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## Rines, Brian oral history interview

Jeremy Robitaille

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## **Interview with Brian Rines by Jeremy Robitaille**

*Summary Sheet and Transcript*

### **Interviewee**

Rines, Brian

### **Interviewer**

Robitaille, Jeremy

### **Date**

July 12, 2001

### **Place**

Augusta, Maine

### **ID Number**

MOH 286

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### **Biographical Note**

Brian Rines was born on August 30, 1941 in Gardiner, Maine to Fred and Catherine Rines. Fred Rines was the postmaster in Gardiner and also worked on Muskie's gubernatorial campaigns. Catherine Rines served as social secretary for Jane Muskie from 1955 to 1958. Rines became involved with politics at an early age from his parents' interaction with political figures, and from the influence of professors at Bowdoin College, his *alma mater*. Rines is an active Democrat and was elected mayor of Gardiner in 1992.

### **Scope and Content Note**

Interview includes discussions of: Brian's mother, Catherine Rines, who was social secretary for Jane Muskie; Bowdoin College; his father's campaign work for Muskie; driving Muskie stories; Muskie's public speaking abilities; Muskie's environmental support ("Mr. Clean"); Gardiner, Maine community; Democratic Party in Maine; and Brian's time as mayor of Gardiner.

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## **Transcript**

**Jeremy Robitaille:** We are here at the office of Brian Rines in Augusta, Maine on July 12th, 2001, and interviewing is Jeremy Robitaille. Mr. Rines, to start out could you please for the record state your name and spell it?

**Brian Rines:** My name is Brian Rines, and my last name is spelled R-I-N-E-S.

**JR:** Thank you very much. And what is your date and place of birth?

**BR:** I was born in Gardiner [Maine] on August 30th, 1941.

**JR:** And what are your parents' names?

**BR:** My father's name is Fred, my mother's name is Katherine, both Rines.

**JR:** And where are they from originally?

**BR:** My father was born in Gardiner, and my mother was born in Leeds, but actually grew up in Nova Scotia.

**JR:** Okay, and what were their occupations?

**BR:** My father was a postal career employee and terminated his employment, retired from the post office as the postmaster in Gardiner having spent about forty years or so with the postal service. And my mother has been a social secretary to Jane Muskie, and has a degree in music education I think, and then was, probably spent twenty years as a music, roving music educator

with the school district that included Richmond, Richfield, Wales, all those little towns kind of southwest of Gardiner.

**JR:** Okay.

**BR:** And she's also retired now.

**JR:** Okay, tell me about your mother's involvement with Jane Muskie, when did she serve as her social secretary?

**BR:** I believe '54 to '58, whenever Ed got elected governor, Jane, my mother interviewed for the job, was immediately hired in the Blaine House and served in the Blaine House all the time that he was governor, and I think those were the years.

**JR:** And what were her major responsibilities as social secretary for Jane Muskie?

**BR:** I don't think I really know accurately, but they have a tea a day and they have various dignitaries who, probably was less, more casual than it is today but various dignitaries show up and they've got to put on a particular social front and atmosphere and it was my mother's job to make sure, as I understood it, it was my mother's job to make sure that it happened the way it was supposed to and people were, went home thinking nicely of the Blaine House and the Muskies.

**JR:** And do you know of like, of what contact she had with Ed Muskie?

**BR:** My presumption is that it was daily. I mean, she was in the Blaine House, they lived in the Blaine House, at least a couple of the kids were there as school age kids then, and they, and my mother's office was in the Blaine House. Ed operated out of the Blaine House, unlike some of our recent governors, and it's my understanding there was at least routine contact if not daily how-are-you-doing social contact.

**JR:** And, did you get a sense, like, perhaps maybe like stories she told or anecdotes of like, of say like her impressions of Ed Muskie or other people who were there at the time, like maybe legislators or maybe some of these dignitaries that came to the Blaine House?

**BR:** I know that she was initially somewhat humbled by their presence, and soon came to realize that they were just other people like her, like she, and as time passed I think got very comfortable with the idea of doing that job and being with those people. My personal mentor, if you will, at Bowdoin College, or the faculty member that I felt closest to and probably inspired me more than anybody else, or as much as anybody else, was a guy named Paul Hazelton, and Paul was one of the kind of kitchen cabinet advisors. Frank Coffin was somebody that I knew casually then and he was, or my parents knew and I as a fifteen-year-old, sixteen, seventeen-year-old, certainly knew him and worked casually in his campaigns then and later. And I know she talked, always talked of him positively.

I know at one point in time we were cleaned out of our house with the idea that Adlai Stevenson

might be coming in for some sort of conference, and I don't even know if it was, how quiet it was, but it turned out that either he didn't appear or he went some-, they found some other accommodations for him. But he was, they were going to have this seemingly quiet political conference and they wanted to be off campus and that was an easy way to do it. And as I tell that story I think it may have even been, my family owns a house at Pemaquid, it may have even been they were going to go down to the ocean house to do that but, that's a pretty wobbly story.

**JR:** Okay, what particular campaigns of Frank Coffin's did you work on?

**BR:** Too long to remember. I mean I've never, not been involved in a congressional campaign since I was about fourteen years old. And at a pretty amateur, pretty ordinary level, I've gotten more sophisticated, more involved as I've gotten older, but then I remember going to county fairs and saying would you like to meet the next governor of Maine, here's Maynard Dolloff, you know, and we'd grab people and carry them over to Maynard and get him to shake hands, or we'd carry over Frank Coffin at, again, county fairs, I did a county fair circuit when I was in high school and college introducing people to the candidates. And then I was a very low level, very ordinary (*unintelligible word*).

**JR:** What are your impressions of, or what can you tell me about Paul Hazelton?

**BR:** Paul was just a nice man. He was a very, very nice man who was an esteemed faculty member at Bowdoin, and he was a graduate of the college, went off to war, I believe, came back to Bowdoin, founded and, I think he was the only staff member, but I might be wrong, in the so-called department of education and he taught some, which I guess today would be called social science courses that kind of evolved around the socio cultural, political, psychological aspects of education.

We certainly had a department of sociology and government and we had those and Paul was off there by himself. At one time, maybe even then, he was the only full professor who only had a master's degree. I think he was held in very high regard by his colleagues, I think he was a scholarly guy, but he also was the kind of guy who would sit down and have a beer or a cup of coffee with you.

And he was a little bit unique in that I had an interest even then, which I followed by going to, we had a state hospital for mentally retarded kids,- and this is another, Ed Muskie is involved in the second part of this story,- but when I graduated from Bowdoin I was supposed to go in the Peace Corps. And when I took my physical about, Jesus, about two weeks before my graduation, I flunked my physical because of a skiing injury to one of my knees and the fact that I'm functionally literally blind I guess you'd say now, if I don't have my glasses. And they were going to send me, I had been assigned to somewhere in Colombia, I think they even told me where I was going, some God-, it certainly wasn't Bogota, it was out in the middle of nowhere. And this was, what, forty-five years ago, there was even then civil war raging there. And so they turned me down, and so I went to Paul and I went to some other people and they immediately greased me this job at Pineland as a very junior psychologist assistant. And so that was long before, well I started my doctorate the next year.

But I, and Paul had a son who was clearly impaired, I never knew him clinically or professionally, but he was obviously impaired and had been kind of adopted by the college and even by the community as, and I don't remember his name any more even, as a guy who was a, just goofy and not very smart but pleasant and presentable and we'd, you'd give him a buck and he'd go get your pizza, or if you've left some books he'd go get them for you, and kind of hung around the edges of the campus and went to hockey games with his mother and father, and Ruth was a very gracious woman. And they were just really nice people. And Paul I think had some affection for me after I graduated, because I stayed in touch with him until his death a couple of years ago. But I continued both in clinical psychology but also had a special interest in mental retardation for many years. I was had a (*unintelligible phrase*) fellowship in mental retardation and worked in that area until I drifted out of it. When they, by the time I got back to Maine they'd closed, were starting, they closed the part of Pineland that I'd worked in so I never went back there, and ended up doing what I'm doing now.

But, so we had a quasi-professional relationship. But Paul really was the guy who along with another professor there who didn't have anything to do with Ed Muskie other than he was an incredibly solid Democrat, I know this is a bit of a reach, but he kind of taught me how to think and forced me to put some rigidity to what I was doing and how I was acting and how I was writing. And that's turned out to be real important to me. I mean, I've had three or four men in my life who've done that academically, but Paul was the first one who kind of said, you seem real bright, you also seem real scattered, here's what you need to do.

**JR:** And who was that other professor that you were alluding to?

**BR:** A guy named Dodge Burnalton, was a psychologist who, somebody told me that Governor King lives in the house that Dodge used to live in, but don't quote me on that. He lived right off campus, as did Paul. No, Paul lived in Topsham then.

**JR:** You mentioned that Paul Hazelton worked for Muskie like in the, probably the executive council. Do you know in what capacity?

**BR:** No, I don't even know if he was appointed, because we did, probably did have the governor's council then. Maybe he was in that. But there were half a dozen men I believe, mostly men probably then, who, and I know they met at our house in Gardiner a couple of times, or may-, at the ocean a couple of times for cookouts, and I remember Frank, I remember Paul, I remember the Lee guy who sells cars in Lewiston.

**JR:** Shep Lee?

**BR:** Shep Lee, but I didn't, never got to know him. Don might have been, Nicoll might have even been involved then. But there were a half a dozen men who I would just call the kitchen cabinet, who were bright academic, or bright business men who were outside of politics that, if you're a good politician you've got someone around you can talk to, or a leader. You know, they aren't in a hierarchy and if you want a real world view or a different view you go to them. And I think that's some of them, and undoubtedly Ed had them scattered all over the state. But...

**JR:** So, sort of like an unofficial advisor.

**BR:** I think so, I think so. I mean, I know that all of us have people we turn to for advice, and I suspect that if you're a governor or a senator they take on a special, takes on a special cache and importance to have those people I think. And Paul was the one that I knew best, and as I said, I fronted as an advance, I wasn't even the advance man, as a *flunky* working with an advance man for Frank Coffin. He went to Congress a couple of times and then, as you may know now he's the senior judge in this circuit on the appeals court, and is revered by the Bar for his wisdom and ability to get, to take care of business. Everybody still talks of him with absolute reverence. Should have been on the Supreme Court and didn't get there, that kind of thing.

**JR:** Okay, backtracking a little. Was your father at all involved in politics, and if so in what capacity?

**BR:** My father was involved as a city council member and the school board member, and as a federal employee under what was, the rules they had back, he could not get involved in partisan politics formally. But he did do some, he's a math wizard and, you know, he's the kind of guy you give him four, I don't know if he could do it today, but three three-digit numbers and tell him to multiply them, and in the old mechanical calculator days, adding machine days, you know, you came and pull a crank and the piece of paper would advance, my father could do those sums in his head faster than at least mechanical calculators could. And he was an accountant by professional training. And he had some sort of role in the background on election night where today you have sophologists who have got a database with every voting ward in Maine and every single polling station and the counts, and they're doing exit polling and everything else, and in those days I think Dad kind of looked at numbers and helped people figure out, these are the twenty-five important wards we need to look at, and to kind of sit around on election night, break down the numbers and hand them to somebody and they say, "Gee, we're really doing well in ward seven in Lewiston, boy, that's a good sign." And my father would figure out the statistics and tell people what it meant. But it was very unofficial and I think very much behind the scenes because of his job. But he certainly instilled in my brother and I, he was probably that same generation that Muskie was, of we took something out of the pot and one of the ways to put it back is community service. I think if he had been a businessman as opposed to being a federal civil servant he might have run for the legislature, because he certainly, with the Muskie position and his, now at the same time he was on the city council and school board in Gardiner, all of our table conversations at night and chats always revolved around government and politics. And certainly Ed Muskie as the first successful Democrat in any of our lives inspired that.

**JR:** What were his views on Muskie?

**BR:** Well, I think everybody, well probably everybody didn't, but I think everybody revered the guy, I mean as a person. He was, turned the system upside down with his force of personality and his leadership, and his ability to work the system to both a partisan and a public advantage and I think that, at least in my household and everybody I knew, that was the grounds for superior, supreme accolades for wonderful leadership. And I know that my father had another scam going as a postmaster, that before the post office changed, senators and congressmen and members used to track how long a piece of mail took to go from Washington to

Gardiner, or Portland to Gardiner. And Senator Muskie would, or I remember specifically Senator Smith, I don't remember as much for Muskie, but I know Smith did the same thing, would call the postmaster and say, "There's a piece of mail coming to you, open that mail and toss that letter that's addressed to me back in the bin. And then you can get it, and tell me when you got it, write it down and send that to me." So they were kind of keeping an eye on two things: how fast the local post offices responded, and then they would sometimes ask for us to send, us being local people, to send mail to them and see how fast we responded to them.

My parents are literally as we speak moving out of this house they've lived in for sixty years and so they're finding all sorts of stuff, and the other day my father came over and slapped a manila envelope down on my kitchen table, literally, that was correspondence he had had with Ed Muskie in 1963 that involved me. He said, "I thought you might be interested in this." And when I flunked out of the Peace Corps, there were probably ten letters went back and forth between, because the Bowdoin physician said, "No problem. Sure, he's got a funny knee but big deal, he was able to play intramural athletics, and I certified him, if he'd been good enough I'd certify him to play regular stuff." And my family physician said, I don't know, seemingly said the same thing, I haven't seen their documents, but my father made reference to them and Senator Muskie made reference to them. And so my father's writing Muskie and saying, "Could you figure out what's going on here, we don't understand. Certainly if this is going to be a dangerous assignment we don't want Brian there, but on the other hand, what happened?" And so there were these three or four letters from each of them went back and forth. There were a lot of letters, my father was playing postmaster again and was talking about some correspondence they had about mail and mail speed, and made some reference to that in a paragraph. And then there was yet another letter in which my father is talking about his disappointment that Ed Muskie's staff was not responding to some constituents' concern as fast as my father, you know, basically said, "Look, the post office is doing its job getting stuff back and forth. What's going on with your staff, how come they haven't answered this person's concerns?" And then there, and there was another letter came back from Ed, again talking about me but in the last paragraph he said, "Thank you for your concern about this other issue, I'm sure, I want to assure you I'm taking care of it," and, "Please be careful to reassure your, our constituents, that this won't happen again."

And then there was another letter where my mother wrote and she was seemingly annoyed that a letter had been signed by an auto pen. And I know they were in existence because we had gone to Washington and gotten into the office somewhere and seen the gizmo then, which was an incredibly complicated device that ran off some cams. But Ed had written back to her and said, "In spite of the tone of that letter, there is a possibility that this letter was in fact automatically generated and please be assured that I read them all even though I may not personally sign them," or words to that effect.

And so they had that kind of colloquy, and as I think about that auto pen device, I had unique opportunity on two occasions, one of them to change my personal history, and another one, American history. In the spring of 1959 I'm graduating from high school, and we stayed at the Muskie house wherever they were living, we went down there. My, I believe my, both my parents, my brother and myself, but I don't know that everybody, I think everybody must have been. Anyway, we stayed at the Muskie house wherever it was, and one day we were driving



somewhere, and I'm a relative pick-em-up shit kicker from Maine in 1959, I know nothing, and there's no interstates in Maine that's nothing. And I nearly get us all killed merging into some traffic in downtown Washington, or coming in from the suburbs or something. And I remember Ed's, I remember Senator Muskie's famous profanity and temper tantrum-ness bubbling up for a minute as he excoriated me for this bone head, why-you-tryin'-to-get-us-all-killed statement. And it was over in thirty seconds.

Then in 197-, I hated Nixon and still hate Nixon with a passion I can't explain or understand. But part of it is, I missed the enemies list by fifty bucks. Because part of the enemies list is that you had a cap on federal spending and if you exceeded that cap you were reported to the equivalent of the federal elections commission. I don't know what it is any more. I was a resident at a medical, at a big hospital in Chicago when Muskie was getting ready to run for president. And I was sending him fifty bucks a month, and I, my recollection is that the cap was five hundred dollars when they went to the elections commission, it might have been two-fifty, but whatever it was I stopped fifty dollars short of the cap or I'd have been on the Nixon enemies list! Because part of it was they took the people in the United States who had donated to Ed Muskie's campaign. We were part of that group that they were going to, God knows what they would have done to us, I mean, they wouldn't have done anything to us. But, so Ed might have touched my life, Senator Muskie might have touched that in my life because, I mean, my political career might have been enhanced by being a member of Nixon's hated whatever that number was. But I didn't hate Nixon because of that, I mean.

**JR:** Now, this list, was this like one of the, coming out...

**BR:** It was part, it was a big part of the Watergate scandal, and it was just part of the venom and vendetta that Nixon always had about everything that was never not suffused with some sort irrelevant paranoia. And Muskie came out of the '68 campaign as a very, very legitimate candidate for president. And while we didn't have the perpetual campaign then, I don't think there was ever a period between '68 and '72 that everybody in Maine thought Ed Muskie would be the next president of the United States.

And then another personal recollection that my father laid on me, that Muskie was a brilliant, the technical term might be like solographer. He knew words better than anybody I've ever listened to. And my father used to encourage me and my brother to develop our vocabulary so that, why use nine words when one will do. He liked Senator Muskie, because apparently there never was a time when Senator Muskie did not, he didn't feel, apparently, and I don't know this because I wasn't paying attention, never dumbed things down, never felt the need to be artificially humble. And that, and alternatively was not superfluous or officious in his use of language. I mean, he didn't use sethquindaily or some fancy word like that if it didn't fit and wasn't appropriate. And my guess is he probably used it more in written than in the spoken language, but I know that's something, and I use that same example with my kids. One can learn in the English speaking world learn the language and be like Senator Muskie.

And certainly that's never left me: "Why use nine words when one will do?" If my father said that to me once, he said it to me three hundred times while we were teenagers and college students, and that was our model. And I actually don't believe, with one exception, that I have

ever read a piece of Senator Muskie's writings, but when he was secretary of state, when are we talking about now, I think it was the Joe Brennan first gubernatorial campaign.

**JR:** That sounds about right.

**BR:** We had a convention in Bangor and Phil Merrill was running against Brennan in the primaries. But the big event was that sometime in the middle of the afternoon somebody stood up and said, we have an incredibly special treat. Senator Muskie, Secretary of State Muskie, is coming back from somewhere, at least from Europe. The plane is going to, was scheduled to refuel at Dow Air Force Base. "He has agreed," and who knows, maybe this is all cooked up months in advance but, "He has agreed to come to the convention, leave the plane, come over and speak to us." Now seemingly, this was fairly an extemporaneous or unplanned stop, and for what seemed like, and I know it was at least forty-five minutes, he spoke in a logical, rational, linear, emotional, political fashion about the foreign policy of the United States and the impact it had on the state of Maine, each of its people, and how lucky we were to be Americans, that kind of speech. Extemporaneously without going, um, uh, what am I going to say next kind of stuff. It was, I mean that's how, what an orator does. And I remember then thinking about my father's exhortation about language, and that may have been the first time as an adult, because by then I'm thirty-five years old or something, of I'm realizing what an incredible guy this is. This guy that I used to wash cars for, who I tried to kill once, etcetera, here I was and he was up there doing his thing.

Libby Mitchell, who is a Maine politician who sadly we're, seemingly not going to be able to find a place for her due to time and chance, seems to have that same ability. Libby can stand up and orate with just stunning clarity and grab your heart and your mind, and Ed certainly did that that day, it was phenomenal. We'd have carried him out on our shoulders, could have lugged him right out of the room, every one of us.

And it was phenomenal, too, because we had, I don't know how long we, we certainly didn't have pillars in the United States Senate. Like we've had a couple in the last couple of terms but, I mean go back to American history, 1870s, to the turn of the century, that previous century, Maine was, when Republicans in the northeast ran the country, we had those kind of people all the time in Washington and so he was one of our guys to, who had seized it and was leading our country in incredibly important and diverse roles. Everybody, that was really an incredibly touching element for hundreds of us, you know, and I put aside for a few minutes the partisan politics of how lucky we were to have somebody like him. And I, George Mitchell is one of my personal heroes and I got to know George moderately as I was an officer, chief officer of the state association. We did a lot of lobbying in Washington, I spent a lot of time the year I was chairman of the Maine Hospital Association. I went to Washington about once a month, and always met with Senator Mitchell. He had some of those same skills, and I think he may have been a harder nosed, harder assed politician than, partisan politician than Ed Muskie was.

But I read something recently about Muskie's, Mr. Clean name was not casually earned, that to get his environmental movement, Earth Day movement, started that there was some blood on some floors and back rooms to do that, which I hadn't thought much about. But clearly he overturned a way that we looked at ourselves and our communities, and our industry and our

people, and you do not do things like that easily because a lot of pressure groups were not at all interested I'm sure in what he had to say. In fact I remember when we had the so-called environmental movement start here in Maine, I must have been a college student. No, my first year of graduate school at the University of Maine because it was 1964 that Senator Muskie was senator, that movement was going on. And I remember there was a debate at the library at the university, and I'm certain he wasn't there, but I just remember some Maine politician basically saying he has shown us the way and we either have to decide whether we're going to allow ourselves to be an industrial cesspool of the Western world, or we're going to change things and maintain the purity and sanctity of our environment, while keeping jobs, and it is possible and we must do it, and Senator Muskie said we must do it. And therefore that happened, you know, that drove a whole generation of people. It still does, I presume, people who are interested in the environmental, so-called environmental movement.

And I remember the guy, he's a prominent banker in Waterville and, he's probably retired now, but he was the son of the guy who ran the Nature Bank in Bangor who made that statement at that time. And I remember a light bulb going on in my head that said, "Yeah, why do the rivers all have to be dirty when they can be clean?" And, "We can still run paper mills," and "what are they talking about?"

I am very fortunate to own a house literally on the banks of the Kennebec River. Been there for twenty-five years, and the reason I bought that house was, when I bought it in '74, the following year the Clean Water standards were going to go into effect. And when I was a youngster and you fell in the Kennebec River in Gardiner, the first thing they did was take you to the hospital, Gardiner General Hospital in those days, and you got a typhoid shot and whatever they gave you because, you know, it was just presumed that the river was unsafe to be in and anybody who went in the river was likely to get some deadly disease. And they *literally* took you down to your doctor and you got a whole bunch of shots. And in '75, it was '74 when we actually bought the house, maybe it was '73, we knew that the thing was coming. And I have a document in my house signed by another one of Ed's people, Senator Muskie's people, who, I can't think of the guy's, he was the first commissioner of environmental protection here in Maine, and we had a straight pipe into the river which meant you flushed your toilet and it ended up in the Kennebec River, and we had a discharge permit that I framed and put up in my bathroom that basically says, you can do this until this day, and on that day you must no longer do that, and the city of Gardiner in the meantime got a large federal grant to build a sewer treatment plant. So that, you want to come to my house some warm summer afternoon and unless there has been some strange occurrence, the Kennebec River is safe to swim in. And boating and fishing and recreate in, whatever you want to do. And that just wasn't, Bill Tracy who is a neighbor of mine talks about painting his house white on the very day that a paper mill in Gardiner, there were three of them in Gardiner when I was a kid, three of them, we either used the term cleaned their tanks or flushed their tanks, I don't remember which it was, but whatever it was they released all these chemicals into the air and it used casually to be called the smell of money, but whatever that chemical was it turned Bill's freshly painted white house a yellowish-brownish hue. Chemical reaction, you know, hitting on fresh paint.

**JR:** Wow.

**BR:** Yeah, you betcha. That won't happen any more, and Ed, Senator Muskie was one of the people who said we can have clean air, clean water, clean streets and still have jobs, and that's basically right. I guess we're still fighting over details in the edges but. He probably made a deal with Senator Byrd and a couple other people about to get cold for a while, but we're going to catch up with those guys one of these days, too.

**JR:** All right, what can you tell me about growing up in Gardiner, like how it was politically, socially, economically, and how it's changed over the years?

**BR:** Seemed like a nice place to grow up. I was clearly part of the middle class, my parents were, never wanted anything, always had, I mean we certainly weren't affluent but we weren't poor. And I know there were people who referred to us a wealthy. I think it probably was rare in 1954 or so to be, or '55, to be a two-car family because in '47 most families didn't even have a car. We had two by the time my mother went to work for Senator Muskie, or right after she went. Probably it was a commuting vehicle for her.

I just remember an idyllic, wonderful growing up. My father was, my great grandfather, my grandfather, and my father were all city council members involved in city government, they were all actively involved in a middle-of-the-road Baptist church as leaders of that church. My father was moderator of the annual meeting for I think, he just retired after fifty or six-, some ungodly period of time. My grandmother was a person who taught piano lessons in her home, my mother was a professional musician before she hooked up with Muskie so there was a lot of music around. And my grandmother was very politically active, but as a Republican.

**JR:** What was her name?

**BR:** Ruth Rines. She wasn't a partisan Republican, she was just politically active and clearly was a Republican and everybody knew it. But she ran things like she was state boss of the DAR and the Daughters of the Colonial War and the Huguenots, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union and all those gangs, my grandmother was a member, a state leader of in her fifties and sixties. So in some sense I grew up with a clear political commitment to taking care of business and came home. My brother's been a selectman in a community near here -

**JR:** What's his name?

**BR:** His given name is Kincaid, and his street name is Rudy Rines. But, and I've been involved in city government in one way or another for twenty-five years, and some of that is, undoubtedly some portion of that is the kind of Muskie-Mitchell model of you take something out of the pot and you put something back. It's kind of my hobby. Some people collect stamps and go kayaking where I'm collecting community government. So I don't remember a lot about it. It was a really nice place to grow up. Dogs, cats, I remember we'd play city common, city police.

**JR:** All right. Through your many years of political involvement, what sense do you have of how the political atmosphere in Gardiner has changed, and perhaps even Maine, too, in all your years of involvement?

**BR:** Certainly Gardiner has changed in that there was a time recently where there were only two out of eight of us on the city council and the mayor elected at large, and there are seven city council members, there were only two of us who were from town, and like five of us, four of us were from away. That never would have happened fifty years ago, I mean it was a genera-, my grandfather, my great grandfather, my father, that kind of thing. I don't have any doubt there were also doves who got elected city councilor in the forties, fifties and sixties, but, and I think I, I don't know whether I learned this because I was part of the hippie movement, or whether I learned some of this because of Ed Muskie, but I clearly believe and practice a form of politics that says no secrets, no surprises, and try to have as open, clear, direct and regular and honest no bullshit relationship with the press. I believe those, some of that came from Paul Hazelton who was, people are our friends, not our adversaries. And if you mess up, you might as well admit it and get on with business and figure out what you're going to do next. Got an error, got a problem, fix it and get on. And if it's bad enough then maybe you don't deserve to hold this job, you know, if you're a true bonehead then maybe you shouldn't be doing this. And if you've got a bonehead set of errors or a streak that says you're a repetitive bonehead then maybe instead of lying about it and trying to cover it up or whatever people do, maybe you should get out. And we've been lucky in that we haven't messed up a lot and whenever we have we've, and that certainly wasn't true when I joined the city council in 1980. It is, I believe that it is firmly ingrained right now with the gang I run with and, who knows, let's hope that continues.

*End of Side A*  
*Side B*

**JR:** Okay, you mentioned -

**BR:** And I suspect that his presence on the Maine scene made it possible for there to be two-party government, and two-party government clearly limits secrets and surprises. And that doesn't mean that there aren't, I'm certainly a yellow dog Democrat as close to it as you can be, except the (*unintelligible word*). And I proclaim myself to be a yellow dog Democrat, although there have been occasions in my life where I've closed my eyes, bit my tongue, and voted for a Republican. We didn't have any of that choice for a long time in Maine, and we have it now, and it forces us to run responsible people and forces us to be a responsible political presence. And he made that possible. And I think that we have been, obviously had people, but while (*name*) was alive (*unintelligible word*) who say he didn't live up to both his expectations or mine, or yours perhaps, but an average student.

And I'm sure that, I tell people, I read the *Boston Globe* every day because at least our local newspaper didn't have a lot of world news, that there may be some corruption in Maine but having people as him, as Billy Cohen, as George Mitchell, as Joe Brennan, even McKernan and now King, we've had a level, John Reed, I mean they're all real honest people who are setting a tone that says we may have parties in rancor but we won't have corruption and malfeasance. And I think that, I spent what was it, five years in Chicago I think, and five years in South Carolina when I was away getting educated, and those surely weren't the rules there, those surely weren't the rules there. And I think here it is. I mean, I would be just absolutely, I wonder what it would do my head and my soul if I discovered that somebody was bribing a member of the planning

board that I appointed for some permits. And you read about it every week in the *Globe*. Someone in Massachusetts, somebody's brother-in-law is giving somebody some money so they can move a boundary or want to do something to build something. I just can't imagine that kind of thing happening in Maine and part of it is the kind of leadership that people like Senator Muskie, and Governor Muskie, provided. Those are our icons and we're not going to tarnish their integrity, it's part of you. And I think that if you're a young Republican in Maine you can say the same kind of things about Margaret Chase Smith or Billy Cohen, without any hesitation at all that that's the kind of things they stood for and they did.

**JR:** How about Olympia Snowe?

**BR:** Yeah, yeah. But, I mean, I don't know that Olympia, well Olympia is a, I have a friendly relationship with Olympia because her, the Snowe in her name was my cousin, Peter, she was married to my cousin and he was killed in (*unintelligible word*) in '73. But, so Olympia and I, and my uncle is her foster father for all practical purposes. I don't know that he has literally adopted her, but he certainly has, the only person who has, her parents died in her toddler years I think, and then she married into my uncle's family and my uncle is an incredibly warm, gregarious, wonderful man. And when Peter died, it's okay that Peter died, well it's the worse thing in the world that Peter died, but you will always be a member of our family. And he has, I know that Olympia, when she goes for a winter vacation in Florida stays with them, she and Jock.

My daughters certainly hold her up as a model of something we can be. And I don't think that that is solely the function of her being a member of the family. Because we have family reunions, we have parties, and Olympia shows up. In fact we had one last Sunday and Olympia was supposed to be there but something happened and she called my mother and said, "I can't come." But I'm sure that Olympia has an impact on my daughters, and lots of other young women, that she doesn't necessarily have on me because we're kind of, we're literally peers by age. And as I think about it, there probably is the same age spread between my kids, my youngest daughter turned twenty- one yesterday literally so there's, what, thirty years, thirty-four years between her and Olympia, and that was probably the spread between me and Senator Muskie and me and Margaret Chase Smith, somewhere in that range, I mean they clearly were another generation advanced. And so Olympia, and who knows, maybe Susan will do it, too, but Olympia's been around since the late seventies, is part of the picture because she got appointed and ran for Peter's seat and then when Billy ran for the Senate of course she ran for the House and then, you know, danced their chairs.

**JR:** Okay. You mentioned for a time that you were, was it chairman of the Maine Hospital Association?

**BR:** Yeah.

**JR:** And that you went to Washington, down to Washington for a month. First, when did you serve as chairman?

**BR:** '90, '91 I think, maybe it's '90, '92. That's why I'm wearing the gray hairs of history.

**JR:** And with your frequent trips to -

**BR:** No, no, I can tell you when it was. It had to have been '92 because Billy Clinton had just been elected president, and it was all the madness and mayhem of the Clinton health care plan.

**JR:** Okay, and what brought you down to Washington so often, like, were you lobbying for something, and -

**BR:** Well, I went down to represent a perspective of Maine's hospitals that we wanted our elected representatives to hear because most hospitals in Maine still get a preponderant amount of their income from Medicare and Medicaid, and so federal regulations have a lot to do with whether we go broke or not. And ultimately they determine what kind of health care my mother and my next door neighbor get, because it's, I was dealing with bureaucrats in Washington over elected representatives, but, you, come back a thousand miles from there and you're still talking about Gardiner-Augusta, Maine and General Medical Center and what kind of money we're going to have and how we're going to get paid for that and how we're going to use it. And somebody over at the hospital, if you went and talked with him, would tell you the general Medicare rates are three feet tall and require, you know, two porters to carry them from one room to another. I mean, that is literally true. I mean, I don't know if they're three feet tall, they might be seven and they might be three and a half, but there's certainly a lot of papers that, hospital billing, surgical and, all the procedures, not just, the whole bureaucracy does not want to govern what happens in hospitals. And we, of course, have hired the smartest people we can and I try to get an edge and get a buck out of them that we think we deserve, and that was part of my job was to go down and lead delegations of hospital trustees, which I was so it, hospital leaders, and make our plea. And somewhere along that time Senator Mitchell was on the finance committee, which is important because they write Medicare legislation, and then he was majority leader, which made him king of the hill. He's a wonderful guy.

And I know I read all the time that he was an incredibly effective partisan senator but I didn't see that. I saw a guy who was advocating for Maine and Maine hospitals and trying to make the system work.

**JR:** Okay, and in your involvement with that and other like health care related institutions, what sense did you have of how politics was affecting, like you mentioned this a little bit with how Maine gets a lot of the money for Medicare and Medicaid, but what was your sense of how, I guess maybe how it's changing in relation, Maine in relation to the country and perhaps within Maine itself?

**BR:** Well I don't think hospitals, hospitals don't like regulation. Hospitals see regulations as a governmental trick to control, a governmental effort to further control their, not just their purse strings but their behavior, and generally see that as a Democratic endeavor rather than a Republican one. And it's inside and I was frequently down there two weeks, two or three weeks ago and, again on a hospital gig, and I'm, and there'll be fifteen or so men and women and I'll still be the only Democrat. Because it's, you know, it's big money, it's a billion dollar effort in Maine, hospitals, it's big money and a lot of very powerful pressure groups are involved and they

started, Tecno in 1988, '87, started to rigorously control the delivery of health care because those of us in the hospital family don't want to do it. And since we don't want to police our own ethics and control our own costs and control our own expenditures, they're saying since we're the piper we're going to call the tune.

And I belong to a relatively small group that says, since they are the piper and since they are calling the tune, and they don't like the tune, why don't we write ourselves our own music and see if we can't get them to adopt our tune rather than theirs, instead of constantly saying you're such a bad goddamn orchestra we hope you go away. Let's try to- but that's not effectively put. It's hard to negotiate with cops and it's hard to negotiate who are usually, cops who are far away but I would certainly have advocated, it's hard to say, I couldn't still do the, some of these regulations could be avoided.

I was involved in the bottle drive, was that in 1988? And a good friend of mine was the chief lobbyist and brain keeper for the bottle redemp-, the empty bottle redem-, he worked for the bottlers and I remember, and you ought to interview Irv Faunce if you haven't.

**JR:** What was that again?

**BR:** Irv Faunce, F-A-U-N-C-E. And you can find him now because he's a member of the board of commissioners of the Department of Environmental Protection. But Irv is a peer of mine who's been involved in community politics all along, and you know, he went to those guys and it kind of taught me a lesson. If somebody is onerously trying to restrict your activities, instead of standing up and fighting with them all the time, maybe you should advocate for what you want and see if you can't find a middle ground. And that goes back to something Paul Hazelton taught me, that if you want to get a middle ground the guy who goes to the meeting with a written proposal is the guy who is likely to prevail if only, if you've got a written proposal and you lay it down on the table, then at least your work becomes a template for what gets done as opposed to other ideas that are flying around. Rines has written this down, let's see what it says, rather than fourteen other ideas. And I learned that from Paul, and there's no rocket science in that, I'm sure that Bismark said the same thing two hundred years ago.

But anyway, Irv I know went to the bottle gang and said, look, we're going to lose and we're going to lose big and we ought to come up with a deal for returnable bottles. And I think he will tell you they said, no way, and hospitals continue to lose big.

I mean, my mother is a living example. Ten years ago, twelve years ago, she has a heart that's going flippety-flop and she needs a new valve and Dr. Jedick who is the local cardiovascular wizard says, you need a new valve, Katherine, you're going to go to Maine Medical Center, we'll do it on November twenty-first and you will be discharged and a year later you will be feeling like new. Okay, doctor, revered god on the hill, away I go. Last year my father, who is eighty-five years old, has some funny symptoms and they want to do a job on his neck where they remount his arteries, the carotid artery, they sometimes put in stents, but at least they enlarge the arteries to make sure there's a continuing blood flow to the brain. And her response to that is basically, and again, we've got an eighty-two year old woman who looks at computers as kind of interesting devices that you play games on, you know, what are these things all about. And she



wants me to go to the Internet basically and see what I can find about endarts, and endartectomy is the name of this procedure. And, somebody must have written about that, what are the standards. I mean, and I knew there were and went to the American College of Vascular Surgeons, American College of Neurology and Neurosurgery, and sure, wizbanks all over the world that said this is what you ought to do and these are the procedures you ought to follow, these are the outcomes and these are the kinds of people who should do this to get these outcomes. So I printed it off and I handed it to her and she read it and said, what does this all mean, so we went back over it again and I underlined something, I wrote her a three-paragraph summary. And she went to her doctor and asked him some rather pointed questions, well she went to my father's doctor and asked him some rather pointed questions, which twelve years ago never would have entered her mind. The technology has put my mother in a position where now she's asking questions, and lots of other people are asking questions, and I don't know where this gets us to but hospitals still want to pretend that we've got a bunch of sheep wandering in that we're going to shear the way that we say they ought to be done. And many of, I meet with some of the smartest, most articulate, highly paid executives in this country when I go to these meetings and they say that stuff, but I know their mothers are doing the same thing to them and one of these days they're going to have to wake up and say, gee, this may not be the way it is. But we haven't gotten there yet. "We knocked off Hilary, well, we'll knock off the next one, don't worry, boys."

We still have twenty thousand more, twenty percent more hospital beds than we need in this country, and in your home town, or at least in Lewiston today they're crowing the fact that Central Maine Medical Center is about to open a two hundred thousand square foot, nine million dollar building that everybody knows we don't need to do open heart surgery in Lewiston. So that people don't have to drive to God forbid Portland and have their heart done. You know, they'll drive down there for underwear and lasagne at the Maine Mall, but they can't drive down to have their heart done so we're going to piss away an incredible amount of money and energy and whatever to satisfy Bill Young's ego, but so be it.

**JR:** Who's Bill Young?

**BR:** He's the president of Central Maine Medical Center who wants this edifice to be the edifice in this part of Maine. And hospitals are defined by the president. His wife is mayor of Lewiston, probably, of Auburn rather, and probably has some real contacts with the senator, too, because she was here during the Muskie years. But anyway, that's an aside. I don't think Ed Muskie would like what we're doing in Lewiston today.

**JR:** No? As far as?

**BR:** We're pissing away some incredibly valuable resources in the second or third poorest state in the country, a state with the highest, the lowest level of Medicare reimbursement in the country proportionally, and we're going to spend a gazillion dollars before it's over to build a facility to do procedures that are done very effectively thirty-five miles away; maybe less.

**JR:** Yeah, it definitely seemed like, from my involvement with some Democratic campaigns in the election 2000 there really was a power play on like state legislators from Lewiston and

Auburn to exert force over, like, and show that they're not pawns of the Portland legislators.

**BR:** Yeah, yeah. *Sic transit gloria* and (*unintelligible word*) Young and fifty million dollars worth. Those poor bastards in Washington County, who cares, you know. So what if they got a little bit of typhus over there. Ten minutes and I got to get out of here.

**JR:** Okay, well then I just wanted to, kind of to ask you about your time as mayor in Gardiner and just kind of like the major issues that you had to deal with and a bunch of people that you've worked with, things of that nature.

**BR:** I'm probably the best mayor they've had in my lifetime.

**JR:** What years did you serve?

**BR:** I've been mayor since the Clinton-Rines years (*joke*). I was elected in '92; I was not impeached so I'm still mayor. I think this will be my fifth term. We're representative of a thousand New England communities that had the textile mill, three paper mills, and a huge furniture and large window manufacturing facility, as well as two shoe shops, one of which made more of the standard black combat boot in WWII than any other factory in the United States. A little fact about Gardiner, Maine. And with all of that, today one paper mill exists employing fifty people. And they do a wonderful job, and there's a trash bag around here filled with white paper that I'm going to dump in their recycling bin tonight. But Gardiner was a mill town, no longer a mill town, and we, during the time I've been mayor we've gotten, with the assistance of federal people and the courage of our, some state people and our own elected officials, a two and a half million dollar grant to build a major sewer line expansion and business park which we, I think we've sold seventy-five percent of it. And we've now gotten another two and a half million dollars in state and federal grants to continue with the downtown revitalization. Any decent mayor would have made that happen. I think what I have done is allow people a chance to feel like they're part of the government, and fallen on my sword a couple times of no secrets and no surprises, and people forgave me. You just tell them what's happening and this is why it is and you ask for-. I remember a couple of years ago somebody said, I think it's George Bernard Shaw, "Why look around and look for all sorts of complicated explanations for things when simple human frailty and stupidity will do." And I don't know why- the paranoids, the paranoids are always there, and I say, look, you know, you can believe this or pull out, the simple answer is I screwed up, here I am, you know. I mean, I suggested something that didn't work, and it isn't because of Irving Oil or 7 Eleven or whatever, I simply was a bonehead that afternoon and in retrospect it was a very dumb thing to do and I wish I hadn't done it. And people say, "Well you're acting like a bonehead," and I said, "Yeah, you're right," I just said that. And, "Well, we think that you really do stupid," "You're right, I do stupid things." And then after a while they say, "Well," I say, "you're right, I agree with you." Ninety-five percent of what we do is okay, but three to five percent of it, you know, we made some errors. And people are like that, you know?

I don't know that I learned any of that from Edmund Muskie, and I don't know that there- and I know there are scads of other people around who do it. George Mitchell once came to us, and I'm sure that Senator Muskie would have said the same thing: "The hardest job in politics and

government in the United States is the local one," because, you know, I got to go to Shop 'n Save, and I got a shopping list here somewhere, I got to go to Shop 'n Save tonight and buy some stuff and there's likely to be a lot of constituents in there. And some of them are likely to have some opinions. And I'm not separated by a thousand miles and I got an auto pen writer and various other things, "Hey Rines, come here for a minute," you know. Yesterday it was bushes that were growing on the side of the road occluding a stop sign, and I said, well, here's how we're going to solve that. The city manager and me are going to go over there some night with the cutters and we'll cut those bushes back when nobody's looking. We cut the bushes back last year and DEP came down and slapped us around because we're in a coastal plain or resource protection zone and we should have gotten a permit, and we should have jumped through some DEP hoops before we cut down some really, really, ordinary, stupid, bushes. Maybe that's the downside of an environmental movement of a regulatory government, you know, it's really a pain in the ass. I mean, we can't, every time we dump some snow in the river somebody comes down and kicks us around and I said, "Jesus, you know, we're throwing the snow in the river and we're forty miles from the ocean and it flushes out every day," and it seems like a no-brainer to me. And they say, "Yeah, but then there's cigarette butts and maybe condom wrappers and God knows what else in that snow that somebody threw out on the street, and that's going in the ocean, too." And you say, "Yeah, maybe you're right. How about if we put up a fence and we'll collect all the detritus and the snow will melt and that will go in the ocean." "Well, actually we'd rather you didn't do that because, you know, the river, the ocean's got a lot of salt in it, but we don't know what'll happen if we put all this road salt in." And that's when I get up and leave the f---ing round table saying, "Jesus, these people are just -." So we spent a hundred and, let's say a hundred and fifty thousand dollars in the last four or five years developing alternative snow dumps where it melts and the salt water goes down into the aquifer anyway as opposed to going to the Atlantic Ocean which is thirty-five miles away. This is my favorite pet peeve.

But, so this equality regulation that you have to deal with, and if you lived in Utah or Arizona the DEP would consist of the governor's sister-in-law and nine clerks and that would be the end of it. And you drive through Utah and there are, you know, mining tailings that are forty stories high and five miles long and you say, where are those DEP and then you remember they don't have any regulations. Every time some president tries to impose some federal ones they try to shoot the federal marshals that show up. So, we live in the northeast, got three hundred years of government, got a lot of regulation and we have to live with it. But, I certainly learned it from my parents, I think my parents belong to the same political philosophy that Senator Muskie did that said you got to be open, real, and honest and you do that with people enough and they'll actually trust their government and be proud of it, you know. And the saddest thing is when you have, Waterville's had a run of crooks as mayor over the last ten years. Ed's hometown even, you know. I'm sure he would roll over in his grave if he looked at some of those people who were not dealing honestly with the public trust, and open and directly.

And they always get caught, that's the part that just doesn't make any sense to me. One of the mayors in Waterville went down to, he was a protégé of Ed's even, went down to City Hall one night when his son got arrested for drunk and disorderly down in a Colby bar and, you know, and screaming and hollering at the police about police brutality and how you're just arresting him because he's my son and blah-blah-blah-blah-blah, and here's this shit-faced kid who, you know, should have been home in bed and was just drunk and disorderly and should have been allowed

to sleep it off and bail him out and take him home, like they did with us at Bowdoin. Probably still do in Brunswick. Maybe even do at that place you go occasionally. And, you know, instead she goes down and two days later Mayor blankety-blank threatening police, using her power inappropriately, and she should have stayed home in bed and sent her brother-in-law down with a hundred dollars to get the poor boob out of jail. Why people do that stuff and think that sooner or later it won't get to the newspaper and be on the front page is beyond me, because it always does.

**JR:** All right, well, you have to get going so it's a good place to stop.

**BR:** Yeah, I have to go to jail, see somebody who probably doesn't even know who Ed Muskie is.

**JR:** All right. Well, thank you very much.

**BR:** Yeah, my treat.

*End of Interview*  
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