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Day, John oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

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Interview with John Day by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Day, John

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

August 18, 2000

Place

Sugarloaf, Maine

ID Number

MOH 215

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Biographical Note

John Day was born in Portland, Maine on May 15, 1941 and grew up in Harrison, Maine. He attended Bridgton High School and the University of Maine at Orono, where he graduated in 1963, majoring in Journalism and Political Science. In 1963 he began working for the *Bangor Daily News*. In 1971 he replaced Kent Ward as BDN correspondent covering the state house in Augusta. In 1978 he was sent to Washington D.C. where he was the first full time Maine reporter to be sent to Washington. He covered Edmund S. Muskie during his tenure as Secretary of State, traveling extensively.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: 1969-1972 presidential campaign; 1976 Senate campaign; 1980-1981 Secretary of State; Canuck letter hoax; Chair of Senate Budget Committee; environmental protection; Vietnam War; Democratic Party in Maine; community history of Harrison, Maine; Maine Indian Lands Claim Suit; John Martin; insight into dynamic of partisan politics; stories about May Craig; General Frank Lowe; SDS group at the University of Maine, Orono in early 1960s; Maine gubernatorial race of 1974; presidential election of 2000; and the anecdote about why Muskie received the committee assignments he received.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: interview with Mr. John Day on August the 18th, the year 2000 at 6015 Penobscot Circle at Sugarloaf, U.S.A. in Maine. And if you would start just by giving me your full name and spelling it for the record.

John Day: Okay, it's John, J-O-H-N, Stuart, S-T-U-A-R-T, Day, D-A-Y.

AL: And where and when were you born?

JD: I was born in Portland, Maine in May 15, 1941.

AL: And did you grow up there?

JD: I grew up, my first recollections were in Harrison, Maine. My folks lived briefly in New Hampshire and moved to Harrison and myself and my brother were both born and raised in Harrison, Maine.

AL: And what was that community like?

JD: It's a small town, it was less than a thousand when I was growing up. It's located, it's very scenic, it's located between two lakes, Crystal Lake and Long Lake, it's on the I think the northwestern end of Long Lake. There used to be a narrow gauge railroad depot there, it was kind of like the end, the end line of a narrow gauge railroad system. The major industry in town was summer camps, there were probably twenty, twenty-five youth camps located either on Long Lake or on Crystal Lake. Growing up in Harrison, both my brother and I, our summer jobs, we were handymen or dishwashers or kitchen help at the summer camps. I probably worked at four of five of them, or five or six of them, and my brother also. And one summer we both worked at the same camp.

AL: Did you get to meet a lot of people from all over working there in the camps?

JD: Well, yes, my father was the barber and he, he went to, around the camps. It turned out that the, Sam Sezak, the athletic director at the University of Maine for many years, his summer

job was at one of the camps, Camp Sequilo, and he was a friend of my dad's so when I went to the University of Maine, you know, Sam Sezak was somebody that knew me. It's interesting, years later when I was covering an event with Kitty Dukakis, it would have been '88, she came to Bangor, and in a speech she was giving at Bangor she had mentioned that the best summer of her life, you know, she remembers from Maine going to Camp Newfoundland. And I, the bell went off because both my brother and I were working at that camp and so afterwards I went up and I mentioned that, you know, I worked at that camp and what year were you there, and she mentioned the year and I said well that was the year that I was working as a handyman at the camp. And she said, "Oh, you worked for George." And I said, "Well yes, I worked for old George." So, you know, in Washington, D.C. people pick up on my accent.

And it's, having a Maine accent is kind of a home court advantage because most people equate Maine to scenic vacations or many, many millions of kids, you know, went to the Maine summer camps before it became kind of a dying industry and they, you know It's surprising the number of people I've run across in Washington, D.C. who spent their summers in Maine camps, and even some of the camps that I know. So, yeah, I think that's one of the very nice things about growing up in a small town like Harrison, Maine, which is small on the map but a lot of people know about it through their youthful, positive, you know. . . . The good times that they had growing up in Maine, they may have gone through there.

I said, my dad was the town barber but he also kind of tried a number of sidelines. He, I know when my uncle came back from WWII he invested some money with my uncle in a mink farm. And for about four years we, you know, on our house, my uncle and my dad and the family, my brother and I, we took care of a herd of, well I don't think you call it a herd, but a brood of a couple of hundred mink. It was one of those kind of fad industries that you never made much money out of it. But his second sideline was just before the commercial television came to Maine. We had about the first TV set in the town and we could get reception from Boston, you know, maybe one out of three nights, if the atmospheric conditions were right, you could see a little bit of the Boston channels. So he correctly assumed that whenever, when Portland, I believe it was WCSH, or I could be wrong about that, the first Portland channel went on the air, that was like forty-five miles away, that everybody was going to want to buy a TV set. So he got an RCA franchise and he made a ton of money I think the first five years that they put a, you know, the Portland TV stations went on the air and everybody had to have a TV set. And then about four years later or ten years later everybody had to have a color TV set so he had an RCA franchise in town and did very well with that, as a sideline to his private business.

His final business, and this came from somebody at one of the camps that had talked to him, had formed a company. I forgot the name of it, it was sort of a, it was a mail order company where you have women, you know, sell the product. You ship them the product and it's kind of hard, it's a model which probably doesn't exist now but back in the late fifties and early sixties and seventies you had a tremendous business before the, you know, the big super, the big shopping malls where everybody could get everything. Back in those days you had to drive, you know, fifty miles to Portland to buy some of these products. And he decided the product would be blankets.

And so he started a mail order business and it was very popular among women who worked in

the factories, the shoe factories and the textile mills, and there are few of those now. But, (*unintelligible phrase*), you had a woman who was a secretary, she would sell a, you know, a blan--, they'd form a club with I think eight members. The women in the factory would pay, you know, a buck a week, a couple bucks a week to the secretary. She'd collect the money and then she'd send in, you know, the order when the money was all collected and my father would ship them a nice blanket. They had a huge selection, you know, quite a big selection. We had a big warehouse at one time, he had about, I don't know, ten peo-, ten women working for him at the peak. And the gimmick for the, the hook was that the secretary, the woman would get two free blankets, you know, for doing all this stuff. And he, at one time he was the largest northern New England distributor for, oh, I want to say Beacon Blankets it may have been. Well, he had Pepperrill and he had Cannon, but I think the other, I could be wrong on this, I think it was Beacon Blankets.

I used to marvel at the fact that he was pumping out so many blankets up in the middle of the boon docks. He had a map up in the, you know, he eventually, you know, did this just full time. He had a map up there and we were shipping blankets out to every state in the country at one time practically, including Alaska. And there were just, it was one of these word of mouth, you know, each one, some of these women would form hundreds of clubs, and we found out that the incentive was that they went into the business themselves. They would like form ten clubs, they got twenty blankets. Well they would resell them; that's where they got their money. And that was, you know, or either that or they had a, you know, their, you know, their houses were just, you know, what does a woman do with a hundred and fifty blankets, something like that I mean. So this was a business that lasted through, oh, the middle seventies.

My dad retired, went to Florida, ended up selling the business, selling the house in Harrison. And it was taken over by a gentleman who kind of ran it for a while and then had a run of bad luck. The, you know, the warehouse burned down and he had some financial problems. So it was a business that was probably going to be doomed anyway by Wal-Mart. I mean, today the concept, you need a blanket you can go to Wal-Mart and, you know, you're not going to go through all of this, you know, razzle dazzle, you know, bookkeeping type things. But it was, I'm sure there are in Maine and in a lot of other states, there are women who, you know, who have heard of Harrison, Maine because of the fact they bought, you know, they had blankets shipped.

Oh, this is another interesting thing, my dad's, every day he would ship out, oh I don't know, maybe a hundred to a hundred and fifty blankets in these boxes. And the volume became so great that the town of Harrison qualified for the next step up in postal service because the volume had gone up so big. But the problem was that just about the time they broke ground for the new post office he shipped, he changed to UPS and that was To this day I think the postmaster in Harrison, Maine kind of resented, you know. He got his new building, he should have been happy about that but he lost. We were, I'm sure we were the largest volume, you know, shipping in Harrison, Maine, so.

AL: What was your dad's name, what is?

JD: My dad's name was Carl Day.

AL: Yeah, okay.

JD: C-A-R-L.

AL: And your mom?

JD: My mom is Virginia, she was the town librarian. There's a little Carnegie Library, it looks like a, you know, a stone, it's all made of masonry stone, it's a very nice little building. And she was, she was one of the librarians there and that was kind of an advantage because I, you know, when a new book came to the library she would bring it home and my brother and I or she would get the first crack at the new books. So, you know, I pretty much had the run of the, you know. I probably read a lot more, you know, growing up in Harrison than I do now because, with the volume of paper and things that you read it's mostly newspapers and magazines. And, you know, the time that you get to just sit down with a, you know, with a book is, is, you know I'm sure I read less books than I did when I was young.

AL: Were books a big part of your home life?

JD: Yes, my mother was very well read. She had a lot of interests, she liked, she liked travel books and history. And I don't remember that much about politics but it was sort of like, she had a lot of, her mother was somebody who traveled a lot and saw a lot of the world. And I guess she, you know, thought that, you know, settling in a little town in Maine, you know, staying with, you know, her family, for whatever, she, that was her sort of vicarious, you know, wanderlust or something. She'd read about places, and during WWII she corresponded with a Scottish woman in Edinburgh. That was just something that, you know, the English and the Americans, I don't know how my mother found this woman but they, I'm sure they had clubs or exchanges and, you know, for fifty years they corresponded.

My brother and I would also correspond with this woman. She had a son who was in the, eventually I think went into the Royal Air Force, and a daughter who married somebody in the military. But my mother always talked about, you know, she wanted to go to Scotland and we, you know, we had a lot of pictures of Edinburgh which is incredibly beautiful. (*Unintelligible phrase*) so eventually when my father's business was going pretty good she would, she went there two or three times, and my dad went over there once with her. And the Scottish woman, Mary Saracin, she was a professional golfer in the 1930s and, very unusual, had played overseas a lot. And she came to Florida to visit my folks I don't know, maybe ten, fifteen years ago.

I think she's probably passed away now. But I always just, you know, it was, it was nice back in the days before television and the Internet and, you know, people used to write letters. That was how you found out about the outside world. Now you just turn on the boob tube and, you know, you can take a virtual tour of Edinburgh. And I've actually gone to web sites for Edinburgh and, you know, got the history of their golf courses and, you can virtually just, you know. I mean there's so much more information, you know, so much easier to do that. But back, back then, back in the late forties, early fifties it was, people wrote letters, that was, sent snapshots.

AL: Now what was your mother's maiden name?

JD: Cutler.

AL: Cutler. And you said her mother was well traveled? Where were they from?

JD: Yeah she was, they were from Brownfield, a little town probably forty miles west of Harrison. That's where both my parents grew up. That was a town that, in 1947 the great fire in Acadia National Park, it was sort of the year that, you know, Maine was just ablaze in forest fires. Well, in 1947 my brother and I were with my father's brother, who still lives in that area. And the fire, the fire totally destroyed Brownfield, I mean virtually every building in the downtown and I, that's one of my earliest memories with my uncle and my brother Dick, Richard, We were in the back seat of the car in the middle of town and we could see fire all around us, houses going. We had tried to, you know, we were helping a friend, they were trying to move their furniture out of his house. And the interesting thing was, they wanted to take it up on a hill to another house that burned down in a previous fire twenty-five years ago and, you know, the theory was it never would (*unintelligible word*), you know, (*unintelligible word*), right. Well it turned out his house was spared. The house that they took all the furniture to was burned down. And so that old, you know, wives tale about, you know, fire not coming to the same place twice is a crock; it did happen then.

AL: When you were growing up did, well did either of your parents have the opportunity to go to college or were you the first?

JD: I was the first, my brother was the second. My mother, I think one of her regrets was that she married fairly young and she didn't go to college. Her mother traveled as a, she kind of scandalized Brownfield. She was, at the age of nineteen she went off with a married military commander, a Navy commander, who took her on a world wide cruise, with a chaperone. And my grandmother went to, you know, Argentina and the Mediterranean. We have all these beautiful pictures of, you know, the Navy commander who never married my grandmother. And my nineteen-year-old grandmother who was a real, you know, very attractive woman. And these places that they visited. My mother I think always, you know, had she not married she would have gone to college and, you know, would have been a much more worldly sort of person. My grandmother, she married at least three times; ran her own restaurant on Park Avenue in New York City right off Central Park.

I remember visiting her in New York and she, one of her beaux was an Argentine band leader. He had his own band, he had his own nightclub and we would, you know, we'd come down from Harrison, Maine on the train and, you know, we would go to this elegant nightclub. And all these people were doing the tango and, you know, it was interesting. But we used to go to New York to visit my mother's mother, you know, just, at least once or twice a year. And actually at one time my brother and I, were still, you know, very young, we knew the New York subway system and we'd just go anywhere we wanted to. We used to stand in front of the Today show, they had the window and they would pan and we would go down there just about, you know, at least once during our trips to New York. And people back home, you know, would say, we saw John and Dick on TV. It was part of the deal, and people did, you know, people did watch that show just to, just to see who was standing out in front of the door.

AL: Now you went, you grew up in Harrison, then you went -?

JD: I grew up in Harrison, I went to Bridgton High School, which is now SAD district Lake Region, went to the University of Maine, graduated in '63.

AL: And what did you major in?

JD: Majored in, well, I don't know if they call it political science but it was history and government I guess. I minored in, well, no, I minored in, I majored in journalism but even though most of my I had a choice at the end of pretty much declaring whether I was a journalism major or a political science major, the credits were about the same. And I ended up I think going down the journalism route because I worked on the *Maine Campus* and had decided that I, you know, I wanted to get into journalism, so. But I did enjoy the history and the political science.

As I mentioned before, John Martin was in the same year as myself at the university, and we also went to grad school together. I worked at the *News* in 1963, I started off at the Machias bureau, Washington County. I was there until, actually the day Kennedy was assassinated was my last day there. I came back to Bangor and I was working on the city desk but at the same time I was taking grad courses in the morning. So I worked kind of a late swing, I'd come in to work around three o'clock on the city desk until around midnight. And I was taking, oh, maybe a half or two thirds grad, graduate school load in political science or history and government. And as I said, John Martin was taking a lot of the same courses I was, that's how I knew him before he actually got into politics.

AL: So you knew him quite well in school?

JD: Well, I wouldn't say quite well, we were in class together. And afterwards, you know, sometimes, you know, we would harken back to, you know, whether either one of us learned anything from these classes. I do vaguely remember we were involved in a polling project involving, you know, a political opinion survey that both he and I worked on together. But he was not somebody that I hung around with, no, I was in a fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon. I think he, I'm not sure, I don't think he was in a fraternity. There were, I think in my graduating class there were four or five hundred students. You pretty much knew most of them either by, you know, you recognized them, you had a rough idea of most of them, where they were from, whether they were from in state or out of state and things like that.

AL: Your paths must have crossed quite a bit in later years, he being a fairly, you know, big political figure for the state of Maine and you being a political reporter. How did, did you continue to develop a relationship?

JD: Oh, we have a strange relationship. Because of the fact that we had gone to college together, and at the time when John went to Augusta the state's legislature was strongly controlled by the Republicans. They'd run the state for, you know, a hundred years with the exception of the Goldwater. There was a two year period with the Goldwater election where

there was a Democrat, Democrats I think controlled maybe both branches but certainly the senate. So John was the young Turk whatever and I was starting in at the *News*. I, after the city desk I covered Bangor city council and Bill Cohen was just a young lawyer running for the city council when I was, when I covered that. I also covered Dow Air Force Base, which was a big deal back in Bangor then.

But in 1971, they sent me to Augusta to replace Kent Ward who was, had become state editor. And so I got involved in politics and John was the Democratic minority leader, the speaker of the house at that time was, oh God, Dave, Dave [sic] [Carl Albert], he was a Washington County, you know, he'd been there for, he'd been running the House of Representatives for at least a decade. And the Republicans ran the senate, Joe Sewall and Ken MacLeod was the senate president, Joe Sewall was the majority leader and John was kind of like, Joe Brennan was the minority leader for the senate, in the senate side, and John was the majority leader in the house side. And I got along great with him.

Tony Buxton, who is now an attorney for Severin Beliveau, was the state party chairman at that time and we were great friends. And John I think got the impression, or got the idea, that because we were buddies and we were about the same age group that I was more inclined towards his generation and his type of politics than I would be Ken MacLeod and Joe Sewall who were kind of older, you know. Probably more money, etcetera, and, which created a bit of a problem because any time I wrote something that he didn't like or was off his message, he took it personally and he thought that, you know, old friend, I'm turning against you. And he, he and I kind of would go at each other.

AL: Clashed, yeah.

JD: Clashed, yeah, I guess that's a good word. I remember one time I was in the well of the house and I was talking to Bonnie, Bonnie Franklin [sic] [Bonnie Post] I guess, who was a woman legislator from Owl's Head. And we were discussing something I'd written that, you know, she was kind of, you know, adding a little to it. I don't think she was disturbed or anything, but we were just discussing a story I wrote. John came over and just sort of stood there taking it in, you know, like that, and started saying well, you know, that story was crap. And he said, "You know, I'm sick of reading that stuff." You know, he said, "Under the constitution of the state of Maine, I could bar you from this building." And that really, I said, "Get out of here." And he says, "I could bar you from this building." And I said, "Well I don't, you could bar me from this building but you don't have the guts to do it, do you John?"

And pretty soon Eddie, God, Eddie Murray [sic] [Frank John Murray] from Bangor (*unintelligible phrase*) and he just loved agitating, they're, you know, a crowd of them are coming down and John and I are going at it. He said, "Well I could." And I said, "Well you won't, will you?" And we were shouting at each other and so it finally it just blowed, you know, it blowed over. I've, at some point in my career, I think I've had probably similar clashes with just about everybody that I've ever covered in politics where there's a point where

I think Reagan or somebody had the phrase with the Russians, you know, they go to every, you know, they sink the sword in until it stops and then they pull it back, you just, it's a testing type

thing, you know. If somebody, if a politician thinks he can browbeat a reporter, you know, they'll try, that's one of the things, you know, just getting angry and seeing how the reporter reacts. I mean some reporters get very cowed and, you know, might say well, I can't offend him, you know, he could do things, he could cut down my access or he could tell people to stop talking to me. Other reporters get, well, I'm not going to be pushed around by this guy and my attitude always was that the politicians needed the press more. There was no one politician who was in a position to, you know, terminate my career or cause me that much grief.

As a matter of fact, there have been a number of times when, you know, something like that happens. It's amazing, the next day the person who was threatening your job is saying let's go out and, you know, let's go out and have dinner or let's have a few beers and let's talk about it. So I, my attitude had always been that, you know, if somebody's mad at me I'll listen to you. I'll probably respect you more if you're going to get in my face and tell me about it, but don't expect to, you know, turn tail and run, you know, let's just settle it, let's just settle it here. And I, John and I have a great relationship. I guess maybe because we're now coming down the home stretch. I mean, the last time I saw John, well no, one of the last times I saw John was at Clinton's appearance in Portland and God, it must have been, no, it would have been in the senate race a couple of years ago, Susan Collins' senate race. Clinton came to the ball park in Portland and -

AL: Yeah, '96, was it '96?

JD: It would have been '98 if it was Collins, though. I think he was coming down for Joe Brennan, yeah, big crowd. And I'm standing there and I'm talking with Dick Spencer and John is, John's They're waiting, the Secret Service is doing the credentials, and John is about, you know, ten or fifteen feet behind us, and he says, "Day, what the hell are you doing here?" He said, "I just want you to know that I told the Secret Service to take you under the stands and beat the crap out of you." And so Dick Spencer and I started chanting, "Term limits, term limits." Which is what I, well actually maybe that came first, (*unintelligible phrase*). We're starting up a chant of term limits because that's what ended John's career as the, as house speaker.

I, you know, we, I actually have a tremendous amount of respect for him, like him, enjoy talking politics with him. But you know, we got a history of twenty years and sometimes, you know, he didn't like what I, some of the things I wrote. And, you know, there were a lot of things he did that, you know, as a citizen of the state of Maine I There were times when I thought that he, you know, he was a great speaker in some respects but, and a lot of times he, he was, you know, he leaned on people too hard and reputation was that he, you know He busted chops a little too much and that resulted in, you know, there wouldn't be a term limits law in the state of Maine probably had not John had twenty years of busting chops and running the House of Representatives. I mean, the perception was these people have been around too long, they're too powerful, you can't get rid of them through the (*unintelligible word*). So we passed this law called term limits which had mostly the, you know, the intended effect of retiring people like John, John Martin as house speaker and Ken MacLeod and Charlie Pray, you know, the leaders.

What it did was it opened up the state of Maine to, it further accelerated the trend towards third

party or independent voters because It's made Angus King's political hand much stronger because Angus deals with sort of like a new class of, you know. These are people who are just feeling their way along when they go to Augusta. The leaderships have only, leaders have only been there a couple of years, you know. It's not like, you know, Governor Longley or Joe Brennan dealing with an entrenched political, savvy political leader like John Martin or Ken MacLeod or Charlie Pray. I mean these people have been around, they've seen it all, they've heard it all, they're not going to be, you know, they're not going to be wined and dined or intimidated by a governor.

And so, you know, Angus King I think has benefited greatly by virtue of the fact that the leadership in Augusta turns over every six years and most of them, you know, most of the leaders down there don't even have that much, you know, that much time.

AL: Do you think there's some negative aspects of that, too, not having that experience and not having people who really can continue with the hist-, you know, know the history and -?

JD: It's hard for me to say because I've been in Washington since seventy, out since '78, and I haven't seen the legislature up close. I kind of liked the old system, I mean there was, there were very clear party identification. You knew where the Republicans were coming from with Joe Sewall and Ken MacLeod and you knew where the Democrats were coming from with Jim Tierney and John Martin and. . . . But on the other hand these guys, they were very strong leaders, I mean, all of them and, but that doesn't mean that they couldn't, you know, they didn't dislike each other. This wasn't Washington and Clinton and the Republicans, I mean these people got along very good. They weren't bosom buddies but there was a lot of what I would call constructive bipartisanship even though both parties, you know, the party, the party leashes were much more noticeable then than they are now.

And that's one of the problems is that you get, you get people flying off, you know, (*unintelligible phrase*). There are no John Martins and Ken MacLeods and Charlie Pray around any more. You can't punish any of these, you know, some guy will come into the legislature thinking, I've been elected by my people, I'm going to do what I want and I'm not going to take orders from any speaker or senate president. I'm going to do what I have to do to get reelected and, you know, and the discipline, you know. . . . I gather from, just from afar is, and talking to people who are around the legislature now, is that you have, you know, just everybody flying off everywhere and tougher to get consensus because, because everybody sort of has their own agenda. And, you know, the differences between the parties now are probably less pronounced than they were back then.

AL: So you went to Washington, D.C. in '78?

JD: Yeah, I covered the legislature from '71 until '78. I went to Washington in the fall of '78. We were, I was the first full time Maine reporter sent to Washington. For years both the Portland newspapers and Bangor had employed a service owned by Don Larabee and before the, Portland had their own correspondent, May Craig, for, back in the Kennedy years. She had retired and died, I want to say early six-, well middle sixties. She was a fan-, you know, a fantastic person, I mean.

AL: Did you, you had opportunity to meet her?

JD: No, I didn't, I never met her.

AL: There are many stories.

JD: Oh, there are many, and I know a little about her through, Donald Larabee's a very good friend of mine. And my next door neigh-, growing up in Harrison one of our next door neighbors was General Frank Lowe who was a very interesting guy. He was the Army officer who Truman sent to Korea to evaluate Douglas MacArthur and it was his confidential report about MacArthur that Truman decided to fire him. And for years he, he was, at one time he was national commander of the American Legion, but there were, in the military, there were mixed feelings about him.

I know there was another colonel in Harrison, retired colonel, who wouldn't speak to General Lowe, who regarded him as a traitor because of, you know, what he did. Well, General Lowe was, and General Lowe's wife were close friends with May Craig and when I went to Washington, General Lowe's wife came down, gave my mother this big box, little strips of columns. I mean, May Craig wrote six columns a week, maybe seven. It was like every day. And so Mrs. Lowe said, you know, John, you know, should have these things and he might be able to do something with it some day.

So I had the big box and every now and then, you know, I would just get in there. And here's this little woman, less than, I think she wasn't even five feet tall. I mean she, she followed Patton's army into Germany, you know, she had a wonderful column about going to Hitler's retreat, the Eagle Nest, and going through the rooms and, with American soldiers and, I mean, God, she was a great writer. And, you know, it just jumped, you know, some stuff doesn't last but, you know, I could sit there all night and just read this stuff. I mean things she did, she went to Korea, she was, I guess she still was, had the most appearances of anybody on Meet the Press. She had the funny hats and she was the one that Kennedy always used to joke around with.

Eventually I mentioned this to Don Larabee who thought at one time he was going to do a book about her. I don't know if he dropped that project but I gave him the box, I don't know, about ten years ago and he deposited it with the National Press Club Library. So as far as I know that's where all of these, these little yellowing columns are and they're little strips of paper.

AL: That would make a wonderful book I would think.

JD: Oh, I know. And there was, about four years ago the, one of the museums, there was an exhibit and I want to say, it was not the National Press Club, it was, it was the. . . . One of the museums in Washington had an exhibit about the early women journalists and she towers above, there were just a few of them, Dorothy Kilgallen, from that era. But the press corps during the, during WWII during the forties and fifties, there were only about four or five women who actually were employed full time writing in the media and May Craig was kind of on the top of the totem pole, or one of the women on top of the totem pole. And Don tells me that, you know,

the news gathering styles, everything has changed so much. He said she would, almost every week she'd cook dinner and invite sources to her house, I mean sometimes with some other women reporters and they would have these little either breakfasts or lunches or dinners and, you know, that's where you got the information, I mean, you know. And now you get E-mail press releases.

But, you know, I think, you know I think, Christ, there could be a movie about her and some of the other early women journalists because it was. . . . I know the, Don said that the *Press Herald* kind of treated her badly. That, you know, she, when she did retire it was like she was never like a, well I don't know. I don't know enough about it to do that, but Don said that she felt kind of like, he felt very bad because he was our correspondent. He was, you know, his service was providing Washington coverage to us and when May Craig retired they basically hired him to, you know, recycle the same stories in the Portland papers.

Well this all worked up until 1978 when Don went to work for the governor, Governor Longley, as Maine's representative in Washington, kind of a lobbyist for the congress. So our managing editor, Marshall Stone, decided that this was a conflict of interest to have an employee of the governor owning the news service providing our Washington coverage. So he basically, you know, I was in Augusta and he said, we'd like to send you to Washington for like three months on a trial basis to see if we can justify having a full time person there. And I said, I, yeah, I had some personal reasons for wanting to go and I was single which, you know, meant they could put me up in a, you know, flop house or whatever and it wouldn't be as expensive.

So we did, it was like three months trial basis. And I later found out Mel indicated that he did not have the approval of the publisher or the owners of the newspapers to do this. He said, "I just want you to go down there and write." You know, good stuff and, you know, sort of prove to them that it's a worthwhile investment because it was a lot of money. And I didn't know that, I, and the other thing that kind of bothered me was that he'd already, you know, two weeks after I'm in Washington he filled my job to Dave Rossin. The late Davis Rossin took over and I was thinking, well if this doesn't work out what the hell are they, you know, what's going to happen to me. I'm going to come back there with my tail between my legs and Dave Rossin covering the State House, which was, that was a great job, I really enjoyed doing that. You know, covering news and also writing, I wrote a column on the weekend and Kent also was, continued to write a column. So I probably, that's probably, I probably worked harder during that three months than I, you know, have in my, most of my career because, you know, if I didn't produce, you know, if it didn't work out then I sort of wondered what, you know, maybe I would have to start looking for another job or something, so.

Anyway, it worked out all right and they, I stayed through, oh, I spent over twenty years. Maine is such a small state that, you know, the players are people you all kind of know. As I said, I, Bill Cohen is somebody that I knew when he first ran for the city council in Bangor. Olympia Snowe, I met her when she was a college student, she was up here skiing with a guy who sold me my house. I bought my house from Olympia's late husband, Peter Snowe. He built and he was, he, you know, he'd just met Olympia. I don't even think, actually they were, he was probably, I think he was dating another person before he started dating. But I can remember meeting Olympia up at the Red Stallion here with Peter. Susan Collins was an intern for Cohen,

you know. John Baldacci is, I knew John's father as former city, mayor of Bangor, and Baldacci's Restaurant was a big political hangout in Bangor. And John says, you know, he remembers first meeting me when he was like eleven years old in the restaurant, so.

Muskie and Smith were the two senators when I started covering politics. Muskie was still in the senate in '78, Margaret Chase Smith had been defeated by Hathaway. But one, in growing up Harrison one of the, I think my first recollection of Muskie is that my father bought the house in Harrison, it's right in the middle of town, from a gentleman named Sam Pitts, who was the biggest land owner, probably the richest man in town. But he was also a big Democratic Party operative and donor to Ed Muskie when he ran for governor. And his daughter, Virginia Pitts, who was in the, she was a, served in the Army during WWII, well she was also Muskie's military advisor, veterans advisor.

And I do recall, I think I must have been, you know, still in grade school getting off the bus and walking, Sam's house, it was basically, it was a little smaller house that was right next to our house that he sold to my dad. And so I remember walking, getting off the bus and walking by and seeing this big guy on a rocking chair on the porch with Sam Pitts. And I went into the house and I was talking to my mother and I said, "Who's that with Sam?" She said, "Well that's the governor." I said, "You're kidding, that's Governor Muskie?" And she says, "Yeah." He's on the porch rocking with, and talking with Virginia and, so, that's got to be back in the fifties I guess.

AL: Yeah, between '55 and '58, '54 and '58. Let me stop right here, I'm going to turn the tape over and we'll continue.

*End of Side A, Tape One
Side B, Tape One*

AL: We are now on side B of the interview with Mr. John Day on August the 18th, the year 2000. And you were talking about first meeting Ed Muskie.

JD: Didn't meet him, I just -

AL: I mean saw, observing him, yeah.

JD: Saw him, observing him, yeah, rocking, rocking on Sam Pitts' porch in a rocking chair.

AL: Now were your, was your family at all politically aware or involved in the -?

JD: Not, not very much. My dad I think has since become a Republican but I don't remember him having any, ever talking that much about politics. My mom, I probably would have guess would be a Democrat. But no, we didn't, we, we, we were not I guess politically active or anything like that, so, it was more like a Red Sox fan I think than involved in politics.

AL: So when do you think, was it after you had started college and taking courses that you realized you had an interest in politics, political things?

JD: I think I had more of an interest in writing.

AL: In writing.

JD: My first, when I was at the University of Maine, I took some tests with my advisor and it's kind of interesting, the Barre personality said, you know, your personality is not suited for journalism. You're probably too much of an introvert, you should do something like be a psychological major and get into research and things like that. Well I tried that for half a semester and I hated it. And he mentioned, "Well, I don't know what else to recommend." He said, "Brooks Hamilton," who was the head of the journalism department, "is looking for students." You know, he had only like eight students in his whole department, "Why don't you go over and talk to him."

So I go over there and talk to him and he basically said, "I see you got pretty good grades." I didn't have great grades but I had, you know, better grades than most of the journalism students, and he said, "You know, we have a problem here is that we, you know, whenever we get a student he's editor of the *Maine Campus* or assistant editor and he flunks out because the work, you know, all the extra work cuts in the studies." He said, "You've got a good enough point average, how would you, would you be interested in working for the *Maine Campus*?" And I said, "Well maybe, yeah." He says, "You know, it pays like five hundred bucks," which was a huge sum of money back in 1963, a semester I believe. And I said, "Well yeah, I guess I probably would." And he said, "Well that's great." He said, "I think, I think, I think we can, you know, you're probably a pretty strong candidate for editor, at a minimum assistant editor." And he says, "Of course, we got to go through the interview process and all this."

So it turned out there was another student there named Jeff Acker who had, who had a lower point average than I, and virtually conceded to me the friggig job. And he said, "You know, I just want you to know that the editor gets to pick the assistant editor." He said, "You know, if, if, I would hope you would consider me for assistant editor." And I said, "Well sure." You know, that, assistant editor was like four hundred bucks or something like that. So, I used to play, at noon time I played basketball with a kid named Jerry Lindsay who was going to be, going for sports editor at the paper. And they had this interview process with professors from other departments and everything.

And so we played basketball, we were all sweaty and I just put on, very casual, and went in, and we thought this was just pro forma. And I see my buddy Jeff is in a suit and tie and he's got a detailed presentation. And I said, "Well I guess I'm not going to be editor of the *Maine Campus*." So I ended up being, you know, assistant editor, (*unintelligible word*) of the editorial page. But, that was, I think that was my first lesson in politics. You can't take anything for granted, and if you don't prepare, you know, you, my point average didn't count for diddly squat when it came to, you know, standing before three or four professors and talking about, you know, your ideas and, you know, whatever. So that was, that was a good lesson and probably, you know, it's not been lost on me over the years.

I, it's kind of interesting, I was, it was just a little before Stephen King, but a lot of the people on

campus. . . . Actually when I was in grad school, also, I guess I was vaguely aware of him through some of my other, this was just the start of Vietnam, it wasn't really kind of big time, but there was a SDS group at the University of Maine. Several of the current employees of the *Bangor News* were sort of like on the periphery of that.

Actually David Bright, who at one time became our, he's no longer at the paper but he was our state editor, he was the frigging head of the, you know, the SDS chapter. And Jeff Strout who was our leisure guy, he was David, he was a good friend of both David and Steve King. And, oh, oh, this kid named, well anyway, they're, that whole generation. I was older than them but I was on campus doing grad school and I had a part time job as editor of the *Maine* alumni magazine and so. . . . Actually I was living in a trailer in Stillwater and I spent more time on the campus of the University of Maine after I graduated from the place than practically I did when I was there.

Where were we here, this was leading up to something which I've forgotten. Oh, when I became politically, interested in politics, yeah, yeah, yeah. I got to say that Vietnam, it was an interesting, you know, I was in ROTC but I didn't, I didn't have any, you know, aptitude for the military, you know, I hated the uniform, I was messy. One of my fraternity brothers came in and saw my closet and I had the uniform and it was kind of like laying in a, you know, laying on the floor. And he came in and he gave me fifteen demerits, you know, for not keeping my uniform, right? I said, "You're my fraternity brother. What is this?" I'm sending it out to the laundry, and I mean, Christ, that cost me, that cost me a, I think a half a point in my point average. So I knew I wasn't going to go into the military. But a lot of my, you know, people in my fraternity did, went on to have military careers. I wasn't, you know, in terms of, you know, politics, anti war or anything like that, I actually probably believed we were doing the right thing.

But working for the *Maine Alumnus*, as I said, we put out this magazine which just kind of goes to the alumni and, hoping they're going to send us money, do feature stories and things like that. I did a feature story on the SDS and I did it the *Playboy*, this format, you know, tape recorder, boldface questions, answers in italics or lower case, just straight, this is the University of Maine SDS. And I got a picture of David Bright and the SDS students, and they were just talking about their opposition to Vietnam. And the head of the alumni office, Donald, forgotten his name, he was a WWII vet and he had one arm missing, he lost an arm I think in Normandy, and he was very straight and prim. And the, this thing went out in our alumni magazine, the, this is the University of Maine SDS chapter. And they had a little editor's note, these views do not reflect the *Maine Alumnus* or anything like that. But they got about three letters from, you know, older contributors saying we're not going to send money to you if you're doing propaganda for these, for these hippie commies.

And so he basically, the next month he ran a, a canned piece from J. Edgar Hoover byline suggesting that the SDS had direct ties to the Communist Party in the U.S.A. And that got, that got about, more letters from people who were outraged that we were running right wing propaganda in the *Maine Alumnus* magazine so. But basically we, he decided he was going to eliminate the position of part time alumni magazine editor and he was going to edit the magazine himself and, which he did, and that, you know.

But before that happened they had an assistant, a graduate assistant, Christine Hampstead, who was very active in the SDS. In fact, she was dating Larry Moskowitz who was the lynchpin of the SDS who bragged to everybody he was a member of the Communist party, in fact, probably still is. And Chris, I remember there was this big anti-ROTC demonstration and Don Stewart and Bonnie Shrum, who was a woman who worked at the magazine. . . . And we were out on the steps of the library watching this, it was a big demonstration, you know, the parade going around, it was anti-ROTC and things like this. And we could see, could see in the distance Chris was carrying this sign, you know, something, war criminals or whatever.

And a kid named Jim Stephenson who at that time was the, you know, the high scorer on the basketball team, his father was an FBI agent. He tried to grab Chris' sign; we could see it, sitting right there, and Chris is pounding him over the head with the sign. And Don is standing beside me and he's still upset over the SDS thing and he says, "John, is that our Chris doing that?" And I says, "Well Don, I don't think so, I don't think that's her." Even though I did, I told him it wasn't. And he, and he basically, you know, concluded that it was and basically said, "You know, I want you to dismiss her." And I said, "Well I don't want to do that, I mean, this doesn't have anything to do with the magazine, you know." About a week later he said, "Well, I've decided to eliminate the, you know, the, the edit-, my position, whatever." And I said, "Well that's fine." So anyway, I was a fence sitter or whatever in Vietnam, but I have, appreciate the, you know, the passions or whatever of the people who were against it.

On the other hand I, you know, I knew people who went there and died, and. I kind of, my nephew's in the Marines and my, one of my nephews is in the Marine Corps and the other one is a, he flew for the Maine Air Guard. He commanded a KC-135 crew and is, he's now a pilot for American Airlines. But these are, they're big believers in the military. And I served in the Maine Air National Guard during the sixties, well, there were six years, probably '64 to '70. And I do kind of resent some of the attitudes of people who, you know, feel they have to trash the military and basically blame the U.S. military for, you know, for all the wrongs and whatever. And it doesn't come from, you know, I never was, I never considered that I would, you know, I'm just not a military sort of person, you know, I, I'm not organized, I'm not neat and I'm not tidy and I don't like to take orders. But on the other hand I have a lot of respect for people who do, so you know, that respect.

AL: Now what was, what was it like covering the State House during the sixties and seventies?

JD: In Augusta, well it was, it's '71.

AL: Seventy-one through '78.

JD: Seventy-one through '78, it was a ball, that was probably the most fun I've had in journalism. Had an office on the third floor, shared it with the Associated Press. Dave Swearingen and Phyllis Austin were the, were the AP reporters and the Portland guys were, well UPI was on the other side of the rotunda, and Portland had an office, too. And it was great because you were competing against half a dozen of more people who were in that building every day and so, and you were out, running off, you know, competing for the same stuff

basically. So if John Martin would come up to the third floor to talk to a reporter, you know, pretty soon Phyllis Austin would pop up with a notebook right beside you and the UP-, Bill Frederick, the UPI would come over and so you had to work out, you know. . . . If you wanted to get somebody and kind of, you know, keep a lid on it, there was this little closet door that opens up and you can see up into the State House dome. It's, you know, sort of like part of the, you know, part of the structure. But, you know, we'd hustle into there, Louis Jalbert would come up and I'd say, "Louis, come on, we got to go in the closet because I don't want the other people, I don't, I don't want this all over the place that you're yakking to me about something."

And it was, politically speaking it was exciting because the Democrats were on the ascension, the Republicans were beginning their slide. The governor, I had, Ken Curtis for a couple of years was governor and he's one of the nicest guys that anybody will ever meet in politics. After he left, I had the most exciting election I ever covered was '74, George Mitchell, Jim Longley, Sr. and the Republican Jim Erwin. And this was a very dramatic election. Mel Stone, managing editor of the *News*, we decided that I cover it that year. We picked the right election to do it this way, we, bas-, the way the *New York Times* and the big papers cover the presidential race. You put one reporter on the candidate beginning in the morning when he has breakfast and you follow him all day and you write one story a day, and you do that for a week and then you switch over to the other candidate. There were three of them and Kent Ward, Paul Reynolds who was our editorial writer and myself, we did this.

And you really, I mean I got to know George Mitchell very well. I mean Christ, I'm in the motel room, in his motel room while he's changing into his, changing his underwear to go to the next thing and we're yakking about, you know, about things like that. I would sit in on, you know, meetings with the candidate and the lobbyists and you really, it was a great, it was a great way of doing it. And that election was, you know, the independent.

The polls on the weekend, four days before the election, both Portland and Bangor ran polls that showed that Longley was running a poor third. However, Kent and I were out on the road and I said, Christ, Longley's coming on like gangbusters. Kenny, I don't know if you remember Kenny Hayes, at the University of Maine, okay. Ken had a think tank and he was doing polling for the *Bangor News*, I wrote the polling story the Saturday before that election, 1974, and I, you know, the thing that struck me was that there was a huge undecided. The major party candidates had stalled out and undecided had risen to thirty percent.

And so my lead was basically Mitchell, you know, was ahead, but the major party candidates seemed stalled, and were leaving the door open for possibly Longley, you know. But the numbers didn't show it, I mean the numbers had Mitchell ahead by eight and Longley fifteen or so behind. Jim Brunelle wrote the *Maine Sunday Telegram* piece and for years I keep reminding him on every occasion the way he handled it. Our headline said, you know, top, I think was one third of voters still undecided. And definitely, you know, there was language in there, it left the door open for a Longley charge, even though there was no real, other than the undecided voters, there was nothing in our poll that indicated that Longley was coming on like gang busters. The *Telegram*, on the other hand, they took the undecided, same number, and they allocated them proportionately and they basically, I think their headline was something, in the *Maine Sunday Telegram*, Mitchell to win by eight percentage points or six percentage points.

And they editorialized a vote for Longley as a wasted vote. In the meantime Ken, I'm up at Sugarloaf and, over the weekend, and after the, I'm the one that did the polling story, you know, and had the printout and everything like that. And I mentioned to Ken, I said, "You know, I think this poll is bogus. I think Longley may win. And he said, he used this phrase, he said, "John, that's statistically impossible for Longley to catch and win." And he said, "However," he said, "just to indulge you, you and Kent Ward, I'll poll. I'll do a small sample over the weekend and I'll call you at Sugarloaf on Sunday. And, you know, just so that you won't lose, you know."

So, Sunday afternoon I get a call, and it's Ken Hayes and he says, "John," he says, "you're not going to believe this. I think he used a four letter word." He says, "I can't believe it, I've never seen anything like it." He says, he says, "Longley has caught Mitchell, it's dead even." And this was Sunday, so there's still two more days to go. I said, "So Longley's going to win?" He says, "Yeah, he's going to win." So I call Mel, I said, "Mel, you know, our poll is bogus. Longley's going to win this thing." And Mel says, "Well come on in."

And so Sunday at six o'clock I'm in the paper and I'm all charged up to write the story saying Longley riding wave of last minute momentum, likely winner. Well there's a problem because Mel had done, he did a column explaining our editorial policy had said in the, you know, in the last two days the *News* is not going to publish any story that affirmatively helps or hurts any of the candidates, that we basically cut off our coverage. And I said, and I took a position, I said, "You know, we put out bogus information, you know, it was the best we had at the time but it's not true, we're misleading, you know, thousands of voters are going out there probably thinking like the *Press Herald* said, the *Telegram* editorial, you know, a vote for Longley is a wasted vote. We know that that's not true. And how the hell are we going to, let's say Longley loses this thing by, you know, a hundred votes and it turns out we get a big cover up of a poll showing that he had a realistic chance of winning." And, God, we argued about that. And he said, "I can't." You know, so he said, as a compromise he said, "Here's what we'll do." He said, "I haven't made up my mind (*unintelligible word*). I want you to sit down, I want you to write a commentary and I want you to talk about anything that you might have observed, but you can't mention the poll. You can't mention that there's another poll, you can't use any polling numbers. But if you want to write a kind of a, you know, a, you know, save your butt type of, type, because my name, you know, my name was on the polling story." He said, "We'll look at it." And, well anyway our deadline is like eight thirty for first edition. And I'm sitting there, I spent about an hour on it, and very difficult for me to do that without, I couldn't mention the poll.

Well here's the deal, Kent and Mel went out to dinner at seven and they didn't come back until ten and I was furious. I threw the damn printout and I said, "You know, I'm out of here." This is, you know, we just committed a huge sin and I'm not going to be able to, you know, I'm not going to be able to handle this." And I did, I said, "You know, you want my," to Mel who was like my father. He's the one that sent me to Washington, and I said, "You know, I, it, you can have my job over this." And he said, "Calm down, John, and Kent's, you know, cool it, John, cool it, cool it, cool it."

In the meantime Longley finds out. One of the vice presidents at the University of Maine, Peck I think his name was, Ed [Hildred] Peck, figured that he was going to be education commissioner

under Longley. And so he found out about Ken's poll and he called Longley Saturday night and, or Sunday morning or about the same time that I got the information. So Longley is on the line to, he tries to track down Richard Warren, the publisher, Paul Reynolds. And he's saying, "We understand you have a poll showing I'm going to win. You have to run that story." And the, here's Mel's other problem with running it. We had endorsed, we had made this, surprised a lot of people, we endorsed Longley. And Mel said, "My God, if we come up with some phantom poll showing Longley's going to win and let's say it's wrong, we look like, like we're loading it, trying to load it up for the candidate that we endorsed." I think that was probably the trip wire for Mel was that, you know, we had editorially endorsed him, we're not going to, you know, based on this, you know, it was a small sample.

Well anyway, Longley thought that he was going to lose the election. He thought that the Bangor news which gave him the credibility, you know, he, we were the only paper to endorse him, that we were his buddies, that his buddies had turned on him and were going to cost him the election and he was like a wet rag. Poor George had, I think, picked up some of the same, I think that Sunday I got a call from Marshall Stern, lawyer in Bangor who was killed, was George Mitchell's best friend, who said, "John, I understand you guys have a poll, a late poll." And I couldn't, you know, I said, "I'm sorry Marshall." And it's about the only time I ever told Marshall I can't, you know, I couldn't. But I think he could tell from just the tone of the voice.

Anyway, Longley wins and Mel, wanting to kind of repair bridges with me said, "Well, here's what we'll do." He said, "We'll run your column tomorrow, you know, two days after the election, which would indicate that. . . ." And Mel wrote a column explaining the dilemma that he had with we couldn't run this column by John Day because we had endorsed Longley and we had publicly stated we would not run any story that might help one of the candidates.

Well, boy, Jim Brunelle for years has had fun with that. I remember at the Maine Press Association he introduced me for something, he says, "And here's John Day of the *Bangor News*, the man who wrote the column predicting that Jim Longley was going to be the next governor of Maine and they published that column two days after the election." So I, but I never fail to point out that Jim was the author, it's his byline over the *Maine Sunday Telegram* story that said, you know, Mitchell to win by six percentage points.

Anyway, but that was, most elections are just what I would call flatliners, you know. This, Bush is going to win. There'll be a lot of talk about Gore closing it up but, you know, it's a flat line race. I mean, I went to Austin in, a couple months ago, or a month ago, and there had been a hundred and thirty-eight polls taken since the beginning of this race, Gore has led six of them; a hundred and thirty two, Bush has been in the lead. You know, unless Bush, you know, commits a capital act, you know, you know, and he was video taped, gets video taped beating up some pedestrian with, you know, like that, you know, Bush is going to win. Most races in Maine are like that. I mean, Olympia Snowe is not going to be seriously challenged by Mark Lawrence. The senate race with Collins and Burnham *sic* [Brennan] which everybody thought was going to be close, the polls on that. . . . Susan had like a six point lead and she, you know, it closed up a little at one point but never got there.

Flat line races, there are hardly any what I would call big upsets where in the last week of the

campaign you get this miraculous turnaround. In 1974 it did happen, it can happen, you know, but it's really the exception, you know, to the rule. I mean the number of incumbents in Maine who are defeated is just like, I think since I've been covering congress, Margaret Chase Smith and Jim Longley, Jr. are the only two incumbents who were ever unseated, and there must have been twenty or thirty elections since then. But, you know, that was an (*unintelligible word*). Well, I take that back, there was another one where Peter Kyros was knocked off by David Emery but that was the same year. That was the year where people who didn't normally vote came out of the woodworks.

I remember Tony Buxton telling me in Lewiston that they were bussing, they were, you know, giving voters, elderly voters rides to the voting, in Lewiston which is hugely, heavily Democratic. And he said, "We had to cut it out at noon time because we were finding out that more than half the people we thought were Democratic voters we're bussing to the polls were voting for Longley, so we stopped the frigging, we stopped bussing." And a race like that is, you know, you remember longer because it did, it had all the suspense and elements.

And the interesting thing about it is George Mitchell because George Mitchell is, is, you know, one of the smartest, you know, most admirable political figures, you know, I've covered. And he ran a campaign that was like, you know, he had white papers on everything, he took positions. He had, you know, I remember Tony Buxton every week would have, here's your white a paper on the fishing industry; and it was like, you know, twenty or thirty pages long, it was well thought out, he had college professors doing it. He did everything the way you would think, you know, he's running against a guy who, who is almost like a maniac. I mean he just, you know, he dove into the crowds, he remembered people's names, he made the eye contact, he had, he was a natural campaigner and he never slept, he was like a vampire, you know.

At night time when Mitchell was, you know, back in Waterville sleeping, this guy had a camper and he's up at Millinocket, the Great Northern, shaking hands with the night shift coming off. And it was kind of the joke between Kent and I, you know, don't get on that God damn camper with Longley because, you know, he's your prisoner, you'll be stuck with him for two days. And, you know, you've got your car parked back in Lewiston and, you know, when he separates you from your car, you're his prisoner for the rest of the, for the duration. So, you know, we, you know, I made a point of Kent warning me, he said, don't get in that stupid camper with him, whatever you do. But Mitchell lost to somebody who out hustled him and was probably, had more, George was kind of wooden. In fact, I wrote a column in which I made reference to George had kind of a wooden personality at that time, and Marshall Stern told me that, you know, he was personally hurt by that.

Well anyway, when, when Muskie stepped down to become secretary of state, Joe Brennan had the call and, to appoint a Democrat to fill Muskie's seat. And a lot of people thought Joe was going to appoint himself to it until somebody told Joe that, you know, the polls show that if you do that you will never, you'll get knocked off, you know, most governors who do that, the public doesn't like it and so they just knock you off. Plus, I think Joe always preferred being governor anyway, that was the one thing that he really liked. But I remember when Ed Muskie flew up to Brunswick and, at the air base, had a meeting with, with Joe. And after that meeting Joe decided that it was going to be Mitchell who was, you know, basically, Muskie was George's mentor.

And there was a lot of, there was (*unintelligible phrase*) criticism about that. I remember Beurmond Banville of our paper wrote a column and saying of all the God damn Democrats that Joe Brennan could have selected to fill Ed Muskie's shoes, why would he pick a loser like George Mitchell. And that was the perception, George was a loser, he had lost this election.

AL: Because he had lost the election.

JD: He lost the election but the thing was he didn't lose to a Republican, he lost to this guy with no name party, Longley. It was like, you know, it would have been better if he had been defeated by a Republican but, you know, from a third party, to lose to a third party candidate after being ahead. Everybody thought that he, you know, he did have political skills, he was a smart behind the scene guy. And George, you know, during the interim had, you know, he worked as U. S. attorney and federal judge, and I'm sure he just replayed that, you know, why did I lose, and probably did a lot of self analysis. And he said, if I ever get a shot again I'm going to be different, you know. And when, when George tells this story it gets a little more dramatic each time, but I remember the last time he told it was at the National Press Club with about five hundred people there. And he's talking about John Day of the *Bangor News* is in the audience and he said, "John's a good friend of mine but," and somehow he's discussing polls. And he said, after he had been appointed by Brennan to the senate both Olympia and Dave Emery were, had geared up. They'd raised money, they were going to run figuring that he's, you know, an appointed senator is usually a pretty easy knock over.

And the fact that Mitchell had lost to Longley, everybody assumed that it was, you know, George was just a seat warmer there; that he would be long gone after his two years whatever. And both Olympia and David had leaked polls to me, one of them showing, well David leaked his first showing he's thirty-six points up on George Mitchell after Mitchell's first year in the senate. Well Olympia got wind that Emory, you know, that was, you know, they were jockeying with each other to get the nomination and so, you know, Emery got his out first to say, well look, I'm the strongest. Well, they dumped, Olympia dumped her poll on me which showed that she was thirty-eight points up on George Mitchell so, you know, this came in the morning. In the afternoon I went over to George's senate office and I said, George, I'm doing a polling story and I just need your reaction to these numbers. And he says, "Well, what are the numbers?" And I'm sure he assumed he was behind, but I said, "Well, Snowe's poll is thirty-eight and Emery's is thirty-six, and his kind of jaw dropped. And I was thinking, oh my God, he had worked his butt off for a year, the election was less than a year away, and he had, I, I'm pretty sure he had no idea that the numbers were that bad.

And anyway, in retelling the story he says, "This *Bangor News* reporter walks into my office and gleefully informs me that I'm thirty-eight points behind one and thirty-six behind the other." And he said, I felt pretty bad at the time but, you know, like, I enjoyed doing it. I didn't enjoy doing it. But, and I, I really, you know, I really felt kind of sorry for him because it, you know, I thought, you know, he, you know, he's going to lose. He caught a break because I think Olympia would have been much stronger than David against him. But he just knuckled down and he started, he got this, this what I would call Maine humor thing going for him.

He got to tell funny stories, and he would tell hilarious stories about, you know, things back in

Maine which they lapped up in Washington and then they started lapping up back here and, you know, the wooden personality, he kind of got rid of that. And, you know, Gore's problem, how do you, you know, if you're a serious person and you're involved in policy, you know, it's not a joke. But how do you kind of lighten up and make people think you're one of the guys. Well George figured out how to do that, he became very good a glad handing and dated a woman in Washington for many years and George, especially after the polling incident, would make a point of coming over to her, putting his arm around her and saying, "You could do so much better, you know, you're way below your station here."

And, you know, the banter type of thing which Clinton has, and it's just a little thing that the good politicians have it and the, a lot of others for some rea-, you know, a lot of others just really struggle with it. And he became, he became, his turn around, you know, being so far behind in the polls, you know, that's, that's almost as remarkable as Longley winning the '74 race, I mean. But, I must say that that still was, you know, it was closer to a flat line race because once Mitchell was ahead, he got ahead by, you know, fifteen, twenty points in the summer, and it never, it never moved for Emery after that. If you're flat lined in September, nine out of ten, if you're ahead by Labor Day, nine out of ten times you're going to, you know, you're going to win, so.

AL: Now tell me, or, what were some of your experiences of stories with Muskie over the years?

JD: Well, Senator Muskie is a scary person for a young journalist. I mean, so tall, his voice is so authoritative [*sic*] and here's a man who ran for president from the state of Maine. So, you approach him, you know, meekly, and you, you, he has an aura that the other politicians I covered didn't. I mean, maybe Margaret Chase Smith did, my connections with Margaret were, I basically covered the '72 campaign in which Hathaway defeated her. I really never got to know her other than, you know, go to some places that she spoke and things like that. Muskie on the other hand, he has kind of a like a love-hate relationship with the *Bangor News*. And I know there's an old picture at the paper showing him as governor coming in and dedicating the ground breaking ceremony. And I think at one time he may have been very close to the owners of the *News*, but, and I never know where it happened but there, somewhere along the line I think there must have been a falling out because he always regarded, he made a point of saying, you know, whenever I, oh, the *Bangor Daily News*.

And, you know, I always felt like I was under a, you know, a bit of a stigma, you know, in approaching him. But, as I said, I came to Washington, Bob Rose, his press secretary at the time, was the UPI reporter when I covered the State House, he's an old competitor of mine, friend, close friend. And Bob would kind of, you know, explain things away, kind of bridge the things.

But I remember one of the first stories I wrote, and this did not please Mr. Muskie, in '72 the issue of Margaret Chase Smith's age had become an issue and Muskie in an interview had, discussing whether or not seventy, whether somebody should continue serving in the senate after age seventy. And I think, he was quoted as saying, well, you know, he says, "I don't think I would serve in the senate past seventy." You know, it, he says, "I haven't thought about it that

much but probably I would, I would leave before then.” And he said it, you know, four years earlier or whatever and he’s running for election again in ‘76 against, you know, Neil Bishop who was just minimal competition.

And I remember I’m riding in the back seat with Muskie and Bob Rose. I, and we’re on our way to a campaign event in Brewer, Maine and I said, “Well senator, you know, you stated back in 1972 during Margaret’s run that you doubted that you would continue service in the senate beyond the age of seventy, you know. What is your view on that statement?” And he just shot me a look like, he said, “I said that?” I said, “Well yes, it was in a *Bangor News* interview that you had with somebody,” I said. He said, “I don’t remember saying that,” and he said, “Well, if I did say it, so what,” or something like that. Pretty soon, he goes to Brewer and he’s got a big crowd of labor guys and Democratic whatever. And I’m down, you know with, standing beside Bob Rose in the back. And he’s got this, I don’t think he had the *Bangor News* rolled up in his hand, but he started talking about, the *Bangor News* is under the impression that I’m not going to serve in the U.S. senate until, you know, I’m past seventy. And he went on and on and on, and he said, “I’ll tell you one thing,” he says, “When I get ready to step down from the U.S. senate, you know, you know, the *Bangor News* is probably going to be the last to hear about it,” or “the *Bangor News* is not going to have anything to do with my decision to step down, so.”

So Bob is saying, “John, John, don’t get, don’t take it personal,” he says, “he’s just having fun with you guys.” And short-, you know, Muskie come over and he sort of tapped me on the shoulder and said, “Did you like my speech?”

Anyway, Muskie was the chairman of the delegation during the Maine Indian Land Claim and they would, they would hold these secret meetings and, you know, closed door meetings with the delegation, big controversial issue. Hathaway was more inclined to give land to the Indians, Muskie and Longley were, and Brennan who was attorney general at the time, were kind of hard liners. And this was a huge story in east Maine. And these meetings, Tom Tureen was the attorney for the, I can say this now because it’s, the statute of limitations has passed, Tom Tureen of the tribe was in there. Well I’ve known Tom Tureen since when I was in Machias. He was in Calais and he was the legal services lawyer up there and I, I wrote about the Maine Indian Land Claim case back when it started. I was there when it really started, and John Stevens of, you know, the tribal chieftain, you know, found the treaty and a, you know, an old Indian woman had, a Passamaquoddy woman, had found this treaty, a copy of the treaty in her trunk and, you know, I go way back on that.

So I’m down in Washington now and this is the biggest story in Maine in the late 1970s. And poor Ed’s in there behind closed doors trying to negotiate this thing with the attorney for the Indians. And come out of, Tom Tureen would come out of those meetings and he’d walk right by me, go to a telephone and call me up in the senate press gallery, they have these banker phones, and he’d tell me everything that went on in the meeting and I’d write about it. And Muskie went bananas about, who the hell is, you know, somebody here is not treating these meetings as confidential. They never figured out it was Tureen.

And I remember one time, Bobby McKernan, Jock [John] McKernan’s kid brother, was an aid for. . . . and he was in on those meetings. And he had complained about something, I don’t

know, he was always giving me a hard time. So we're coming out and there's big Ed outside his little hideaway, little secret anteroom with no name or anything on it, and Tom Tureen is coming out and I'm there with a notebook and, you know, with some other reporters to get confirmation.

And I know it's killing Muskie to find out who's, who's the source of the leaks. And Bobby had kind of like hassled me on something. So I turned to Bob and I said, within Muskie's earshot, I said, "Bob, thanks for your help on the story last night." And Muskie looks at Bob, and Bob, Bobby looked at Muskie and it was like, just sort of walked away. I don't think, he knew, he, to this day I don't think he ever figured out whether it was a joke or not, but it was just a, you know. I had a, I think I had a wonderful relationship with Muskie.

He, you know, one of my fondest experiences at the paper was when he was secretary of state during the Iran hostage situation; there were a lot of attempts by the Carter administration to, you know, do back door. Well he went on an around the world trip in, I don't know, like six or seven days and I flew with him in his, you know, Air Force Two. And we went to, God, we went to Italy, Venice, Italy, Turkey, Malaysia for three days. And they were trying all that time to, you know, hopefully that, you know, some third party country, you know, would either, there would be some sort of a, you know, a breakthrough. It never came.

But later he, he used to like to talk golf with me and it was really, saddened him that, you know, his back got to the point he couldn't play golf. And I can remember talking with him once about Sugarloaf, he'd heard about this golf course and said that it just, you know, he would so much like to come up here and play it but, you know, because of his back that he couldn't.

AL: Let me stop here and change tapes.

End of Side B, Tape One
Side A, Tape Two

AL: We are now on tape two of the interview with Mr. John Day. And you were saying?

JD: I really do vividly remember the day, and it would have been maybe March of 1980, when they had the failed rescue mission, Jimmy Carter's Desert One failed. Cyrus Vance, the secretary of state, resigned and there was a couple of days where everybody was speculating who the next secretary of state would be; and then it was announced that, well, there was speculation that it was going to be Muskie. So there was a huge horde of reporters camped out around Muskie's office waiting, you know, for the word.

And by coincident it turned out that the daughter of a congressman from Ohio, Bill Gradison, his daughter was a grad student at Brown University and his other daughter had worked for Bill Cohen at one point; she used to jog with me, and she called me up and said, "Would you mind if my kid sister comes down and follows you around for a day because she's thinking about being a journalist." So, I said, "Sure." So she comes down, we meet that night and I said, "You know, I'll check in tomorrow and we'll see what's going on." So, she comes down and we're camped out in front of Muskie's office. And then the announcement, and then everybody goes down to the White House and President Carter comes out and has the announcement and then there is this big reception back in the Russell Building when everybody is, you know, you know, the Cabinet

members and reporters and this is like a day filled with, you know, big news and stuff like that.

And, well anyway, Robin Gradison went back to Brown and she sent me back this little letter. It said, "John, I had no idea journalism was so exciting. I just want you to know that that was the most thrilling day of my life and that I am going to become a journalist partly because of this." And I sent her back a little note and I said, "Robin, you know, it's not like this most of the time, this is the exception, not the rule." Well, to make a long story short, she got an internship with the *Washington Post*, she helped an author named Lou Cannon who did a biography of Reagan. She may have dated Bob Woodward; that was, she, she used to come back with the stories about all these older guys that were kind of trying to date her. And she ended up becoming an associate producer for Night Line with Ted Koppel and I don't know where she is now, she ended up marrying a reporter from *U.S.A. Today*. But, you know, she, absent the excitement around Muskie's, you know, taking the secretary of state job, she might have become a school teacher or a nurse or God forbid she might have gone to law school; I mean, we'd have another lawyer.

So, you know, I, my recollections of Muskie as a senator were, he was held in great esteem by the other members of the senate, I mean he had run for president and I think maybe a part of, the forgotten part of his biography is, he was the senate's first chairman of the senate budget committee and he had, he'd given a speech to the liberal party of New York in which he sort of broke with a lot, you know. . . . Part of the Democrats mainstream dogma at that time was that, you know, our great society programs, you know, if they don't work we've got to come up with, you know, they're wasting money, we're driving ourselves into debt on programs, many of which don't work. And that caused a big flap, it was in the early seventies. So, he was the chairman of the senate budget committee who was the first person. . . . Actually at that time in Washington, they put the budget together in a very haphazard manner. They basically, the committees decided how much money they wanted to spend and they all just mashed it in and that was the federal budget. And then, if the revenues didn't come in to match it, then there was a deficit. And everybody said, "Well we can't be held responsible for the deficit because, you know, these are all good ideas and the committee approved these good ideas." There was no what I would call master cylinder or, or, or, you know, coordinator before they had the budget committee and that was Muskie's first job.

And I can remember during the seventies, late seventies, he would be on the floor of the senate, usually with just one or two senators there, making these speeches about, you know, we've got to rein in the deficit, this is going to, this is robbing our children. And I remember Mary Baker of the, she's the sup-, assistant superintendent of the senate press gallery, she's from New England, Worcester, Mass., and, and she would, every time Muskie did that she'd come down and she say, "Your boy, your guy is up there talking about the budget." I'd go in and I'd be the only reporter in there practically except for the wire service guys who had to do it. And he was talking about stuff back in the mid-seventies, you know, the pending, the deficit at that time was growing, but it did not get into the two and three hundred billion range that it is now.

But, you know, he was way ahead of the curve on the issue, you know, of fiscal responsibility. And, you know, he did work to the point now where they, they do have a mechanism in which they, they take the big picture. It doesn't mean that they, you know, that the discipline is there

but it. . . . Before then it was like there was nothing, I mean it was like, you know, somebody comes up with an idea for spending money and they would spend the money and they didn't care that much whether the revenues, you know, came in and matched it. I think his relationship with George Mitchell is quite un-, you've got to interview George I would think.

AL: When we get a hold of him, he's a very busy guy.

JD: Well, now, I know that, I learned a lot about Senator Muskie at his funeral and the surprise to me were the num-, people who you wouldn't have thought of as being within his circle, you know, showed up at the funeral. I noticed Cokie Roberts who, I gather her connection was, she's the daughter of a senator and, who served with Muskie. Mark Shields I, I talked to him and he apparently got his start in politics during Muskie's '72 campaign. I think it was Bob Rose or, or Leon Billings who was chief of staff. The thing that happened in, you know, after Humphrey went down in '68, close race, that all, that a lot of the, you know, the, you know, the bright young lions of the Democratic, the next generation of Republican Party operatives, they immediately shifted from a Kennedy-Humphrey nexus over to Muskie. In that '71 campaign you had Madeleine Albright, you had a lot of people, Bob Shrum, who were big deals in, in Democratic presidential politics. They, they got their feet wet in the '72 campaign. And, and, you know, some of them, a lot of them showed up for the, you know, for the funeral.

AL: So when you went, I have a question about the trip you took, the airplane trip and, so you were in close quarters with Muskie for quite a bit. Did you get more of a sense of who he was, or, you know, just sort of the ordinary everyday things that make a person unique?

JD: Well, yeah, I, it was, that wasn't, you know, I'd spent time with him, you know, before that, but yeah, you're right, for six or seven days or whatever it was. And I can remember I, the woman I dated was going to her high school reunion and I remember going out shopping for a dress and bumping into Jane Muskie and Carole, Muskie's secretary, God

AL: Carole Parmelee?

JD: Carole Parmelee. And Gayle, Gayle also was a, Gayle -

AL: Gayle Cory?

JD: Gayle Cory. All right. Great, great, great crew of women. And so they actually, you know, I remember, I think I may have shown, you know, I'm thinking of buying that one, what do you think and blah-blah-blah. Gayle Cory was, was a great, I, you know, I sat beside her on the plane and talked a lot and she was a great woman. Carole was, actually, at one point didn't Carole move down to the White House? She was working for John Podesta I think.

AL: I don't know for sure.

JD: I know this from Bob Tyre who was Bill Cohen's AA who, when Cohen became defense secretary, Bob was going down there and he said to me, "I couldn't believe it, I bumped into, you know, Carole Parmelee." She's like right there with Betty Curry in terms of, you know,

access to the chief of staff at the White House. Yeah, he was somebody who, who, you know, you had a tremendous amount of respect for, but liked to talk about, about non-political things sometimes. You know, any town that you ever wanted to mention in the state of Maine, I mean, he would have a story to tell about it, I mean, and he would, they'd be great stories.

AL: Do you remember any of them?

JD: Oh, God, well Harrison, I mean, oh you're from Harrison, I mean, you know, we'd go over the whole Pitts family. But it was not only Sam Pitts, he knew every Democrat in town, and there weren't that many of them early, it was probably a Republican, it's now a probably strong Democratic but at that time, it was more Republican and there were only, you know, there were three or four activists and they're all good friends of his, you know, for, for out, throughout his political career. I think that that was the thing about him that you always had the impression that, you know, he was a very. . . . Some people come from Maine and they're kind of homogenized, they lose their accent, you don't know, you know, they could be from any place. And you never had any doubt when you were with him or talking with him, he was somebody who really, you know, he had state of Maine stamped on his forehead.

AL: That's, yeah, that's interesting because, and I wonder if you saw any of this or observed it in the state of Maine because it was in that '71 to '78 period that you were here covering the State House that there was sort of a feeling that was, you know, after the vice presidential and presidential campaigns, there was sort of this thing out there, people saying, "Is he really from Maine any more?" Did you ever hear about that facet or, what was (*unintelligible phrase*)?

JD: Yeah, oh, yeah. Well this is an interesting by play, I'm glad you kind of jogged my memory on this. In 1974 Bill Cohen became incredible [*sic*] popular because of Watergate. Now Cohen lived in McLean, Virginia, a kind of an exclusive suburb of Washington. And across, he said they weren't next door neighbors, but Bill Cohen used to say that Bill Hathaway lived just, you know, you could go through a little park to Bill Hathaway's back yard and that they were friends, they were close friends. Bill Hathaway took Bill Cohen under his wing when he came down to the senate, and with good reason because both senators were coming up. I mean, Hathaway in '78 and Muskie in '76. Riding this crest of popularity, a very attractive young Republican, he's going to run for the senate sooner or later. And Hathaway correctly assumed that if this guy doesn't run against Ed Muskie in '76 he's going to run against me in 1978 and he could beat me. So Hathaway became Cohen's best buddy, and Hathaway and Muskie, they, they had a good relationship but it was not, you know, there were, there were tensions. They, they, they were, they were a little bit at odds over the Maine Indian Land Claim suit.

AL: So it was issues that divided them somewhat.

JD: It, no, it was more than that, I think. I think Hathaway was, Hathaway's a great guy, he's got a great sense of humor, he's a golfer. And, and he also knocked off Margaret Chase Smith. I don't know, I, you know, the relationship between Margaret and Ed is, but I, I'm, I don't think Muskie enjoyed seeing, you know, somebody from his, close to being his generation going down in defeat. You know, you always kind of identify with, you know, not with the, you know, the

young upstart but, you know, somebody that you had a working relationship with.

But during the Vietnam War there was a clash because at the convention there was an abortive favorite son move for Muskie for president in, it would have been, maybe it was '68. There was, I'd have to go back and look at it, but, but Hathaway wouldn't get on, you know, was, made a point of distancing himself from Muskie on Vietnam. Muskie stayed closer to Johnson longer than Hathaway did; Hathaway was earlier in anti-Vietnam. And there was a kind of a, I forget the specifics of it but there was, Hathaway sort of wouldn't go along with the rest of the delegates in even discussing the possibility of Muskie, (*unintelligible word*) Muskie, favorite son. So there was a little bit of that. Plus, you know, obviously Muskie's people knew what was going on with Hathaway and Cohen. And Cohen commissioned a poll, Dr. Chris, I don't know if you've interviewed Chris Potholm?

AL: Not yet, I'm very familiar with his book.

JD: Right, well he'd be good, because he was, he was Cohen's political advisor at that point and Chris called me and, and, and made a point of saying, you know, there are polling numbers out there. I'm not going to give you the exact numbers but, you know, we could beat Muskie. We think we could beat Muskie. And Muskie's AA, Jim Case, was somebody who was in contact with Chris Potholm, they had kind of a, they're both from Brunswick and they both had a back door going on in which Muskie knew about Cohen's polling. I suspect that Potholm leaked those numbers to Muskie. The result of all this was that Muskie, you know, really energized himself, came back to Maine, figured I could be in a tough race. And, the Cohen polling numbers showed Muskie coming back.

So, and I, you know, the specifics on this, they happened a long time ago and people's memories are a little different. I'm pretty sure that at some point Bill Cohen passed the word to Ed Muskie personally, he says, I'm not going to run against you, I'm going to run against Hathaway. And there was, I, I'm convinced that the Muskie people thought, we could have beaten Cohen, it would have been tough, but we would have beaten him. Cohen's people think we probably could have won. But this was, this was a huge story in 19-, well it probably would have been the winter of 1975, the year before the election.

Cohen was up here skiing for Christmas with his family, and Chris Potholm, and they got the polling numbers and they're going to decide Muskie or Hathaway. Hathaway is, knows what's going on, he's trying to find out what's going on. The media is bugging Cohen every day, are you going to run for the senate in '76 or are you going to run in '78. And he's up here, and they're in a condo, they own a condo right around here, and I'm up here at my place skiing. And Potholm says, "Meet me over at the, at the gondola that goes to the top at two o'clock in the afternoon." And he said, "Don't let anybody see you, you know." Of course who the hell would know, you've got your helmet and your goggles on and all that.

So we're there and he said, "It's Hathaway." And he sort of paraphrased what Cohen was going to say at a press conference the next day. No, it would have been the day after that, or, this would have been a Sunday, guess who's going to go to Bangor for a press conference in the morning. And so, he basically used one of the phrases about, that, the state of Maine would not

be served in an election in which, you know, Ed Muskie would lose or words to that effect. He phrased it very nicely, kind of eloquently.

So I go back and I write my story and either faxed it in or, it wasn't a fax, it was a different type, well anyway we had, had the story the morning of the press conference in the *Bangor Daily News*, Cohen decides not to run against Muskie, going to run against Hathaway. Gordon Manuel, on the other hand, Channel 5, I've never let him live this down, was making calls, you know, and connected with somebody he thought was close to Muskie, and, Cohen, and he led his Sunday newscast as Bill Cohen is going to hold a press conference tomorrow in Bangor, Maine, announces, announcing that he's going to run against Senator Muskie. Got it completely wrong. And for years, Gordon, you know, when you do something like that, when you're that wrong, you know, it kind of hangs over your head a little bit.

AL: I understand he had a good sense of humor about it, though, he was able to laugh at himself?

JD: Oh, Gordon?

AL: (*Unintelligible phrase*).

JD: Oh yeah, well, yeah, yeah, yeah, I guess he had to. He, he, Gordon's a great friend of mine and, and, you know, he's a, he's a good news man and he, I'm sure he made twenty or thirty phone calls on that and somebody who he thought, you know, had the right story but, you know, I was up here. And there were certain people that, you know, when somebody like, you know, Chris Potholm's a good source and, and -

AL: You learn to know who the reliable sources are pretty quick.

JD: Yeah, yeah, you have to trust. And if it, if it turns out, you know, that they're mistaken, you know, you look at them a little bit differently in that respect. I always thought Muskie had kind of a, you know, you know, they were on different sides of the aisle, but that Muskie always kind of had a big brother or father type relationship with Cohen. Because Cohen came down there, he's a junior senator. What happens is, it happens, it happened with George Mitchell when he came down, you become very close to the senior senator, even if he's a Republican and you're a Democrat or vice versa, because there's a lot of, you know. . . . You have to, you know, follow a lot of traditions and there's a lot of social rules in the senate that somebody has to pick up on and, and, you know, there are senators from some states who can't stand each other, hate each other and don't talk to each other. The New Jersey senators are famous for, you know, not speaking and when they do speak, it's in obscenities. [Robert Guy] Torricelli and, and [Frank Raleigh] Lautenberg, I mean they literally hate each other.

But that, you know, Cohen, I'm sure if you have a chance to talk to Bill Cohen he'll have a lot of very interesting, fond recollections of, of Ed Muskie. The, I kind of thought that Muskie, the question was whether Muskie was going to run again. His term would have been up in 1982 and there was a sense that he might have, he might have stepped down. Now, it's kind of like, it's not, no longer a huge shock when somebody like George Mitchell and Bill Cohen, you know,

still relatively young, in their prime, resigns from the senate because it used to be, you used to hang on to that seat until you died, you know, they took you out, you know, you went out with a, you know, in a hearse.

So, but I suspect he, you know, he'd been in the senate for, you know, God, more than two decades and, and when Jimmy Carter offered him the secretary of state it was like a, you know, a fresh wind of energy and, he really enjoyed that. And there are people that I still know in the state department who, he was only there about a year, but they consider him one of the best, one of the best people that they served under in secretary of state.

I remember going down there for, actually it was, it was on the eve of Reagan's inaugural, the hostages, you know, the hostages weren't released until Jimmy Carter had, you know, passed, you know, Ronald Reagan had been sworn into office, that's when they announced it. Well I, in the morning before that I was down at the state department with Muskie and he was having kind of a farewell dinner at the state department right up, with the phone there, keeping abreast of the release of the hostages. And there was, they were hoping, you know, that it would come, that Jimmy Carter would be able to make the announcement and. And I, I did a story on that, kind of, it was an interesting day, the juxtaposition of the hostage crisis, Reagan being sworn in, and Ed Muskie kind of waiting by the phone, you know, for the word on the hostages and it was a really, you know, that's one of those days that you, you remember a lot.

And he got very kind of weighing nostalgic on his whole career and, and was, had just hoped that, you know, that would have been so good for, you know, him to, he to have been personally involved in the release of the hostages but, you know, it didn't happen. And it's kind of too bad because it was just a, just a few days later that they had this huge parade in Washington, more than three quarters of a million people lining Pennsylvania Avenue with the busses of the hostages, you know, coming in. And I covered that and I went down to the White House and it was Reagan who got the, you know, who introduced them in the back of the White House and, you know, it was, that's one of the, there are times where, you know, being in Washington and covering politics you really, you really enjoy it because you're right, you know, you're watching history, you know, unfold.

AL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you, we've talked about, that you'd like to add? Or any stories, any stories of -?

JD: Well I have to remember, you kind of like have to like jog my memory, I'm sure there are.

AL: Like you said that you and Muskie talked about golf, did you ever play golf together?

JD: Never did. I'm not sure that this is a true story, but I've heard that George Mitchell gave up golf, he, he now plays tennis because the senator, I'm told, if you have a bad shot, you know, let everybody know it and. And that George Mitchell supposedly decided that, you know, spending five hours with Ed Muskie hitting balls into the woods and being mad about it was not, you know, was not as much fun as playing tennis and so. Mitchell never told me that story directly, but it sort of does have a, you know, I think it probably is, you know, maybe, maybe an accurate one.

AL: You've observed both Mitchell and Muskie, you know that Mitchell worked for Muskie for many years and so, what did you observe about them that, well, did they have similarities in the way they did things, or, as politicians in general, or what were their differences?

JD: Well, I think I would probably say that, probably not, no, I think they were, Mitchell I saw as somebody, a very orderly, logical person, thought, you know, very intelligent, as was Muskie, thought, thought his, you know, he didn't make mistakes because they came up on him unexpected. I think Muskie was much more, you know, emotional, wore his feelings on his sleeve, and the incident that kind of comes through, and I did some things on this was the, you know, when he ran for president in 1972 and the, the, you know, the Canuck letter hoax -

AL: And the Man-, were you at the Manchester?

JD: No, I knew one of the, I got into it after the fact because there was a lot of speculation that that was, it was a hoax, it was a dirty trick, everybody assumed that, nobody (*unintelligible word*) that much. I got to know one of the reporters at the Manchester *Union Leader* who offered the opinion to me that it was made up by the reporter they sent, that Bill Loeb sent to Florida. However, it turns out that that was not the case, that, I did a column about, there was a report that a Boston attorney had, you know, had written this letter and sent it in, and this is kind of an interesting story. I, in '72, McGovern had this rally and press media event in Boston. And Lance Tapley, who was McGovern's main coordinator, said, "You know, I can get you, get you into a room with McGovern with, you know, give you your own interview," and then it turned out it was like in a room with twenty five other reporters. I drive all the way to Boston and I was a little mad at Lance actually, for that, but on my way I stopped in Somersworth, New Hampshire. My brother was living there and I was going to spend the night. And I'm driving in the driveway and my sister-in-law comes running out and says, "John, there's this reporter from the *Washington Post* on the line, he wants. . . ." He had tracked me down, called the *Bangor News* and I'd left my number.

And it was Carl Bernstein, this was before any of the Watergate stuff. He said, "I've seen a couple of things that you've written on the Canuck letter, we're very interested in this attorney, Boston attorney who supposedly wrote the letter. What do you know?" And I said, "Well, you know, I know, you know, the re-, I have an acquaintance who's talking to me inside the Manchester *Union Leader*." I had, you know, been trying to follow up on it because I fig-, you know, I wanted, it was kind of a mystery and I was hot to trot to do it. He says, "Well look, here's the deal, we're going to, we've got a series of articles coming out about political sabotage involving the Muskie campaign. We think the Canuck letter was obviously a part of this. If you, on your own, come up with information, useful information, here's this number, call it twenty-four hours a day. We will give you a mention or something." You know, no money or anything like that, but he said, "We will cite you as a source in our story." And I said, "Well, that's nice," I never. . . .

Anyway, nobody had ever heard of this guy, this was before their first story came out about campaign, a political, massive campaign and political sabotage, that was their first story. And it turned out that the, the lawyer who wrote the letter was a guy named Ken Clausen who knew a

little bit about New England and just, you know, had seen this newspaper article with a picture of Ed Muskie talking with somebody at a drug rehabilitation clinic. And he, you know, the, his thought process was basically this: Muskie's Polish, comes from a, he knew enough about New England to do this. Muskie, Polish, he comes from Rumford, that's a Franco town, probably had a lot of, you know, you know, growing up having fights with the Francos, blah-blah. So, he fabricated this quote that Muskie told this kid in rehab, the kid was complaining about getting beat up by Hispanic and black gangs. And supposedly Muskie said, "Well, it was kind of rough and tumble when I grew up in Rumford, Maine. We were always getting, you know, getting in fights with the Canucks." And he said probably the Canuck, you know, "The problem that we had with Canucks are similar to the ones you're having with the blacks and Hispanics." And he sent it in to letters to the editor.

Now normally, at our paper you have to put a phone number, an address, and your name, and, otherwise it doesn't get in the paper, and that's the policy of, you know, most newspapers. But what they did at the Manchester *Union Leader*, they got this letter with just a name and the address, this rehab clinic, so what they did was they sent, before they published it, they sent their reporter. Oh, it may have gone this way, they may have published the letter and then there was an uproar about it and they sent a reporter down to try to track down the guy after the fact and found there's nobody there by that name. I think that's what it was.

But, I mean, let's face it, Muskie could very well have been president of the United States had he been more like George Mitchell which is, you know, mister cool and logical rather than, you know, here is my heart on a sleeve. He rents a flatbed truck in a snowstorm and he, the words were, you know, Mr. Loeb is a gutless human being, he walks, he doesn't, he crawls, he doesn't walk, he crawls. And he said that on TV. Now, there were maybe a dozen, maybe more than that reporters there. I've talked with David Broder, the *Washington Post*, I've done a couple of columns on this and I've talked to David Broder about this, he considers this the worst thing that he ever did in journalism. He's told me that, he said, "This is the one thing that I regret the most." There were maybe two dozen reporters there, it was snowing. Broder was the one who led, "Ed Muskie broke down in tears," talking about his wife and Bill Loeb. None of the other reporters mentioned tears. And, and, but two days afterwards everybody was saying Muskie cried.

Well Muskie, you know, I've talked to him about this on a number of occasions. He said, "I wasn't crying, there was snow, it melted, you know, coming off my." He insists to this day. And, Broder, you know, in, in one of the books that he wrote, he writes about politics, he considers that, you know, one of the, one of the dangers and one of the damages that the media has done to the political process is, you know, for him to decide that the lead to the story was, you know, he thought he saw tears rather than, you know, just play it kind of straight.

We had a reporter who, you know, Christ, we got sued over a reporter sticking himself in a story. He claimed that he smelled marijuana smoke from, you know, the next motel room was this member of the legislature. And so he wrote this story, this guy said, you know, "Apparently marijuana smoke was coming from under the door of this member of the Maine legislature." And the guy sued us. You know, that's, that's a reporter deciding, you know, I would have never, you know, maybe I'm a little kind of old school but, you know, it's not probably a good

thing for a reporter to get in the middle of a story like that. And we got sued and we, we settled the thing and, for peanuts, and then like two years later this member of the legislature is arrested with marijuana in his car. So, it was accurate but that still doesn't, you know, that still doesn't, doesn't you know, that still doesn't make up for the original.

AL: So, was David Broder's perspective that when Muskie even said, "They weren't tears, it was snow," that David Broder, he was sort of, well maybe it was. He wasn't, absolutely, he wasn't like absolutely it was tears, he was like, (*unintelligible word*), maybe it was.

JD: Oh no, no, oh no, I think he's backed away to the point where, I don't think, when he saw it, it's one of these things that never, probably, may have never even occurred to him.

AL: That it would be perceived the way it was (*unintelligible phrase*)?

JD: Yeah, it's like you see, you know, you believe your eyes. Who do you believe, your eyes or, and he's looking up there and he sees glistening of, of, you know, water on, you know, underneath his eyes and he's emotional, so he, you draw that conclusion. Let's face it, I mean Dave Broder lives in Washington, D.C. and I'm not sure how much snow he actually sees. Except when they come up to, you know, to New Hampshire in the, in the primary. But, you know, he's a very serious, he's probably, you know, in terms of honesty and credibility he's right up there at the top of the rung and I really respect the fact that, you know, that he is willing to admit that that was, you know, that was a bad mistake.

Muskie, on the other hand, was never that forgiving of David Broder. I forget his, I'd have to go back and look, I have a quote in one of the columns, but it was sort of like, you know, well he apologizes all the time in his books and to other reporters, but he's never come up to me and said that, so. He's probably too, you know, he's maybe a little too intimidated to do that. I mean I, you know, I think Muskie had that effect on a lot of reporters that, you know, he's not somebody you come up and glad hand and try to make small talk with.

Interesting, at Muskie's funeral George McGovern came and apparently they had become very good friends. Both their wives and, and I think, I'd have to look back on this, but I interviewed McGovern in and around the funeral and McGovern's daughter had died of basically alcoholism and, and, no, I'm confusing that. Actually McGovern was talking about Richard Nixon. Apparently Richard Nixon had bonded with McGovern in later years after, he said Nixon had called him after his daughter had died and they'd become very close. But he also said that, you know, he and Muskie had been very, very, they both, you know, in the senate, had be-, they were friends, you know, before the, before the campaign and afterwards.

AL: What, if you look back on that, what do you think Ed Muskie's greatest contribution was?

JD: Well, in, you know, when everybody, after his funeral, his legacy, everybody mentioned the Clean Air, the environmental laws, I mean he basically invented the environmental movement. And I'm sure, you know, the story was that when he came to Washington, freshman senator, Lyndon Johnson, the majority leader said, you know, asked him, I need your vote on this

and Muskie apparently had said something to the effect, well, you know, I'm, I haven't made up my mind, or you know, I'm going to vote my own way. And as punishment Lyndon Johnson put him on environment and public works, which was like a dead end committee and he had taken that committee to, used it to create the environmental movement.

And I, I remember, I mean I know, I've no, we, growing up in Bridgton we played in a football league, we played Jay, played Madison, Mexico. We'd come up to Rumford and play and there were places, you know, you had to, felt like you needed an oxygen mask in addition to a helmet to play there. And, you know, I, you know, growing up in Maine you knew what the craft mills were and the. . . . I remember covering Old Town city council, very intelligent councilor, he was an engineer at the Penobscot Paper Company, and the Penobscot goes right through Old Town. And he said, "You know, the river is," there was discussions about clean up, the city of Old Town was going to have to spend money for sewage. He says, "It's, forget it." He said, "The river is only good for one thing now. It may have been, you know, a hundred years ago it might have been, you know, something else, but it's an open running sewer now. Let's just, let's just accept that as a fact, we're not going to, we don't have enough money to clean the God damn thing up, let's just go with it." And this was, it was the late sixties.

And I thought (*unintelligible word*), came up to Maine after the funeral and, one, when I go back to Washington I go through Rangeley, Berril, New Hampshire, and to Berlin, St. Johnsbury. And I take ninety, interstate ninety one and it's, there's an area where you're just going across the border and you're on the New Hampshire side and you're coming down, and there's this beautiful river. You would look at it and, it's the Androscoggin. It is totally pure and, and the idea, I relate the Androscoggin growing up in Maine, Livermore Falls and Lisbon and Mexico; it was a sewer when I was in high school and in college. And you lose sight of the fact that, you know, at the headwaters up here it's such a beautiful river. And now, you know, years, twenty, twenty, thirty years later, the Penobscot when it goes through Bangor now and the Androscoggin going through Lewiston, it is, you know, those rivers are, you know, they're rivers again. And, you know, that's his, I think his, you know, probably his, you know, his legacy. You know, he invented the movement which, which we claim and it's not just in Maine, it's all over the country. That's probably what he'd be the most proud of.

AL: Any final words?

JD: Well, I don't know, this is probably a pretty good place to end it.

AL: Yeah, I think I've more than taken your time here.

JD: Well, as long as it's not one thirty yet.

AL: I don't think so.

JD: No, I don't think it is, it's, (*unintelligible phrase*).

AL: Okay, thank you very much.

JD: Well thank you, it was a pleasure.

End of Interview