

Gerald R. Ford Oral History Project
Bob Hynes
Interviewed by
Richard Norton Smith
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Smith: First of all, thank you very much for doing this. I guess the obvious place to begin is the beginning – how did your paths first cross?

Hynes: He became the Minority Leader right after the 1964 election, I think, in December at the caucus of the Republicans. I had just come to Washington. Clarence Brown, Sr., who was a ranking member of the House Rules Committee, hired me to replace his counsel who had left the committee. I was Minority counsel, and I was working strictly with committee business for a few years. But, of course, as you know, the House Rules Committee is like the unanimous consent agreements between the Senate leadership about how to organize the body, how to set the debate, rules with respect to amendments and whatnot. The Rules Committee does that in the House of Representatives.

Smith: And who was the chairman of the committee then?

Hynes: Howard W. Smith of Virginia.

Smith: Old line, southern gentleman, segregationist?

Hynes: Yes. When he didn't like being pressed by the leadership, he would go down to his country place in Broad Run, Virginia and be unavailable until he could work something out with the leadership. But anyway, when the Rules Committee would be on the floor, as they were for all the major debates, offering their resolution which would set the time of time, the hours of debate, how much time each side had, what amendments, if anything, were authorized or not authorized. And really controlled the debate. That resolution was always the first order of business, and the leadership was always down there on both sides. The Speaker was in the chair as the debate started. So Ford began to see me and that was true for the next several years.

It was after the '68 election when Nixon was elected that I first started working with Mr. Ford. The way it happened was interesting because the Voting Rights Act needed to be reauthorized. It was originally a five year pact done in 1964(?). It was time to reauthorize it. And Bill McCulloch of Ohio, the senior Republican on the Judiciary Committee, he and Manny Cellars both thought that they wanted to do just a straight reauthorization of the existing bill with minor changes. The Nixon administration, led by Attorney General John Mitchell, had substantial changes they wanted to make in the act. And therefore, the Minority staff and the ranking Minority member of the Judiciary Committee were working at cross interests to the administration. And that meant that Mr. Ford was going to have to not only open the debate, but he was going to have to lead the debate on the administration's bill.

Smith: Was it fair to say that the general thrust of the administration changes would be to weaken the bill, given the famous Southern Strategy of the Nixon White House?

Hynes: I would say it this way: more than I would say weakened, I would say that the bill provided for more freedom, if you will, if certain standards were met. They were different standards than the existing law, but it was still requirements. And they weren't letting any of the states off the hook, but they were changing some of the requirements. It certainly, from a Democratic standpoint, weakened the bill.

Smith: Okay.

Hynes: No doubt about it, but I don't think it would be fair to say - the administration bill still had some relatively stiff requirements throughout the South. So anyway, what happened was, Mr. Ford was going to have to do the debate and he did not have the floor staff in the sense that parliamentarian, legislative counsel - the kind of staff the Democrats basically had. The Republican staff just didn't exist, it wasn't authorized by the Congress. In effect, the Democrats didn't have any money for us to do it.

So anyway, Ford knowing and having seen me at my work, asked my boss if I could help him, staff him a little bit on that. And I had about two weeks, ten days to learn the Voting Rights Act. And we survived. He did a good job of covering up what I didn't know and wasn't able to help him with. At that point he wanted me to spend more and more time.

Smith: Where did he come down? Now there's this dispute between, in effect, the White House and McCulloch.

Hynes: There wasn't a dispute. They were on different sides. McCulloch liked the existing law. They weren't fighting about it. McCulloch said, "This is what I'm going to do." And the White House didn't like it, but Bill McCulloch was going to do it.

Smith: Really?

Hynes: And that's all there was to it.

Smith: And Ford went along with that?

Hynes: Ford was not going to tell somebody who believed that something was right, that he was ordered to do something that he didn't want to do. That was not Jerry's way. He would never do that.

Smith: Okay. Did you have a sense of Ford's own views about Civil Rights and race?

Hynes: Quite frankly, at the time I was so busy trying to catch up with it that all I was trying to do was make sure I didn't leave him empty-handed, so to speak. I think that he was – I can't say in my own mind whether I thought he was doing what the administration wanted him to do as leader, or whether it was something he cared for personally. I don't have any recollection of how I felt about that.

So we worked on that bill. I was down there more and more helping him at times, and then the situation arose that - at this point Howard Smith had retired and Bill Colmer of Pascagoula was the chairman of the Rules

Committee. And his chief of staff was Trent Lott, and Trent and I became pretty good friends because the Republicans and Mr. Colmer had a lot of the same views about policy and things like that. So we worked fairly closely together. And he had someone he wanted to hire, but there was no staff space on the Rules Committee or in the office. There was money around, but there was no rule. So he and I cut a deal; we hired on as Minority staff on the Rules Committee with the money that Mr. Colmer had available, we hired a person that Mr. Lott wanted to have on the staff, it was a good friend of his. And it was Jonalyn Collin(?) who did a marvelous job. She was a great help to me. She basically handled a lot of the work of the Rules Committee on a day to day basis, which freed me up to spend more time on the floor with Mr. Ford.

So then a few years later when Mr. Nixon got himself in the Watergate problem and Mr. Ford was nominated, I was just one of the people he wanted to have on his staff - temporary staff, I guess you'd call it - to prepare him for the hearings. Because, as you know, the Constitution requires if the vice president is disabled or unable to do the work he was supposed to be doing, and Mr. Agnew had resigned because of the problems he had from his days as governor of Maryland, it was just easy for me to get John Linn working up on doing the Rules Committee. I went and worked with Mr. Ford on the confirmation hearings, along with Benton Becker, former congressman Bill Kramer, and Dick Haber. We were the counsel. And the requirement of the Constitution being that you had to have a two-thirds vote in both Houses meant that there were going to be two very serious hearings, and in both Houses you had a situation where the Democrats were the majority. So you could expect for the hearings to be tough and maybe some problems on the floor.

Smith: What was it about Elizabeth Holtzman? Did she stand out?

Hynes: Yes. I think I know the issue you mean, and it's a good story because it was a situation where the hearings in the House, as you might expect, were more confrontational than they were in the Senate, just by the nature of the bodies.

And some of the Democrats in the House wanted to kind of rough up Mr. Ford a bit, I would say.

Smith: Well, Bella Abzug wanted more than that. She thought there was a path through which she sees we could get the presidency.

Hynes: Carl Albert was the Speaker of the House, at the time that Agnew resigned. If Nixon had had a heart attack, he would have become president.

Smith: Right.

Hynes: And in no uncertain terms, he made sure to his Democratic colleagues in the Judiciary Committee – he was not going to be seen as a usurper of the presidency. He did not want to do that. He was a man of the House, he was a man who really cared a great deal about the system and wasn't going to have any shenanigans going on, so to speak. And he spoke to them rather firmly, I am told. I was obviously not there – but I'm told he was pretty firm about it. But nonetheless, the hearings were somewhat difficult and Ms. Holtzman was certainly one of the more difficult individuals.

One of the issues that came up that she raised was how could Mr. Ford, on his congressman's salary, afford to own a ski chalet, as she called it, in Vail, Colorado. And we knew this might come up. One of my jobs was to work with the staff, and I went through all the records of who gave him money in the way of campaign contributions. And what was his voting record – was there any indication to show connections between money coming in for the campaign, and him doing something. And we were very, very careful to make sure that we knew everything; and if we had any questions we'd sit down with the Congressman with a list of questions which he had to answer for. So we knew what the answers were and what he was going to say.

Well, he had the perfect answer for that question about the ski chalet when Ms. Holtzman asked it. And he said to her, he said, "Well, Ms. Holtzman, I have one son in college and I have two kids in high school, one about to go into high school, and they've all worked. All the summers they've always had

jobs and worked and made money and have their own bank accounts. And we took a vacation out to Vail and had a wonderful time. We just loved it. And the kids loved it and they loved to ski, and the family had a conference and we made a deal. And the family – the kids emptied their bank accounts and made the down payment, and Betty and I would pay the mortgage.” It stopped the questioning immediately. That’s exactly the way they did it.

And then, of course, Mr. Ford became vice president and I did not go to the White House. At about the time Agnew resigned, or maybe a month earlier, Mr. Ford had said privately to his own key staff, that he was not going to run again. He was going to retire. And NBC came looking for me, and I had just joined the NBC staff literally a week or two when Mr. Agnew resigned. Mr. Ford was named in another week or two, and I was asked to join the staff temporarily, and NBC said please, go do it. So I went back to NBC where I had a nice career for many years.

I didn’t have a great desire to go to the White House. I don’t know why. I think I was so new at NBC that I was just getting my feet wet and it was interesting work. A network was a very interesting place to work in those days because, as you know, there were only three real sources of national news; it was NBC, CBS, and ABC at night – John Chancellor, Walter Cronkite, Harry Reasoner. People like that who were really giants of the news business, and were true wonderfully qualified journalists. They had reporters all over the world, in the major cities. They had people on Capitol Hill. And it was the place America stopped between six o’clock and seven o’clock or so to catch whoever was their favorite network and their favorite anchorman. And I really enjoyed it. So I went back with ABC.(?)

Smith: Let me back up and ask you, if you could sort of paint in the background of Congress, which was a very different institution in those days. What was it about Jerry Ford that made him a successful leader on Capitol Hill? What were the qualities that he brought to the place?

Hynes: Well, first of all, he had a boiling point that was very hard to get to.

Smith: Really? Because we've heard about his temper.

Hynes: He had one. But it was hard to get him there. So he was a kind of a leader who listened a lot more than he talked. The example of Bill McCulloch on the Voting Rights Bill is a good example. He could have said to McCulloch, "You are the ranking member, you have got to go and support the Nixon bill and you have no choice in the matter. If you want to keep your job as ranking member, you've got to do it." He didn't do that. He looked for another way to get the job done, to support the Nixon bill.

Smith: Is it safe to say he was unlike LBJ in that regard?

Hynes: Definitely. Hugely different. He was the polar opposite. But that didn't mean that he wasn't a strong leader, because he was. He was a man who led more by persuasion and an arm around your shoulder and say, "I know it's tough, but we've got to do this." And he did a lot more of that than he did yelling at people and pushing them around. He was likeable. He was a former football player, and an all-American. He was a bright guy, he was in the middle third of his class in Yale at law school, at the same time he was an assistant football coach, and he kept his grades up and did very well. He was a smart man, he was a good man, and he liked to tell a story, he liked a good joke. He liked to sit and have a drink with his friends. He liked to be around people and they liked to be around him. And that, I think, is as much as anything else, why he was a good leader.

Smith: And one senses that he was as effective, maybe as popular, on the other side of the aisle as his own.

Hynes: Oh Tip O'Neill and he were famously friends. And there are some wonderful stories about that.

Smith: Can you think of one?

Hynes: I'll tell you one because it's typical of both of them. They both loved to play golf, as you know. One day they were out playing golf together on a holiday

or something, and they finished their golf game, they had a drink and they were both walking out to the parking lot where their cars were. As you know, the Speaker had a car and the Minority Leader had a car, and they both had a driver and he was basically a security man, just to make sure that the leadership of the Congress had at least some modicum of protection. These were before the days when anything had ever happened. Nothing had ever happened on the Hill. But they were walking out arm in arm, and Jerry said, “Well, Tip, I’m going to go home and grill out some steaks tonight with Betty and the kids and relax a little bit. What are you going to do?” He said, “Jerry, my friend, I’m going to go back to my office and figure out a way to blank you tomorrow in the forum.” And they both laughed, got in their cars, and that’s how they operated. They were on different sides of the fence, and they were both true to their responsibilities on their team with their members and pushing what they could, but Jerry was always able to get something out of Tip that Tip could give. There’s always something you can give on either side. And Jerry found ways to get as much as you could get from the leadership on the Democratic side because he had a relationship with them that was a very trusting and personal relationship.

Smith: The older I get the more I come to the conclusion that as important as ideology is, nothing is more important in politics than generational factors. And each generation looks back at the previous one. Clearly the Gingrich generation thought Bob Michael was too accommodating – and I’m sure that generation looked back and thought, “why are we just taking the crumbs from the table?” But the fact is, particularly in the ‘60s, this was a profoundly Democratic country, Goldwater had just suffered a historic defeat, Ford was only there out of a certain desperation...

Hynes: There were like 140 Republicans in the House, out of 435. Now, with numbers like that, you are not going to win a whole lot of major victories. You are just not. And even after the Nixon victory in ’68, the Republicans, I think, had a big victory in ’66 – I think about 45-50 members came in. So they were back up to a pretty good number. But still, they were less than 200

members out of 435, and although they had the White House, they didn't have the Congress.

Smith: Tell me about the people around Ford. There was this popular notion, particularly when he got to the vice presidency, even in the White House, that there was this sort of "Grand Rapids set," said with a certain degree of condescension, as if these people weren't quite up to the task. Did you have a sense of the people around him?

Hynes: Not his personal staff, I knew them.

Smith: Did you know Bob Hartmann?

Hynes: Very well.

Smith: Tell us about Hartmann.

Hynes: Bob and I spent a lot of time together.

Smith: Hartmann is very important, and in some ways a polarizing figure.

Hynes: If there was such a thing as Mr. Ford's enforcer, so to speak, about the way he wanted to get things done, the messages he wanted to get spread out, Bob was that person. And I knew Bob reasonably well, we spent a good bit of time together. We spent more time together as I worked more with Ford, obviously. And I always found him to be very smart, good judgment, got hot – he could get very angry at people – and then the next day he'd be fine with you. It was over. But he tried to make sure that Jerry was protected. He knew everything that Jerry had to know and made sure that Jerry knew it right away.

Smith: One senses that sometimes he protected him from himself. The most famous instance, of course, is when Haig is playing games about a pardon.

Hynes: Those were days when I wasn't in the White House.

Smith: That's a historic example. Again, I don't mean to sound condescending – but the notion of 'good ol Jerry' suggests that he saw the good in everyone, which is an admirable trait, but maybe a problematic one in this town. Did Hartmann see his role as filling some of that gap?

Hynes: Well, first I'll say this: Jerry was 'good ol Jerry,' but he wasn't push over 'good ol Jerry.' He wasn't a pushover at all. He had very strong views about things that he cared about, and he cared about a lot of things. When you become president you've got to care an awful lot about a whole lot of things that come to your desk. And I don't have the feeling at all that Jerry got pushed around very much. And Hartmann certainly wouldn't have let him get pushed around. I know that he and Mr. Rumsfeld never got along, and the two of them were always giving each other problems. And Hartmann took a lot of crap, but he gave some, too. His view was, "I'm making sure that Jerry doesn't get hornswoggled. Nobody fools him, nobody tells him stories. He gets the straight scoop, he knows what's going on. I want to make sure he is as prepared to do his job as he ought to be." And Hartmann did a hell of a good job of doing it. Every president needs somebody like Bob Hartmann. You need somebody who walks in the room and when he says something to you, you know that that's the story.

Smith: And presumably, equally important, someone who will say if you are full of shit.

Hynes: Yeah, absolutely. And he was very tough that way.

Smith: Before Haig died, we had a session with him which was one of the more surreal conversations I've ever had, and the mention of Hartmann's name – it was like those two people were put on the planet to alienate each other. And it was very clear that after all these years, Haig entertained intense feelings, and no doubt Hartmann did, as well.

Hynes: I'm sure that's the case.

Smith: The motives of each, and 'good ol Jerry.'

Hynes: I'm sure they both felt that way because I saw it just in my social contacts with Bob during the White House years and other years, and afterwards.

Smith: Was he unhappy?

Hynes: Hartmann?

Smith: I say that because he'd been chief of staff. There were those who believed that was a role he aspired to in the White House. Little things – where the office was, and the fact that there was an alternate speechwriting operation. He experienced some setbacks.

Hynes: He didn't have as much authority as he probably would have liked, although I don't think, in all fairness, I don't think Bob would have been the right person to be chief of staff. His title was counselor to the president, and quite frankly, that is probably where he was best suited to be because of his talents, which were huge. He could see a problem coming a long way off. He could see opportunities coming a long way off. He could let Jerry know ahead of time, "This is coming down the track. You're going to have to see this coming down the track early, because if you don't, it may run us over. He was very good at things like that, very good. And of course, he wrote like a genius politically. I don't know that anybody has ever written any better stuff than he has. Usually on deadline, usually short time and usually late at night. He wrote at night. I don't know how he did it, but he wrote at night and he wrote beautiful stuff.

Smith: Did you know Phil Buchen at all?

Hynes: Yes. I liked him a lot. Very nice guy. Is Phil still alive?

Smith: No.

Hynes: I didn't think so. He was a lovely man. I first met him during the confirmation hearings because Jerry asked him to come down and sort of be a legal senior advisor to him, working a little bit with Bill Kramer's group, not my group.

But really giving him top of the mountain, looking out pictures. He was pretty good at it and a lovely man.

Smith: You didn't sense someone in over his head?

Hynes: I think over his head is the wrong phrase – he had to learn a lot of new things fast. There's a big difference. I don't think he was in over his head. He was a very bright guy. And he had Ford's confidence. And he learned pretty quickly. But the problem of not being in Washington and coming into Washington and suddenly you are in a situation where you are talking about the White House. You are talking about the people who are in the White House who are all strong-minded, big egos, know they can do that job, and by God are going to do it, and nobody is going to stop them type.

Smith: Well, and stop and think, we had all these Nixon holdovers who, to varying degrees, were probably harboring some resentments.

Hynes: Absolutely. And the resentment shouldn't have been to the Ford people and Ford coming in. After all, that was the Constitution. They had to come in. They really should have been more aggravated at some of themselves for letting things go where they went. But people never want to look in the mirror and say, "I really blew this one." They want to point to the other guy who is trying to clean up the mess.

Smith: Tell us, in the confirmation hearings, what was the story about Mr. Winter-Berger?

Hynes: Robert Winter-Berger.

Smith: Who was Robert Winter-Berger? He seemed to kind of emerged from nowhere.

Hynes: He wrote a book.

Smith: He did.

- Hynes: I cannot remember any more than that. But somehow or other...
- Smith: He claimed to have had some influence over Congressman Ford. And I remember in one of our interviews, one of our early interviews with one of the women who was in the office remembered him being, in effect, thrown out of the office.
- Hynes: I wouldn't be surprised. I do remember that name and I do remember that he had written a book and there was a minor dustup during the confirmation hearings, but I can't recall anything about it. I had nothing to do with it. Don't know anything about it.
- Smith: It was the most exhaustive FBI investigation ever. Did it make Ford uncomfortable?
- Hynes: No.
- Smith: I'll tell you the reason why I ask. He said that someone in the course of this and they asked him, going back to a fifth or sixth grade, had found a player on an opposing football team, and they asked him about piling on or something.
- Hynes: It was thorough. But I don't think I ever saw Jerry concerned about it. I know I didn't. He was about as clean a whistle as you could have in a man who had spent his life in the political arena. He was exactly what you saw – a guy who had a good sense of humor. He was a serious person. He was a friendly person. He would throw his arms around you, you'd walk down the hall together. He was just a typical – at least in those days – Midwesterner. I think that's one of the reasons why he found that he could work with me because I came from the same basic background – that Midwestern background which is kind of open and straightforward, and you look for the good in people, and doesn't have a lot of machinations going on in his head every thirty seconds.
- Smith: It's fair to say he was always a real fiscal conservative.
- Hynes: Yes. Sure.

Smith: That's part of that package. And I wonder if part of that in his case, like his generation, was intensified by his experience of the Depression. Going to the University of Michigan, he worked, even sold his blood.

Hynes: Exactly.

Smith: Scraped by.

Hynes: That was a whole generation – the whole generation was like that.

Smith: In the investigation, either publicly or behind the scenes, did the fact that Mrs. Ford had been to see a psychiatrist, enter into any of the discussions?

Hynes: In the preparation for the hearings, my team had absolutely nothing to do with that. Nothing whatsoever, as far as I can recall. I don't believe it ever came up, either.

Smith: Good.

Hynes: Now there's a place where it may well be that Phil Buchen, who was a personal friend of longstanding, had to know about it, might have advised on how we would handle it if it did come up or something. But it was not part of the work that we were doing on the political activity level, if you will.

Smith: Before you got into this, in terms of organizing this, saying, "Here are the things we've got to be particularly mindful of." Were there areas – obviously finances and the like.

Hynes: Exactly. We had file after file. We knew every penny, I think, that ever came in from the time he was a leader on. That's what we were really looking at.

Smith: And there weren't a lot.

Hynes: No, there weren't any problems.

Smith: There wasn't a lot of money in the Ford household.

Hynes: No, there wasn't. For example, Steelcase, which is headquartered in Grand Rapids, and makes an awful of lot office furniture. And a lot of it was bought by the federal government. And the executives of Steelcase gave some money to their local congressman, not much, and when he became Minority Leader, he got some more money, and he got some money for his pac – the kind he would give to other members who needed money, or candidates when he spoke for them. But we found no connections. There was nothing that said here came some money, and this is what happened on the floor of the House – how Jerry did something. We couldn't find anything like that. And the solution to the Vail ski lodge was so easily provable – we had the closing out of the kids' accounts down to zero, and the mortgage payments by the folks. It was a clean, cognitive, easy thing, with such a good answer. The biggest problem we had in the confirmation hearings was that the Democrats were just looking around to find ways to undermine the impression that people had of Jerry Ford. And it just didn't work. It didn't work.

The House hearings were much tougher than the Senate hearings. Bob Griffin, I think, was a major player over in the Senate on the committee that handled it, and he and the Democrats were not about – they did not want to rough Ford up – they just wanted to have a good record of how he did this, and how he did that, and let him _____ enough about what he did and who he was to give the public a view of him and get out of the way because I think everybody knew that Watergate was a huge crisis that Mr. Nixon well may not get past.

Smith: In the discussions, either with him during this period, or equally important, with the rest of your team - was anything said to indicate an awareness at least, that you might, in fact, be preparing the next president?

Hynes: I think all of us felt that that was a definite possibility. We didn't talk about it. And I don't think any of us ever sat down and said the following: We ought not to talk about it because then people would think we're talking about it. It

was just something we just didn't go near. But we all were pretty well convinced that this could happen.

Smith: It did put him in a terribly awkward position.

Hynes: Yes. And we just didn't go there. Our job was to get through the hearings, and make sure that any questions were answered in a full and honest way, and just stay away from that kind of stuff.

Smith: Couple of things and I'll let you go. Again, the background, the culture, the times, for people who weren't there, it strikes me how different some things were. For example, that people drank a hell of a lot more forty years ago than they do now. Maybe they should drink more today if it would foster some work across the aisles. It was bipartisan; in some ways it was almost part of that.

Hynes: Well, the members probably did a little bit more. Now, remember – I was on the Hill for about seven years – and for the first half of it, let's say '65, '66, '67, I wasn't working particularly closely with Mr. Ford. You know how the tables are – there's a table on one side of the aisle and there's a table on the other side of the aisle – and over here is where the Rules Committee member who is going to handle this legislation stands up and talks. The other side is Jerry Ford's table – the leadership's table. I was sitting over here. So he knew me. But it wasn't until we got into that Voting Rights thing that I really started working with Mr. Ford. But I must tell you that Bob Hartmann often would call people into his office for strategy discussions – how are we going to do this, how are we going to do that? And he'd crack a bottle open and we'd all have a drink.

I was not one who saw too many members drinking because I wasn't invited.

Smith: You weren't over at the Board of Education with Sam Rayburn. Another aspect is one senses that it was a much more civil, certainly a much more bipartisan environment.

Hynes: Even when the Democrats were rubbing our noses in it, they let us breathe, let's say. They didn't keep our head down under water too long. It was difficult, you were losing and you were losing big in the middle '60s, after '64. You were losing and losing big for a while. But the people were different. The idea that Tip O'Neill and Jerry Ford were such good friends is an example. And there were huge relationships across the aisle. John Dingle, who was not yet chairman, but was a driving force on the Commerce Committee, and Jim Broyhill, the senior Republican, worked very well together. A lot of members worked well across the aisle together. It was not unusual in those days, during committee markup sessions, to see members walking back and forth from each side of the aisle from committees, talking with each other about things they could work out together. You almost don't ever see that today. Because if you see it today, the Republicans wonder why a guy is walking over to the Democrats' aisle and the Democrats wonder why their Democrat is talking to the Republican. So people wonder what you are doing. They no longer think it might be innocent, they think what skullduggery is going on.

Smith: Then it's on the Internet and you're off to the races.

Hynes: It's a problem constantly.

Smith: There are famous stories about Ford and Hale Boggs who would debate issues at the National Press Club. They would drive down together, decide on the way what they were going to debate that day, they would have their debate that day, and they'd have a drink and lunch and go back to the Hill.

Hynes: Well, those kinds of relationships made it much more possible to solve problems. One of the reasons it's so hard to solve some of these problems today, and granted, they are huge problems – you might say that of a magnitude larger than maybe we had in the '70s – but the fact of the matter is, the people in the '70s knew each other a hell of a lot better than members know each other today. Members don't know many people across the aisle except maybe on their committees and then only from a distance. There aren't

too many relationships that really go personally, where you go to each others houses and your kids know their kids.

Smith: We've been told one of the huge differences is, in those days people brought their families. And when you've socialized with people, and you've played softball with people, and you've gone to kid's plays, it's tough to demonize the other side.

Hynes: And remember, the systems were different. I'm not exactly sure what the rules were back in the, let's say, late '60s, early '70s. But I'm pretty sure I'm right when I say this, that was before you had as much money as you do now to go back and forth. People now go back and forth all the time. And it's good to go back and see the constituents, but when you are here in town you have a chance to get to know people. You have a chance to sit down and get to be in their house and the kids go to the same school so you see them at a PTA meeting or something. And you realize, no horns, good people. And that helps an awful lot to be able to cut deals and work out solutions that don't cripple the majorities' right to do what they want, but it gives the minority at least something to work with. And someday you're going to be in the minority, possibly, although it's fair to say in those days the Democrats thought it was going to be forever.

Smith: Was there arrogance in the majority?

Hynes: Well, some people were arrogant because there are always some people who were arrogant. But a lot of them weren't. I mean, a lot of them worked very well with the other side, and they did it for the good of the country. Whichever party is in the minority, sometimes they have good ideas; sometimes they are better than the bill that the White House sends up. And that's important. One of the problems with the health care bill we've just passed, not is just its size, and the fact that it was so hard – they were putting it together at the last minute in a lot of respects – but that the Republicans had no input at all. Now, all that means is, we're going to find more glitches in that legislation than we might otherwise find, because one party just decided

this is going to be it, and we don't need the other guys. And that's not the best way to legislate, no matter who is in the majority.

Smith: Did you run in to him from time to time in later years? Did you have any contacts with President Ford?

Hynes: Yeah, I did. I was assistant parliamentarian to three conventions. For '68 and '72, both in Miami, and in both of those Ford was the chairman. And in '76, when he was the candidate and Reagan and he were fighting.

Smith: One senses the '76 convention was intensely fought.

Hynes: That was intensely fought. Both of them came to the convention with about 90% of the votes they needed. Ford had a couple of hundred more. There were less than three or four hundred votes that weren't determined and that was a real, real tough convention. There was a good story about that convention that tells you a lot about Jerry Ford. The fight in 1976 was over the foreign policy plank; it was very bitterly debated. Ford was too much a détente – he wasn't firm enough with the Russians, Vladivostok and Helsinki and whatnot. And Reagan really pushed that hard. He didn't come in until late in the primaries, and he used that foreign policy plank to wedge it in.

Smith: The Panama Canal Treaty.

Hynes: The Panama Canal won a lot of the votes in the Southern states, and came into the convention pretty strong. The foreign policy plank was going to be the big fight of the convention on the night before the nominations. And I got a call from one of Ford's convention staffers, and the Rules of the House, in a modified version, are the rules of the Republican convention, and I think of the Democratic convention, as well. Because, unlike the Senate Rules, which are more a unanimous consent efforts, in the House, because the numbers are so large, 435, you've got to have some rules that will advance the effort and the minority can't stop it, if the majority is firm to do it. So the rules of the convention are that way, too, because you've got three or four days and

you've got to get the job done. You've got to nominate your people, and you've got to get out of there.

So the morning of the third day, the convention was going to meet that night on the platform. I got a call from the Ford staff saying on the forum, when Reagan's team offers their amendment and we debate it, we want to be able to close debate on the amendment. And I said, "Well, the Rules of the House are basically the rules of the convention, and we understand that. And then you understand that the right of the offer of the amendment to close debate is a House procedure. That is, the _____ is always on the floor of the House." And they said, "Well, we understand that, but we want to close debate." And I said, "Well, I can't tell you we're going to do that. I'll have to talk to somebody." He said, "You go ahead, but we want to do it. I'm telling you, we want to do it." He never said, "Mr. Ford wants this." He said, "We want to do it."

Smith: For the uninitiated, what were the dynamics here? What was the advantage being sought?

Hynes: Well, the advantage being sought was maybe, for all we know, maybe Reagan was going to come down and close debate. On the floor, possibly, with a ringing speech. That's maybe what they were planning, I don't know. But they wanted to be able to pound the table and say, "We're going to do the right thing for American foreign policy." They wanted to have the last big speech. And that was the goal.

John Rhodes, who was Jerry's successor as Minority Leader – the Leader of the House has always been the convention chair for the Republicans. They want somebody who can manage a body. And I called John and I said this is what's happened. So and so has said to me that they want to close debate, he sounds very insistent, I told him what the rules were, he doesn't care, he wants to close debate and he wants to know. And John said to me, "That's a violation of the rules, isn't it?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "Well, does that close the matter?" And I said, "Not to him." He said, "Do you think Jerry

knows anything about this?” I said, “I’d be amazed.” He said, “I would, too. I’ll get back to you in a few minutes.”

So I don’t know who he talked to, I don’t know if he talked to Ford or not. He may have just counted to a hundred and called me back. And we both agreed we weren’t going to do it, and I was to call the guy back. I learned later that they did talk, just briefly, and Jerry said, “I know nothing about this, nothing at all. And I’m against it.” So, anyway, I called back the guy and I said, “We’re not going to do.” And they got mad at me, but I didn’t care. What could they do, yell at me? I said basically, “We’re not going to change, it’s a violation of the rules, and I don’t think you want to take this any farther because it’s a violation of the rules.” Nothing happened.

I guess the point of the story is, Jerry Ford had presided over two conventions, he knew what the Rules of the House were, he dealt with them every day, and he sure as hell wasn’t going to take advantage of being the President of the United States at that point. Just break the rules of the convention to get a possible advantage, or to deny them an opportunity – he wasn’t going to break the rules.

Smith: Well, remember that the ultimate irony was, they, in effect, rolled over on that rather than give the Reagan people this intensely emotional, galvanizing issue. They turned the other cheek.

Hynes: They did.

Smith: A wonderful story Tom Korologos told us – Kissinger threatened to resign...

Hynes: Tom is right downstairs – you know he’s downstairs underneath the podium, you know, running everything.

Smith: So Kissinger, typically, threatens to resign, and Tom says, “Henry, if you’re going to resign, do it now, we need the votes.”

Hynes: That would be Tom. A wonderful man. And he probably knows where more bodies are buried in this town than anybody I know.

Smith: He and Bill Timmons, together, have buried a few.

Hynes: Yes they have, and they are both wonderfully good guys. They are just quality people. If all the guys and gals who worked the Hill and represented clients went up there and did the work, the quality the way they do it, the place would be a better place.

Smith: How do you think Gerald Ford should be remembered?

Hynes: A very good man, a man of principle, a man of integrity and honor, who proved it every day. A man who was thrust into a job he never sought, never even in his wildest dreams ever thought he would ever get to. There must be a hundred people who have told you that his lifelong ambition was to be the Speaker. And when he told a few of us early in 1974 that he was going to retire and not run, and if you want to get a job downtown, this is the time to go downtown before I announce it. He was saying, "I'm not going to get the thing I want most in life, and I recognize it and I'm going to make a little money and make sure I get my kids through school and take care of the family and everything else." And he was suddenly thrust into that job, and he was good enough to do it in a quiet, solid way. He was a Ford, not a Lincoln, just like he said. And he did a good job, worked as hard as he could at it, did every day what he had to do. With Betty being ill and everything else, during that time, it was tough on him, but he never lost it, he never threw his hands up, he never said, "I can't handle it." He just kept doing the job that he had to do.

Smith: Perfect.

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