

M: We are going to talk about a bunch of names you wrote on a napkin at a party recently to begin a series of interviews about journalists in the civil rights era. How did you come to meet all these people? Many of these experiences and jobs at these newspapers came after you started teaching. Let us talk about how you got into doing summer work.

D: I was with the Florida Times-Union for five years as a beginning journalist. I will not talk much about the Times-Union because I think it lacked the tone, vigor, and romance of journalism. Even though I was at the state capitol for four of those years, it was essentially a gutless newspaper.

M: Why are you speaking in the past tense?

D: I do not read it anymore. [Laughter]. Even though I was with [the newspaper] for five years, I do not spend much time talking [about] it. What I am more apt to talk about is the Atlanta Constitution which sharply contrasted with the Florida Times-Union. I was only with the Atlanta Constitution two summers. Those were the summers of 1959 and 1960. I was also with the Miami Herald in the summers of 1961 and 1966. The reason, I think, that you know those is that the quality of journalism was so superior. The events were so exciting and the people you were dealing with were superior.

When I was at the Constitution those two summers, Ralph [Emerson] McGill [1898-1969, American journalist] was writing his almost-daily column. He was reported to turn these things out in series--three, four, or five at a time--and take off the rest of the time. He was called editor of the Constitution, but actually he did nothing but write the column. They called him Pappy. While I was there he visited the Soviet Union.

I did not know him very well. He was a man of normal stature, and past middle age where he had a little gut on him. He was nothing sensational. He was a very kind and gentle man. He was the type of fellow who came in before he left and said, "Goodbye." When he got back from the Soviet Union he said, "Hello." He walked around the newsroom and shook everybody's hand. That was the kind of fellow he was.

I guess if we look at his columns today they seem awfully tame in regard to race and that issue. I think he had a perception that the South was changing. He could see the tenant shacks being vacated, and blacks leaving for the North. He saw that society really was going to be different. Basically, I think he saw the mechanization of agriculture in the South, the decline of small farms, and the changing culture. That is what I think he saw.

One funny aside was that there were pictures splashed all over the country of him walking down the steps of the journalism school at the University of Georgia. Charlene Hunter Gault was one of the first two blacks to integrate the University of Georgia. The funny story was that it was accidental. He happened to be there for a conference or something, and just met her and walked down the steps with her. Of course, he got the reputation from that of being a big integrationist.

The Constitution had a chief executive over both papers--the Journal and the Constitution--named Jack Tarver. Jack Tarver was the antithesis, as far as I am concerned, of a good newsman. He sat on the budget. He raised hell with things, small things. He protected Richs, Davidson's--the two big advertisers. This was major. These [businesses] took about eight pages at a time. He took care of them.

One of my former students, Jack Kaplan, was assigned to cover a sit-in at Richs. He went over there, and I think he covered a short story. Somebody took a picture of this black sit-in at Richs. Of course when he got back to the Constitution with this, a big decision [had to be made about] the story. They finally decided, Jack said, to carry a little short story about the sit-in [without a] picture. This was the way things like that were thought about. Of course, McGill was a columnist, and was not enthusiastic about this sort of conduct.

There is a funny story about McGill and a fellow he hired to head an editorial page, Eugene Patterson. We will talk about him later. Patterson told me this story. The march at Selma was on; in fact, the march occurred, as I remember, at the crossing of the Edmund Pettis Bridge, and they got clobbered. So there was going to be another march a week later. Martin Luther King was going down there, and they were going to march again. So McGill and Patterson wanted to go. Jack Tarver said no. He would not give them a car. He would not give them money. He said, "We are not going to let you go." So Patterson went to McGill, and said, "Pappy, damn it, let us get on a bus and go anyway." Pappy said, "No. We cannot go against Tarver in that fashion." Of all things, the Constitution did not cover Selma because of Tarver's interference.

Incidentally, Tarver got where he was because he had been a reporter for the Constitution at one time. When Gone With the Wind was premiered in 1939, he wrote the story. I do not remember the name of the little black girl in that movie. His lead said something like this, "When Atlanta fell to Sherman, the only thing running was Butterfly McQueen's nose and the laundry that did Rhett Butler's shirt." That was the lead that supposedly made him so prominent in Atlanta. He ultimately became head of the paper.

It is obvious from that conversation I had no real close contact with McGill except that and the high regard that the newsroom had for him, and the general tone he set for the paper. His column appeared in the front left, front page everyday. It was generally left wing and mostly dealing with race. Incidentally, at one time during this period (not when I was there but I heard about it) they ultimately got on the segregation issue and assigned a guy to it. He put a sign on his desk [which said] "segregation editor."

Eugene Patterson was there when I was there. He used to kneel beside your desk, and believe it or not would say, "I have four more inches for an editorial. Do you have anything for me to write [about] today?" I thought it was appalling. I thought you had to study editorials, not type on the news. He was there during that era. Patterson, as you know, ultimately left that paper. He had a columnist who criticized the Georgia Power Company Corporation. She was told by Tarver to lay off through Patterson. She wrote another one, and Tarver insisted on firing her. So Patterson quit as head of the editorial page.

From there he went to the Washington Post, you remember. He was there for a number of years. While he was there, the Pentagon Papers were published. Patterson has a kind of an ego thing. He left the Post under conditions of which I am not sure. He came down here looking for a berth at a university. What he really wanted to do, I think, was to lecture three graduate students a week and write a book. So they did not hire him here.

M: We have people that do that.

D: Yes, we have people that do that. Anyway, he wanted this magnificent salary to do that. He was not hired. I remember how turned off I was in a way. Some of us took him out for dinner. He said very aggressively, "I am the first editor in the country to ever stop the presses at government order." He was talking about the temporary injunction to stop the publishing of the Pentagon Papers. He tried to sensationalize that quite a bit.

M: Was he interviewing for one of those Gannett visiting professorships?

D: No. We did not have that then. He wanted a berth. From here, he, of course, landed a berth at Duke. They tell me they founded a million-dollar chair up there in his name, which is amazing. He was only there about a year. Nelson Poynter put him on at the St. Petersburg Times, where he ultimately became editor and president, and retired from that position there. He was a good newspaper man, but he was a different personality.

Another person I encountered there was Jack Nelson, who is now with the Los Angeles Times and has been at Washington for years. I guess he is the leading head man in Washington. Nelson made his reputation by exposing the mental facility at Milledgeville, Georgia. I think a doctor tipped him. He went over there and found these horrible conditions. People were slinging feces around. They were doing experimental drugs on these people in really horrible conditions. He exposed that.

At first, the Georgia Medical Association really was mad as hell about it. Then when it turned out to be true and it was so bad, when it came time to nominate for Pulitzer Prizes, the Constitution management nominated itself for public service. The Georgia Medical Society was incensed by that, and nominated Nelson by his name for his own work. The Pulitzer Prize committee gave it to him in his own name. That was going against the company there.

When I was there, they were building this state park thing over at Stone Mountain. Nelson had gone over there and seen these bidets stacked up for the hotel they were building. So he exposed the extravagant construction by the state of that facility over there. I saw him at work. Nelson had the tremendous ability to browbeat on the telephone. I have never seen a guy get away with anything like that before in my life. He could talk those people down like nothing you have ever seen. It just was absolute browbeating on the telephone. You would think you would have to be face to face and pounding on the desk to do this.

M: Were you close enough in the office to hear him?

D: Sure. Sure.

M: What kind of things did he say?

D: "What the hell are you talking about you cannot tell me about that?" "By God, this is an abomination." He would go on and on. He was raising hell with them. He really could browbeat them. The significance of this is this. I looked it up last night. I was there in 1959 and 1960. Ralph McGill had won the Pulitzer Prize in 1959, apparently the spring that I arrived. Jack Nelson got it in the spring of 1960. Gene Patterson won it in 1967. The quality of people and being around such people is a training device. To watch people and how they function, and the guts and some of the ideas they have are very helpful. McGill and Patterson won theirs for editorials. Nelson won his for reporting.

I had one unhappy experience with them. I can understand why it happened because I was a temporary. Nelson got a letter, of all things, by way of the lieutenant governor, from a guy writing from Griffin, Georgia, concerning the blind people

working in the Georgia Factory for the Blind, where they made everything from mattresses to brooms to whatever. Lockheed was producing airplanes. They would drop bolts, nuts, and washers. Blind people were good at sorting it out. They did that by the pound.

Nelson had this letter from this guy, a blind person, saying there were abuses in the Georgia Factory for the Blind at Griffin. Nelson had his plate full, so he gave it to me. I went down there on the way home. I used to drive a Volkswagen. This was before interstates. I would drive every other weekend from Atlanta to Gainesville. Griffin was on the way. I stopped at Griffin and talked to some of these people. One of them was a one-legged guy who could see a little bit. Another was a former truck driver who could not see at all, but his wife could. They were very suspicious. I found out that blind people have a really different culture. They really are suspicious of everybody. I can understand why on the basis of what happened to me.

I sat in this room, a cruddy place with a bare light bulb because light does not mean anything to these people. I tried to get their confidence. They had these general things to say about the manager's daughter stealing funds from their canteen, their Christmas fund. [They] also were harassed. [They had] wet sponges put in their seat where they worked, and nail casks put in their usual path to the john. I went home for the weekend.

Then I went back to work, and I talked to managing editor Bill Fields over it. He said, "Well, you have got to have affidavits." I said, "What? I do not know what the hell you are talking about." He jerked out about six or eight that Nelson had done on Milledgeville. What they did was get these people to swear to these things in case of libel. When they went on the witness stand, they either perjured themselves under that sworn affidavit or on the witness stand. Incidentally, I tried to find all these things for you. I could not find them. I do not know what the hell happened to them. I wish I had kept them because I got some, too.

M: The affidavits from the people at Griffin?

D: Yes. I went down there with a portable typewriter. I tried to get these people to talk. The wife of the man who could not see was driving people in there. They would sit down and I would try to get under their skin a little bit. I would type off what they said. After I got three or four of those, [which by then was] about eleven o'clock, we would get them all together, put them in a car, and drive to a notary public. One night it was a county judge. We got him out in his pajamas, and he would not let us inside. We stood in the anteroom. Since these people were blind and going to sign with an X, I had to read it out loud to the judge.

M: The whole thing?

D: The whole thing. Then I would say, "Even though I do not attest it, I have heard this." They would sign it and the judge would notarize it. One of them, you see, [said] the factory manager and his buddies had gotten two of them to have sexual intercourse together [while others] observed. I had to get that out of two people--a man and a woman. The woman was pretty vocal about it. She was older. She confessed that they offered her five bucks if she would have sex with this guy. They went out in a field and did it with everybody watching. The boy was much younger, and he was kind of reticent. He finally said yes. I got a short statement from him. I thought that was the piece de la resistance. That really would do it. I had all this other stuff too--canteen money, harassment, and this.

I got [the statements] notarized and I carried them to Bill Fields. His reaction was, "We cannot present this to people over their breakfast newspaper." He ticked me off. He said, "Why do you not work on the financial ends, and we will start talking to a state senator about it." I left. That was very disappointing to me. They did not trust me. When I left, I turned it all over to Nelson. About a month later, there was a front-page piece about that factory manager who resigned. It very briefly mentioned some of the abuses.

M: Did all the goods that you had lead to the resignation of the guy?

D: Yes. Apparently, they turned him back over to the governor and forced his resignation. Yes, that is why he resigned. That was a disappointment to me. We talked about Hunter James. Hunter was not an investigative type. He and Nelson were just at completely opposite ends. He was a feature writer, essentially. He came up with these wild ideas. He did some of these things on his own, [which] I have found is a way you get ahead in the business.

One time he undertook what he called a walk from Buckhead. Buckhead is a northern suburb. Everyday he walked so many miles before he got to work, walking from Buckhead and reporting what he saw on that route down Peachtree Street. That was his idea. He did a story on somebody called Honest John, who ran a carnival at Hiawassee State Fair. The thrust of it, of course, was that Honest John was a crook. [Laughter] But you could not say that with libel as it was. So he said it in a more subtle way, which was pretty good.

The story I like is the one I mentioned to you where he and I were supposed to cover Vice-President Richard Nixon, who was campaigning. He was coming to town. Hunter was assigned color. Hunter came up with this idea of interviewing the confetti

makers before Nixon arrived and [finding out] how good business was going to be, and then after, interviewing the people that had to sweep it up.

Until that time, I was teaching [and] all I knew, working for The Florida Times-Union, [was] a paper record. If it was not written down in a minute by the government, it was not news. So to have somebody like Hunter sashay through there with his ideas was quite exciting.

I had one experience on that same story. I was supposed to cover the official reaction from the appearance of Nixon and his speech. I got dressed up. Atlanta, you know, just is nuts about the Civil War. Make a note about that because that is another thing that happened to me. Unlike Florida, Georgia has a past and a history. So I got dressed up. I was going to hobnob with all the Republicans. The Democrats and the governor, I found out, had taken off for Jekyll Island. The Republicans were out in spades--all the bigwigs. I got to the newsroom at about 2 PM, when I was supposed to be there. I was dressed. I had a tie, shirt, coat, and all that.

The city editor that day was a guy named Cal Cox. When I walked in, Cal's eyes lit up like King Kong's. "Buddy!" he said. I said, "I am ready to go." They were putting Interstate 75 through Atlanta right behind Grady Memorial Hospital. He said, "The bulldozers have just uncovered a cache of Civil War stuff down where they are digging the expressway. Get down there!" Here I was decked out. I was going to be a big shot that day.

I got in the car and I went down there. I stripped my coat and tie off, and I rolled up my britches to about my knees. I got in that muck down there. A bulldozer hit what was probably at one time a well made out of crossties. They knocked the top off it, and a man was down there up to his waist in mud bringing out swords, Brown's pikes (we called them Brown after Governor [Joseph Emerson] Brown [1821-1894, governor of Georgia, 1858-1866] of Georgia), cannonballs, harnesses--all this Civil War junk. It apparently had been thrown in there when the Confederates left Atlanta or when Sherman abandoned Atlanta. I got about four cannonballs. I have two in there now. At about that time, here came the state archivist saying, "Boys, put it back! Do not take this stuff." Everybody was grabbing this stuff.

I got a few cannonballs and I got the facts. I trudged back to the paper. I was pooped. I really was pooped. I wrote the story, and turned it in at the six o'clock deadline. I started to go get something to eat. Cal said, "Where is the story about the Republicans?" [Laughter] I came back after eating something, and I started trying to get those Republicans, who were drunk by that time. I started calling around and found them at these hotel ballrooms. I dialed the main desk and asked for somebody. They would say, "Well, he is in the ballroom." I said, "Give me the

ballroom." The minute they picked up the phone [you would hear] da-da-da-da--all this damn music. "Hello," some nut would say. Finally, I would get this drunk on the phone and ask him about his reaction to the visit from Nixon. I would get some asinine statement and write it up. If you read the Constitution for that day, I have bylines all across the front because the Civil War thing really was bigger than the Nixon thing. The way they play these things was really something.

I had one experience with the Civil War, while we are on that topic, that was kind of unbelievable. I had a friend named Ovid Futch. He has a book out. You can read it. [It is] called History of Andersonville Prison [Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1968]. It was his doctoral thesis. He is dead. He died at a very early age of about forty. He and I were in high school together. Knowing Ovid is a long story, I will not go into that. We were in high school together. He got degrees mainly because of me. When I first saw Ovid after World War II he was snaking logs out of the forest for a wood company. He wanted to know about going to the university. I had just graduated with a baccalaureate of arts degree. I said, "Hell, you can fool those guys into going to school. Do not worry about it." So he came over here and got a couple of degrees.

I was driving in Atlanta one of those summers, 1959 or 1960. There was Ovid gassing up his car. I stopped and said, "What the hell are you doing?" He said, "I am getting my doctorate under Bell I. Wiley." We talked. I said, "What are you writing on?" He said, "I am writing on Andersonville." It was a Civil War prison. I said, "Ovid, how far along [are you]?" He said, "I have got it in manuscript form." I said, "Why do you not let me have it, and I will do a series on it." I had learned how to do series up there. That is another story almost.

I took Ovid's doctorate thesis and wrote a series. Of course, you do not start a series until you finish it, in other words. I have seen people do other than that, and that is a disaster. So I finished it. I turned it in, and they thought it was pretty good. They ran a little ear thing [about] the upcoming series on Andersonville.

That one little announcement just set them off. I mean the letters poured in. "Oh God! You are going to crucify us," and all that sort of business. Anyway, the series started on a Sunday. It took almost a whole page of the feature section on Sunday. I looked at it and I thought it was pretty good. I came to work Monday and somebody said, "My God, did you cause us trouble!" I said, "What do you mean?" [They said,] "The photograph." Ovid had given me a bunch of photographs. Some of them were like Buchenwald [site of Nazi concentration camp in East Germany]--it was horrible. You have seen it.

M: I showed that to my class.

D: They had printed a panorama shot of the thing. You could see the dead laying, the pain, and all that. He said, "You know we printed that and stripped it all the way across. We ran about 50,000 copies. We had to stop and remake." I said, "What the hell are you talking about?" Well, I knew because I had read the thesis. They had a creek there. The reason so many people died there was because the creek became contaminated. They had built a sort of bridge across the creek and that was their johnny. In this picture, if you look close, there are about six guys with their rear-ends exposed taking a crap. [Laughter]. They had to take that picture, do it away, and put something else in it. That caused them a lot of [trouble].

M: Did they discover that after the first edition?

D: Yes, after the first run. Somebody said, "Look at these guys. You cannot print that." That happened. Also, while I was there I had kind of interesting conversation regarding Margaret Mitchell [1900-1949, American author, won Pulitzer for her only book, Gone With the Wind, 1936]. I was there during the tenth anniversary of her death. She must have died in 1949 or 1950. I was there on the tenth anniversary. I mentioned to an editor, "You ought to have some kind of a story on the tenth anniversary of her death." He said, "Yes." I picked up the phone and called the library. I said, "Send me what you have got on Margaret Mitchell." This was standard. The guy said, "All ten filing cases?" [Laughter]. She had been one of their revered writers.

So I was doing a story, and I said, "I really ought to see what happened to the guy that ran her down in that taxi." Well, he may have been in a taxi, but he was not on a run. He was going to get drugs for a sick child. His mistake, as I remember it, was he ran her down, got out, and said, "Oh God, I knew I should not have had that beer." That cooked his pie. I knew he had gone to prison for a while. All that was in the records. But where was he? What was he doing? That seemed to be a logical follow-up.

I looked in the phone book and found a guy with that name. I called his home and asked for him. His wife or somebody gave me his work number at a filling station. The thing was, was that really him? Of course, you know this would be a problem if it was not. I just had to confirm he was in Atlanta doing something. So I called the filling station, and I said, "This is Buddy Davis with the Atlanta Constitution. I want to ask you about the tenth anniversary of the death of Margaret Mitchell." He said, "Go to hell," and hung up. I knew it was him. That was all I got out of him. I also met Margaret Mitchell's brother. I went out to the cemetery where she was buried, and he was out there. I met him.

That pretty well sums up the Constitution. What I found out was if you go to an editor and say you want to do a series, or even a story sometimes, they are going to say no, especially to a series. What I found out right away was do [the series], throw it in the basket, and they will run it. For example, I was given a routine assignment to go to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. I went there. I had never been to one of those things before. I was surprised. I thought, "This is ridiculous--running six inches on an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting." I wanted to do a series on it. I met some very interesting people. I met a woman. The lead of one of my [stories] was something [like], "I love liquor. I love it when it goes down, and I love it when it is coming up." That was one lead.

I also met a nice-looking blonde who showed me burns on her stomach, where she fell asleep under alcohol and was burned by cigarettes. She told me how she kept liquor close. She married this guy (I think she had been married three times) who did not know she was an alcoholic. They would go camping out at Lake Lanier. She would have a fifth of liquor in the boot of the car, at least a pint under her cot, and a pint or something smaller in her purse.

He would go down to cast a few down in the lake, and she would take a nip from what was in her purse. If he was still down there, she would fill it from the pint she had under the cot. If he still was down there, she would fill the pint from what she had in the car. In other words, she had a chain of liquor from the car to her mouth. I did a series on alcoholism which I thought was very good. I also did one on juveniles and their mental problems. I do not know much about that, but I did a number of series. I did not ask these people. I found out right away if you ask them, that is that.

M: So these were all enterprises?

D: Yes. The AA thing was covered immediately. I found much of the same thing at the Miami Herald, just to shift a little bit. I saw in the classifieds one time a guy was advertising for models over six feet--you know--big women. I went to the city editor and said, "What about running a story on this?" He tells me, "Oh no, we do not want that. We have done that." So you sit on your can for about a month, and some other staffer writes it and it gets printed. I had that kind of experience all the way.

M: Before we shift gears too much, let me ask you [something]. Looking over your resume, I know you worked five or six years before you began teaching. Why, after you started teaching, did you go back to work at newspapers? Was it your initiative, or was there encouragement?

D: First of all, it was partly financial. The first two summers I taught, I just committed to Starke to put out the weekly Bradford County Telegraph. That was sort of a money thing. In 1958 my stepfather died, and I did not work at all. We were in bad financial straits. It was just not good to not get a check in the summer. However, you could not save any money even working summers. To be quite frank with you, at the Constitution I do not think I was ever paid over seventy-five dollars a week. I had to pay my commuting costs. I had a Volkswagen, and I was coming back and forth. I distinctly remember trying to get on the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. It had such a good historical background. I learned later it was horrible. I tried to get on that paper. I tried to get on several papers.

M: Why the Post-Dispatch?

D: I think that is where Joseph Pulitzer had started out [Joseph Pulitzer II, 1885-1955, editor, publisher, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1912-1955].

M: Yes.

D: I think that is it.

M: It sounds like you would lose money going there.

D: Yes, but I wanted that kind of experience. I learned later it was a sorry newspaper. I tried to get on over there.

M: Was this unusual for professors to work at newspapers then?

D: Well, there were only five or six of us, maybe. Yes, I think it was at that time. There was no economic incentive from the University like they have today. When the college started paying a \$5,000 supplement to get a summer job, I laughed about how many times I did not get anything for that. I guess the first time you do it, it is certainly a mind-blowing experience. You realize it is going to affect your teaching also. It is an in-depth thing. You really start to see, "I have to do more of this." That is the essence of it. I suspect why they did encourage it. They certainly would not discourage it, but there was no economic incentive from the University or anything like that at all.

M: When you applied for this limited full-time job, what was the reaction from the newspaper and the executives who hired you once you got there? I know I remember when I started working that there were very few journalism graduates. A journalism professor seemed such a funny thing.

D: There was some humor about it. They tend to call you "the professor." At every paper, particularly the Miami Herald, there is a smart ass who is going to show you up. The smart ass down there was (I am trying to think of his name). Anybody will admit he was a smart ass. His idea was to show you up. Incidentally, he became a managing editor. They want to blame things on you if there is a mistake. Usually, you break in for a week or two on the desk. If there was a mistake in the headline, they come zooming in there wanting to know, "Davis, how come you did this," even though you did not do it. That was the reaction that they had to these things. The first time at the Atlanta Constitution was fairly easy because I think we had Bill Fields, the managing editor, down here to talk to classes. He probably encouraged it or whatever. After that, if you do it one time, it is easy to go back, which I did in two consecutive summers. The third summer was on the Miami Herald. So I did it three straight summers on that score.

I think I am through talking about that except for a couple of things about how a mind-blowing experience can be one way or another. I mentioned the Pulitzer Prize winners Ralph McGill [1959], Jack Nelson [1960], and Gene Patterson [1967]. I also knew, through the Conference of Editorial Writers, Paul Greenberg, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969 [for editorials, Pine Bluff Commercial, Arkansas]; Ed[win] M. Yoder, who won it in 1979 [for editorials, Washington Star]; and Gene Miller, who won it in 1967 and 1976 [Miami Herald, 1967, local investigative/specialized reporting; 1976, local general/spot news reporting]. If you stay on campus you do not meet people like that. That is the point, I think. We will talk about Miller in a minute. If you stay here on campus, if you stay so provincial, you get shaky. I have seen people on campus who are afraid to venture out. I think it is a great experience to do it. I cannot think right offhand of any more Constitution things, although if I thought hard I probably would.

Incidentally, while I was there Patterson tried to hire me. He said, "Why do you not stay here and write?" I guess he meant on the editorial page. I never pursued it. They were paying me so little. I had enough of Jack Tarver. I knew what he had done. I just did not want to stay around a little tyrant like that. And he was a tyrant, I do not think there was any doubt about it. When you got out on a limb really working with something besides light feature work--if you were working on integration, segregation, or whatever--Tarver could put a clamp on it. I knew they were deadly afraid of Rich's and Davidson's. It was so transparent that that paper depended on those two big department stores.

I am trying to think of another story that Jack Kaplan told me. It goes like this. Kaplan was assigned to cover something for the Constitution. I think it was something as simple as a 4-H presentation Rich's was having for kids, or something like that. He came back with the story, and he turned it in. He was assigned it. They came to him and

said, "We cannot run this." He said, "Why?" They said, "We have decided to give this story to the Journal." It was not that kind of a story. Do you know what I meant? The Journal was the biggest circulation paper, and it had all the ads in it. Rich's wanted to look good in that little story, so they wanted to run it in the Journal.

I had a similar experience where they assigned me to cover a fire. In the Constitution, you could hear the fire alarm. I do not know why, but we heard it. It was knocking-off time on a weekday. There was a big crowd, and there was a building on fire. One fireman was injured slightly. There was a lot of smoke and a lot of people. I wrote about six or eight inches, and they got a picture. It was only important because of the time of day, I think, and the fact that all the people were there. I turned all that stuff in, and they only ran the photograph with a cutline under it. They said, "Write a cutline for this." So I wrote a cutline and that is all. The next day the Journal comes out with a big spread on the fire. The Journal was the favored paper because of the advertising. On another occasion a photographer and I were going out on assignment. Lo and behold, I looked at the highway up there and there was a Chinese junk that was wrecked. [Laughter].

M: [Laughter].

D: Sure enough, I stopped. This guy had bought this junk, and brought it to New Orleans or Pensacola. He was trucking it up to Lake Lanier. He bought it, I think, from China. It was brand new, but it was from China. They had wrecked it, and it was sitting on the dirt. There was another photographer there, and he was disgusted because we lucked up on it. He had a Journal assignment. We were working with the Constitution, and we were going to break the story. He was disgusted. There was some competition, but not that much.

Moving to the Miami Herald. I was on the Constitution the summers of 1959 and 1960. I was on the Miami Herald the summers of 1961 and 1966. There is where I encountered Gene Miller, who got the Pulitzer Prize for reporting in 1967 and 1976. I looked that up yesterday because I knew you were coming. Gene was one of those characters. Gene would take on the news-side administration. He would write a sarcastic memo. He put it on the bulletin board. John McMullen, the managing editor, would come in and take it down. Gene would rewrite the memo and make about fifty copies. Every time it was ripped down, he would put it back up. It would be some memo about office equipment, or something like that. They knew who was doing this. It was not any secret.

The favorite story about Gene is that they moved to the building sometime between 1961 and 1966. It was probably around 1965. Immediately, all the new rules came in about what you could do in the newsroom. Gene already had won the Pulitzer Prize

one time. He looked around, and some of the subeditors had little two drawer filing cabinets that were desk size, neat, pretty, and matching the desk. He asked for one, and they told him he could not have it. So he asked again. They told him he could not have it. He asked again. They told him he could not have it. He asked again. They told him he could not have it. So he brought in an orange crate. [Laughter] He put it down and put his files in it. Of course the next day, he had a filing cabinet. [He had] the kind of personality that I really like--that type of iconoclastic stuff.

I am not too familiar with his 1967 Pulitzer Prize. Apparently, I was there shortly after he won it. It had to do with springing some innocent person from jail. The 1976 Pulitzer Prize I learned something about. He used almost exactly the technique I had used for the Factory of the Blind. I believe the first one involved springing somebody out of jail in Louisiana or that section. It had to do with the fact that when the crime was committed, there was a traffic ticket written for that guy in some town like DeFuniak Springs. He could not have been in two places at the same time. Documenting that, as I remember, so embarrassed the government over there that they gave this guy amnesty and let him go without a new trial, which irritated Gene to no end. That did away with the publicity.

The second case was kind of interesting. I hope I am not confusing these cases. The second case was a death not in the Miami area. Maybe I have it backward. Maybe the second [Pulitzer] was Louisiana. Maybe the first was the Key West case. I do not remember. In one case he was springing somebody from Louisiana, and the other was from Key West.

M: I think the Louisiana one he wrote was "Invitation to a Lynching."

D: I think so. What year was that?

M: I think that was the 1976 one.

D: All right. That was the one he had a hard time with. The 1967 [Pulitzer] was easy because it dealt with somebody in Key West. That was in circulation area. So that was okay. But in 1976, it was the Louisiana case. The Miami Herald did not want to have anything to do with it. It was out of the circulation area; [it was] none of our business and so forth. They told him he could not work on it.

What he did, very simply, was start working after hours, going to work on this thing. His technique, I found out, was very similar to what I did. This was the one where I think the person was arrested in DeFuniak when he was supposed to be in New Orleans or somewhere. He went out getting affidavits. He did it mostly by phone.

He did not have the Miami Herald approval. He did not have travel money. He would call people, and get them to give a statement over the phone. He would write it out, and mail it to them. They would sign it, get it notarized, and send it back to him.

When he got it all together, he called his friend, F[rancis]. Lee Bailey, the lawyer [1933-; partner, Bailey and Broder, New York City, defended Patty Hearst, 1976, O.J. Simpson, 1995]. He would jet down, pick up Miller, carry him over there, file all this stuff, and get him out. He won the Pulitzer Prize that way. The Miami Herald had nothing to do with it. He ran it for a story, and they printed it, but they cannot lay any claim to that thing whatsoever. He did it on his own. He had a very excellent personality, and a good person to rub shoulders with in the business.

M: I am assuming that when the Pulitzer Prize is given, there is a lot of interest from other newspapers. Did he get a lot of offers and feel like saying "the hell with you" to the Herald?

D: I assume so. I would be surprised if he did not. Jim Magee certainly did [James V. Magee, won Pulitzer for local investigative/specialized reporting, 1964, Philadelphia Bulletin, with Albert V. Gaudiosi and Frederick A. Meyer]. His was only a piece of a prize, really. I would assume so. I would assume he just wanted to stay in Miami, kind of like I did in Gainesville. People would say, "You can move up now." I said, "I do not want to go anywhere, the hell with it." I remember when I won the Pulitzer Prize [Gainesville Sun, 1971, editorials]. Jack Harrison said, "This is going to change your life." I told Margie, "I do not want my life changed." We just said, "the hell with it."

Another guy I bumped into at the Miami Herald was a guy named Jim Buchanan, who died this year in the last two or three months. Jim had been arrested by Castro early in the regime and [was] jailed for several days, months, or weeks. As far as I am concerned, that ruined his career. He had this chip on his shoulder from that time onward. It was his claim to fame. He was a pretty good reporter, but he did not measure up to Miller in any way. He just seemed to rest on that notoriety and let it go.

One of the funniest things I dealt with, though, was Janet Reno's father. She is the U.S. Attorney General (appointed in 1991) now. I think this was 1966. For two or three days, maybe more, I fell in with taking his stuff. Janet Reno's father never came to the Miami Herald. He had this little office in the police department. He was more cop than reporter. First of all, you would get a piece of copy sometimes. It was the damndest stuff you had ever seen in your life. It was cryptic. It was little notes. I always thought, "We are going to end up with a libel case with this guy." You just

cannot decipher everything he is saying. You jump to conclusions. I talked with him on the phone once or twice and he would say, "Well so and so got so and so and so and so." I would start to ask him a question. I would say, "When did this crime occur?" He would say, "You can find it in the files." [Laughter] If it was not for the files, we would have been lost with that guy. They kept him on forever and ever and ever. He had been there thirty or forty years in the police department. He never came to the paper; he just did his thing.

M: But he was an employee of the Herald?

D: Yes, sure. He was their police reporter. Another guy I ran into who I admired was a guy named Derek Daniels. He came from the Daniels family in North Carolina. I liked him. He left shortly after 1961, when I was there, to become managing editor for Playboy. That was the kind of guy he was.

M: That was one of the names on the napkin.

D: I do not know how long he lasted with Playboy, but he was one of the city editors when I was there. They had several. I can remember I had not been there more than a day or two. I was sitting on the desk. A guy came up to Derek and said, "We got a cop shooting out in the middle of Hialeah. We do not have any reporters." Derrick looked around, looked at me, and said, "Here is a reporter." [Laughter]

So I got in this car with this photographer. We went to this house. There was a tricycle and little toys for children out front. There was an elderly woman on the living room floor mopping up a big pool of blood. There was a bedroom door with bullet holes through it. We got what we could out of her. Then I said, "I better call and find out what hospital where all this is taking place." I went to the wall phone in the kitchen and there was this bloody handprint on the wall. [Laughter]

What had happened was that there had been a family altercation here. This man had his wife held hostage in the bedroom. A cop came and knocked on the door. Pop, pop, pop--right through the door. The man had shot his wife, himself, and the cop. They were all in the hospital. We went to the hospital next. I thought, "My God I have only been here two days and this is what is happening to me." [Laughter] That was a real experience. I remember I went to the hospital. The hospital public relations man was on contract with the hospital. He was doing an interview for the Miami News first. When the News left, we could go in and get the stuff. That was a funny thing.

The Herald, despite its high quality, does have its oddities. I used to work on Sundays, and that was a dull day. One time I was assigned to go to North Miami and cover the

mouse astronaut. I went out there. This was on the water side, so it was a highfalutin place. The man of the house was a lawyer. He was drunk and hanging on to the bannister. It was a high-class place. The woman was there. They wanted their name in the paper so bad. Their son had taken a big matchbox and tied it to the tail of a kite. He put a white mouse in there and got the kite in the air. He pulled the thing out. The mouse fell out. He had a bandanna parachute. [Laughter]

M: [Laughter] I lived in the Homestead area from 1962 to 1965. It was a real good community in those days. As I understand, Homestead is now basically Miami. We used to consider going to Miami going to the big town. Would you say back then [the Herald] was above-average quality? I was a ten year old. I probably did not have that much of a critical sense.

D: I think the Herald was above-average quality without a doubt. I am talking about a couple of fun things. Anyway, we went out to this house. The wind had died. I am with the photographer. [Laughter] I am running the kite, getting it in the air. The photographer was trying to take a picture of the kid who was pulling the things so the mouse would come out. This was a Miami Herald story. It makes the local page. This was a funny thing about it. We called it a mouse astronaut. They go for this sort of stuff.

There was a time that I read a small ad about auras. They were going to have a meeting dealing with auras--the thing around people. I knew not to spring this on editors much in advance. I waited till after dinner. I said, "We do not have anything to do. Let me run out to this savings and loan association where they are having this meeting." I went out there and believe it or not, there was this couple (one of them had a doctorate) talking about auras. You can see black auras of death, a red for anger, or yellow for this. They went through this rigmarole. There were about forty people there listening to this. I played it absolutely straight. I knew it was a dangerous story legally, but I wrote it and played it absolutely straight.

They thought it was pretty good, so they sent a photographer out there. That guy took a picture of the guy; he had a visual aid of some kind. He took it up so he looked ghostly. They ran the picture. Naturally, this guy's job is in jeopardy. [Laughter] Only a kook is going to do something like that! [Laughter] He talked about suing. Of course at the Herald they do not worry about that at all. Moral rearmament--you do not remember this do you?

M: Moral rearmament?

D: It was a movement sort of like the guy in Clearwater. The guy was a science fiction writer, and he started a so-called religious movement.

M: Oh, L. Ron Hubbard--the scientologist [1911-1986, American religious leader, founded Church of Scientology, 1954].

D: This is like scientology. It preceded scientology. Moral rearmament was much the same type of thing. I was supposed to do a story on it. I went and interviewed this guy. He was very secret; he met me in a hotel. He talked about it and gave me a little literature. So I decided to investigate it. I wanted to do a series on moral rearmament as a secret suspect-type situation. I did it. I turned it in. They just sat on it, and sat on it, and sat on it. I knew the guy who founded it was eighty-something years old. He was going to die sooner or later. Sure enough, he died. I was staying at Hollywood on the beach with no phone. Boy, they wanted so bad to do something with that story. I got back. They pegged his death. They had tried to alter my copy and finally gave it up.

The thing the Miami Herald is very protective of is the tourist industry. When I was there, you dare not satirize it or anything. I tried to satirize it. They had some kind of a grand something or Elks or whatever convention at the beach. We got assigned to cover those things. It was on Sunday, and that convention was ending. I was going to a press conference at a hotel there. So I went up there.

Here were these three television cameras with these hoses all across the place. We were sitting there. It was getting late. The time has passed. A guy ducks in and he says, "He has left the hotel on the beach!" So we wait ten or fifteen minutes. The guy ducks in and says, "He is at the bridge and the causeway now!" Then the guy ducks in about ten minutes [later] and say, "He is downstairs. He will be here." He was talking about the head honcho. Finally, he comes inside. The whole thrust of it is that we love conventions in Miami Beach. Here are these television-types doing all this. So I satirized the damn thing. It never saw the light of day. You had to write something like that absolutely straight about what this guy was doing.

I had a run-in, if you want to call it that, with Barry Goldwater [1909-; American senator, author, Republican senator from Arizona, father of modern conservatism, defeated by LBJ in landslide presidential election, 1964] under similar circumstances while I was there. He was coming in on a plane. I was to meet him. I think he was Sigma Chi, and he was going to address their convention. I got there, and I went down to the tarmac. Boy, you did not do this in the terminal; they had tarmacs. So we got in there. The plane stopped, and all the passengers got off. There was no Barry Goldwater. But then of course, he gets off. He is the last passenger waving up

there for the television cameras. There were three or four of them down there. He waved for the camera, and then he came down for the interview.

I was disgusted. [Laughter] I was disgusted with this thing. There was a Cuban newsman. Every one of those things I ever attended--he was there. He would say with his accent, "Now Mr. Jones, what do you think of Castro and Cuba?" So you always had to wait for that guy to do that. I sat there and watched Barry Goldwater. The Cuban man got his little say in. Then he had to do another voice-level check. The television guys used different microphones. They had voice tune-ups. They do another voice tune-up, and they ask him the same damn question, "What brings you to Miami? How do you like Miami? Have you ever been to Miami before?" Another television station voice test, then another series of questions like that. Another television station voice test and another series of questions. I was standing there disgusted.

Something just had happened between Goldwater and Senator George Smathers [U.S. Senator from Florida, 1951-1969]. I forget what it was. No one was about to discuss anything like that. So when he got through with the television, he started breaking for the limousine where his fraternity brothers had been waiting for him. I am just pump, pump, pump--keeping up with him. So I ask him this touchy question about George Smathers and Cuba. He looked and said, "Do not get snotty, sonny." He got in the car and drives off. [Laughter] He was not about to entertain anything serious.

M: What state, [along] with the Herald, opposed his presidential bill?

D: I have no idea. I do not remember. I really do not remember. That was a funny thing. The only other thing I remember covering of any significance was the Cuban exodus. This was 1961, I am almost sure. What happened after the Cuban overthrow in 1959 and the Bay of Pigs early in 1961, [was that] the U.S. government decided to allow Cubans to flee. They could pay \$17.50 and get aboard a Constellation and fly to Miami. I think the Constellation held about seventy-five people. Everyday there were about 150 Cubans coming. I regularly drew the assignment to go down there and greet those planes. Oddly enough, I did not speak Spanish. So I went with a photographer and an interpreter. We had an interpreter. So it was a kind of a delegation going down there.

I remember interviewing a very beautiful girl in her early twenties. I think she was really a looker. She was on her way to Spain. Castro had already seized her father's rum factory. So she was going to Spain where he had gone back into the rum business. She was complaining like hell because her hacienda in Havana had been taken over. They had built bunks and brought these peasants in to live in this hacienda.

She was horrified. I thought to myself, "He made one family mad, but he sure made a lot of people happy." [Laughter]

Another interview (I will not call it an interview) made a great little story even though I did not have any facts to go with it. I was there and they would come off the plane. You could see them leave the plane. The relatives would be up there waving like mad from the top of the airport terminal. They would have to go through customs. Then you go down there where this mass of people are waiting for these people to come through. I was there, and all of a sudden I heard this great shout. There was this rather heavy-set woman. Just getting through the crowd to get to her was one thing. I got there, and she was hugging this kid. She had a teardrop on her nose. I distinctly remember that. She was hugging this kid. I get my photographer over there, and he got a picture of the teardrop when he got over there. I got the interpreter and said, "What the hell is going on here?" It was a big, big thing. He got there, and started to ask her a question. She said, "De nada, de nada, de nada." She rushed out, got in a taxi, and took off. The interpreter started going around to find out what the hell it was about. The day before, she had gotten on the plane in Cuba with her twelve year old boy. They were [about] to leave when in came one of these Castro types, and took that kid off the plane. He had somebody to bribe him. He had somebody else who wanted a seat. So he pulled the kid out. This woman was peering out the window at her son, and she had left him there. She had been at the airport all day waiting to see if he came on the next plane. He came on the next plane. That was it. That was their thing. I got a good little story out of it. It was a great thing.

I found [that] the Herald was capable of being frivolous upon occasions. They had this position on their local or regional page top right, [and] they always had to have a story there. They wanted the headline so big. I went in there one Sunday, and they plopped this document in front of me that was so thick. It was an annual report of the Dade County Health Department. They just would tell you very plainly, "This is the lead story tomorrow." They do not know what is in it. They do not have the slightest idea what is in it. So you . . .

M: . . . edit the lead.

D: Yes. You have to get a story. You read that damn thing, and you just have to come up with something. There is one more thing worth discussing. This was in 1961. I remember it was 1961 because I remember the old building. They briefly just had announced Ernest Hemingway [1899-1961, American journalist, author] had killed himself. He had a son in Miami going to medical school. I was to talk to him. All of this was by phone--most metropolitan journalism is. He was hunting or fishing. So I had to wait an hour or two. Finally, he returned the call. I said, "You dad has been

found dead. He killed himself with a shotgun." He said, "My dad would never do that." I broke the news to him that his dad had killed himself.

Later, Hemingway's wife (I think it was his third wife) was going from Miami to Cuba to try to settle his land estate down there. She was coming through Miami. I was sent out to the airport. There were a lot of interviews at the airport. I was sent out there to interview her. I hardly knew anybody was around. I felt like this was going to be an exclusive. The minute that plane landed, news people piled out of the woodwork. God, the newsmen were just all over the place. I do not know from where they came.

The thrust of [the interview] was [that] we asked her, "Are you not going to Cuba? Will you not be exploited by Castro?" She said, "Oh no. I am going there to settle an estate." Well, she was exploited. She went down there. Castro had the first Soviet astronaut down there. Castro put her up on the lectern with him and this astronaut. She went down there and she was exploited. I interviewed her briefly.

There were a few interviews; I do not remember them all. I remember the Secretary of the Atomic Energy Commission; I talked to him. I interviewed Albert [Bruce] Sabin [1906-; American biologist] at the airport. It was a good experience working at the Herald.

M: I do not think Mary Hemingway was with it for about fifteen years after he killed himself.

D: Yes. It took a long time. I started writing editorials for the Gainesville Sun in 1962. So the business of leaving to work in the summer took the edge off it. To start with, I think they only paid me \$7.50 per editorial. Anyway, that took the edge off it since I was working in my craft. It is funny. About 1966, I was at the Herald. I guess during my time with the Sun, I had two falling outs. I quit. I think that was one of them in 1966. I was going to the Herald, and I was not going to write editorials for the Sun. The Sun could not get anybody decent to write that cheap. They still wanted me.

I remember one time when I quit I ran into Jack [John R.] Harrison, who was running the thing. His father-in-law, who bought it, was Gardner Cowles [1903-1985, "Mike," American publisher, founded Look magazine, 1937; Chairman, Cowles Communications, Inc.], of Cowles Communication. I ran into him at a civic meeting, and Jack begged me to come back to write. This was the way it usually worked. So I said, "Okay, Jack. You have been paying me \$7.50. I will go to work for you for \$10.00." [Laughter] That is the way it worked.

Anyway, in 1966 I had quit writing. I guess I just got mad and quit. So I went to the Herald. I had rented an apartment within walking distance of the Herald. It had a swimming pool. My hours were always two o'clock to eleven o'clock, or three o'clock to midnight--horrible hours on all these papers. On weekends you took the bitchy shifts. I began to get this pleading from Jack Harrison to write editorials for him. He was sending me clippings and saying, "What are we going to do about this?" I fell into an unbelievable schedule of going to work for the Herald at two o'clock in the afternoon, working till eleven o'clock. Then [I would] go home and read the newspapers, get up, scan the newspapers again, write an editorial, put it the mail, go to work for the Miami Herald, knock off, read the newspapers, get up in the morning, [and] write editorials. It was a horrendous thing.

M: Was the Herald aware of it?

D: No. No. I would not dare tell them that. The interesting thing about it is if you look close you will see that Jack Harrison won the Pulitzer Prize that summer [1965, Gainesville Daily Sun]. He got on public or poor housing, and he was running editorials with photographs of this crappy housing. He won the Pulitzer Prize in my absence. Everybody thinks I did it for him, but I had nothing to do with it.

M: Had you written editorials at the Bradford County Telegraph?

D: I am tempted to say yes without recalling anything specific. I remember writing one that was cited. It had something to do with debt. It had something to do with a railroad that did not want debt. I pointed out that if you look at the railroad under structure, it is apt to say on there Hanover Bank of New York or whatever. All of those things were built with borrowed money. I remember writing that column, and it was widely reprinted in the country press and in Florida. That is the only thing I remember.

I meant to mention this. I told Ralph Lowenstein [dean of the College of Journalism, 1976-1994] the other day before Gene Matthews dies--he must be in his 90s now--[that] he [would be] a great topic for one of your historical journals and theses. I worked for him when I was in college; I wrote features. He donated all his papers to the University of Florida. So I wrote his ten, twenty, and thirty years ago columns. In the summer I got married, 1948, I put out the paper.

He left under the orders of his doctor. He went to Odlund's Island, which you can only get to on the Suwannee River by boat so he could get away from us. I put out the paper in 1948. I worked for him for the summers of 1955 and 1956. I put out the paper mostly during that period.

Gene was a good person to learn a little bit about journalism from because he was a graduate of VMI [Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia] first, and the Columbia School of Journalism. He took over that paper. He graduated before this, but he took over that paper about 1933. So getting a college education from Columbia in journalism prior to that was quite an accomplishment. His father, E.S. Matthews was a banker who owned the paper, and later a member of the Florida Railroad Commission which governed shipping rates and so forth. I think Gene Matthews paid his dad \$2,000 or \$3,000 for the Bradford County Telegraph. It had been published since 1879, and was the oldest paper in Florida published under the same masthead. There had been some [that were] older, but they changed titles and merged or whatever. So I was over there one year, and I guess it was 1954-- Adlai Stevenson [1900-1965, American diplomat, politician; United Nations ambassador, 1961-1965; lost to Eisenhower in 1952, 1956 presidential elections]-- right?

M: 1956.

D: Okay. That seems pretty close. I was there 1955 and 1956. Gene got worried because he wanted to endorse Adlai Stevenson, and frankly, that was not Adlai Stevenson territory. Adlai Stevenson had a divorce, a hole in his shoe, and a sense of humor. Gene was worried about that. So he left one day (I distinctly remember this) to come to the University of Florida where his files had been for years just to see the political record of the Bradford County Telegraph. He came back, and he was just grinning because he was just so happy. That paper had never endorsed anybody but Democrats since 1879. He was happy. That gave him something on [which] to peg his endorsement. He endorsed Stevenson. I think he was a good person to learn from, although, like most rural journalists he was tied to the commercial thing. He had been secretary of the chamber of commerce, and maybe president. He had been president of the Rotary Club. He was totally in the power structure. He did the best he could.

I will tell you a story I thought was very interesting. I was there one time (I presume it was in the 1950s) ragged and working, and this little black guy came in. His name was Jenkins. He was very bashful and very apologetic. He said he would like to talk to somebody. Gene was not there, so he talked to me. He had retired in the last week or so as principal of the black high school. He said, more or less, "I have got something I want to show you." So we got in my car, and we went out to the black school. It was totally segregated in that day and time.

What they had done out there was apparently had a building that was a black school. As the school expanded, they just got these old barrack buildings from Camp Blanding and attached them to it kind of like a stalk. The middle room had no windows, just a

bare light bulb. That was a school house. He carried me out to the johns, the toilets. There was a four-holer over here for girls, and four-holer for boys. About 500 feet over the main road was sewer. They just had outdoor toilets. He thought that was horrible, and I thought it was pretty horrible, too.

Gene operated with a polaroid camera, and he sent away for the cuts. So I was snapping pictures like mad--snap, snap, snap--the john for the girls, the john for the boys, dirty holes, flies. I got those pictures back, and I took them out and laid them out. What I envisioned was a Life Magazine-style layout, double truck. I was going to win the Pulitzer Prize that week. I said, "Gene, I want you to come see this." Gene walked in there slowly and said, "Well if we run that, the whole town is going to call us nigra lovers." They had a funny way of pronouncing negro.

I wrote a column about this once and made a mistake. I said, "Nigger." Gene said, "You never say nigger." That is probably true; you would not do it.

My face fell, and Gene said, "Why do you not take these down and show them to Harmon?" That was Harmon Morgan, the county school superintendent. I gathered the photographs down there, and I went to Harmon. I laid them out on his desk and I said, "This is what your black school looks like." Incidentally, this was just about 1948 when I got married. They had a brick school out there by the middle of the 1950s. Harmon looked at this and he said, "Well, we will have to do something about that." Before I left for the summer, I went by there and they had flush toilets stacked eight feet high around that place. They were going to install toilets in that place. That is the way a country editor has to work.

M: That is a different kind of power of the press, is it not? It does not have to be in print always.

D: Gene could not have printed that and survived. Hell, I would have tried it and been run out of town on a rail. There were other things. I exposed the deputy sheriff (this was terrible in a way) [who] had a rustling conviction dating back to 1928. I was not going to run that at all and did not run it. I went to the sheriff and said, "You better be sure that Fate Brown has his civil rights restored because he is your deputy." We dropped that. Within a year or two, Fate was arrested and convicted in federal court of running interference for moonshine. We had experiences like that. The sheriff did not like me worth a toot. A highway patrolman pulled me off the road one day and warned me the sheriff was going to run me off the road sometime.

Then we had a funny case. This was real funny. There was a big wreck on State Road 100 south of town. Two blacks were killed. They had run off the road and hit a telephone pole about ten feet off the ground. They clipped the pole off and were

killed. I was told that something was awful funny about that. The election was coming up. So I went out there, and all over the field where they had the wreck were pieces of paper. They were marked ballots. These were sample ballots, but they were marked. The funny thing about those sample ballots (this was probably 1956 when the election was coming up) was that all the big offices were ignored. The boxes that were checked in the sample ballots were county commission and that sort of race. I could not figure it out. I started questioning around, and I found out that the local lawyer by the name of Hollis Knight was willing to talk. So I went in there, and I said, "Hollis, what in the hell is the story here?" Hollis was mad as hell. He was so mad. He said, "That god damned Sheriff P.D. Reddish!" He was so mad.

He and P.D. Reddish, the sheriff, sat down the night before and marked these ballots for distribution to the black voters. When Hollis got tired about midnight, he went home. P.D. junked all those ballots, and started marking them the way he wanted them marked. Those were the ballots that were scattered all over the field. I could not get Knight to speak for the record. I do not think the story was ever printed. I do not remember writing it. Those are the kind of little picky relations that go around in a town. It is ridiculous. You will find in the editorials I wrote about Lawtey the "Who is to Speak" [editorial which] came [about] because of P.D. Reddish.

The way that a small town works is this way. P.D. Reddish, the sheriff, is the person who takes care of the black people. He is the one that goes out, and says, "Well Sam, you are beating your wife, but I am not going to carry you to jail tonight. But by God if you do it again, I am going to carry you to jail." Or he catches them drunk. He says, "I am going to let you go tonight, but by God next time . . ." It was that kind of a fatherly relationship.

P.D. Reddish went out to Lawtey, Florida, and registered all the black voters. He got them in his machine, so to speak. What happened (I do not know if P.D. was alive when this happened) was they finally elected a black man. Then you had this business of trying to drive a black man out of office. Somebody did; I do not think P.D. had anything to do with it. This is the way blacks achieved power in the South; the sheriff gave them power or some major local politician did. So that editorial came about because of the activities of P.D. in Lawtey. He was kind of a boss--a county boss.

M: Let me ask you about editorial writing in general. When you started working at the Sun in 1962 after the stints at Atlanta and Miami, why [did you choose to write] editorials? If you had not done a lot in Bradford County, why was that attractive?

D: It started as a complete, sheer fluke. I have written columns. I wrote a Sunday column for the Times-Union for four years. The Times-Union hardly qualified as [opinion writing though,] because they do not allow opinions there. At least that sort of summary [and] research I had done before. I [started] writing editorials for the Gainesville Sun. I was on vacation, and I remember learning about the Sun. I do not know how, but I guess I read the paper or something. I was in Cherokee, North Carolina. I guess I ran across a little news item that the Sun had been acquired by Cowles Communication. It did not have any particular meaning to me.

I came back to teach, and that was 1962, probably in the summer. I came back to teach, and Jack Harrison, who was Gardner Cowles' son-in law, the head of Cowles Communication, had a little luncheon for journalism faculty. Hugh Cunningham had been writing editorials for the old paper owned by the Peppers. In fact, I had written one or two that requested public service-type stuff for United Way or whatever. I had fiddled with it. They had printed it, but it was a sorry newspaper. Most of the editorials were canned. Hugh had been writing a few for them. Hugh told me in advance of the luncheon, "These people are more in philosophy with you than they are with me." He invited us to write an editorial. I tried one, and it was printed. That was kind of nice. He said he paid for them. I wrote another one, and it was printed. I wrote another, and it was printed.

Then a phenomenal thing happened. State Senator Bill Shands, after whom Shands Hospital is named, owned hunks of property in Gainesville. He was the prime mover. In fact, I covered the legislature where he got through the first five million dollars to finance Shands Hospital. He made a speech against a state income tax or for a larger sales tax. We had a sales tax. I do not remember the thrust of the speech, but it was from some rural area like High Springs or Archer. He made a speech in favor of more regressive taxation, whatever it was. Well, do not forget I had been around for a long time. I had covered it when he ran for governor, probably in 1952 or somewhere along there. I had covered the speech where he was for a state income tax.

I wrote an editorial saying, "The senator says this today, but now here is what he said a few years ago." I turned it out, and I did not think much about it. My God, I did not have any close connection with the Sun, but they printed it. Nobody said anything. By God, I picked up the paper one day and there was a statement by Senator Shands denying that, saying he had never said that in his life. Well my God, I could see my reputation as a journalist shot. This was going to shoot me out of the plain blue sky.

Believe it or not, my wife had kept clippings. I went through those books. Flipping through it, I found this piece that was published in the Florida Times-Union where Senator Shands had made this speech. I got nervous. This was before Xerox. I went

down and shot a photograph of that thing, and ran off copies of it so if I had a fire over here I would have a copy of it. I wrote an editorial and I burnt his tail up. I gave the edition and the page, but he never reversed himself. I never heard another peep out of Senator Shands. That put me in.

M: The editorial writing camp?

D: Yes, after that there was not much doubt. It was pretty well-documented. I do not know what would have happened if I had not kept that clipping. I would have been cut out without a doubt. I would have been so humiliated if I had not had any access to that sort of thing. From that time on I said, "These people got guts. These people are different from the Peppers. These people are not afraid to take on the hard stuff." What you are looking at is a series of editorials that won the Sidney Hillman Award and the Sigma Delta Chi Award. The Shands thing preceded that by about six months, three months, or whatever. I think that is what gave me the guts to do some things. They had a lot of cancellations because of those editorials. The fact that they stood behind me in that very critical Shands thing showed me these people are different. I had my troubles with them before it was over. Harrison was the problem.

M: He was the problem?

D: He was the problem. Ultimately, he was the problem. The time I won the Pulitzer Prize, they were paying me \$17.50 per editorial. If I went over ten or twelve [a month] I got twenty-two dollars. I do not know why. The point is that Harrison was the one who was more apt to buckle under pressure--not about race, but about business.

One time, I undertook the promoting [of] the state income tax. I wrote about it and wrote about it. Harrison asked me to come in for a conference. I went down there. This is one time I quit. I went in there, and I sat there at the desk. Behind him was this framed picture of his father-in-law, Gardner Cowles. Jack was very nervous, and he was popping Tums or something. He said, "Mr. Cowles says that we have to quit on this thing. We are being too anti-business." They were paying probably \$8.50 or \$10.50 per editorial. I said, "Jack, you married into the family. You have got to cleave to it. I am not married to him. The hell with it. I am walking out." So I left.

Then, of course, a month or two later, he was pleading for me to write more editorials. We had another run-in, incidentally, with Senator [Edward J.] Gurney [1914-, U.S. Senator from Florida, 1969-1975]. I was not unreasonable. We stayed Senator Gurney's back all the time. He was a reactionary. One day he called and had Gardner Cowles over for lunch. When they were through, he pulled out three, four, or five editorials. They had been in his pocket so long they were creased and torn.

He laid them out and he said, "This is kind of being unfair." That was conveyed to me through Jack Harrison or Ed Johnson (I do not know which). I kind of agreed with him. I said, "Okay, we will say something nice about Senator Gurney." So I bounced it off a little bit. I did not come off him. I just said something nice about him once in a while so he could not say we always were against him, which was a technique we used with editorials anyway.

Incidentally, speaking of Gardner Cowles, I have to tell you a couple of other things. I was invited to judge a Scripps-Howard editorial contest. Maybe it was just a newspaper contest. I was invited to judge this thing. I accepted because it looked like [I would get] a trip to New York. Lo and behold, another member of the committee was John S[hivley]. Knight [1894-1981, American newspaper publisher, founder, longtime editor, Knight-Ridder newspaper empire; won Pulitzer for column, "Editor's Notebook," 1968] and Jack Harrison, the same man we are talking about, the son-in-law of Gardner Cowles. I drove down to where Jack lived in Lakeland. He had left the Sun and went to Lakeland at that time. I got in the car with Jack and we drove down. That was where he told me one of his stories about these two press lords, Gardner Cowles and John S. Knight.

These old boogers were sitting down there overlooking the Atlantic Ocean in their condos or whatever. John S. Knight just had amalgamated the Knight newspaper chain with the Ridder family [Bernard Herman Ridder, 1883-1975, American newspaper publisher]. John S. Knight did not need much money, so he did not declare many dividends. He just sunk money into the newspapers. The Ridders were accustomed to sucking off these papers, and they insisted on doing this. So now John S. Knight was with the Ridders, and he had to declare these big dividends. He did not like it. They were sitting there drinking their sherry overlooking the ocean and John S. Knight said to Gardner (they called him Mike, Mike Cowles), "You know Mike, damn these Ridders. These dividends--I had to take eight million dollars last year. You know what the taxes are on eight million dollars!" Gardner Cowles reached over, petted him on the knee, and said, "There, there, there." Harrison told me that story.

But when I was up there with old man Knight for three days, he already had read these papers and marked them up a little bit. We had to go in his office. The funny thing about it was that we were told to be there about 9: 00. So we got there in the newsroom at 8: 30 AM, and we just were talking to people in the newsroom we knew. I saw his secretary ducking in and out down there. Finally, we went down there on time. She rushed in there. He bawled us out for being thirty minutes late even though we had proof otherwise. We did not whip out our letter, but we had proof otherwise. We had chats with him. Then we would go read the papers. Then

we would go in there and have sandwiches over his desk. We spent every lunch for about three days with John S. Knight.

This was the story he told right out of his mouth. He had only been married a year or so, but I do not know whether it was his second or third wife. He only had been married a year or so to his final wife. He said, "I told her when we were courting to think about marriage." First of all, he took a free ride on the air ship down there. That was where their reception was. They had champagne in the damn air ship. He said, "We were talking about marriage. I told her I got these newspapers. We got to have some kind of agreement before we get married. Would you mind meeting me at my lawyers tomorrow at nine o'clock to chat with the lawyers?" She said, "No John, I would be glad to." He said he got there a little bit early, and he was sitting there with his lawyer. In she came with her lawyer. He said, "You know what? I found out she had more money than I did." [Laughter] She had been married to a General Motors executive or something. She was trying to protect herself. He told this story on himself.

M: I see by the masthead in here that one of the Peppers stayed on as president.

D: He was token.

M: Just a token?

D: Absolutely token.

M: [What about] Pat Cowles?

D: Pat was Gardner's son. He stayed around briefly for awhile, too. Pat went off to run a paper somewhere else. The history of that was that they went to Puerto Rico and founded a successful paper. Then they bought the paper in Fort Pierce. He was in the magazine business. Was it Colliers?

M: I thought it was Look.

D: Okay, he founded that right after the time Look and Life was founded. So he bought Fort Pierce and then, all of a sudden, the next paper he bought was the Gainesville Sun. He began to buy Ocala, Lakeland, and papers of that size and type. The two boys might have worked in Puerto Rico--his son Pat Cowles and Jack. Jack's father was a used car dealer. He put them on the Fort Pierce paper for I do not know how many months to learn the trade. Then he bought the Gainesville Sun and moved here. Ultimately, Pat left. He bought a paper up north near New York, I think. Pat left, and Jack stayed here to run the paper. For a while, to me, Jack was God's gift

to good journalism. Then the old man, once in a while, would clamp down with Gurney and business.

M: It sounds like, from what you said about Gurney, the Sun was more politically powerful than it is now.

D: You mean under Fitzwater?

M: Well yes, I guess all my time here has been under Fitzwater.

D: I used to lecture on this. I was not above experimenting. We had two environmental issues one time. They were both practically identical, except one had a very small thing I did not like. I cannot remember what it was. They were constitutional-type questions. I wrote an editorial endorsing one and not the other. I figured from that, we persuaded something like 2,000 voters. There were a lot of people against something because we endorsed it, but on the other hand, I think we did have a following of about a couple thousand who would vote. I learned so much.

Believe it or not, in the early 1960s in the black section over here they did not have running water. We are talking about northeast [Gainesville]. They had privies and ditches. The ditches were running with the stuff. They had privies and septic tanks. The stuff was running in the ditches. The water was so bad in their wells that the city of Gainesville ran a pipe out there with a faucet and a sign that read free water, so these people could have water. These were third-world conditions out there. We had a very modest bond issue coming up, or maybe for those times it was a lot. It was 1.2 million or something like that. Actually, it was a six million bond issue, and 1.2 million was for that purpose. Everything else was straightforward; paving or whatever that white people would [support]. Incidentally, they broke it into parts so you could reject this 1.2 million. On top of that, at that time you had to be a property owner to vote. You had to register specifically for this election. You talk about democracy.

M: About the failures.

D: It was so damn embarrassing. I wanted this thing to go through--this 1.2 million. They could fraction it or vote against it. Not only that, they had to make a special trip down there to register for it. We do not practice democracy like that anymore. So I wrote an editorial. I thought, "What technique can I use to get these people to endorse that thing?" Finally I hit on it. It was only one line, maybe two. I said, "Where do your food handlers come from?" [Laughter]

M: Get them where they live. [Laughter]

D: Yes, get them where they live--that is where I learned. I used to lecture on this--get them in the pocketbook, get them where they live. I use that as an example of getting them where they live. I imagine that must have been 1962 or 1963. Not in the prize winners, but I always was proud of the way I hit on that.

M: That was a good job. I am kind of curious about the way you talk about the Sun then. It appears that people actually read it.

D: Instead of corporate, you mean.

M: Yes.

D: I think you are right, but I do not know how we got away with it. I think the Sun always did well in regard to quality, photo prizes, this, that, and the other. I think the emphasis was on the product and less on financial. I talk about it sometimes, but new management came in 1987.

M: It was 1987.

D: I think the guy came in here with orders to bottom line and make peace with the so-called business community. You see, we had philosophy. I had a philosophy when I was writing editorials that I would join no organization that was not journalistically oriented. I was active in Sigma Delta Chi, the Society of Professional Journalists. In fact, I was national vice-president for campus chapter affairs for three years. I was active on campus in ODK, the leadership society. I simply refused to join golf clubs, civic clubs, or to be active. Ed Johnson was the same way.

For example, we took on the Gainesville Golf and Country Club for not admitting blacks. If Ed was playing out there, that would be very tough. In fact, I think Bill Ebersole, the publisher, did belong to them for a while. I think he resigned because we raised so much hell with them that it just was not comfortable for him, or he did not think it was right. So we did not want to belong to the power structure. We wanted to be outside of the power structure, and to be free to come in without that.

The philosophy of the current publisher is completely opposite. For example, two years before he came, the Sun had a special for the best letter writers. One time it was a banquet, and another time it was a cheese and wine thing. You pick out fifty or one hundred people. This publisher got here, and I remember he was at the last one, which was a banquet. He was there, but that was the last one. The next thing I heard was that he had a gigantic dinner at the Golf and Country Club for his advertisers.

It is a matter of philosophy of who ought to run a paper, and who ought to have the say of a newspaper. Is the bottom line the guy that sits there and balances the books, or is it the people that have charge of the editorial content? That is what happened to the Sun. I quit writing editorials, I guess, in 1983. I started writing a column in 1983, but the new management came in 1987. From 1987 on, I began to have troubles with the management. I have some memos in there that demonstrate what kind of troubles, if you want to see that.

I think it is an interesting study of management. For example, I wrote a letter to the New York Times earlier this year pointing out that this paper had won no awards compared to--owned by the same group--the paper in Lakeland which won copious awards. Skip Perez is the publisher of the paper in Lakeland. He was a former student of mine. I think it boils down to the philosophical feeling of papers. Skip came up through reporting and editorial writing. He left here because he did not think he would get past me as an editorial writer. I was in his way. He went down there, became editorial writer, then editor, then publisher.

It has to do with the top-down feeling of do we have guts, do we have feeling, a sense of community, independence, or are we going to be scared all of our life? Skip has the guts and the feeling, and this guy does not. That is what it boils down to. So I wrote a letter. I will dig this out if you want to pursue it.

M: I think you may have given me a draft of that, or is that what appeared in Fact?

D: It might have appeared in Fact, but I did write a letter saying, "Look at the difference." It is not just awards, but awards sometimes indicate whether a paper is going against the stream. This paper does not.