

Interview with Bob Hardesty, press secretary to Gov. Dolph Briscoe, Austin, Texas, December 11, 1974, conducted by Jack Bass and Walter de Vires, transcribed by Linda Killen.

Jack Bass: --personality still prevails in Texas politics?

Hardesty: Oh yeah.

J.B.: Was Yarborough an exception to that or did he also reflect that or was that more ideological?

Hardesty: Well, he managed, finally, after many tries, to put together the liberal part of the state and the old populist belts of the state.

still very intensely loyal to him. I don't know whether you've picked up the hatred and bitterness the liberals have for Bentsen. They'll never forgive him. They'll do anything in the world to keep him from *[becoming president because they will]* just never forgive him for knocking Yarborough off.

J.B.: Is the degree of bitterness involved in that campaign a reaction to Bentsen defeating Yarborough or what the Yarborough supporters perceived to be, their objections to the tactics used? The emotionalism of the campaign and in the advertising.

Hardesty: I think basically it was the fact that they lost. Some of both.

W.D.V.: Do you think that's the end of the liberal bloc in terms

of electing state-wide offices?

Hardesty: I don't think so. I'm relatively new to Texas. You're not talking to an expert. I didn't come down here until '69. I think you're going to see in Texas in the years ahead increasing importance of the suburbanites around the big cities, who haven't really been a factor in politics up to now. Northerners have moved down here to go work for this company and that company. The polls we've taken indicate that these people are not particularly party oriented. Anybody who can put together, who can hold a base, whether it's a conservative base or a liberal base or a moderate base, who then can personally appeal to these people, can win an election. And nobody's really done that yet.

W.D.V.: When do you see that coming?

Hardesty: It's hard to tell. Could be four years from now. This is politically sort of an untapped resource. They don't align themselves with a political party. I think they tend to be more conservative now, but I think it's a kind of a swing vote. You get economic hard time and you'll find them switching toward Democratic candidates. Unemployment starts shooting up and they get worried about their jobs and making car payments.

W.D.V.: Hasn't Tower been able to do that? Work from a conservative base, pick up the suburban vote?

Hardesty: I guess.

J.B.: What's your own background, Bob?

Hardesty: I was in Washington. I went there to go to school at G-W. I stayed on there and did some newspaper work there. I was John Gonowski's speech writer when he was Post Master General. Then in '65 I got borrowed by the White House for two weeks. I stayed with Johnson seven years. Came down here with him after he left office to help him write his memoirs. Then in the spring of '72 Carl Albert asked me to come back up to Washington to put together a research of issues operation for House Democrats during the '72 campaign. After that, when Gov. Briscoe was elected--I'd never met him. I was up in Aspen skiing when he called and asked me if I'd come and talk to him next time I was in Austin. He wanted me to become his press secretary. I was very taken by the man.

J.B.: How do you assess his first term?

Hardesty: I think it surprised a lot of people. Everybody referred to him as a conservative, and he is a fiscal conservative. But his relation to people. He's a very compassionate man. He's got very good instincts. And the minorities have found this out. They get to him and they tell him what this problem is or what that problem is. He'll react very compassionately in a very sound progressive manner to their problems. He's been very fair with the black and brown caucuses. And I think a good deal of people have been surprised by that. He's managed to get along well with labor. So while his image, I think, is still conservative, I don't think the label really fits. He came in. He put together a legislative package which was fairly limited in its scope but with some real sound achievements. Insurance reform. Marijuana

reform, which was a two-pronged thing where it's different, stiffer laws for the pushers and more lenient laws for first offense possession of marijuana. This year I think he'll be going with a much more broad legislative program in all areas.

J.B.: Has he taken a position on utilities commission?

Hardesty: Yeah. We haven't really gotten to the point--we will in probably a week or so--on the specifics. His general position is he feels we need a utilities commission, primarily to offer expertise to the smaller communities which don't have the expertise, research ability, to regulate utilities. He does not feel we ought to have a broad, umbrella utilities commission to take over everything. For example, he doesn't believe that the big cities want the state to take over that function. He thinks smaller communities would. So the way he envisions it, the commission would provide any of the research and back up and expertise that a community wants. If a community wants to get out of it altogether, they could request the utilities commission to take over. It would be a local option. Telephone installation charges, intra-state long distance calls, gas and electricity. I imagine we'll end up with something like that. There's enough resistance to an overall utilities commission that probably it wouldn't pass.

J.B.: What's the resistance based on?

Hardesty: Based on people don't think we need a super-agency in the state to handle it.

J.B.: Am I correct that Texas is the only state without one?

Hardesty: Yeah, I don't know what the other states have. If they all have an umbrella type of agency or if it's modified. But apparently it's the only state without some form of a utilities commission.

W.D.V.: Do you think the governor is going to become more active in the next four years in proposing programs than he has been in the past? Is there substance to the charge that he didn't really propose much in the first two years he was in office?

Hardesty: Yeah. No. His general attitude has been when he feels the need of some particular piece of legislation, and some member of the legislature has a bill that he's in general agreement with, he won't go in with his own bill. He'll just support that bill and work to secure that passage.

W.D.V.: But there wasn't any identified administration program?

Hardesty: I guess the most highly identifiable one was the drug reform law. The insurance reforms. He came into office, as did all the new elected state-wide officials, on a platform of reform, opening government, tougher campaign reporting laws, open records of meetings. They were all identified with that.

W.D.V.: Did you get most of those?

Hardesty: Yeah.

J.B.: Any specific changes in labor-oriented legislation resulted in his improved relationship?

Hardesty: Workmen's compensation. We were at the bottom of the heap in '72. I suppose we're about in the middle now. I think the main

thing was in the past many governors have been labor-baiters, really. They just assumed they had labor against them to solidify the conservative base. Briscoe wouldn't do that. He felt they wanted to talk to him, express their concern, they would to be able to come in and do it. He's kept open a good line of communication with them. He's made some good appointments they've liked from the labor ranks. It's been mostly a matter of communication and appointments.

W.D.V.: Has he appointed more union members, blacks and chicanos than any other governor?

Hardesty: It's hard to say it's more than any other governor because he's only had two years to do it. But I think you can definitely say he's appointed more in the time he's been in office. See, Connally was here six years. I don't know whether anybody has done a study. But the blacks, browns and the labor people tell us that there's never been a period when there have been more appointed.

J.B.: How about on his staff?

Hardesty: Probably more Mexican-Americans on his staff than any other governor has had. The only real identifiable top member who is black is the director of the office of employment equal opportunity.

J.B.: Does that office function beyond the scope of the title? Is it involved strictly with employment or does it handle grievances of various sorts?

Hardesty: Let me give you a little background on that.

J.B.: Also, is that his creation or was that an office already here?

Hardesty: There was a rider to an appropriation bill which created the office of equal employment opportunity in the governor's office. He supported that. In '73. He created the office. We got Lorenzo Coal, who was the deputy director of the federal office in his regional office. Last winter sometime the attorney general ruled that the rider was unconstitutional because of a technicality. He immediately announced that he was going to keep the office going on executive order. The only writ that had been given from the legislature anyway was to encourage agencies to develop affirmative action plans. I think the office has gone beyond that as much as they can in rejecting affirmative action plans. They didn't really have that authority. Work with the agencies. What it's going to develop into now, I don't know. I assume there will be a move to strengthen the office. We're also going to propose that there be a state personnel agency created. When that happens operation, too.

J.B.: But there's no general state agency dealing with complaints of discrimination against minorities as such?

Hardesty: And that's why it will probably have to be strengthened, the office. Either that or you just get the federal government moving in.

W.D.V.: But does he act as the governor's representative with minority groups other than just Does he have a special representative with the blacks?

Hardesty: He works very closely with the black caucus. Of course

the governor deals directly with. . . . Rudy Flores, the governor's special assistant, works with browns a great deal. It's not a formalized thing, is what I'm trying to say. Some of them will come to him.

W.D.V.: There's no commission on human relations or anything?

Hardesty: No. It's really a faction. . . state government. . . as you found out probably.

W.D.V.: Are you going to move towards a merit system?

Hardesty: I don't know.

W.D.V.: You are going to create a personnel office? Through the governor's office?

Hardesty: Yeah. No, it will be an independent agency. It will be a civil service type thing which does centralized hiring and firing. Agency people probably maintain that function but it will be

W.D.V.: Is Gov. Briscoe going to make any effort in the next four years to reorganize state government? You've got two hundred and some agencies, boards and commissions now.

Hardesty: I really don't know. We'll be having some reorganization.

W.D.V.: I was thinking about something really fundamental, like collapsing them down to fifteen or twenty departments or something like that.

Hardesty: Well, you're going to need some constitutional provision to do that in many cases. He's prepared to announce, probably this week, the recommendation to abolish the mass transit commissioner and

put that under the highway department and create a new department of highway and transit. I imagine we'll be seeing more of this kind of thing

W.D.V.:

Hardesty: Yeah, but god knows what form it will take. Some think they ought to go ahead and create a citizens commission. Others think the governor's got to work on the foundation that they've already laid, expertise they've already developed and report out article by article for the people to vote on. It would be much more realistic to do it that way then to try to go off with an entirely new document. In my judgment if they had reported out a new constitution this year the people wouldn't have passed it. People are very suspicious of government in Texas.

W.D.V.: Why?

Hardesty: I don't know. Just traditionally very ~~suspicious~~ get big government, get a lot of change. There was no great outcry against the creation of the constitutional convention. People passed it. But the more it went on, the more you pick up all of this "Well, I don't know, we seem to be doing pretty well with the present constitution. I don't see any point in changing it." It just became sort of a general attitude.

J.B.: What sort of legislation is there on open meetings and open records?

Hardesty: They passed a tough open meetings and open records law last time, 63rd legislature. I'm not a lawyer. I can't go into the . . .

J.B.: What sort of exceptions did it have on meetings?

Hardesty: From my understanding, most of the exceptions have to do with confidential personnel matters.

J.B.: How about legislative committees?

Hardesty: I don't think there's such a thing as an executive session. I may be mistaken. I have a feeling that all of their meetings are open.

J.B.: How do you assess press coverage of the legislature in Texas?

Hardesty: I think it's pretty good. I was just talking to Garth Dillinger of the Associated Press yesterday. You may not be familiar with the movement now to throw the press off the floor. He was arguing with a couple other members. Really didn't feel there was any problem with it. Someone said "Hell, they're not allowed on the floor in Congress." And he said "Yeah, and look at what sort of coverage they get." I think it's a point pretty well taken. They cover it pretty intensely, pretty thoroughly. Now the way papers carry the story, that's something else. But you've got a pretty good size press corps out there and they cover it pretty thoroughly. They did a fantastic job of covering the constitutional convention. Just unbelievable. Long stories, every day. Sometimes two and three stories. Basically a pretty good bunch of reporters.

J.B.: Is there much investigative reporting?

Hardesty: Yes. You've got four or five reporters out there who are top notch investigative reporters. Dave McKinnery, Dallas Times Herald. Jerold Hancock. Not as much as they'd

like. I suppose if you talk to any of them they'd all say they were short handed, don't really have time to cover the committee hearing or the other things that most investigative reporters would like. They're always stirring something up.

J.B.: How many papers have more than one man at the capital?

Hardesty: The Dallas Morning News has five, Houston Post has three, Dallas Times Herald has two, Ft. Worth Star Telegram has two. Good size AP and UP bureaus. Houston Chronicle has four. Austin American capital bureau has four. And the rest of them are one man operations. Long News Service handles San Antonio news, so you really can't say that they only have one man.

J.B.: What kind of job do they do?

Hardesty: Long? Good job. Real good pick and shovel work. They do a good job of servicing their local papers. But Stuart Long probably knows as much about state government as any man alive. The intricate things. The board rulings, water quality and this sort of thing. That other papers really just gloss over. He does a very good job.

W.D.V.: How's the television coverage?

Hardesty: Well, we're hampered in Texas because it's so big and there's no such thing as a state network. It's spotty, by necessity. You've only got really one out of town full time tv staff here. That's Joel Smith out of Houston. The rest of them will come and go. Send a crew in for a story they want to cover. The governor has a press conference, they'll send somebody in.

W.D.V.: Does the governor have regular press conferences?

Hardesty: Not really.

W.D.V.: Just as they're called?

Hardesty: Sort of. Play it by ear. He'll meet with individual reporters on individual inquiries and that sort of thing in his office. But there's no regular press conference.

J.B.: What's he going to do with all the money? The \$1.5 billion surplus.

Hardesty: It's not going to take long. The biggest problem is going to be to keep from spending it all. Because surpluses come fast and they go fast, too. He wants to keep a reserve of \$200 million set aside for an emergency. Our new school aid, public school, package is going to be as expensive as hell. Plans to propose. Still working on it.

J.B.: What's the sort of basics?

Hardesty: Oh, it's very complicated.

W.D.V.: Is that the proposal to equalize?

J.B.: Grown directly out of Rodriguez?

Hardesty: Yes. It's based on a weighted pupil approach. They've broken down types of education and how much it costs per pupil to teach that type of course. General college preparatory courses, x dollars per pupil. An agricultural course is a little more expensive. Some of your more sophisticated career oriented courses are the most expensive. You need specialized equipment and that sort of thing. The objective is to get the money into the areas. . . . You pay the school almost exactly on the basis of what they're teaching. If they say that so many

students in this type of course, we know exactly what that type of course should cost. Now when we're talking about these figures, these figures are based on 27 school districts that we went into that we were told were running the best courses in these areas. We found out how much it cost them to give these type of courses. The idea is to bring the entire floor up to that point and have a new floor.

W.D.V.: So it's related to the quality of the instruction rather than the tax base.

Hardesty: That's right. As far as the financial aspect of it is concerned, the amount of money the state pays into it is related to the local school district's ability to raise money. Your poorer school districts are making a much greater effort. . . if not making enough money to have decent education. Some of your other school districts, which have oil or refineries or something. . . .

J.B.: Does that go so far as the state taking over the public schools, the financing?

Hardesty: No, it's just a whole new way of the state foundation program of financing the districts.

W.D.V.: Do you know of any other state which uses that as a formula for state aid.

Hardesty: I don't know. Dr. Hooker has gone all over the country and has examined what all the other states have done. He feels that with the particular needs of Texas this is the way we ought to handle it.

W.D.V.: Is that going to be one of the major efforts of this administration?

Hardesty: Oh, it will be the big one.

J.B.: This will involve considerable additional state funding, rather than redistribution of the existing funds.

Hardesty: Yeah. It will be probably a billion plus package.

W.D.V.: Do you see any other major drive in, say, highway construction or mental health or prisons? Or do you think education is going to be the major problem this administration grapples with?

Hardesty: Well, it will be the biggest one. We'll have a youth care package which is not completed yet. be a very big one. Water program to try to get water in to water deficit areas of the state.

W.D.V.: Are you talking about that plan to transport water from Louisiana across Texas? Is that thing really still alive?

Hardesty: I presume at some point we're going to have to make at works under the discussion stage. There is going to have to be a decision on the off-shore terminals. Of course pay raises is going to be an immediate one that's going to have to be done. I think somehow the governor would like to strengthen the state university coordinating board, stop this business of universities competing with each other in the legislature. Have some sort of control over that sort of thing. Mass transit. All sorts of things. Prison reform. Obviously the legislature has already gotten into that, what's going to happen on that. Right of privacy. The governor would like to have a good, tough bill cracking down on bugging and tapping, probably designed on the federal bill.

W.D.V.: How about campaign reform? Expenditures, contributions.

Hardesty: Well, Mark White, the secretary of state, is working on that right now. He has said that he would be very amenable to a limitation *[on spending]* Doesn't want to see an expenditure limitation that would work in favor of the incumbent.

W.D.V.: Be tough to do. By definition that limitation does work.

Hardesty: That's right. That's why he has some reservations about it. But there's got to be a realistic figure somewhere.

W.D.V.: What kind of a guy is Briscoe?

Hardesty: A private person. Extremely intelligent guy, very sharp mind. He's a banker and rancher. He's got an ability I've seen in very few people. He can see through a snow job so fast. Somebody will come in and try to con him with some figures and things and something will just click in his mind--something wrong there--and he will just go right to the figures that had been whizzed by him about ten minutes ago and he'll say "Now wait a minute, you said such and such. That doesn't jibe with this."

W.D.V.: Does he like being governor?

Hardesty: Yeah.

W.D.V.: Is he a good administrator? How does he get along with the legislature?

Hardesty: He gets along very well with them. Sort of has an open door policy. They come and go and they complain and, of course, you know, there's always a certain number of them mad at him for any one issue. But they usually manage to get it worked out. On the campaign reform, he's already said that he would like to see a limitation

of \$10 on any cash contribution. At one stage in the game he said "I'd just as soon see all cash contributions outlawed." Then people prevailed on him and said this will prevent little old ladies from sending in their dollar. He said "All right, but I don't want it to go above \$10." Get rid of these big cash funds floating around the campaign. He did not accept any cash in the last campaign. If somebody wanted to give cash, he said to go down and get a cashier's check and bring it on in. I don't know what else Mark's working on. I hope it will be a fairly extensive package. Have you seen a copy of the Democratic platform for Texas?

[Interruption.]

--legislation, education, public utilities. Youth care will be a big package. HMOs, I think, will probably be a pretty big issue.

W.D.V.: Has ERA passed in this state?

Hardesty: Oh yeah. Now there's a move on to repeal it.

J.B.: Is there a move for the state to move into HMO?

Hardesty: Not to move into them. Just to pass enabling legislation.

[Interruption.]

All the time I was at the White House, he and Johnson worked very closely together. Never had any problems in Washington. But as soon as one of them got across the border down here and involved in local politics, it was almost a paranoia. each other.

W.D.V.: On both their parts?

Hardesty: Well, by that time Johnson

I don't

know what went on before. I'm relatively new at this sort of thing. Johnson just refused to get involved in the Bentsen primary. Said "I just can't do it." I was out there one day when the Bentsen people were trying to get him to support Bentsen. And he said "I was looking over the legislation that passed. Every one of those things

Yarborough couldn't believe it, even to his dying day. It was just a funny relationship. Yarborough couldn't do enough for Johnson in Washington. When they got down here I was just surprised at the depth of animosity of the Yarborough supporters.

W.D.V.: Did Johnson participate much in Texas politics when he came back? While he was president, did he?

Hardesty: No. Oh yeah. With Connally down here. He participated with Connally. Connally was sort of holding down the I think as long as Connally was here he didn't have to worry about it much. That's why Connally told him, in the fall of '67, that he didn't want to run again but if Johnson was planning on him being on the ticket he would run. Johnson said don't make any plans based on what I'm going to do. On that basis, Connally

W.D.V.: When Connally moved to the Republican party, there wasn't very much movement of other Democrats. Why is that? Considering his popularity and all he'd done in Texas politics.

Hardesty: I guess for personal reasons and local reasons. . . a lot of Democrats vote Republican anyway but feel more comfortable in their communities being known as Democrats. I think that has a great

deal to do with it.

J.B.: Do you think there would have been a substantial move if Connally had not run into his other problems, and particularly so quickly?

Hardesty: I really don't know whether there was any great movement of people to register as Republicans. He had a huge personal following, voted for him, with support, money, their votes. But I'm not convinced it would have revitalized the Republican party. Unless Connally decided to run for governor as a Republican, something like that. Texans are content, conservatives are content, to go with the Democrats and vote Democratic in local and most state races and vote Republican in national elections.

W.D.V.: What's it going to take to make them vote for a Democratic candidate for president?

Hardesty: I suppose a lot of it depends on the state of the economy. A lot of it depends on the Democrat.

W.D.V.: Bentsen got a chance?

Hardesty: At this stage in the game I assume he's got as good a chance as anybody else.

W.D.V.: Do most people in the party here treat that seriously?

Hardesty: Yeah, I think so. But, you know, a year and a half is a long time off. Four years ago everybody in Washington just assumed that Muskie was a leadpipe cinch for the nomination in '72. You've seen an awful lot of losers. You've seen what happened to Romney. You can't predict what Lloyd Bentsen is going to do to anybody. Somebody that no

body would even think about might come along. Nobody out of the Midwest had ever heard of Adlai Stevenson until he ran in '52. Truman was more or less lifted from obscurity. Were you with Romney? That was the damndest thing I think I've ever seen in politics. And I think that was just entirely a press creation. To this day I can't see what in the world was wrong with saying [He got 'brainwashed' in Vietnam]

[Interruption]

It's just amazing to me that people would accept the press' word on the basis that he was unqualified to be president because of that remark. Nobody ever stopped to think what the remark meant or whether it was really such a terrible thing to say.

W.D.V.: They made the judgment that he wasn't qualified for president.

Hardesty: And everybody followed it.

J.B.: How do you assess the Democratic party in Texas now? What are its component parts?

Hardesty: You have your conservatives, and at the moment your Wallacites.

W.D.V.: Who would be some of the leaders identified with those factions?

Hardesty: Paul Matos, of course, is the Wallace leader in the state.

W.D.V.: When you say conservatives in the Democratic party, who would you say are typical. . . office holders or leaders who are identified with that faction?

Hardesty:

Money's there. The delegates. You know, I'm at a loss to identify them. Obviously, some of your big

There again, that depends upon what race you're talking about, too, I suppose.

a Bentsen supporter and you wouldn't consider Bentsen a conservative. There's really nobody speaking for the conservatives that I can think of, outside of the legislature, on a state-wide level. Your state-wide elected officials now, you'd have to call them moderates. Governor, Hobby, Hill.

W.D.V.: They're moderate in what sense? On race? Fiscal matters? What does moderate mean in Texas?

Hardesty: Moderate means, in my way of thinking, you're not race baiting. Moderate means you're not picking a fight with labor. Moderate means you're willing to look at progressive legislation, programs to help the people. Moderate means you're just not against everything that comes up. Not just trying to hold the line. Recognize , problems of the state. What might be moderate here might be considered conservative in Michigan or Wisconsin or Minnesota. But you have to look at it from its point of view.

W.D.V.: Is it a way to approach problems more than it is a set of programs?

Hardesty: Yeah, it's a point of view.

W.D.V.: There's no more race baiting in this state, is there?

Hardesty: Depends on where you go. Hopefully. Local races. . . .

W.D.V.: But on a state-wide basis.

Hardesty: The reason I'm breaking it out that way is because really that's just sort of the way our delegation broke out in Kansas City.

W.D.V.: How do the liberals [differ] from the moderates?

Hardesty: Well, obviously, they want to do more, they want to do it faster. They are less conservative on fiscal matters.

[End of side of tape.]

J.B.: You put the labor movement in the middle, being with the moderates. The programs that Briscoe's considering now, that look like they will be proposed next year. Is that going to result in a tax increase?

Hardesty: No sir. He said there won't be.

J.B.: So he's planning to do this out of the surplus.

Hardesty: The two big items will be pay raises and the education. Pay raises for state employees and retired employees and retired teachers.

J.B.: Basically, then, this is coming out of the inflated revenues from oil and gas because of price increase in the sales tax revenues that result from inflation.

Hardesty: Everybody more or less recognizes the need to decentralize MHMR and the youth care facilities. The fight is going to be over how much we can afford to do in one time. The governor recognizes that you will be better off with community facilities. Everybody does. Some are going to want to do it quite a bit faster than others.

J.B.: Does he have any state program in so far as housing is concerned?

Hardesty: The department of community affairs is working on something. I don't know what they're ultimately going to come up with.

J.B.: What sort of public kindergarten program is there in the state?

Hardesty: We just started, just started. Last session. Now there's a movement afoot to put more money into it, particularly in bilingual education. You'll see some activities in the legislature there. The governor is developing a very strong migrant affairs office program.

J.B.: V.O. Key wrote about Texas, twenty-five years ago, something to the effect that there was a lot of new wealth in Texas and very newly rich people who had not developed any sense of social conscience, social responsibility toward wealth. Is that changing? Is that what's reflected by the current leadership on the state level where you have a fair number of millionaires in office. Governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general. All of these men have personal fortunes in excess of \$1 million. Does this represent a change in that? Sort of a second generation of wealth.

Hardesty: I never have thought of it that way and I don't know whether I'd want to generalize. Even having lived here since '69, I don't really feel I have that much perspective on the state to know.

J.B.: Taking the historical perspective out of the question, do you feel that this group that have come into office in the 1970's, in these various state constitutional offices, have a sense of social

responsibility?

Hardesty: Oh, I don't think there's any question about that.

J.B.: Is it your impression that this is a fairly recent development in Texas?

Hardesty: I don't know. I just don't think I'm qualified to answer that question. If you talked to some of the old Connally people-- I suppose you'd consider Connally fairly conservative. And yet he did just a fantastic job of broadening higher education, broadening opportunities and keeping down the tuition. Which obviously has a great impact on everybody across the state. I think they'd probably say that he had a great social conscience in that area. I just don't know how to answer.

W.D.V.: The assertion is that in the 'fifties and the 'sixties there were big money men who picked the candidates for governor, state-wide office, ran the legislature. Still do. That pretty well determined who the nominees would be conservative, big money Democrats. That's the assertion. And without that support, without that blessing, you won't win.

Hardesty: It's quite obvious if you run a state-wide office campaign in Texas you've got to have heavy financing. Barefoot Sanders just couldn't get it. If he'd gotten it, I think he might have been able to beat Tower. So in that sense you're probably right. I would say it's more of a negative influence than a positive influence. I'm not sure the big money people can pick and choose their candidates, but I think they can probably kill a candidate by refusing to finance him. I don't think they're kingmakers as much as they are necessary ingredients

to a successful race. I was in Washington at the time, but my wife was handling Barefoot's Travis county campaign. I did what I could for him up there in developing issues. The poor guy just tried to cover this state campaigning. It was just unbelievable. As I said earlier, you don't have a state television network. There's no one place you can go on, have a newsconference, and have every station just pick it up. You have got to depend on the people there to send their reporters in, which they ordinarily won't do. Or you've got to get in your goddamn airplane and fly out there and get on the local stations. He was on the move constantly. In New England, if you get on a television station you can pretty well cover the state. The whole region. Here it's just unreal. So you've got to be well financed to make a race. And that's why, I presume, it took Yarborough so long. To get the name identification and the organization he needed and the public support.

J.B.: Do any of these new campaign limitation proposals recommend limitation of individual, candidate's personal contribution?

Hardesty: Yeah, I think there probably will be something like that. I don't know what form it will be.

J.B.: In Texas, at least, couldn't that have the effect of increasing the influence of big money?

Hardesty: Might. But if you limited what they could give I have a feeling, getting back to the point I was making earlier about the new breed of voters in Texas. I have a feeling that Fred Hoffhines^{ehz} might be the guy to capture them. He's got new face, very aggressive campaigner. I think he'd like to run for the Senate. Mayor

of Houston. But it takes somebody like that. Somebody that would be young, attractive, good television personality, Kennedy-type person, pull these people together.

J.B.: Basically moderately progressive.

Hardesty: Yeah, although I think, depending on the circumstances, a conservative might be able to do it. But I think these people would probably be considered moderates.

J.B.: Bentsen basically ran as a conservative, didn't he?

Hardesty: He ran as a conservative against Yarborough, then he moderated like hell against Bush. But I think basically

J.B.: How much polling does Gov. Briscoe do?

Hardesty: We ran a poll in the primary and a poll in the general election.

J.B.: Does he do any polling other than campaign polling? Not on just issues, and this sort of thing?

W.D.V.: He intend to?

Hardesty: No plans at the moment. After you've just come out of a campaign you don't need much of a poll to figure what the people are talking about. The questions they throw out at you, the questions the reporters throw at you in any given area you go into. I think he feels he has a pretty good grasp of what the issues are in the state. People don't want new taxes, people are concerned about inflation, they are concerned about energy, they are concerned about corruption in government. I don't view these times in Texas as an issue oriented time.

Maybe human issues. Even the education thing really hasn't stirred anybody up too much. Papers editorialize about it, but there have been very few letters on it.

J.B.: You see it then more as issues revolving around management of problems.

Hardesty: Yeah, and wanting as little interference from government as possible. This can change overnight when unemployment starts going up in Texas. Hasn't been hit too hard by the recession yet. Get to the point when the figures start going up, that will change awful fast.

J.B.: How do you assess the Republican party in Texas? There are sort of two views. One is that it's negligible and not getting any better. The other is that under the circumstances it really didn't do badly this year, even though they did poorly in the state-wide races. They picked up two county judge seats and really didn't suffer much in the way of real loss.

Hardesty: Maybe I can answer that best by telling a story where this guy Nick Row, who was a POW, was running against Bullock for controller. He mounted the best financed, best organized, most intensive campaign . You had another guy who was running against Mac Wallace, the railroad commissioner, whose name I don't even remember. He didn't do anything. I think he spent about \$14,000. He got as many votes as Row did. So that indicates to me that the Republican party isn't going anywhere. There are a certain amount of votes there for Republicans and they just aren't going to get any more. Again, on the

national level it's something else again. But as an organized party, I don't personally see any great movement. But of course then you've got this other problem that organized parties generally are becoming less effective and have less strength. I'm pessimistic about parties anyway. I wish I didn't have to be, because I believe in them. Just look at any of the polls. Fewer and fewer people are identifying with parties. And at a time when that's happening, you can't expect the Republicans--a minority party in the state anyway--really to develop to any great strength [as a political] party.

J.B.: If Bentsen remains a serious contender for the presidential nomination, is he going to simultaneously run for re-election in the Senate?

Hardesty: I presume he will if he can. Legally.

J.B.: There's nothing to prevent him from doing so now, is there?

Hardesty: No. It's my understanding, unless somebody changes the law. I don't know. Nobody's told me he will, but I just assume he will. Unless there were a huge outcry that he just couldn't live with it.

W.D.V.: Did Gov. Briscoe develop his own campaign organization in '72 and '74 or did he rely on the party apparatus?

Hardesty: He first ran in '68. Finished third.

I was not campaigning with him in '72. There really isn't much of a party apparatus. Small SDEC, state Democratic executive committee, office. You've got to put together your own in Texas. You have to get your own local coordinator, your area coordinator, your county coordinator.

W.D.V.: Did his organization overlap with anybody else's? Were the same people in several?

Hardesty: Oh, I'm sure there was in some cases. I don't know any specific examples. I wasn't involved in the organization aspect of it. I would say that in most instances that his people were people he'd known. It was an amateur operation to begin with. I would think that in most cases there was no overlap . Because there were people who never , who had very little experience in politics. Their attitudes wanted to see him governor. And some of them became very effective, some of them didn't. So basically he put together his own organization.

W.D.V.: How does his office get along with Tower's?

Hardesty: No great problems. We've got an excellent office of state-federal relations in Washington. heads it. He works for the Texas delegation up there. We don't work closely with Tower, but we've had few run-ins.

W.D.V.: Is the reported figure on the amount of money that Briscoe spent in '74 right?

Hardesty: Yeah, the reporting law is so complicated. . . . If you want an answer to that, call David Bean, what's left of the campaign headquarters. He can give you a full breakdown. The way you have to report it under the law, sometimes money he lends to the campaign looks like it's lumped in with something else. The figure is exaggerated, but by how much I don't know. He's on 476-4806. He can give you a complete breakdown of exactly how much he spent, how much was spent.

W.D.V.: Is it likely that he's the last governor that will be able to spend that much of his own personal wealth in a state-wide campaign?

Hardesty: I wouldn't be surprised. Of course he wouldn't have had to spend all that if he hadn't voluntarily sponsor. October dinner last year.

There was over \$400,000 in there that was raised at that dinner.

She filed suit and just froze it. That money, presumably, eventually will be paid back into the campaign treasury and paid back to him. So from that point of view

I have a feeling. . . I don't know what sort of feeling you all have having gone all over the South. . . your question about the Republican party. George Christian and I were just talking about this last week. I think when Nixon tried to put together his new majority, I think he did a horrible thing in the South. I really believe he appealed to the base instincts of the southerners. He was after the Wallace movement. I think that's why he really failed to coalesce the Republican party. You can maybe win an election on a race issue or a veiled race issue, something like that, but I don't think you can put together a permanent operation. Do you have that feeling at all? When Roosevelt put together his coalition, he was appealing really to people's legitimate [interests]. Wanting economic development. Wanted to get the hell out of the depression. Wanted to give them an opportunity. And I think they responded to that on a long term basis. Responded up to the

time of the race issue here. But I don't think he appealed to any tangible long range emotion that people are proud to hold on to. People don't want to wake up in the morning and think they're racists. They may be racists in one sense; they may be very decent, progressive people in another sense.

J.B.: I think what he tried to do was sort of make it respectable.

Hardesty: You can't do that. You can do it as long as you've got busing and a few issues like that. [Interruption.] -- might have been able to succeed.

J.B.: What do you think he would have had to have done to succeed?

Hardesty: Oh, I don't know. Garner support for his foreign policy. You know, the South was pretty generous in support of the war. Get them behind him on a respectable, conservative program. The South is conservative. Build something positive. Which he did, in some cases, and then I think destroyed . But Christian said that he really honestly believed that he was putting together a whole new ball game in American politics. Rising above party. I think the way he did it was a very fragile thing.

J.B.: It seems to be pretty much gone.

W.D.V.: Anybody else in the executive office we ought to talk to?

Hardesty: You might want to talk to Ken . He was the campaign manager. He can tell you a lot more about
[End of interview.]