. And I said, Hey, I'm surprised, but Simon has lost. That's how I phrased it.

Well, anyway, it was obviously the banner story in the Post-Dispatch that morning, of course, and remained so throughout the day. Then right away the next day, of course, all the managing editors said, Well, Pensoneau, we got to get it quick now. We've got the first day story, now the next day we need a Pensoneau analysis on how this happened. My gosh, this unbelievable result. Simon had always been a favorite of the Post-Dispatch. The editorial writers loved him, so you should know that. So then I had a long analysis the following day on why I thought it happened.

DePue: You had mentioned before when we were talking that you made it a practice not to vote in the primary election – and newspaper journalists would not – because you didn't want to tip your hand. If you had, put you on the spot here Taylor, if you had, would you have voted for Simon or Walker?

Pensoneau: I did vote. I did. And I'll go on record here which shows how much I have changed through the years. It was the first time in my life I took a primary ballot; I took a Democratic ballot, which I guess meant I was saying I was a Democrat. That's no longer the case. And I voted for Paul Simon. I've never told Dan Walker that. I don't know if Dan will ever read this. I have changed my opinions much. I'm a lot older now. I'm not the same person. At that point in my time, I was thirty-one years old and I had different views of things, but I violated my own private code of avoiding partisanship as a political writer by taking a primary ballot. I guess you can say why and the best recollection I have is that I thought, although I had to admit I'd grown to like Dan Walker – of course, I also like Simon – but I guess I felt, and this may sound pretty lame – I guess I felt like Simon was entitled to it because of his long already-established

political career and maybe was more entitled to it than revolutionary Dan Walker. I've never told Dan this but I've changed a lot since then and I want to make this complete.

In the years in doing the Walker book I grew to have considerable admiration and respect for Dan Walker irrespective of the prison stuff. In the years since, I now count him as just a… We've just become darn good friends; we talk all the time. I think Dan Walker is one of the smartest guys I've ever encountered and I thoroughly enjoy hearing him react to public issues, both in the national level and at the state level. He is an incredibly clear-thinking individual and I have more than respect for him. I just think he is an outstanding person. I really do.

I can say that with a clear conscience because my book is very objective on him. There are many things in there he doesn't like. I do not call him one of the state's great governors. One of the great campaigners, yes, but not one of the great governors. But, in looking back, I did, I took a primary ballot because I just felt Simon was entitled to the nomination. Now I could probably get away with that because no one has ever brought it up. This is the first time I have ever talked publicly about it. And it never was brought up. I mean nobody probably but me cared whether I voted in a primary or not. I just never thought it was the right thing to do. Also, if someone had questioned it, they probably would have said, Well, you know, Pensoneau was obviously a Democrat. Look at the Post-Dispatch. It's one of the strongest Democratic papers in the country; the Post was extremely liberal and very Democratic and so I'm sure they would have said, So, what else would you expect from Pensoneau? If anybody had ever even cared or if it had been brought up – which it never was. Okay. You wanted an honest answer and I gave you the best I can.

DePue: Well, I appreciate that because it's generally an unfair question to be asking a journalist in the first place.

Pensoneau: This is based on my life. This is a matter of record right here.

DePue: Absolutely.

Pensoneau: And I want it to be honest as well as factual.

DePue: Well, it's certainly fascinating.

Pensoneau: And that too.

DePue: I want you to talk about the general election between Ogilvie and Walker themselves. But before we get there, maybe it makes sense to talk about the 1972 Democratic National Convention. Are you privy to the goings-on at the Democratic Convention?

Pensoneau: I was there.

DePue: Okay.

Pensoneau: Miami Beach.

DePue: I especially want you to address this huge controversy over the Illinois delegation.

Pensoneau: It was unbelievable. The Democratic Party nationally had gotten itself all entwined, in my wording and my opinion, in this bit about guaranteeing proportional representation of all groups and elements in American society, not just in the party, but in America in general.

DePue: Are you strictly talking minority groups?

Pensoneau: Well, yeah, right. Right. I'm using couch terms here, yeah, minority groups. And people who maybe were not always part of the regular Democratic process. This is a national situation as well as an Illinois one.

DePue: I believe that was called the McGovern report or McGovern commission?

Pensoneau: Yeah, I guess, McGovern. At least his name was on it and he was a supporter of it and, you know, okay, in terms of the big picture. The upshot was that McGovern got the nomination in a way that was orchestrated and forcibly brought about by a set of unfair ridiculous rules that were supported and enforced by people who were not part of a normal Democratic establishment in any part of the United States. Okay. The situation obviously gave rise to an opportunity for the always present but generally under-the-table anti-Daley movement in Chicago itself. There were ripples there, and most of these people had supported Walker in the Democratic primary, people like Mary Lee Leahy, who has since become a friend of mine.

That's where I first met a lot of people who would become part of public life in Illinois for years to follow, like Mary Lee Leahy and others, people I did not know then. All of a sudden they became very prominent in terms of the Illinois delegation; this series of rules gave them a lot of say in the Illinois delegation to counter the regular delegates from throughout the state who would take their marching orders from Daley. Of course, Daley was to be part of the delegation but it turned out that the rebel group – using terms loosely –in Illinois was able to generate sufficient support from like-minded individuals in delegations in many of the other states, especially New York and California, the big states – that they were able, and I can't remember the exact process –and Jesse Jackson was another one of the rebels – that they were able to actually deny the seating of the regular Illinois delegation headed by Mayor Daley.

DePue: Well, I've had an opportunity to interview Mary Lee Leahy about this exact incident …

Pensoneau: Okay, okay.

DePue: … and she explained that there was a Democratic delegation that was selected in the normal procedures during the primary.

Pensoneau: Yeah.

DePue: And that because it didn't match the proportional representation that this McGovern Commission said you were supposed to have in your delegations, that Jesse Jackson and Billy Singer …

Pensoneau: Bill Singer – I was going to get to him, Singer.

DePue: … put up this alternative delegation. So now those are the two delegations we're talking about at the Democratic Convention.

Pensoneau: Okay, right. I was trying to say that all rings a bell with me. The upshot was that the Daley – call it the normal, the regular delegation – was not seated, as I recall. At least Daley himself wasn't. This was unheard of at a Democratic Convention for a man who, in every respect meaning of the word, was a party kingmaker. And, I mean, (laugh), you just had to be there to understand what was going on. This was like unfathomable. Daley never surfaced, even physically, on the convention floor and the biggest question, of course, among the many questions, was, Well, where is Daley? Is he still in Chicago? Well, there were reports that night, I mean, this was … believe me, this was insane. Trying to get this all straight. But I remember, I was up all night writing a story and about the Daley delegation not being seated. This was again the major story on the front page of the Post-Dispatch – beat all the convention stories that the Washington guys would write and everything else obviously, which made me feel good. But I finally got to bed about seven in the morning.

I was going to sleep a few hours before the merry-go-round, the circus, resumed. I'll never forget. I got a call from the copy desk editor of the Post-Dispatch, which was very unusual. Normally I would get calls from like the Metropolitan editor or the City editor or one of the news editors or maybe even the assistant managing editor, but not the copy desk editor. The copy desk editor got me out of bed. Of course, they had my hotel room number, the phone. And it was like, You're story is missing one element. Because it's the lead story, we have one question which you have not answered and we can find nothing else that anybody else has written that answers it either. Where is Mayor Daley? We've got wire copy out of Chicago that indicates he's not in Chicago but is he in Miami Beach? Where is he? And I said, I don't know, George. The man's name was George Londa. I said, George, I don't know. Nobody knows. Then, I remember, Londa said, Well, can you find out? We would sure like to get that in the article. I said, Believe me, I tried, George. Nobody knows where he is. And so, of course, I didn't know where he was. Now, after all is said and done, this became one of the unanswered questions through the years. Where was Mayor Daley? Well, I heard one story that I'd like to believe? Shall I relay it to you?

DePue: Sure.

Pensoneau: I don't know if it's true or not, but it's the kind of story I would like to believe. The Augustine brothers who ran a well known restaurant motel complex down in Belleville – my hometown – they either owned or had in some way a yacht berthed at Ft. Lauderdale or Pompano Beach or one the Florida coastal cities right there, north of Miami Beach. I was supposedly told by old line Democratic political sources in St. Clair county – my old home area – that Daley was on the Augustine yacht waiting to see what would happen. That is where he was actually. And when they didn't seat him – he never appeared at the convention obviously – he departed. He left. Now, I point out for the record here. this is as credible a story on where Daley was as any I've ever heard. There were other stories but these old line Democratic honchos in St. Clair county – individuals who could, if they had to, get Daley on the phone in Chicago, among the few downstaters that could – insisted to me that this was where he was. That quote "He was on the Augustine yacht; that's where he was actually sitting."

DePue: Now fast forward to the election itself just a few months later. Do you know if the machine in Chicago turned out the vote for McGovern?

Pensoneau: I don't recall it. Did he carry South Dakota?

DePue: He did horribly.

Pensoneau: Well, yeah. I mean, everybody knew it was going to be a landslide. Everybody. It was just going through the motions. I used to write these analysis pieces for every Sunday in what they called the war page. Right away after I got back, of course, my articles were all to the effect that McGovern in Illinois is a … he's not even a dead duck. He doesn't exist politically. I mean, how do you deny the Mayor of Chicago a seat at the Democratic Convention and expect the Mayor to do anything for the candidate. So McGovern was campaigning in Illinois. I would pick him up when he was in Illinois and I remember the first time he was in Illinois after the convention. He wasn't in Illinois that much but he did come in. He started out downstate and then he was going on to Chicago and actually I did follow him on the bus into Chicago. In situations like that each reporter gets about ten minutes alone with the candidate at some stage, on the bus or whatever.

I got a few minutes with McGovern and I remember I said, Well, Senator, I have to ask you obviously, you know, people loyal to you, identified with you, led the move to deny Mayor Daley at seat back at Miami Beach in the convention. I mean, don't you think, sir, that you've got a real uphill fight? I know you're going to be meeting – I think late tomorrow some time – in Chicago with Mayor Daley, but is it reasonable that you can expect the Mayor, sir, to fully support you? And I remember, "Well, I am the Democratic candidate; the Mayor is first and foremost a loyal Democrat and I know he will

do everything that he can to get a Democrat in the White House. I fully expect that the Mayor in a situation like this would let bygones be bygones."

I remember, I would return to my seat in the back of the bus with other reporters. It was cynical … I mean, they would whisper, Well did he tell you? And I said, Well, he thinks Daley is going to, you know… No, no, some national reporter would say, Did he really think Daley is going to support him? Some were even saying, Can you believe Daley is even going to see him tomorrow? I said, Well, he told me and they say Well, that's what he's telling everybody. He's been saying that. These guys just snickered, you know. I mean this is the national press. It was absolutely hopeless.

DePue: Well, that's what makes this fun. Okay, let's get back to Governor Dan.

Pensoneau: Okay

DePue: Now he is running against Richard Ogilvie.

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: Tell us a little bit about that campaign. What was Walker saying in his platform versus what Ogilvie was saying?

Pensoneau: Well, Ogilvie was obviously running on what he said, his record. He had reorganized half of Illinois government. He had brought it structurally, organizationally into the modern political history stage. It was unquestionably the biggest reorganization and broadening of Illinois government since Republican Frank Lowden was Governor back in, partly, the World War I years. Ogilvie felt that bringing Illinois government into the twentieth century, he pointed out the things that he thought would help him get reelected.

Yes, he called for the income tax, but look at all the great things that have happened around the state because of the increase in revenue from the income tax. Departments have been created to deal with situations. He's upgraded every aspect of Illinois government, you know. We now have a state EPA. We have a pollution control board. We now have a formal Illinois Department of Transportation. You know, we have a much more responsible budgeting process. We have taken budgeting out of the hands of a couple of very powerful legislators and made it a truly an executive budget. Look at all we've done. We have increased aid to mass transit throughout the state. You know, you're from downstate. We've set up and paid for a state community college in East St. Louis. We have this incredible public works infrastructure improvement program covering everything from highways and bridges all going on all over Illinois. We've got all this with the increased revenue we've got. The people see this. They recognize it was necessary. They see all the advantages of it.

Sure, we've had to mobilize the National Guard repeatedly, but we've prevented our university campuses from being burned down and destroyed by rioting protestors. We've supported state aid for Catholic and other parochial schools. It either didn't pass or if it did, it was held unconstitutional, so the Catholic community should be appreciative. Hey, he's gotten all these plaudits nationally from the national press for being a top-notch governor, which is true. He had. And, you know, there are people who think that probably someday he should be a Republican candidate for President. But first we've still got things to do in Illinois. Look at all the progress we've made but, you know, give us four more years and you're not going to believe what a great shape the state is going to be in. That was Ogilvie.

DePue: Now Walker.

Pensoneau: Walker. I'm not sure if he criticized the income tax but he pointed out that Ogilvie was a high tax governor who was encouraging and allowed all sorts of wasteful expenditures and we had all these scandals. Walker played all the scandals to the hilt. While Ogilvie was governor there were all sorts of big-time scandals. I mean really big-time that absolutely did undermine confidence in Illinois government. The irony was that Ogilvie himself was not involved, nor were he and his people responsible for any of them. But all this stuff happened during Ogilvie's four year term as governor. All of it occurred on his so-called watch.

It all reverberated back on him negatively because people just felt he couldn't have all these negative things going on without the governor being involved. Now, come on, you can't be the governor and be divorced from all these scandals. The truth of the matter was, as I would write, Ogilvie was quote "clean as a hound's tooth" but the scandals dragged him down. Walker played on these scandals, you know, the nefarious stuff involving the racing industry and public officials. The Supreme Court scandal. What he called the perpetuation of a legacy of corruption under both Democratic and Republican governors. And when is it going to end?

We've got to get somebody in there who is not part of the political establishment who can take this thing, who is not shackled by old allegiances and old hand-me-down traditions. I'll go in there unfettered and basically I am in a position to clean house and I'm in a position to demand reforms because I can do so with a clear conscience and without any ramifications. You know, I don't owe anybody anything. You know, I got this nomination on my own. I beat the wicked Daley machine to get it, and there are all sorts of people in Illinois that want a new beginning in Illinois politicals, a fresh start. and I am that fresh start. Look at all the people that came out to support me in the primary. People who were never involved. Again – all true –Ogilvie is certainly a fine man, a solid person. But he is still part of a culture of corruption in Illinois. He can't escape from it. He is sandbagged by it. It's only going to end

with a completely new fresh face at the head of Illinois government and I am that person.

DePue: Did you find that campaign theme compelling?

Pensoneau: Obviously, it certainly was compelling among a certain element of the populace. Now, I should point out that when the general election campaign started polling was not as extensive in those years but there was some polling; it indicated that Walker was the early favorite to win. It was difficult to say how wide the polling margin was but everybody sort of agreed, including myself, and we wrote accordingly that Walker was favored to win and Governor Ogilvie was facing an uphill fight in order to retain his office in the November general election.

Now, I didn't realize how far Ogilvie trailed until years later when I did the book on Governor Ogilvie. I had a conversation in Chicago with his old guru, Tom Drennan, one of the early practitioners of polling even back when he was still a Chicago newspaper political writer. Drennan said he did his own private polling with people and in a way that he knew was accurate. And he said, when the Ogilvie - Walker campaign started you would not believe … He said, I knew Ogilvie was an underdog. You wouldn't believe the hole we were in. He said it was mainly because of the income tax, that the populace never forgave Ogilvie for that. In retrospect I accept that.

There were other little things: the state combination of the EPA and pollution control board had imposed a very controversial ban on leaf burning throughout the state. I mean, you wouldn't believe the negative revolt against that, especially in many downstate counties. I know in my following Ogilvie in the campaign it came up all the time from local Mayors, or local county board officials, or local editors of small town newspapers. They said, Why Governor, couldn't you get that EPA or pollution control board of yours to hold off on this leaf burning thing? Man alive, that's a wildcat issue. We can't control that locally. I think the irony of it was, within a matter of weeks after the election was over it was rescinded or something; but that's the way it goes.

But I think the income tax was the big issue. And also the fact, you know, television was starting to play a more important role with every passing year in the electoral process. And Walker was really very charismatic. He was handsome and he was charismatic and he was a forceful speaker. And Ogilvie was really none of those things. He may have been Governor but he never could be charismatic for reasons we have already discussed. He didn't come across good and come across very well on television. He was only okay as a speaker. Walker may have been in his peak. Walker may have been like in Obama's class as a public orator. Ogilvie wasn't. I think all these things added up. But …. Well, go on.

DePue: What was Walker's position on taxes? What was he saying about the income tax?

Pensoneau: I don't recall what he said. I think his basic position was that it's a darn shame that the people of Illinois have had to produce or come up with more revenue but yet so much of it has been wasted on unnecessary patronage. These were all standard lines. Wasteful expenditures. Bloated agency budgets. All the stand pat stuff, you know.

DePue: But was he advocating rolling the income tax right back?

Pensoneau: I don't think so. Can't swear to that. My memory does not indicate that that was the case but …

DePue: As I recall in conversations, or even the books, that he was okay with the income tax and that he was not going to be advocating rolling it back.

Pensoneau: I don't remember that he advocated rolling it back.

DePue: But he apparently wasn't shy about using it as an issue to propel himself into the governorship.

Pensoneau: Oh no, yeah, right. Well phrased.

DePue: Where was the rest of the media on the issue?

Pensoneau: Oh the media. The bulk of the media was in favor of the income tax from day one. The media thought it was necessary. When Ogilvie was governor, way back on April Fool's Day of his first year in office – 1969 – the bulk of the media was ecstatic when he called for imposition for the first time of the Illinois State income tax. I mean, the media has never been shy about supporting an increased hit on taxpayers in order to finance necessary public services in Illinois. Uh-huh, that was one of many reasons for the dissatisfaction with Blagojevich because he refused to consider or hear any talk at all of increases in the state income tax or the sales tax. The media had grown, generally speaking, very resentful of Walker and it was incredible that the media was heavily in support of Ogilvie.

The 1972 election may have showed the degree of impact that at least newspapers have in influencing voters, because the bulk of the editorials endorsed Ogilvie for re-election, including my own newspaper, the very Democratic-leaning St. Louis Post-Dispatch. The Post-Dispatch broke with tradition and endorsed Ogilvie for re-election. The Post-Dispatch concluded he was a pretty darn good governor. The Post-Dispatch editorial writers were still smarting over the fact that Walker had denied Paul Simon the nomination for governor. I'm confident that if Simon had won the nomination for governor as expected, my paper – the Post-Dispatch – would have endorsed Simon. But that didn't happen and there was resentment of Walker. There was a lot of

resentment. Walker never overcame the lingering resentment over the fact that he denied Paul Simon the nomination. You got to understand that. That's got to be understood, that was one of the reasons Ogilvie got the bulk of the endorsements because number one, as we use the term, he had been a good governor. I mean, in looking back he is emerging as possibly one of the great governors of Illinois as the years pass as we sit here today talking in 2009. But also, you know, Walker was resented by the bulk of the media, by working reporters, certainly by editorial writers, and even by a lot of the executives at the papers. You know, he was resented. It was still the same mentality as in the primary. Here is this guy Walker. He's an upstart. First of all, he denies the Democratic nomination to Simon – a guy we really like and who, more importantly, deserved it and should have had it. And now he's trying to deny re-election to a very good governor. That was the mentality that Walker had to overcome. He did overcome it and it was no small doing on his part that he did overcome this media mentality.

DePue: There is one more question I want to ask you. That would make a nice closure and then we'll start the next session with Walker in office. But I put you on the spot before…

Pensoneau: Sure.

DePue: …in the primary election. I'm going to put you on the stop again in terms of how you pulled the lever for the general election.

Pensoneau: I'll tell you. Dan, I hope you don't read this. I voted for Ogilvie. Now I will say this. Every reporter that I knew voted for Ogilvie. Most reporters are Democrats. If they are not Democrats, they are Liberals. Okay. But animosity had developed, even before he took office, between Walker and the press and it was to continue. I'm sure we'll talk about it when we get into the Walker years as governor. But every reporter I knew, including myself, voted for Ogilvie.

DePue: Voted for the Republican?

Pensoneau: Uh-hm.

DePue: So Walker starts with a big hill in front of him. He's already antagonized the entire political machine.

Pensoneau: He really did, Mark. He really did. And it was a standoff situation that never, never was resolved.

DePue: Okay. I think this is a great place to take a break. Thank you Taylor.

(end of interview #5 #6 continues)

Interview with Taylor Pensoneau
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Interview # 3: March 26, 2009
Interviewer: Mark DePue

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DePue: It's the twenty-sixth of March, in the afternoon. This is Mark DePue. I'm still with Taylor Pensoneau. We have gone through more than half of Governor Walker's life, but now we're at the important point where he's become the Governor of the State of Illinois after a fascinating campaign season that he had, both at the primary level and also at the general level. Now let's get back to Walker and his administration. How would you describe his governing style?

Pensoneau: A good question. A good place to start. One aspect of it in the minds of many observers, reporters, but also others, was that it was at key stages confrontational. At least that's how it was interpreted. I know the governor himself doesn't really agree with that to an extent. For example, if you point out to him what some Walker critics say, even after he was governor, he would not compromise with Mayor Daley and that was a mistake. To that Governor Walker would come back and say, "Why don't people who say that say that Mayor Daley wouldn't compromise with me? It should be a two-way street." That's his reply to that. Walker had a number of proposals where he tried to change the tone of Illinois government. He tried to integrate some of his programs more intensely with local officials. He brought a lot of new faces into Illinois government, some of whom would become enduring parts of it, i.e., Roland Burris, Vince Demuzio, well, Patrick Quinn (chuckle), a number.

DePue: Mary Lee Leahy.

Pensoneau: Mary Lee Leahy. Very good. Yeah, definitely Mary Lee Leahy. And there's certainly a number of others. I thought, in terms of his basic proposals, Walker, as I recall, did not do a whole lot in altering the governmental structural reorganizations implemented by his predecessor Ogilvie. It seemed

like Walker did get bogged down in transient stand-offs a lot of times. It was obvious his governorship was not going to be smooth, at least not at the start, in that a number of his appointments to key positions did not fly well when Senate confirmation was required. I didn't recall, earlier in my reporting days and covering Illinois government, hardly any of the gubernatorial appointees being turned down in the confirmation process, but a number of Walker's were, including Mary Lee Leahy, initially.

DePue: Uh huh.

Pensoneau: Including the individual they named to head the penal system, a guy named David Fogel, and I think there were others. In terms of legislative proposals, Walker didn't have anything on the grandiose scale of Ogilvie, and it seemed like if his governorship was allowed to have proceeded without constant interruption, that he would have been a middle-of-the-road governor, one who tried to demand more accountability out of the agencies and, I think, would have obtained it, because in that regard he was direct and could be hands-on. I think that Walker without the interruptions would have been seen as an individual who "cleaned up Illinois government". For example, you take the racing board which was mired in incredible controversy; he appointed Anthony Scariano to head that. Scariano was obviously, in his uncorruptible zeal to further get to the bottom of corruption in the performance of the board, had a take-no-prisoners attitude and I think he succeeded to some extent.

Walker did undo a few things of Ogilvie's. As I recall, Walker let slide or dismantled or reorganized Ogilvie's little FBI, the Illinois Bureau of Investigation. He still retained on a greatly reduced scale some sort of an investigative arm in that overall law enforcement picture, but, basically, he discontinued the little FBI. But in terms of his governing philosophy, I think he was a middle-of-the-roader who favored a pragmatic approach as opposed to an ideological approach. You know, that's what I thought.

DePue: Was he a hands-on or a hands-off administrator?

Pensoneau: Well, I think he tried to be hands-on. I think he made personal visits sometimes to agencies. I remember, for example, with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, as I recall, he came out there one day and called the employees out on the parking lot, at that time, and basically gave them a pep talk. And this was kind of unprecedented. I think sometimes he would walk through different offices and introduce himself and shake hands with people – people who, believe it or not, never see a governor, he's just a big name to them, let alone have the governor come in and personally greet them, how are you doing, a little word here, a little word there, things like that. I thought he was very good about that. But as I recall, he tried to set up a series of regional offices – again it's in my book, I just can't recall the exact nomenclature – but he tried to integrate state government more into the daily goings-on of local life in Illinois, as I recall.

He tried to set an image of an individual not swept away by the trappings of the office. I think his image was very important. He felt that he could convey his message more and get across more what he wanted if his image portended what he stood for, and in a way it did as governor. He did not ride around in a big black limousine. He wasn't surrounded by a cordon of State Police security guards like, quite frankly, Ogilvie often was. I think in some regards he kind of patterned himself more after a Senator LaFollette of Wisconsin or somebody like that. He kind of pictured himself in that vein.

DePue: Senator LaFollete, you think?

Pensoneau: Bob LaFollete, yeah, the basic one, wasn't it? Fighting Bob?

DePue: Yes

Pensoneau: He brought in a lot of people who, if not anti-political establishment, were certainly new to the political game. There were pluses and minuses there. Some of the minuses were that they had a lot of catching up to do in terms of how the system operated before they could impose their particular brand or whatever they wanted, how they wanted to do it. He knew he would get resistance from the established bureaucracies in state government. I think every governor does, but I think he felt he didn't anticipate the astonishing rigidity and inflexibility and resistance to any kind of suggestion for change that you found in a lot of these bureaus and agencies getting deep within some of the departments.

DePue: Uh huh.

Pensoneau: There was open antagonism between the governor's office and the State House press corps and I never fully grasped why at the time. I knew it existed. I had to deal with it. I recognized it, but I never understood the wisdom of it on the part of the governor's office and I didn't fully realize how intentional it was until later on when I got to know Walker.

DePue: Intentional on his part?

Pensoneau: Intentional on the governor's office part. I guess you have to say his part, yeah. He has acknowledged to me that he wished now that they hadn't done it, because it's not that difficult to have a good relationship with the State House press corps. And that doesn't say everything; that's not a totally positive statement about the State House press corps, but I think it's a mistake to antagonize it. Actually, later on in life, as we will see, Governor Blagojevich did the same thing. I always have to ask why. But you say how did Walker do it or why? I felt there was some resentment on their part, which was justified, and which I alluded to earlier; they felt that the State House press corps was not giving them a fair shake, which there was a little bit of automatic truth to, because, again, of the smoldering resentment over the forced departure of Paul Simon.

DePue: More than Ogilvie?

Pensoneau: Yeah, I think so. Although, certainly some on Ogilvie, too. I agree. And that's a good point. I'm glad you added it, because I should add it. There was also resentment that Walker never was really given much of a chance by the State House press corps to exhibit his governing potential, you know.

DePue: But before you were suggesting that Walker and his people also antagonized the press corps.

Pensoneau: Oh, they did. They did. Well, for example, the time-honored tradition when you're presenting your budget was you would ahead of time, over the preceding three or four days while the budget was embargoed, the press corps would be brought down several hours each day and different department heads would come in and explain the proposed appropriations for their agencies and you would get to ask questions ahead of time. The only stipulation was that until the hour of the governor's formal presentation of the budget to a joint session of the General Assembly – of the two houses – that you didn't write anything about it, and it was honored, but when you were ready to release it, you were very well informed on what the governor wanted budget-wise, appropriation-wise, where the expenditures were going to go. Was he calling for a tax increase? Where was he possibly cutting? More often, the question was where was he adding to? What budgets was he enlarging? What projects were involved? You had all that information. You didn't get that with Walker. I didn't understand it. No, they just gave you everything on the day of his presentation. As I recall, at least the first couple times around, you just got nothing ahead of time, no briefings, no anything, you just got the budget materials, a couple of books and their position paper type things. They just came in and dumped a stack on each guy's desk and that was it and walked out. He wasn't available for questions. Then he took off, as I recall, on a fly-around of the state where he actually entertained questions about the budget from say, reporters in Marion or Champaign or the Quad Cities or Danville of what-have-you. The bottom line was the State House press corps was being circumvented and the traditional interaction between a governor's State House press corps and a budget was not followed. It just absolutely incensed the State House press reporters because they all had to report back to local offices and they were used to answering questions from city editors back home about What do you propose for our area? What about our county? What highway projects may be in there? Blah, blah, blah, stuff like this. You didn't have any answers, you know, and there was no chance ahead of time to analyze it. DePue: But here as an outsider and, you've already said that most of his people were outsiders, was this an unintentional slight? He just wasn't aware of the unwritten rule?

Pensoneau: No, he was aware, because he had a lot of outsiders, but he also had very insiders. His press secretary, Norton Kay, was conflicted. I knew Norton Kay very well. Norton's still with us, although I understand he's not in good

health. Norton, of course was called Norty. Norty knew better, and Norty knew that the governor and Norty himself were going to get hammered for this. He didn't want to do it, but this was decreed by others in the inner-circle or palace guard, who felt it was a way, I think, to show the State House press corps that we really don't need you guys, that you guys are not as important as you think, that you're not all everything. There are other media people in this state who may be more objective in asking questions about the budget and I think they should be given a chance to talk to the governor about the budget and to see the governor on the presentation of the budget and so on. That there's no reason to exclude other people because that's showing undue favoritism to the State House press corps.

DePue: I can't help but think that his view on Illinois politics has been corrupted by that mean, nasty, huge Chicago Democratic party machine.

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: And that the rest of the state, if we could only get rid of them we could fix a lot of stuff, and now he's kind of putting you guys in the mix.

Pensoneau: We're part of the press corps, we're part of the problem. (laughs) I think there was some of that. I understood, at least – not that I later on agreed with it – but I understood the rationale for continuing to oppose Daley, but I never grasped or understood the rationale for alienating the State House press corps. I just didn't. And, on that score, I have had direct discussion in later years with Dan Walker and he has gradually come around to the position that, indeed, it probably was a mistake. As always, he says, That's a mistake for which I take responsibility. And I think he's acknowledged that Norton Kay knew better and Norty was torn up inside by it.

DePue: Uh huh. Victor deGrazia is often considered his closest advisor.

Pensoneau: Absolutely.

DePue: His political brain. I'm going to bring out this quote and then I'm going to ask you to talk a little bit more about Victor, as well. But both Victor and Dan – another one of your journalist colleagues, I think, and you cited him – said this about these two, "Victor and Walker were better at collecting enemies than in rallying supporters."

Pensoneau: I maybe wrote that, back, way back when. I don't recall. I've heard that. I can't remember if I wrote it or not.

DePue: I think you cited another journalist and I don't have it written down.

Pensoneau: Okay. Okay.

DePue: Would you say that's correct?

Pensoneau: Maybe I used it in my book. I think some saw it that way. Yeah. Well they certainly collected a lot of enemies. I mean, they al a good portion of those in the State Senate as well as those in the House of Representatives, and so that was true. And then they continued to alienate, not just the mayor himself, but other principals in the Chicago Democratic machine. They had this thing, for example, where they tried to separate governing and government officials from holding political offices, meaning party posts. I think they had this deal whereby they were insisting that any major appointee – and if they had their way, any other elected officials – couldn't also be party ward committeemen or members of the state central committee or maybe even precinct captain. In other words, at the time, folks didn't really understand this and this further alienated people who were ward committeemen and had public jobs and so on. I mean they tried to separate this, and as, I remember that was one thing that got very acrimonious. They seemed to take on positions. All major political issues have engendered different viewpoints, debate, a lot of time spirited debate, and that's part of the territory, and that's going to come on every issue. But sometimes it seemed like they pre-judged a situation by inviting the antagonism to occur ahead of time, before they even have their basic proposals on the table. It's like they relished that part of it. Not that it wasn't going to happen sooner or later, but it was like they couldn't wait for it to happen. They wanted it to come up front, you know, as a major part of what was going to be going on. I did feel maybe there was no choice because of the way they came into office, with all the people they had to take on to get there. And when Walker came into the State House, he was an outsider. We had a governor who never was and even then was not considered a part of the political establishment, obviously, and I think that his team continued to play that to the hilt and there was never any reconciliation, obviously, with the establishment. I think that it was obvious; it came through in so many things that Walker did, that they didn't want reconciliation. In retrospect, he's told me that that was part of the basic tenets supported by deGrazia, that deGrazia said we'll lose our political identity and we'll lose our reason for being, politically, if we make up with Daley and accede to, if not demands, entreaties from the political establishment.

DePue: Can you tell me more about Victor deGrazia then?

Pensoneau: DeGrazia, for the most part, was always on the edge of Democratic politics, politically. He actually did have, I think, briefly, a role in government when he was fairly young and when Otto Kerner was governor, but it didn't last long. Chris Vlahoplus, who is still alive and was the major aide and spokesman for Kerner, kind of Kerner's Mike Lawrence, said he really liked Vic, he was charming, and was fun to be with, but he just couldn't be a team player. Once you're in office, you've got to be a team player, Chris said, and he just couldn't subject himself to being a Kerner team player. So, he had been kind of a maverick Democrat back in the late '50s and he returned to that maverick Democratic posture after he left the Kerner administration.

DePue: So it's not hard to see what attracted the two men to each other.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, yeah. I mean, in my opinion, they were like brothers. DeGrazia had a brother who was, I don't know what faculty he was on, where he taught or what, but he was like a brilliant political theoretician. And I think his father had been a famous musician. But deGrazia grew up in a very, I think, enlightened household.

DePue: I always found it ironic, his brother authored a book on Machiavelli.

Pensoneau: Right. I was going to get to that. You beat me to it. I was going to say I think his brother wrote…

DePue: I'm sorry.

Pensoneau: …his brother wrote a book on Machiavelli. In fact, early on I wrote something not far from the statement that deGrazia's obviously the Machiavelli of the Walker movement and the Walker governorship and Vic didn't like it. (chuckle) I remember that. He didn't like it at all.

DePue: Was that the opinion among the press corps, that he had Machiavellian traits?

Pensoneau: Right. Right. Now, here's a slam. Some of the press corps didn't even know who Machiavelli was. (DePue chuckles) I can't say they knew. But, I know one time I wrote an analysis piece. The editors wanted me to analyze the relationship between Walker and deGrazia. I don't think Dan's ever thrown this up to me, if he remembers it; I got to believe he saw it. De Grazia did. (chuckles) In my attempt to show how close they were and how they were on the same wavelength – as people always said –I accepted as gospel the fact that if you talk to one, you talk to the other. DeGrazia never made any pretense about the fact that if I tell you something, it's Dan talking or vice versa.

De Grazia didn't like what I wrote. It was like, are you trying to create problems between Dan and I? or, you're overdoing it, Taylor. "I've never not been available to you but you're trying to create a situation here where people think that I'm the governor and I'm not." And he said, "This is obviously" – and he said it smiling – "a bit of mischief on your part." (chuckles) I just remember that. I thought that was clever at the time, yeah.

DePue: Let's go back and take a quick excursion into what Walker's career was, his profession before he launched himself into politics. I'm going there because I think maybe that will reveal some things.

Pensoneau: Well, he was a very hard-working attorney.

DePue: What fashion of law was he practicing?

Pensoneau: I'm not quite sure. I knew that one of his early law partners was a man named George Kelm. That was interesting because later on in my life, in representing the coal industry, the man who ran one of the major coal companies was the same George Kelm. George and Walker had been friends and Kelm and Walker had been, if not partners, associates in the practice of law. Kelm told me that Dan was one of the hardest working attorneys he ever saw; he said that Walker was just driven to make something of himself beyond the, perhaps, routine practice of law. He said Dan was always very ambitious. Kelm told me there was a point where, "I wasn't sure if his aggressiveness would bear fruit in the business world or public life." But he said, "Dan was always looking ahead to really becoming a player in the life of Illinois." Kelm told me that later on.

DePue: For some reason, I'm recalling that he was a trial lawyer.

Pensoneau: I guess.

DePue: And the only reason I bring it up is because – maybe this is my own prejudices on such groups as trial lawyers – is that they tend to be, and may be by nature, more confrontational and aggressive.

Pensoneau: Okay. I think that's a good point. You know, its kind of funny, at this stage in the game, my mind is a blank on what kind of law he practiced, if that's the right way to phrase it. I just know that he had the existence that I've witnessed through the years of other attorneys in Chicago that I've known in various walks of life and that they're never home. They get in, they get in their office at nine in the morning. I think this was definitely Walker, you know they work, all day they're downtown in their offices. They maybe knock it off around six o'clock, but then they go and eat somewhere in downtown Chicago at night, and its only then that they might catch a drive or catch a commuter train back to Deerfield or Lake Forest or out to Hinsdale or whatever. Then, but they're back downtown at like nine o'clock in the morning. I think Walker was in that mode and I've seen that with other lawyers in Chicago; I mean, it seems to be kind of a routine pattern, at least during the weekdays. But, you know what, I just have kind of vague… I really don't recall what I wrote and I do not recall much about his actual law practice. Obviously, he eventually got in a position of considerable responsibility with Montgomery Ward.

DePue: Yes.

Pensoneau: And I know that a number of people who knew he and Roberta absolutely thought it was bordering on insanity that he walked away from that position cold turkey to run for Governor of Illinois and roll all the dice on that one undertaking.

DePue: So an incredible risk taker?

Pensoneau: Absolutely in that regard. I think he spent all he had and beyond in terms of their resources on the venture.

DePue: Yes.

Pensoneau: I mean, they banked everything on it, so, yeah, I mean, what a risk taker. I think I said in my book that no Las Vegas gambler took a more long-range shot than Walker.

DePue: Longer odds. He's had some experiences from what you were talking about with Montgomery Ward as an executive. He had the training in the military as an executive. Do you think he was much more comfortable in the skin of an executive than he was as a legislator?

Pensoneau: Well, of course, he never was a legislator per se, but I think that he envisioned himself – which he was – as a competent, proven executive. In looking back, as a partial answer to a question you asked earlier, I think that was one of his selling points in running for governor, that he had been an executive of a big corporate undertaking and knew what it was to both govern and have to responsibly deal with finances. Okay, so I guess I'm just answering your question by saying, yeah, I think he felt his executive experience was a plus. To carry that a step further, I think that a big corporation's not a democracy and top executives usually encounter little resistance to their decrees or what they want done. I mean, there's no debate. There are not two parties. I mean, people generally within their own corporate world get what they want and people fall in line. And perhaps there was a little bit of that in thinking the General Assembly would be more responsive to what he wanted done legislatively and so on.

DePue: Is he the kind of person, the kind of governor who would go down and sit down and chat with the legislators to cultivate their support on certain issues?

Pensoneau: Gosh, that's a good question. I remember so well Thompson doing that. Some would never. I mean Otto Kerner would never do that. He was too dignified. I don't recall, I'm sure, I don't recall Ogilvie doing anything like that at all. I don't recall, and again, I might be wrong here, I can't recall Walker actually physically meandering, say through the House. If governors ever did that, they generally seemed to do it in the House as opposed to the Senate. Okay. I can't recall. However, though, Walker did invite legislative leaders over to the mansion to play cards and so on. I know he did that. He liked to play poker and I think he played a rough brand of poker, for keeps; there are some anecdotes about that.

DePue: As you explain in the book, he set the rules?

Pensoneau: Yeah.

DePue: Its going to be five-card stud or five-card draw and table stakes, and that was it.

Pensoneau: Exactly, and that was it. Right. I know he did things like that. I remember one night – this is in the book, but I wasn't present – involving Bob Estill who was then a member of the press corps, was a reporter for the, I think it was the Journal; the papers were still separate then, here, the Illinois State Journal. Anyway, I didn't play cards and didn't participate, but Estill had a poker game or card game about every other week. One night at his house a number of the reporters were there and, by golly, unannounced, Walker walked in and asked if he could sit down and play a few hands with them. I thought that was kind of interesting.

But Walker was not warm and fuzzy, okay, as opposed to Thompson who you could actually see, if there were big issues being debated such as a state subsidy for the White Sox doing a new park in Chicago, or state appropriations of great size to encourage this Japanese firm to build a big, the Diamond Star plant up by Bloomington or whatever. There was a lot of division on these things when the big debates are going on. It might be in the evening, here was Thompson, himself, wandering around the floor of the Illinois House and, if there's a vacant chair he might settle into it and put a long leg up on the table and just kind of listen. Here'd be the Governor of Illinois just sitting and seeing who was opposing and who was supporting his position.

Now you never saw that with Walker nor with most governors, but that was an exception. I really don't recall and, if Mike and Jim contradict me on this, so be it. I don't recall Jim Edgar being in that mode. Ryan might have. Ryan had a great rapport with legislators. It was one of his strong points, because, as opposed to a number of governors, Ryan really understood the legislative process. I mean, he'd been Speaker of the House. He really knew the nuts and bolts of it and that was a big leg up for Ryan. But I don't recall Walker doing that, even though he had this populist image.

DePue: Was he averse to reaching out to the legislature, do you think?

Pensonesau: No, I don't think he was averse. There was a cadre of downstate Democrats, encouraged by Walker, who set themselves up as semi-independent Democrats in the Illinois House. They were all downstaters. I think there were about fifteen of them. They became players and, basically, their standing was both encouraged and abetted by Walker. Walker saw that he was not having a smooth relationship, maybe not getting anywhere to any extent with the established Democratic leadership and, consequently, he thought he had to develop his own separate support base in the Illinois House. These were House members. And I remember they were in league with Walker on issues and they were openly critical of domination by Chicago Democrats.

DePue: You explained in the book, one of the early, maybe the first real incident, of important legislation going through the legislature, where once again its Walker and the Democratic machine, we're talking about the transit authority and getting funding for the transit authority. Can you talk about that a little bit? Do you recall the specifics?

Pensoneau: I'm not sure, I've got to be honest, I do not.

DePue: Let me just try to recall the specifics that I recall, that it was a matter of how we're going to fund Chicago Transit Authority using state dollars, and whether it would be at a one-to-one ratio or a two-to-one ratio, with the state kicking in two dollars for every dollar that the City of Chicago kicked in. It went to two-to-one. It was a matter of negotiation among the legislators on both sides, both Democrats and Republicans; they got it pushed through without much involvement with the Walker administration. It went to Walker; he vetoed it and they overrode the veto and, once again now, he's snubbed his nose at the Chicago Democratic machine.

Pensoneau: I'm sure it's the way you described it. You remember it better than I do. Although he was from Deerfield, at least that was where he voted out of – their house was in Deerfield, Walker almost automatically took umbrage with any legislative proposal that seemed to be an outright gift to Chicago or even to the greater Chicago area. In almost every piece of fiscal legislation, be it for mass transit aid or school aid or whatever, if you really get into the details you'll see where Chicago does very well. Chicago is never short circuited, it is never slighted, in spite of what people might believe to the contrary. The general rule is that whatever legislation passes, Chicago gets more than its fair share. I do believe that, and, really, Kerner certainly saw that. I'm not sure Ogilvie would argue with that. I think we still saw it as recent as when George Ryan was governor. But, the point I'm trying to make is, Walker attempted to draw the line and attempted to point out where Chicago was getting too much out of this legislation. It wasn't presented that way originally, but if you look at it, you know, i.e., Daley is getting far more than his share and this has been going on for years. It's not fair to the taxpayers of Illinois. It's certainly not fair to downstate taxpayers. He would veto it or try to use this new mechanism he had under the 1970 Constitution, the so-called amendatory veto. Walker would like to highlight and try to get political mileage out of suddenly issuing a statement indicating, I cannot support this piece of legislation because it is unfair to all parts of Illinois outside of the City of Chicago, and while this is intended to be a statewide program, basically the funding mechanism shifts way more dollars to Chicago than to other parts of Illinois and so on. So, yeah, I remember that tenor where he was quick to point out that those days are over of Chicago having its hand out down here and getting more than it can carry back.

DePue: Okay

Pensoneau: It was like just a basic part of his operating philosophy.

DePue: I know when he first got into office that both the House and the Senate, by a very thin margin, were controlled by the Republicans.

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: Do you recall anything about his relationship with W. Robert Blair, who would have been the Speaker of the House for those first couple of years?

Pensoneau: You know, I don't think they got along at all, not at all. In fact, as I recall there, Bob Blair didn't like Walker and I think that Blair in some legislative scenarios actually took the side of Chicago Democrats, that's what I'm going to say. In fact, I think he actually eventually lost his House seat because opponents of Blair in his district – it was kind of a south suburban district around Park Forest – felt that he had become, on key issues, too cozy with Chicago Democrats and had forsaken the traditional concerns of suburban Republicans. But, no, Blair didn't like Walker, and I think that if a contest erupted among the Democrats on the House floor or in the House, Blair would take the side of the Chicago Democrats.

DePue: In the Senate, you've got William Harris. After all those years where Arrington ruled the roost, you've got William Harris as the Republican. Get along with him?

Pensoneau: I don't recall that Harris disliked Walker. Blair did. I don't recall that Harris disliked Walker. He may have. Blair's still alive. Harris is gone. Its just interesting, as I look back on Walker's relationship with the General Assembly, most of my memories off the top of my head are in regard to the House, not the Senate. I do know this, though, I do know that in both houses – Walker operatives have made this clear to me – that after seeing about the difficulties they were incurring with the General Assembly on almost everything they wanted or attempted or whatever, that they were going to go out and immerse themselves in contests for legislative seats in the 1974 election, which, of course, was the mid-term election as far as Walker's four-year term was concerned, and, oh boy, did they. I think deGrazia spearheaded this, but I would use the phrase, Walker and deGrazia recruited candidates to oppose, not just sitting Republicans, but some sitting Democrats in various parts, especially downstate Illinois. And, I'll tell you what, in that 1974 election, he had a high batting average.

DePue: They got some supporters for Walker?

Pensoneau: They sure did. They sure did. For example, you take the south central Illinois Senate district, starting just not too far south of here. It was, still is, a Democratic district. However, through a set of unusual circumstances, a Republican was sitting in the seat, but he was imminently beatable. Okay, so Democrats were confident that they could recapture the seat in the 1974

election. Many Democrats in the county, in the district, which included either all or a good part of Macoupin County, wanted a popular young, I think, school administrator named Russell Masinelli to get the nomination and he appeared to be a natural. I remember it was part of my beat, you know. I remember I had lined up to talk to Masinelli and he seemed like an attractive guy, popular. Well, all of a sudden, we were told there was another candidate that, frankly, had been recruited by Governor Walker to run, and that was Vince deMuzio. The early word was that, well, you know you can't ignore Walker, but, boy, Russ Masinelli's an awfully popular guy down here.

Vince deMuzio was like a young attractive guy at the time, was quite young. He was running some local economic development board or organization called Illinois Valley Economic Development Corporation, something like that. Well, this is an example of what happened. Walker went down there personally, personally. He had this open air Jeep that he took pride in, and he drove from hamlet to village in that district with deMuzio and shook hands. This is the Governor of Illinois. And, I mean, he took deMuzio by the arm and they went into places and he said, Folks, Dan Walker, Governor Walker, this is my man; this is who I want in Springfield. I want young Vince deMuzio. And deMuzio won. He won the primary and the rest is history. I'm giving you one example.

The same thing happened in a rural district up in, I think, Kankakee County where they plugged way up there for a farmer named Jerry Joyce, though he was completely brought out of nowhere, unknown to the local Democratic establishment. They came up with him, campaigned for him, he won. Down in southern Illinois, a young businessman down there William (Bill) O'Daniel. They immersed themselves in his race. Now to be fair, he probably would have won anyway, but they immersed themselves in his race and made sure he won. There are others; we can go around the state. I think there was a traditionally Republican district up around Freeport, as I recall, and they recruited a young Democratic candidate up there, Jim Getz, Jim Gitts, I can't remember the spelling of his name, who was thought to have no prayer. They threw resources and their political muscle into that race; it was a strong Republican district and this young guy won. Now, I don't think the Democrats held the seat for too many years after that. But the young Democrat won because of Walker, again, Walker and deGrazia. Hey, they were like everywhere. Well, deGrazia didn't actually go out. It was Walker who went out. DeGrazia was orchestrating it. Well, they were both orchestrating it, but Walker would go out and just drive around with these guys and get out at every road house and go into every grocery store and say, Hello everybody, I'm Dan Walker, I'm your governor. We've got an important election coming up. I've got this nice young man here. He's been here all his life. He's lived here. He's a fine young man. He's running for the state Senate. This is who I want you to vote for. Please consider voting for this individual.

DePue: Would he at the same time bring out the Daley machine and here's our opportunity?

Pensoneau: That I don't know. That's a good point. I don't know that. He maybe did. Its just that I personally was never with him on any of these outings I'm talking about, but I know what I'm saying did transpire. And there were three or four other situations like that in the state. I think there was one over in the Quad Cities area, and we can go on.

DePue: Let me ask you this. For those first two years, the minority leaders in the House and the Senate are both interesting personalities in their own right. As I understand it, Clyde Choate, who we've talked about before…

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: …in the House, and Cecil Partee in the Senate. Now how did they line themselves up in terms of willingness to support Walker and his initiatives?

Pensoneau: Okay. Choate was very seasoned and very smart, very crafty, very schooled. At some point in those first two years, Walker and Choate had a falling out. Choate always professed to me he wasn't quite sure why. He almost tried to give you the impression one morning he woke up and Dan Walker was no longer my friend. Choate professed not to know why and I think if I talked to Walker about it, whatever I talked to him about is in the book, but I think Walker just decided that Choate represented, in the end, the old style of Democratic political maneuvering that he said he opposed and that he had run against and that he just couldn't hold further truck with Choate. Okay, so we'll get back to Choate in a minute, but as far as Partee, they definitely felt that Partee was friendly, but I think – as Walker told me – his word wasn't worth much legislatively speaking in a political sense.

DePue: Partee was a Chicago Democrat. Did he see him as a populist, Daley?

Pensoneau: Yeah. Right. I think they said he would on the surface be friendly, but you couldn't count on him because whatever Daley decided, that's the way he was going to go. They were not real pleased with Partee, but they recognized that he went where he thought his bread was buttered. Now, if you want to get ahead of the situation here.

DePue: Sure.

Pensoneau: As you know, the Democrats – and Walker gets a lot of credit for it – the Democrats capture control in the 1974 election of both houses. Of course, the Republicans are weakened by the Watergate scandal in Washington and the whole downfall of Nixon; this left the GOP much more vulnerable than usual and depressed and all that stuff, so, that certainly contributed to it. But Walker had a hand in bringing about Democratic control of both houses as a result of

the 1974 election. So now it comes to elect a speaker, and that turns out to be one of the most dramatic developments of the Walker governorship.

As you already pointed out, when things started, Choate was the Democratic leader and, of course, he'd been reelected to the House. Choate was assumed to be almost automatically elected speaker. Walker intervened and said, "No way. I don't want him to be speaker." Daley had signaled his okay on Choate, but Walker said no. Remember, I told you there were a few Democratic hold-outs in the House as a part of a rebellion against Chicago domination. So this thing went through ballot after ballot after ballot and then finally what emerged was Democratic support coalescing around Bill Redmond from, I think, Bensonville. He was a little gentleman, a go-along-with-it consensus-type Democrat, but he still needed to break this logjam. He still needed a vote somewhere; they didn't know where they were going to get the one vote needed to end this marathon situation. A Republican – who was a friend of Redmond's, maybe from the same district – Lee Daniels in the House gave him that vote, crossed over and voted for him to end it, and make Redmond speaker. So, you would have thought Walker would have done better having blocked Choate and gotten, if not his own man, somebody other than Choate with the support of Walker. But I don't recall that the situation improved that much in the House, if memory serves me right.

DePue: It sounds like he would have expended a lot of his political capitol just trying to get the result he wanted.

Pensonseau: He did. A good way to put it, a good way to put it. This was night and day covering this drawn-out thing over election of the new speaker. I thought at the time, Gosh, is this really that important to Walker, laying it all on the line like this? Choate was very pragmatic and I think that Choate would have been reasonably okay for Walker. Again, it was, it was the same kind of thing that there was sympathy in the press for Choate. Now you know, Choate had qualities. He could be conspiratorial. What you saw wasn't always what you got. There could be devious aspects in what Choate was trying to push or what he was trying to do, but I think the press corps did recognize so-called political tradition, okay? And I think political tradition dictated that Choate should have been the speaker. Again, he had kind of earned it in the same way that maybe Simon had kind of earned the Democratic nomination for governor in 1972. Again, many in the press couldn't understand and were not sympathetic to Walker's insistence; he threw everything he had into insistence that Choate not be speaker. It was another one of the enigmatic situations with which Walker seemingly got himself ensnarled as governor. It wasn't totally clear, outside of the fact that I think Walker said maybe he did feel that in the end the image that he tried to foster for Illinois government, this more open, clean-cut image, wouldn't be served by the presence of Clyde Choate as Speaker of the Illinois House.

DePue: We've talked a lot about the politics and the relationships that Dan Walker had with the press, with the legislature, with that Chicago machine, etc. What we haven't talked much about is what he was trying to get done when he was in office, what his agenda was. I think you're silence, at least up to this point, is somewhat indicative, isn't? He saw himself as an effective administrator. He told me that himself.

Pensoneau: Right, and I agree.

DePue: He didn't have the agenda that Ogilvie went in with?

Pensoneau: I think the truth of the matter is, that in terms of basic programs it seems like all governors want to do a little reorganization work, sometimes just for the sake of reorganizing (laughs). I think it was generally recognized that Ogilvie had done enough. Ogilvie had really shaken up Illinois government organizationally – I mean, big time. The basic pattern still holds today as we sit here, Ogilvie. And I don't think there was a lot there to do. I just felt that Walker wanted to bring in people who were not tied to the establishment, who had fresh faces, who would demand more in performance from the agencies and would be able in a way to make the agencies seem maybe more down-to-earth, more familiar, more malleable to the rank and file citizens of the state, if that makes sense. I think that he just wanted to get more out of the structure that he inherited.

DePue: So to make the government efficient.

Pensoneau: Yeah. Yeah,

DePue: And responsive.

Pensoneau: I think so. Right. More responsive and efficient. I think that's it. I think that he felt that recognition that this could be achieved, plus what he perceived to be his personal popularity and his personal powers of persuasiveness, that these would all come into play and not only guarantee his reelection, but would position him for a serious run for the Democratic nomination for president.

DePue: Did you recognize that he had that ambition up front in the administration?

Pensonesau: I did. I did. The answer to that is yes. Early on I got to spend a few nights with Walker. I spent one night with him when he threw a little party at the mansion. He'd maybe been in office a year and a half. It was in the summer; it was in warm weather. It was a party he threw for those who had had connections to his campaign. Okay. There were only a couple of press people there. I remember Burnell Heinecke, then with the *Chicago Sun-Times*, was there. The reason being given that I was invited was because I had walked so long with him on his walk. That was the reason I was invited. It was a very eclectic group. There weren't many people there, maybe twenty, That night I

talked to him at the mansion itself, he wanted to continue the thing with a couple of us afterwards; I was one of them and I went along with it.

That's when Nixon was really on the hot seat, okay? But I don't think he'd resigned yet. Well, Walker sat down and initiated a conversation with me about Nixon and his problems and how certain things could have been avoided if he'd just done this or been open with this. I think Walker said, Don't you think if he would have just acknowledged up front the goofiness of the Watergate burglary and said, hey, this is unfortunate, but there's no way I'm supporting these guys and so on. Of course, as it later turned out, there was more to it than that, but, I mean, he felt that he was analyzing briefly with me the shortcomings of Nixon in dealing with the then red-hot Watergate scandal. I really felt, the way Walker says things, his manner is something like: well, I think, I could handle a lot better, I would just apply more common sense in the situation. Then someone like me – and this may have occurred – would say, "Well Governor, are you seriously thinking about the White House?" And then I think he would say, "Oh sure." Just like that. "Oh sure," yeah.

Now, let me say, in all fairness to Dan Walker, in my time, about every person that gets elected governor of Illinois thinks he's automatic potential material for the White House. Richard Ogilvie thought that. I know that. Thompson certainly thought that. Certainly those two thought that. Adlai Stevenson came back to run for governor because his ultimate goal was to be president.

DePue: Adlai Stevenson the third?

Pensoneau: The third, yeah. The third, right. I should have said that. Adlai Stevenson III walked away from his senate seat to come back and run for Governor of Illinois because he was convinced – and I would agree politically – that being Governor of Illinois was then a better platform for getting the Democratic nomination for president than being a sitting United States Senator.

DePue: Okay.

Pensoneau: So it wasn't unusual that Walker… I mean, I kind of took it as almost pro forma that whenever we have a new Governor of Illinois and he has every reason in the world to be very heady and optimistic and all that, they think that they're White House material. I know that; I know Ogilvie was in that vein, certainly Thompson…

DePue: Rod Blagojevich?

Pensoneau: …at least those two. Well, he said so. (laughs) We'll just have to take him [Blagojevich] at his word (DePue laughs), okay? Only because, as you said, he said so.

But I do know that there were a few national columns – some things written nationally – that indicated Illinois had a very attractive new independent governor, Dan Walker, and you know, keep your eye on this man, folks. He's going to be part of the national picture.

DePue: If you look at the political landscape of 1976, all you have to do is think of Jimmy Carter, a small state governor, an outsider. These are all things that Dan Walker epitomized, plus in a much bigger state.

Pensoneau: Dan has talked about that. Maybe if he'd done a few things differently, a couple breaks here or there, it would have been Walker instead of Carter. I'll tell you this, in my opinion Walker would have been every bit as good a campaigner as Carter. I will say this, in looking back in terms of primary competition in various states, in a head-on clash between Walker and Jimmy Carter, I would have put my money on Dan Walker. Because I'll tell you what, Walker was a heck of a campaigner. He was good. He was good.

DePue: Let's talk about a couple of the other people we haven't mentioned yet. You've already talked about Vic deGrazia; you can't talk about Walker without talking about Vic. Let's talk David Green next.

Pensoneau: David Green. A bit of a mystery man. To my knowledge, I never saw David Green. I don't know anybody who knew about him. Early on when Walker was coming into office, there's a story about highlighting who was who in the new administration. I sat down with Norton Kay and we said let's go over the key people. Some were obvious: Vic deGrazia, Norty himself. I didn't remember Goldberg from the campaign, but I think he indicated then there's this young attorney Dan is very close to, trusts, and he's very smart, William Goldberg, so Goldberg is mentioned. I kind of knew who he was, didn't know him. Then two or three other names were mentioned; one was David Green and it was like, David Green? And Norty said, "Well, no, you wouldn't know him. Really, I don't think any reporters do because he's never around when you're around, but he's very close to Dan and he's got this sixth sense about politics. He's a success himself in private life and won't be going on any state payroll." So that would be another reason he doesn't have to deal with people like me. He's not going to be on the payroll. Okay. Norty said, "But if you're going to get into people who count, you ought to mention him, because he's going to continue to give Dan advice and Dan goes through him on a lot of questions. Dan goes to him a lot for advice."

So that's how I heard about David Green. Whenever I would write stories about who counts in the world of Walker – you know, people love to read that stuff – and about once a year the paper would want me to update who's who up there. Who is advising the governor? Who counts? Who doesn't? I'd always include the name David Green. I never met David Green, wouldn't know David Green if I saw him; Norty said if he's in the state house, he comes in through circuitous ways; you have no way of knowing he's there.

You wouldn't recognize him and he could walk right by you. But I found out that he was very much part of the inner circle.

DePue: What was his role? What did he offer to Walker?

Pensoneau: He just had this… He was Jewish, I'm sure he was Jewish; he was just very smart. He had this political intuition where he could sense things. He just had a sixth sense for knowing which buttons to push that might be pertinent at a given time, maybe what issue to talk about might count at this point. Discard talking about this, people don't care. According to Norty, he just gave good solid advice. He just had a feel for politics. He was like an amateur student of politics, but he really understood. I guess on his own, through his own capabilities, he was able to do some sort of research in terms of voting patterns. I think Norton more than once made the point to me that he was one who mapped out voting breakdowns and patterns that showed where Walker could beat Simon, where Simon was vulnerable.

DePue: Walker and others themselves have always accredited some kind of a political calculator in his brain.

Pensoneau: Yeah. Norton may have used that word. Norty said that he was so accurate that it was scary. He just said, "Here's a man not in government, not on anybody's payroll, but his own, and yet he was an invaluable advisor."

DePue: Another personality – I think the explanation, the description is going to be quite different – is Neil Hartigan, the Lieutenant Governor.

Pensoneau: Well, that was a different situation altogether. They were not allies. Hartigan was a Chicago Democrat whose loyalty was to the Chicago hierarchy. His family had been a big part of it for years. Hartigan and Walker: if they talked at all, it was pretty much beyond me. Hartigan. Sometimes when I wanted to take on Walker, I would want to include Hartigan's latest version. So I would go down to the lieutenant governor's office where I had – I'm sure others did, too – almost immediate access. Sometimes the conversation would go like this. Hartigan could have a sense of humor; maybe I'd be talking to Hartigan a half hour and I'd start to say, "Well, Governor, I know you're busy as Lieutenant Governor of the state and I won't stay much longer." "No, go ahead. I don't have anything to do." (DePue chuckles.) Then I would ask a question; of course I knew what the answer was going to be. I'd say, "Well, isn't there anything Walker's delegated you to do?" And he'd laugh and say, "Taylor, I haven't talked to the governor in three months," or something like that. Then Hartigan would always say, "Do you ever talk to him?" And I'd say, "Well, yeah, I see him in the capacity in the press room." Hartigan would laugh and say, "Well, can you tell him that I'm sitting down here?" (DePue laughs) This is true. "Why don't you ask him if there's something I can be doing." But then he'd laugh; he knew that wasn't going to happen. Certainly, at the top of Illinois government, they were the odd couple.

DePue: I don't want to put you on the spot here, but I know from talking to the governor himself, he was proud about ethical reforms that he made.

Pensoneau: Uh huh.

DePue: Do you recall any of the specifics there and how he managed to get those pushed through?

Pensoneau: Yeah he did. Yeah I do. He tried to do it by executive orders – just take the bull by the horns; he tried to be decisive on that. He tried to, I think, implement situations where a lot of state employees couldn't—couldn't or shouldn't contribute to political campaigns. He tried to institute so-called ethical guidelines in regards to contributions, which really sought to stem or curtail the normal flow of contributions in the political establishment process in Illinois.

DePue: Or as you've described, we're talking about the life-blood of Illinois politics.

Pensoneau: Of course. Of course. And that was another thing that met with great dissatisfaction. Like, what's he doing? You know. It was interesting, because Walker himself was in debt politically and that was one of the big monkeys on his back throughout his governorship. But he tried to implement reforms that, as you've just said, interrupted the basic life-blood flow of contributions in the normal channels. Yeah, he did.

DePue: Is that why he went with executive orders instead of legislation?

Pensoneau: Right, oh sure, absolutely. No question about it. Right. He issued these executive orders and how they held up or whether they did all hold up I can't recall. They were fairly far-reaching and they were met with cynicism and smirks and all the usual second-guessing and so on. But he did try, to his credit. Take a guy like Otto Kerner, the Democratic governor through most of the 1960s; Kerner could depend on funds if he needed them pretty much through the regular Democratic channels, party fundraisers, then an allotment would go to Kerner. Things like that, you know. I don't recall any Kerner fundraisers – maybe – I don't think he even had any, but if he had, he would have gotten all the regular Democratic contributors there, all the normal, routine people that normally do. It would have been business as usual and I think necessarily critical here.

But Walker didn't have that luxury. One of the ways that he was to be punished, a lot of Democratic traditional contributors didn't, especially the old line, the old-timers. There were Bourbon types in the Democratic party, also, and they weren't about to contribute to Walker. But Walker needed political funds. They all do. It's a reality of life in Illinois politics. You can't get around it. So Walker set up, as I recall, [something] called the Illinois Democratic Fund. I go into much detail on that in here. That was a vehicle, basically, just to raise money for Walker and his allies, those he wanted to

disperse political dough to. The Illinois Democratic fund didn't operate in the spotlight, let's put it that way; it became a source of controversy, as to who was contributing to it and its functions and so on. Then, of course, when it did raise money, the come-back among a lot of the old regulars was there's not that much money to go around. Now we don't even have what we used to get because he's siphoning it off through his own political situation and, as you all know, none of that's going to go to us – and this kind of stuff, you know. So, Walker had the Illinois Democratic Fund, if that's the right name. Again, Mark, it's in my book.

DePue: We can search that in the transcript.

Pensoneau: Alright. Make sure I'm accurate there in terms of the name. It did hold some fundraisers, though, that were glamorous affairs. Of course, the press was not allowed to go in and mingle with those who were there, but we would stand outside and maybe talk to, especially the people coming out, about how was it. Were you contributing? Why did you? Are you a supporter of Governor Walker? And stuff like this. I remember it was one of the few times when I got to talk to Stan Musial; he was at one of them.[19] I remember asking him a couple of questions when he came out. I'm just giving examples. But there were some celebrities that showed up for some of these things.

DePue: It's curious, the way you're describing a lot of this stuff. Here you have Dan Walker who cut his teeth politically in Chicago and got disgusted by what he saw on the way Chicago politics was run…

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: …run his own campaign for governor, and instead of having ward bosses and precinct captains, he develops his own foot soldiers during the campaign.

Pensoneau: Absolutely. Absolutely.

DePue: This situation is very much the same kind of an explanation.

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: An alternative to the way the Democratic machine was doing.

Pensoneau: Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. Oh yeah. It was a competitive situation. There's no question about it. A lot of the regulars – that was the generic term for those who are not Walker people – a lot of the regulars bitched endlessly. You know, they'd sit around and, Well, he's all for himself. This shows he's never going to play ball. This shows he doesn't want any rapprochement, and all this kind of stuff.

[19] Stan Musial, "Stan the Man", was a famous, long-time professional baseball player with the St. Louis Cardinals.

DePue: You mentioned the cynicism in the ethical reforms he's making. Was that among the legislators or among the news crew as well?

Pensoneau: It was mainly among the legislators and they applied to other officials, too, in state government at certain levels.

DePue: Okay

Pensoneau: Well, yes and no. Definitely, there was a cynical reaction among those affected, okay? Alright. Okay. No question about that, and I've mentioned that. But there also was a tendency among the press to look for motives in everything that Walker did that went beyond the obvious or went beyond the surface. And usually, with the assistance of always-available Walker critics, the resulting stories would come out and be negative – that he wasn't doing things for the right reason and so on. To answer the question – it's come up again here – again there was a really prejudice against Walker in the state house press corps. The man could do nothing right, very little right, couldn't get a break.

DePue: Let me shift gears here because you mentioned when we were at lunch that you actually were out of the state for quite a bit of this time, in '73 and '74

Pensoneau: Yes. Washington, D. C.

DePue: In Washington, D. C., because you were reporting on Watergate?[20]

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: So I'd like to hear your reflections on that.

Pensonseau: Alright. With the Watergate thing dominating the news nationally and across the country, actually starting in '72, but then really heating up in '73, I was asked by St. Louis to depart Springfield for a certain period of time to go to Washington to help the Washington bureau in coverage of the ongoing Watergate scandal which was overwhelming everything else in Washington, and I did so. This actually repeated itself in 1974, but in '73 I went out there. It was kind of funny. In 1973, as I recall, the Ervin Committee hearings started in April or May. This is off the top of my head. I say May because my first wife and I had gotten a motor home; I had a lot of time built up in the Post-Dispatch and we decided to take a drive to the West Coast and we did so. I was sitting out in Los Angeles in the apartment or the condo of my very close friend out there – I've talked about Jeff Prugh – and we were watching Watergate coverage on television; this was in the early days of the Ervin

[20] The Watergate Hotel in Washington, DC, was the scene of a Nixon administration scandal. Nixon operatives broke into the Democratic party headquarters and stole important documents. The incident eventually concluded with the Nixon's resignation to avoid impeachment.

Committee hearings. I remember watching, I think, John Dean testify and they'd keep flashing back to his attractive girlfriend or wife, Maureen…

DePue: Wife, I think.

Pensoneau: …sitting there with her real short dresses and all that. At that time Jeff was still in sports with Los Angeles *Times.* I remember Jeff was saying, You're in politics, you cover politics, is there any chance you'd get involved? I said, Oh, I don't think so; I've got my hands full in Springfield. and I don't think they'd want me out there. You know.

But anyway, so I got back, I don't know, mid-late, sometime the second part of May, to Springfield. I was back in the State House about two days and I got a call from one of the top dogs in St. Louis and they said, Washington needs help on this thing; do you think you can wrangle it to skip out on Springfield for perhaps what might be weeks and go out there and help them cover the Watergate situation?

DePue: When you say Washington, you mean Washington, D.C.?

Pensoneau: Washington bureau of the Post-Dispatch. Oh, yeah, yeah. We had a site. We had about seven or eight people there at that time.

DePue: And that wasn't enough?

Pensoneau: Apparently not. So, I said, "Sure." So we drove the motor home out there; within a few days I was there. The *Post-Dispatch* rented a house. Didn't know how long it was going to be, but they rented a house for me in Bethesda. We had the two little kids at the time. I took public transportation every day from Bethesda to downtown Washington. Our bureau was right on Pennsylvania Avenue, about a block from the White House. I immediately got thrown into it. We would take shifts at the hearing. I mean, you'd take two hours and then you'd go and phone into St. Louis. You were continually updating the stories with each new witness. Then someone would take my place. It's kind of funny that I remember you had assigned seats. The *Post-Dispatch* had an assigned seat at this one table, which was really quite close to the witness table. Of course, then you stuck the committee itself right up there, and I was on the side of the table facing everything. Then the seat across from me was for whatever network at that time was employing Leslie Stahl; she was much younger then and quite pretty. (DePue chuckles.) It seemed like every time I would be there for two or three hours in a given day, those were the same hours she would be there; so she and I started helping each other. Of course, she was big-time TV. I was the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. She was one of the TV networks. She was there. I remember it was kind of funny. If she'd want to go out to take a break for whatever, she'd say, You cover for me. I would take notes and vice versa. Sometimes I'd have to go do an update; she was the one I got to know and she said, "I'll take

notes for you." And she was good. I mention her because she became a well-known name.

DePue: Yes

Pensoneau: She's become a well-known name. She was, I remember, very slight and very, very pretty. Very nice. Kind of slight looking. But that was interesting. I brought this up because only a couple of weeks before, I was sitting in this condo in Los Angeles joking with my confidante, my good friend out there, just watching on TV, never thinking two, two and a half weeks later I'd be sitting there as part of the coverage. I mean, I just didn't have any inkling that they'd want me out there and I certainly didn't volunteer for it, but there I was, you know. It's just like a small world situation.

DePue: Did you have the sense at the time that this might be the most important story that you were ever going to report on?

Pensoneau: Again, it's a good question. I guess, sure. I mean, obviously I knew it was major and so on, but – how do I phrase it? – I mean, I was there but I wasn't part of the clique of the Washington people that were there.

There was always intense competition among the younger reporters in the *Post-Dispatch* organization. Getting to Washington was like getting the Holy Grail. It was like the ultimate objective. The newspaper made a big deal on having this Washington bureau. The Post had been one of the first major papers in the country to have a Washington bureau, a sizeable one, and it was one of the flagship operations of the *Post-Dispatch* and it was like the dream of every self-respecting reporter at the Post to get to Washington. It was like there was something wrong with you if that wasn't your end goal.

In fact, when I first was assigned from, moved from St. Louis to Springfield, I thought it would be a stepping stone to Washington. I thought it would only be here for a few years and then I'd probably be in Washington. Well, I grew to really like it here. I should point out that back in 1971 I had gone out there late in the year for about three weeks to work in the bureau while a number of them had taken off on late-year vacations or breaks, so I had a little bit of a taste of Washington then. It was interesting but wasn't quite what I thought, and I soon was figuring a few things out for myself. Well, it was very expensive in Washington, extremely expensive. Okay. We would meet every morning in a brief huddle in the Washington Bureau Chief's office. He had a big private office. I always had a feeling that it was made clear I was there but I wasn't the full-time one there. I mean, I was like a utility infielder or something like that, having to be brought in. It was always like everybody had a definitive role or whatever, and then it was like they would look at me and what was left over or what was the least desirable aspect. That's okay.

That was to be expected, but I wasn't used to that. I was my own man in Springfield. I had the whole platform to myself. I was the whole show and I'd gotten very used to it. By that time I'd been in Springfield about nine years and I was, I wasn't used to taking orders from anybody. I might get requests for story ideas from St. Louis from top editors and so, but I pretty much ran my own show. I had a dream situation. And here all of a sudden I was in this chain of command where I was at the bottom, although I played a role. While I was there on a given day I did as much as the others did, but it was always, it was always like I wasn't… This is sensitive to talk about after all these years. I guess I don't care. It was always like I was to do something, but it was always made sure that whatever I did, I didn't outshine anybody who was there full-time.

That went back to my three or four weeks there in 1971, my first time out there. I'm going to go back for a second, because in that brief time there, I was able to do several investigative things that were so obvious to one who knew the issues back in St. Louis and in Illinois and Missouri. They hadn't been done by the Washington bureau and I think there was a little bit of resentment that I went out there. I was only there for a matter of days, and had an idea and followed up. Frankly, I found it relatively easy compared to Springfield, compared to the Illinois State House.

DePue: Easy?

Pensoneau: Easy to turn up stuff investigative-wise. I found, I just did. I think St. Louis really appreciated it. I don't think the Washington guys did. (DePue laughs.) I sensed this, and I sensed that was going to be a problem. Well, then here I come back later; I'm asked to go out there again on this Watergate stuff. So I'm there, and, of course, another guy and myself always ended up with the late shift, which meant that when everyone else had gone home at five or six o'clock, we were still there at ten or eleven o'clock at night wrapping up. It was great experience. I guess you might say, if you're into name dropping and the celebrity stuff, it's great, you know, to go in and see all these *New York Times* reporters. You've read their bylines and all this kind of stuff. You see them all around. You quickly identify who's who. It was good experience. I got to meet some interesting people who lived out there in houses. While we were in Bethesda we got to meet some of the people on Sunday afternoons and they were fascinating people. But again, I never could be too comfortable because I never knew when the rug was going to be pulled out from under me, you know. I always sensed that there was this feeling. There were a couple young guys in the bureau along with all the older hands, and the young guys I had known when they were still back in St. Louis; I always felt that they viewed me as possible competition, you know. It was just a feeling I had. But anyway, I got to cover the Ervin committee. I got to do other stories. I got to follow up on some stories concerning Nixon's enemies list. I found people really quite willing to talk in Washington. I

found them much more free, ready to talk, or free to give out information than I did in Springfield. But I figured out why. You want me to go further here?

DePue: Yes. That's what I was going to ask.

Pensoneau: I'll tell you what I figured out on my own and it became a factor later on in terms of my pride. I saw in Washington, everybody really only read two papers, either the New York *Times* or the Washington *Post*. That was it. It didn't matter. Oh sure, you had select people here, Illinois congressmen would read the Chicago *Tribune*, I would agree. There was a certain built-in readership for the Los Angeles *Times*. I remember the Baltimore *Sun*, you would see it laying around and so on. The *Wall Street Journal*. That was about it.

My point in bringing this up is I found out very quickly you could write about anything you want in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. They talked because they didn't care. Nobody ever saw it or read it. I mean, I figured this out on my own, and it was like, I was not used to writing things where I didn't get a reaction. Because whenever I wrote in the Post, of course when I was here, you know, the next Monday morning you'd get a reaction or in the aftermath of a story. It wasn't always positive, but people read it, they'd react, there'd be comment, there'd be discussion. you felt like you had a sense of some importance. I didn't get that feeling out there. I mean, as I've said many times in talks since, out there you were a pebble on a massive beach, and back here you were a descent-sized frog in a small pond.

DePue: Okay

Pensoneau: First of all, I quickly ascertained in my own mind I was as good a reporter as anybody in the Washington bureau. That became damn clear to me pretty quick. Okay? And so there was really, no awe connected with it or anything. I mean, I found covering the Watergate stuff relatively easy covering the hearings.

I've got to be honest with you. I wasn't all totally responsible on my own; It was part of a team and I played certain roles. Really, I kind of enjoyed being part of it, but I learned a lot though. I sensed very early on, you mingle with other reporters and so on – certainly in my own bureau, but with others, too – from the New York Times, the incredible anti-Nixon mode. I wasn't prepared for that. I thought I'd see a little more objectivity, but it was like a total "get Nixon" attitude. Maybe they all had a lot reasons for feeling that way. But it was a definite herd mentality and it was a, We're going to run over this guy, we're going to get t his guy, he's our enemy, and any little morsel of dirt will do for the day. That's what I observed.

Now, to complete, so I came back. What happened was, I wasn't sure how long I'd be out there. The summer's dragging on. I was still there. I was

ready to go back at any time, but then one of the *Post-Dispatch* unions went on strike in St. Louis and the paper ceased publication, it turned out to be for a goodly number of weeks. So, the managing editor got me on the phone and said, In view of that I should be back in Springfield in home base.

DePue: You mean the newspaper wasn't even published?

Pensoneau: No. Couldn't reach a contract with one of the unions. See, there were multiple unions. The *Post-Dispatch* was a heavily unionized operation, something like ten, eleven or twelve different unions you had to deal with, and if just one went out on strike, all the others honored it. So, that was another situation.

DePue: That's kind of bizarre. So, here you are publishing people, you know, obviously keeping track of this archives and suddenly you've got this big gap where there are no newspapers.

Pensoneau: You've got it. So I came back here.

DePue: Were there any incidents at the Watergate hearings themselves that stick with you?

Pensoneau: Well, I had covered a lot of legislative hearings in Illinois in the Senate and the House and I had a lot of experience at it. In fact, it dawned on me that I had more actual day-to-day legislative experience covering legislative hearings than some of our Washington bureau guys who write these long think pieces, but they never actually, went to actual hearings and things like that. I guess I got to see Haldeman, Ehrlichman, the whole retinue. Butterfield. I remember I was in play the day that I think it was Butterfield let slip that tapes existed. Now I don't think – I'm trying to remember, though. I don't know if Butterfield did that before the committee or he did it in some post-interview or whatever, but I remember I was not actually in whatever we were in – the Rayburn Building or whatever – I wasn't actually at the committee at that point in the day. I remember I was walking on the street down Pennsylvania Avenue and I ran into a couple reporters I'd met from another paper; they were excited and they said, "Did you hear?" I didn't know what. I said, Well, what? And they said, There's tapes of all the stuff that's gone on in Nixon's office. And they mentioned Butterfield. I had heard of Butterfield, but I had no idea he'd revealed directly or indirectly the existence of these tapes and I said I hadn't. I remember their attitude: they said, Boy, this is the real breakthrough. We've got Nixon now. The rest is history. Then I came back.

Okay, well then the following year is 1974 and, of course, the whole thing's been building up, building up, building up. I think around the same time again I got a call from the hierarchy in St. Louis, We all want you to get out there again. This Nixon thing's going to come to a head in the summer – as it did – and they're going to need you." I said, "Well, fine." So, did the

same thing. We had the motor home, drove the motor home out there. This time they rented an apartment for us in Foggy Bottom and so that's where we lived. I remember it was a small apartment. My son was quite little, he was three years old. He slept in a closet (laughs), it was that small. It was really only a one bedroom apartment. My wife and I slept in the bedroom. We had a daughter who was six. The couch in the living room made into a bed; she slept on the couch. My son, the little boy, slept in a closet; (laughs) we put a little mattress down in the closet and that's where he slept. Oh, well. That was in Foggy Bottom.

So, that was when I was out there, of course. The big committee then at that point was Peter Rodino's House Judiciary Committee. I was covering that. We took shifts and it turned out, as I recall, the final vote on issuing articles of impeachment came on a late Saturday morning, early Saturday afternoon, and there were two of us in the room covering it. The other guy was a full-timer, Lawrence Taylor, and I'm Taylor Pensoneau. The byline the next morning – Sunday morning – in St. Louis was an interesting byline on the Nixon articles of impeachment vote – a big double byline by Lawrence Taylor and Taylor Pensoneau. So a nice name for your scrapbook, right?

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau: So, anyway, that was, yeah.

DePue: Let's get you back to Illinois if we could.

Pensoneau: Okay. Alright. You probably lost track, you probably lost interest. Well, I should point out something since I'm being honest.

DePue: Complete the record here.

Pensoneau: As the summer's running down Nixon's gone, he's resigned, Ford is sworn in and things are dying down quickly so the Washington Bureau Chief brings me into his office. I sensed this was coming, and he said, "We've all talked. We've talked to St. Louis. We would like to know how would you feel about coming out here full time?" You have to understand, those words were like the ultimate dream at one point of a *Post-Dispatch* reporter and I knew I didn't want to. I just knew it. And I told him I didn't think I wanted to. And he said, "Well, are you turning us down?" (DePue laughs.) And I said, "Dick, I just don't know. I've got these two young kids. I have a family life." He said, "I know. I've been through all these things myself. I know it's hard, but you have a better future here and you have a bigger stage." He gave me the talk and all that, you know, and I just said, "I know you're going to find this hard to believe, but I think I really prefer my own world in Springfield, Illinois, covering Illinois government" and so on. And I really felt that way, too, inside. So where we left it was, he says, "Well, we're always going to need help in the summer, whether we've got a Watergate or Nixon or

whatever, so I'd like to get you out here again next summer. When some of the others want to go on vacation, we'd like you here." I said, "Well, we'll think about that at that time."

I knew then I didn't want to come back and I'll tell you what I did. I always had time built up, and by that time I had worked long enough for the paper that I had, I think, I don't know, maybe close to five weeks of paid vacation if I'd wanted to take it. The following summer would have been 1975, and the editors in St. Louis I dealt with said that They're going to want you to go out to the Washington bureau again this summer, that Richard Dudman had already talked to the managing editor, and we haven't got the word yet, but just be prepared, you're probably going to be asked. You can start making arrangements. And what I did is, I told him – I planned ahead and this was true – I said, I've got all this time coming and I want to take off in the middle of the summer and I want to go to Europe. I've never been to Europe and my wife and I want to go to Europe; the only time I can do that and do justice to Springfield is in the middle of the summer, if at all. Well, this one editor shared my view. I had some confidants in St. Louis with some editors, and I told them when I came back that I really don't want Washington. They said, "Well, we knew Dudman was going to offer it to you." Dudman was the Washington bureau chief. I told them when I came back the previous summer; they already knew, word was already out that I wasn't going to go to Washington full-time. So this editor told me, Well, look, I think I know why. This means you won't be available to go to Washington. And I said, I really don't want to. I've earned this time and this is my decision. We're going to go to Europe in the middle of the summer. We're taking the whole time at once. Which we did – about five weeks. And that was it. In my remaining roughly – what, four years with the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, I never again went to Washington. It never came up in a conversation with me. Now back to reality, okay.

DePue: The '76 Democratic primary season.

Pensoneau: Gotcha.

DePue: We kind of have the tables reversed this time. Now you have Dan Walker, the sitting governor of the state and he has a contest on his hands, does he not, in the primary?

Pensoneau: He does. He had continued to have one confrontation after another with Daley. Of course, as Walker was trying to say then and repeatedly said to me in conversations in recent years, "Why was it always me that was expected to compromise with Daley? Why wasn't Daley ever expected to compromise with me?" And he always would say, "Answer that one for me, please." And of course, there's maybe not a clear cut answer to it outside of the fact that there was more prejudice against Walker than there was against Daley. You

know, there was a lot of prejudice among reporters against Daley, but there was probably more against Walker.

DePue: That's saying quite a bit.

Pensoneau: Yeah, it really is, right. So, okay, having said that, it soon became clear that Walker, of course, didn't seek the slatemaker's endorsement, but the Democrats were going to slate again. That was part of their basic operating fiber. And what they did is, they selected probably the most popular figure in the party that they had available to take on Walker to try to get rid of him and that was then Secretary of State Michael Howlett.

I didn't write this at the time, but in retrospect, before Howlett died and after he was gone from Illinois government, I saw him once or twice in Chicago, just once on the street, and he wanted to talk. We had a cup of coffee and he made it clear – this was not long before died – that he wanted to talk about '76; he made it clear to me that he had never wanted any part of it.

DePue: Didn't want to be governor?

Pensoneau: Didn't want to be governor, didn't want to take on Walker. Daley twisted his arm big-time, said he had to do it, had to get rid of this guy – meaning Walker and that you can do it Mike, you've got the job and you'll be rewarded big time. Howlett laughed when he said this. We're having a cup of coffee. I think this might have been at the Conrad Hilton, I'm not sure. He said, "Do you believe it?" You have to understand, Daley was dead by this time.

DePue: Yes.

Pensoneau: I'm sure this conversation would not have taken place if Daley were still alive, but Daley was dead. Howlett said that Daley said, "You can do it. You take out Walker. Then you'll win the governorship, and then I'm going to make you the second Catholic president." Howlett just laughed. He said, "Can you believe he told me that?" Okay, well, anyway, I just looked at him and he was smiling and I guess I smiled, but the man said that.

Well, anyway, so Howlett takes on Daley and I mean the machine implemented, pressed every button it could for every bit of power it could muster and it was considerable. Of course, the thing was that the large army that Walker had in 1972 no longer was in place. They couldn't muster it. They just couldn't, and all the regulars under the pressure of Daley's insistence endorsed and went with Howlett and Howlett won.

DePue: Walker in 1971 up through 1972 was obviously, full-time a candidate for governor in the primary campaign.

Pensoneau: Yeah.

DePue: How much was he involved during the campaign, the primary campaign of ’76?

Pensoneau: That’s a very good question. I don’t recall him having the energy, the delightfulness in many regards, of his campaign as you said back in ’71 and ’72. The verve – it wasn’t there. I recall Walker, frankly, looking tired, literally tired, tired all the time in the ’76 campaign. I recall spending some time with him in the closing days and it was just like – I don’t know – it was just like he kind of had some kind of hangover. It wasn’t the Walker that I remember from ’71 or ’72, Mark, it just wasn’t. It was still the, “Well, I’m going to win. The mayor thing, he’ll pull this out, but I’m going to win.” But then I remember we’d been on a small plane and he just put the chair back and he just looked out the window and that would be like it, you know.

DePue: Was he over-confident?

Pensoneau: I don’t think so. I don’t thing so. Roberta 1, his first wife, told me in interviewing her for the Walker book that she knew he was going to lose. She said, “I knew Dan was going to win in 1972 and I knew he was going to lose in 1976.” She said, “I just knew those things.”

DePue: We should mention, you referred to her as Roberta 1 because he got divorced very shortly after he lost.

Pensoneau: Right.”

DePue: And he married a second woman named Roberta.

Pensoneau: Yes.

DePue: Let me ask you this, then, how much was the second Roberta in the picture at the tail end of his administration?

Pensoneau: I don’t think at all. He’s gone to great lengths to explain that to me and I think that I accept his explanation.

DePue: There are some who think that she was.

Pensoneau: Well I don’t think so. If you read my book, you will see in there the absolutely most frank admissions any governor has ever made about his personal life. Walker, like any red-blooded guy, appreciated good-looking women. I would refer you and anybody else in this discussion to one of the latter chapters of my book. I’m sure you’ve read it.

DePue: Yes.

Pensoneau: When the book came out, that was the part everybody focused on. (DePue chuckles.) I thought that [the fact] Walker was man enough to actually

acknowledge that and so on was really something. That's what I thought. Because he's surely not alone, but who's going to face up to something like that. Okay, now having said that, you know what I mean, he told me, and I believe him, that she was not a factor in his… He said the marriage had just run out of gas. That's what he said and it was just something he couldn't rectify within himself. But he did meet her, though, I think, not long after the divorce. But he has insisted to me, and I have accepted through conversations with him, the fact that Roberta II was not the reason for his divorce from Roberta I. I'm sure there are people who think otherwise.

DePue: Did Roberta I feel comfortable in the limelight in the role of the first lady of the state?

Pensoneau: I don't think so. I think she was inherently shy about things like that. Again, I would refer anybody interested in that to my book where I go into that.

DePue: Okay.

Pensoneau: She did not feel like she was part of what was going on. Frankly, she felt that there was a conscious effort by deGrazia to shut her out and that there were times when, because she was a woman and because she had intuition, that she might have offered some reasonable advice or input. She said that she didn't feel she was allowed to do that and, as a result, she felt that was something that Dan missed in his governorship.

DePue: Oh.

Pensoneau: She was very reticent, though, I know. I did get to spend a little time with her. When Ogilvie was governor, I never got to spend any time with Mrs. Ogilvie, and certainly not with Kerner's wife, but I did get to spend a little time with Roberta Walker and I found her to be sort of soft spoken and obviously not in any way, shape or form carried away with it all. Okay?

DePue: Were you surprised when Howlett won, rather handily, I think, against Walker?

Pensoneau: I wasn't. I wasn't. I think I wrote that it looks like Governor Dan Walker is going to be denied renomination by his party. I believe the odds were favoring Howlett as the primary approached, I believe.

DePue: Let's get to the point then of summing up some things here. We can take a little bit of time doing this in terms of reflections on Dan Walker and his administration. He started the race in 1971 by saying this, or words to the effect: We will eliminate the patronage system and the political prostitution of our courts. We will construct a political system that will not tolerate politicians who have persistent ties to organized crime and those who use party positions to acquire personal wealth, etc., etc. That's his standard stump speech.

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: Do you think he was at all successful in accomplishing that?

Pensoneau: I think there was some headway made. I think he definitely brought about a brutal end to the cozy, and frankly unethical and largely hidden relationships between major political figures and the lucrative horse racing industry. I think he did that through the appointment of Scariano as chairman of the racing board. I think that he did take the first meaningful steps in a sincere, rather bold effort to try to curtail strong-arming by political leaders and higher-up officials to strong-arm lower level people for contributions. I think we have to make note of the fact that during his administration, I don't recall Dan Walker had any significant fiscal scandals. In my book, I think I write that I didn't detect, I was not aware that anybody was indicted for anything, and that's really saying something. Okay? Now, in retrospect – and I think Walker himself maybe told me he didn't remember this – apparently there was at that time some very low-level or far-out individual indicted for something, but it wasn't prosecuted or whatever. I guess the indictment was dropped. I was not aware of it, and frankly, I didn't know anybody else that was aware of it either when I did the book. But, without going into names, look at other governors and we've had indictments, right? Okay. I mean, we're all familiar with what's going on. Well, Dan Walker had a basically scandal-free administration.

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau: I think that, I mean, that's to be said. Its just not that what he was responsible for was scandal-free, but that overall state government, including parts he was not responsible for, didn't suffer any major scandals. Ogilvie suffered greatly as we've already talked about at length, about all the scandals that occurred when he was governor that were not attributable to him, but they certainly damaged the image of Illinois government. Walker didn't have hardly any of that, and because he insisted on this, he just had this moral tone to everything. Even in those confrontations that we've talked about here, he always insisted he wouldn't brook corruption.

DePue: Did he come across as sanctimonious in that respect?

Pensoneau: I think he did. His critics, of course, naturally pounced on that and said he is so sanctimonious. And then when I've thrown this up – what we're talking about here – about him being scandal-free, people still come back to me, not downstate, but in different parts of the state north of here and say, "Well, yeah, there shouldn't have been any scandals because he demanded more and he thought he was better than other people." They didn't mean it necessarily in a complimentary way. And I would always say, "But isn't that something that, if he set the tone and the tone was adhered to as far as we can determine, isn't that actually a positive situation for once?" But again, there always

seems that reluctance, even there, to give Walker any credit. I should point out something here, though. Even though he lost that primary to Howlett, and that was because, of course, of the Daley-dictated vote where Daley was master of the scene, Walker remained very popular in much of downstate Illinois.

And, you know, when the Walker book came out in 1993, he came back and there were some book tours, one of which he joined me on. These were orchestrated book tours, so people knew we were coming. You wouldn't believe the people waiting for us in certain towns. It had nothing to do with me. Just to see Dan Walker again and to thank him, and to thank him, saying that they thought he was a good governor and that they remembered the things he had done and you paid attention to our little situation over here when nobody did. Some people stuffed presents – I remember – stuffed ties in his pockets and so on. I think some people wanted to give him money, cash and, you know. But many people would come up and say, I would never get to talk to you when you were governor, but now I can and I just want to thank you, because we had more morale in my agency when you were governor than ever before.

Walker himself made a point, he told me, that he really grew to like and appreciate the quality of life in much of downstate Illinois; he said basically there was something innate in him that just, in the end, he identified with downstate Illinois. He used to tell me that when he would fly out of Springfield for a weekend in southern Illinois, which he liked to do more often than we knew, his stomach would just ease as he approached southern Illinois, when the plane landed, he said, he had a calm feeling and he said I relish, I do, the whole weekend. Maybe he would meet with Pud Williams, who was his agriculture secretary, and they would take off and they'd drive around in an unmarked vehicle. He said those were the best days.

He said they'd go into (laughing) I think a barber shop in DuQuoin. They'd walk down the street in DuQuoin, he and Pud; they'd walk into a barber shop (laughing) and there's a guy laying there getting shaved or something and Walker'd say, "Hey, how you doing?" This is Saturday and Walker would say, "Just want to see how you're doing and if there was anything that you want to talk to me about." "Well who are you?" "I'm Governor Walker." (both laugh) The guy would be thinking oh, yeah, sure.

You know, I think this stuff's just interesting. He said he loved it. He loved to get into the small towns and get out and walk up and down the streets, and he said it was just one of the most enjoyable moments of being governor. And, you know, he said there was this little restaurant that was well-known in this real little tiny town not far from Mt. Vernon. They went in there and he said he and Pud – I guess it was Pud with him – went in there and they got a piece of pie. He said he'd already eaten, but he wanted to order something in this small restaurant with five or six tables but she was well-

known – so he said he had to order something so he ordered a piece of pie. He said he could only eat about half of his pie. He really apologized. He paid for it, but he said he apologized profusely and, "God its great, ma'am, but I just can't eat anymore right now." He can tell you, its a month or two later, they were going back and they stopped in the little town and he went in this little restaurant and she had taken his half-eaten pie and preserved it; it was in like a little cabinet thing that she'd put on the wall of the restaurant. There's this unfinished piece of pie. (DePue laughs.) Isn't that a great story?

DePue: Yeah, that is a great story.

Pensoneau: Yeah, and he says that's a part of the governorship. You know, it was just he loved southern Illinois. He said he really did. He said he found the people in the end more shared his values than a lot of people he encountered in the upper part of the state. He told me that.

DePue: The obvious irony of Governor Walker is that now he is identified as one of the three governors who have spent time in jail and a fourth one heading that direction right now, and that people automatically assume that was because of something he did while he was in office.

Pensoneau: Yeah. It's a real sad reality that in the necessary reporting and compilation of gubernatorial corruption in Illinois, especially in the last forty or fifty years, that in mentioning those who went to jail, or prison, Walker, of course, is mentioned. But more often than not, there is not the caveat added or the parenthetical wording added that his imprisonment had absolutely nothing at all to do with being governor of Illinois. That should be added in all fairness and also in terms of all candor and honesty and accuracy in reporting. I think that's just unacceptable in journalism in the state. I know I get interviewed about recent gubernatorial history and, of course, this stuff always comes up. I always make a point of clarifying the Walker part of it by pointing out, However, its got to be noted, his indictment and imprisonment had nothing to do with being governor of Illinois. That should be pointed out. But what are you going to do? I mean, it's still more often not added on than otherwise.

DePue: Let's frame a question this way perhaps. You've already said that Ogilvie, his administration, is now looked to be one of the good administrations we've had recently, perhaps one of the very best. How would you rate, in terms of ethical standards, Ogilvie to Walker while they were governor?

Pensoneau: Well, personally speaking, getting as personal as you can get, Ogilvie was clean. I can't remember any scandal that he was linked to personally. He had to endure a lot of scandalous conduct in Illinois government while he was governor, as we've talked about endlessly here, but Ogilvie was personally honest. I mean, when he left the governorship, Mrs. Ogilvie detailed to me where they stood financially, and they had next to nothing in terms of financial resources. Now, he did very well as a trustee in bankruptcy or

whatever it was for one or more major railroads in the Midwest, and he did make big money then, finally, finally.

DePue: After he was out of the governorship.

Pensoneau: Oh, yeah, after he was out of the governorship, but I don't know how you measure it otherwise. I mean, that's certainly one way of measuring it. Did Ogilvie leave with four hundred thousand dollars in the bank account? No. He did not. I'm pretty sure.

DePue: Nor did Walker, did he?

Pensoneau: No, oh no, no. No, Walker didn't either; to my knowledge he didn't. I'm sure he did not. I know Ogilvie didn't. I think Mrs. Ogilvie showed me some financial statement or something that indicated very clearly their financial standing at the end of the Ogilvie governorship. They had a house in Northfield. First of all, the house was not that expensive and I don't even recall if that was paid off. And their savings were very meager. I mean, it was a pretty short list of assets and liabilities, but the point of it was, they were just… I think they were solvent. But Ogilvie left the governorship with very little in the way of monetary resources and I think the same was true for Walker. Now Walker obviously did make some money. Walker started different kinds of business ventures and some failed but some succeeded, too.

DePue: I don't think I want to go through his legal problems after he was out of office, if for no other reason than you've done a good job and he's been very candid in laying those things out himself in the book. I guess what I wanted to get at here is, in terms of Ogilvie who has this very good reputation now and ethically, as you just stated, and Walker, maybe a year out, he would have had roughly the same ethical reputation, although he was obviously unsuccessful in other respects.

Pensoneau: I think so. In terms of ethical reputation, there was this press hostility, prejudice against Walker; it might have carried over into the realm of what you're asking about here in that even without the prison bit, he might never have gotten the credit, or his due, on the issue of ethics. Even if on paper he did institute some ethical reforms and demands that certainly eliminated some of the old nefarious practices of government, in government and by government in terms of fundraising, he still might have been depicted as philosophically dishonest ethically.

DePue: Because he painted Paul Simon in unfavorable terms, for example?

Pensoneau: I think you can still trace it back to that. I still hold to that theory to this day and I think that there would have been some way to construe the ethical question you're asking about into a way that would have been interpreted less than favorably for Walker. Certainly not as meritoriously as it should have been, put it that way. While Ogilvie had good standing with the press,

basically through his governorship and certainly, especially after he lost to Walker. Oh, I mean, you know, the press just really was in a very lamentable mood about that defeat. But whatever Ogilvie did would have been taken at face value and would have generated plaudits.

DePue: Walker's greatest strengths?

Pensoneau: (Sigh) I think his largely indomitable spirit. His ability to dream big. His boldness of vision. His willingness to tackle the unattainable. I still think that was a strength, although in some regards, it turned out to be a shackle on him when he was actually in office and governing. But think that was an incredible strength. Without that obviously incredible inner strength generated by who knows what – incredible ambition, grandiose dreams or whatever – it persisted and it was, I thought, a basic make-up of the man. It was like full-speed ahead, damn the torpedoes, or whatever that phrase is.

DePue: Fitting for a Navy man.

Pensoneau: Yeah, right. Very good. I think when you match that determination to succeed with a brilliant mind – and I think he has a brilliant mind, okay? – then you ought to be talking about a pretty formidable individual. I think that there may have been a derailment, but I think overall Dan Walker, his accomplishment in becoming governor of Illinois, was beyond normal political comprehension. I think that in his later years, I've got to say in this situation like right here, I'm going to point out that the man through sheer will, basically, achieved the impossible.

DePue: I think you know the next question, then. I've asked about his greatest strengths. What would you characterize as his tragic flaw?

Pensoneau: Okay, maybe in terms of his active governorship. When he was governor, it was this tenacious stubbornness and his refusal to perhaps bend. Now, I'm sure he would not agree with this. He would come back and say, "Bend to what? Bend my principles? Bend my basic beliefs? Short-circuit my own self for the benefit of the exact kind of people I was running against, that I was trying to rout out of Illinois government?" But I think that he could have accomplished as much and more of what he wanted if he would have bent a little bit more in certain situations and maybe taken the easier path. He did not duck anything, but sometimes I think he let himself, with his eyes wide, open get involved in entanglements that sapped his energy and pulled him off the straightforward path that he had been on. He let himself get diverted from some of his major stated goals, and I think that that was unfortunate.

After he was governor, in his post-gubernatorial years, I think that was a little bit different situation. I think there you have a man who was disappointed that he did not get reelected governor of Illinois. I think he had some regrets, but I also think he had so downplayed or he had so forcefully

and visibly played the populist role, that in so doing, he had denied himself all the perks and the trappings of the governorship that almost all of the governors in our time had availed themselves of. Okay. And we've talked about those things. In his effort to be a populist, and even Roberta 1 told me in retrospect that when Dan was governor we deprived ourselves of all the things, so many of the things that a governor can avail himself of because he always wanted to be like, identify with, the so-called regular guy walking the street. That was his stated attempt, and he tried to pursue that in terms of his conduct of his personal life during his governorship. And I felt that then there was a backlash in his mind. She said, After it was all over and we lost, then I wish we had taken advantage of a lot of the perks. At least we could have enjoyed that part of it. We had earned it and we denied ourselves those things, and for what? We lost.

Okay. Now I think with Walker, I think that he did feel that he had deprived himself or denied himself opportunities to enjoy "the good life." I think he had a change of heart after he was out of the governorship and that there were opportunities to enjoy the good life if he was more free to make decisions and pursue ventures that would open up the so-called good life to him and the good life offered things that he had denied himself, that were not available, but that they might be; he was going to take advantage of them.

I think he and Roberta 2 were enjoying the good life. They had yachts. They for a while were part of the so-called international set. You know, they were rubbing shoulders with celebrities, both here and abroad, and I think they got in over their head financially. Then I think that he felt that there were some ways to cut corners or maneuver to give them a little breathing room financially, things that I think he thought perhaps others in similar positions had probably done with financial institutions; I think he thought he could take some steps there that would not create any circumstances that were not redeemable and I think he availed himself of several options that federal investigators and eventually the U. S. Attorney found to be not kosher.

DePue: Again, both you, and he in particular, have explained the details of that and I'm sure, in his case excruciating detail, because it had to be painful and cathartic for him to do that.

Pensoneau: I have a very detailed, carefully constructed breakdown of the actual charges in my book.

DePue: Let's finish with a couple of broader questions for you. Of course, we're talking just a couple months beyond the point in time with Rod Blagojevich's governorship where some would say he basically destroyed himself. There are lot of people who would jump to the point of making comparisons between Walker and Blagojevich. Comparisons because both men had a horrendous relationship with the press. Maybe I'm overstating that, but I don't think by much.

Pensoneau: I don't believe you are.

DePue: Both men had a very poor relationship with the legislature and in the case of both, it wasn't with the opposing party, it was with their own party, even to the extent that both men had lieutenant governors they didn't bother to talk to (laughs) and associate with.

Pensoneau: Yes.

DePue: So, having made all those comparisons between the two, your reaction to that.

Pensoneau: What can I add? (laughs) You've stolen my thunder. (laughs) And you've done it very well, Mark. Yeah, an interesting thing, after Blagojevich.

DePue: Do you think that's an unfair comparison?

Pensonseau: Well, okay, first of all, taking it a step further, Blagojevich – I don't know – did some things that were, if the word outlandish doesn't apply, I'm not sure what word does apply, but, I mean, he did things that just were completely out of left field and almost ridiculously so. I mean, he seemingly just lost touch with reality. What can I say except to invoke the old trite analogy: when they created him they threw the mold away. I mean, you know, he's totally enigmatic. Walker was not, was nothing in terms of unpredictability. Blagojevich was miles beyond Walker. I mean, Walker might have seen, might have taken, instigated, taken some unusual turns in his day, but nothing to compare with Blagojevich. And neither Walker nor any other governor in my time has sought to exploit gubernatorial power the way Blagojevich did with apparently little sincerity about a lot of it. I mean, the repeated summoning of the legislators back to Springfield for special sessions to the point where Speaker Madigan and other leaders were just kind of ignoring it. They weren't taking it seriously anymore, you know. Just one of many examples.

But here's an anecdote on that. Blagojevich gets elected governor. He's been in office about a year. People are starting to draw comparisons as you just said, accurately; they're saying he certainly brings back some memories of Dan Walker. Okay. So, anyway, Walker in one of his phone calls to me after Blagojevich is in for about a year, says, "What do you think about our new governor now?" And I say, "Well, he's kind of tough to follow. You know, I'm still the coal industry guy. I've had my ups and downs here in this first year in dealing with him and his people." Walker said, "What I want to know is, what are they saying about him though. I mean, people are talking about him, aren't they? They're saying things." There was a silence, and I said, "Well, Dan, do you want to know?" "Yes, that's what I'm asking you." "Well, Dan, they're comparing him to you." (both laugh) And then there was this silence; I've had three or four seconds to laugh, and then came this reply, "How is that?" (both laugh) You can, and listeners [and readers]

can fill in the rest of the blanks. I got into the press thing and so on – the press thing, the encounters with the General Assembly, the usual things that you just mentioned. Walker just listened silently, but basically, "Oh, I see. I see." But that was about all. I thought it was interesting, though.

DePue: He didn't have a strong negative reaction?

Pensoneau: He said, "Well, what do they say." Well, his tone was quite sharp when he said, "How's that?" And I could tell by the tone of his voice he was not enamored with my comment. Okay? But he pressed me and I told him what people were saying, you know, and they were. But Walker, certainly, did not operate in the extreme realm that Blagojevich did. I mean, I have to say that. I mean everything about Blagojevich defied conventionality. I mean Walker did live in the mansion. You know, if Walker was going to appear at a ceremony or bill signing or something, he was on time, as were other governors like Jim Edgar and so on. Blagojevich may keep you waiting three or four hours.

DePue: Do you think then, when you were reporting on Walker, and today, having known him for many years that you ever questioned his sincerity in what he was trying to do in Illinois government?

Pensoneau: You say would I have questioned his sincerity?

DePue: Yeah.

Pensoneau; I thought back then to when Walker was governor and he came in; I thought he was sincere. And I'll tell you, I wrote my share of critical stories. Several times Walker himself reacted. More often deGrazia reacted. But I have to say this, that I was sorry to see Walker lose in the '76 primary, personally. I've expressed my personal feelings. I mean, I tried to write things as straight as I could. I sure tried. But personally, at that point, I had actually come to appreciate Walker, many things about Walker, and I was sorry. I thought, I really in spite of all we've talked about, I thought we were taking a step backwards politically when Howlett beat Walker in the primary. I have to say that. That was my personal feeling at the time. I was saddened by it, you know. I had a job to do, but I was saddened. It was kind of funny then.

Of course, the primaries and all, it was either late winter or early spring, and then that summer, in '76 we had the Democratic convention which was in New York City. I was part of the *Post-Dispatch* team covering that. Well, Walker, in 1972, had never gone to Miami Beach. He didn't go down there. He stayed in Illinois and kept up campaigning for the governorship. In '76, of course, he was a lame duck governor by that time. He went to New York and I guess the luster was off Walker nationally because there was very little attention paid to him. He was still Governor of Illinois, but he wasn't getting any kind of special attention. I remember I spent almost one whole day

with him. Parts of the convention were kind of boring because everybody knew Jimmy Carter was going to be the nominee; that was pre-ordained before we got to New York City.

What I did one day – I don't know how it happened – in the morning, I met up with Walker and Walker was going to make different visits during the day to different state delegations. I wasn't sure why, but he was. Good will calls, he called them. I didn't know for what; I don't recall the exact purpose. But he asked me to join him and I did. I spent a good part of the day with him. Basically we were just walking or hopping in cabs together. I don't think there was a state cop there. He's still the sitting Governor of Illinois. I don't recall a cop, any state police with us. I don't recall. I remember we were just talking freely back and forth. I was still the *Post-Dispatch* guy, he was Governor of Illinois, but it was just kind of very… it was different. It was like a couple of guys who were friendly with each other just making the rounds. And I remember – I just remember that day. We were talking about things and he was complimentary of Carter; he was glad to see a governor getting the nomination and so on. I'm sure I made remarks like, "Well, if things had turned out differently for you, Governor you might have been the one accepting the nomination here. If not now, some year." And I think his reply was, "Well, it was nice of you to say that, but that's not going to happen." Stuff like that. But I remember that day. We were hopping some cabs together and get out, and he kind of wanted me with him. There was no one else. I don't recall exactly, he spoke to some of the delegations in caucus rooms or whatever in some hotels and so on.

DePue: I'm not surprised. We've been at this quite a while. There's a lot to talk about when you talk about somebody as interesting as Dan Walker.

Pensoneau: Absolutely.

DePue: Do you have any final comments before we close today? Because I'd like to start next time to get into another exciting (both chuckle) political personality, and that's Jim Thompson.

Pensoneau: Absolutely. Sure. I think we've gone on record with an awful lot about Dan Walker. I just simply say there's so much that Walker brings to the table in terms of political interest that I don't know when we'll see his likes again, at least in our lifetime.

DePue: You quoted Toby Olszewski

Pensoneau: That was one of his campaign gals, yeah.

DePue: She said about him that he undid the traditional party patronage stuff. He opened the political door to a whole new legion of people. "Let's face it," she said, "The political parties have just not been the same since Walker."

Pensoneau; That's absolutely right. Good analysis, Toby. (both laugh) I remember the conversation with her over the telephone. Yeah, I always said he turned, at least politically, Illinois government upside down, and I agree. The parties never were the same. Of course, not long after the '76 election was over, Thompson easily defeated Howlett who in no way had his heart in the general election campaign. It was only, I think, the following month then that Daley died, and that really completed the Walker era. I mean, that was the real climax, and that signified a complete upheaval of the old order.

DePue: Okay. That's very important to bring out. So you've got Ogilvie who changes, forever after the way Illinois governance works.

Pensoneau: Absolutely.

DePue: And Dan Walker and the demise of Daley as you just pointed out.

Pensoneau: Right.

DePue: And that changes Illinois politics.

Pensoneau: Absolutely. Absolutely. I was a lucky guy to get to be in the pressroom during certainly the Ogilvie and Walker years. I was one of these people you meet in life who was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time.

DePue: Probably a good way to finish for the day. Thanks very much Taylor. It's another fascinating excursion with Jim Thompson and Jim Edgar that I'm sure will be a little different.

Pensoneau: (laughs)

(End of interview #6 Go to Volume II)