Drew Pettus

SR 2762, Oral History, by Michael O'Rouke
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PETTUS: Drew Pettus
MOR: Michael O'Rourke
Transcribed by: Unknown
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Tape 1, Side 1

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MOR: The date is June 5, 2002 I guess, today. And this is Michael O'Rourke for the Oregon Historical Society beginning an oral history with Drew Pettus, an attorney in Bellingham and we're conducting the interview today in his office in Bellingham.

Well, Drew, why don't I ask you to start at the beginning? When and where were you born?

PETTUS: I was born in Long Beach, California, June 29, 1946, which is too many years ago. [MOR laughs]

MOR: And what are some of your first memories from childhood Long Beach?

PETTUS: Well, I had a great childhood. I was — there was basically my brother and I, and my mother had a sister and a brother, and my father, there were some older brothers, but basically they were a good deal older than he was. But on my mother's side there was my uncle and my aunt. They didn't have any children. So as it worked out, again, it's just my brother and I. I was the oldest, and it turned out, I was one spoiled little kid. I was a happy camper, let me put it that way, growing up in Los Angeles, actually in a little town called Downey, and at a time when Los Angeles was still a pretty civil place to live. I can

remember growing up in Downey which right now is part of that very difficult life down there that exists.

But in my day I can remember waking up and looking out at the orange grove across the street. Now it's, I'm sure, a high rise and all kinds of traffic and that sort of thing, but it wasn't that way when I grew up. It was a great childhood.

MOR: And what were your parents up to? Well first of all, let's start with your father. What was his name?

PETTUS: My father's name was Burnett Fenton Pettus.[1] He was a supervisor for the Southern California Gas Company, and was a workaholic. He was at the office all the time. And my mother was a secretary for a small firm in Los Angeles.

MOR: And you lived there, I think you told me yesterday, until you were 12 or so?

PETTUS: Yes. I was about 12 years old. There was a — my mother and my father split up, and you know when you're young, you're not exactly clear what's happening. You know something's happening, but there was a good deal of turmoil and whatnot. But I was raised by my mother's parents, my grandfather and my grandmother on my mother's side. They lived in the home in Los Angeles and Downey with us. So rather quickly in a 12 year old's mind, I was kind of swept up, and the next thing we know, we're headed north which is where more of my mother's family was up here in Washington state. So the next thing I know, we're moving up to Washington state after my mother and father split up. So I found myself adjusting to a whole new world at that point.

MOR: And that was right here in Bellingham, right?

[1] Burnett F. Pettus lived from 1911-2000.

PETTUS: Actually we spent a brief period in Everett, a few months, and then we moved up to Bellingham ‘cause my mother found a job here.

MOR: She continued to work as a secretary, then?

PETTUS: She continued to work as a secretary. As I recall, it was again to the extent that a young person has a sense of these things, but I do recall that money was tight and slim pickings. Then I went to Bellingham High. I went to junior high and Bellingham High School here. Bellingham really is where I consider my roots are. I mean this is where my friends — you know you make friends as a teenager and whatnot and you go out and do all those things that teenagers do. And so I finished graduating from Bellingham High in 1965 and went to Western[2] for a year and then went down to Berkeley.

MOR: Let me back up just a little bit here. Did you — it sounds like you lived with your father for 12 years. Did you see him much after the split?

PETTUS: Yes, we stayed in touch. I would occasionally get down to Los Angeles. When I was in Berkeley, I would go down and visited him. He actually would seldom come up here because he was a warm weather guy, and he didn’t — he’d be in Bellingham for about five days, and even in the peak of the summer, it was too cold for him, so he’d turn around and leave. He didn’t like it up here at all. But we stayed in touch, yeah.

MOR: And how would you describe him as a person, his personality in those days?

PETTUS: He was I would say blue-collar, hardworking, affable sort of guy who — he had been in the Navy. He was in Korea. In fact, you know in those early years I recall him

[2] Western Washington University is a public university in Bellingham, Washington. The northernmost university in the contiguous United States, it was founded in 1893.

being gone while he was in Korea. So that there was always good — but I do recall that he was not in the home as much I would have liked. But you know, I don't think that's unusual.

MOR: You said that it was your mother's parents that played a large role in raising you?

PETTUS: That's right. And of course from a perspective later in life, that may have been part of the problem. I don't know. [Both laugh]

MOR: So I assume you were close to your grandparents on your mother's side?

PETTUS: Oh, yeah, very close. Very close. They were Scotch. They had a Scotch descent, and you know there was a good deal — not that they were stern, but I can recall that they would bicker a lot between each other, but they both had a heart of gold. And as grandparents will do, again they spoiled me, so very fond memories of both of them.

My grandfather died shortly after we moved up here. That was back in the days before Medicare, and he contracted gangrene and basically ended up going to the public hospital which was nothing more than a caretaker facility and didn't last long. I have strong memories of that. Actually he was sick in the home for a good long while, and my grandmother had to take care of him, 'cause in those days, that's what people did. You didn't have Medicare. You couldn't go to the hospital, and didn't have access to good medical care and that sort of thing. People don't realize what they have when they've got the ability to do that now. 'Cause it was one miserable situation, I can tell you that.

MOR: I imagine it was kind of tough on you, too, to lose him as a teenager.

PETTUS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Because again we had a nice relationship. It was a sort of a jocular back-and-forth kind of relationship. And of course when he got older and sick, that kind of — when you're old and sick, you don't feel like being affable, jocular and back and

forth. You feel more like being sick. So in those latter years it wasn't quite as good. And of course at that point I was starting to think about girls and stuff, and so…

MOR: Other things on your mind. [Laughs]

PETTUS: That's right! That's right! [Laughs]

MOR: And your mother. First of all actually, did you know your grandparents on your father's side?

PETTUS: They were a good deal older, and so I never knew my grandfather on my father's side. I knew my grandmother. I liked her. I remember her as being fun to be with, not with her lot, but I can remember always looking forward to going over and seeing her and that sort of thing. But she was a good deal older. I think she must have been close to 40 when my father was born, and so by the time I came along, she was up in years. 'Cause I was born late. My mother was 33 when I was born.

MOR: And your mother. What was her maiden name?

PETTUS: It was Jessie, Jessie Ruth McKenzie.[3]

MOR: And how would you describe her?

PETTUS: A capital "M," a small "C" and capital "K." After my mother was, or is — she's still alive and not quite as mean as she used to be, but she's still alive. She was — I remember her as always being very bright and very quick and feisty. She always had an opinion on things and wasn't shy about letting you know about that. After the divorce, she just at that point devoted her life to providing for my brother and I. And so she worked very

[3] Jessie R. McKenzie lived from 1913-2007.

hard, and I can remember we came up here, and as I say, she was a secretary. She actually started out as a secretary for a small firm. It wasn't a law firm; it was an insurance company. I remember she'd work weekends, and you know it pretty much consumed her. Not that she lost her spirit or anything like that. It's simply that she was busy.

MOR: Hold on for just a second. Yeah, we're in good shape. What about — were either of your parents, or was your household when you were growing up religious at all? Did you go to church or anything like that?

PETTUS: No.

MOR: How about politics? Were you mother and dad interested in that?

PETTUS: Yes. And that fits nicely here, and it's certainly a piece of this story, I think. It's good to know who I am and how I got to be who I am. They were not active politically. They weren't part of the local organization or precinct committee people or anything of that nature, but I can remember from the days as a child that my grandfather was always interested in politics and current events.

By the time I came along, reached the stage of being pretty conscious of what was going on around me, he was retired. So he was there all the time. And he would listen to the radio, and he would read the newspapers, and there was a discussion of politics very early on. And of course he was a Democrat, and I would say reflective of a blue-collar Democrat position.

My mother reflected that. My grandmother, she wasn't all that political, but it wasn't that she just went along for the ride. She just wasn't as strong as my grandfather and my mother. But it was a strong kind of blue collar, working man's kind of politics. You know I

can remember them being very supportive of Adlai Stevenson.[4] They didn't like McCarthy[5] very much, and that's going back a ways.

I can remember later we were in Los Angeles when John Kennedy[6] was nominated. Not that we were at the convention; we didn't play that game. But I can remember that we were just touring out on Sunset Boulevard, and we saw Kennedy's car. I mean there was three or four cars; we actually saw Kennedy. This was before he was nominated.

MOR: When he was sort of running for it?

PETTUS: And of course we were Stevenson people. And my aunt on my mother's side lived in North Hollywood, so we had gone down to visit them. We were in my aunt and uncle's car, and we saw Kennedy, and at the time there was a great deal of — he was just becoming part of the consciousness of America. This dashing, young image that was cut. And here we were, we saw him in the car. While the family was still for Stevenson, you could see the thing starting to change right then and there. And then of course he was nominated. We were down there, and it was all part of the thing. So it was that kind of family. And politics played at that kind of a — again not at a participatory level, but we were tuned in.

MOR: And what was your grammar school experience like in California? Did you like school?

PETTUS: Yeah, that's an interesting question. My recollection is that school is fine. I always did well in school, and the reason I say it's interesting is I look back on really pretty much my entire elementary and secondary education as there being a good deal of

[4] Adlai Ewing Stevenson II (1900-1965) was an American politician who was twice the Democratic nominee for President of the United States.
[5] Joseph Raymond McCarthy (1908-1957) was an American politician who served as a Republican U.S. Senator from the state of Wisconsin from 1947 until his death.
[6] John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963), often referred to by his initials J.F.K., served as the 35th president of the United States from 1961 until his assassination near the end of his third year in office.

outside turmoil. That is to say turmoil in the family and — because I liked school, and I liked the subject matter, and I was interested in it. But my recollection of it is that there always seemed to be a lot of interference at home and in my family life. And I think, you know, I really do recall that even though I was not aware of problems between my mother and my father, I wasn't tuned in to the point where I took sides or whatever. I was aware the backfield was in motion, and there was trouble, and you know.

Then after the divorce we came up here, and like I say, it was slim pickings. It was hard times. We didn't have a lot of money. And I'm going into junior high and high school. And especially in a smaller town, but then it's probably true everyplace, if your family doesn't have a lot of money, and if your family is not well-placed in the community and all that sort of thing, you're not quite as cool as the kids that have all that.

So my recollection of my elementary and secondary education in general was, I could never quite grab hold of it. There were times when I did, and I did very, very well. There were times when there seemed to be disruptions and that I didn't do as well as I could have. And it really wasn't until I got to college that I really was on my own, and I was able to really apply myself. And you know it's there where I actually was able to really concentrate.

MOR: Now you said you went for a year at Western? That's a local…

PETTUS: That's right. That's here in Bellingham.

MOR: A local community college or something?

PETTUS: No, it's a state university.

MOR: A state university. Okay. And still living at home then?

PETTUS: I was still living at home. And interestingly, but I was a kind of — even if you're living at home, you're was your own. And it tended to be more academic based than social based which high school is. But that's also where I first started to become active in politics. And it was at Western where I first started going to Young Democrats meetings and that sort of thing. And that was really where I met Lloyd Meeds[7] for the first time and Al Swift[8] actually as it turned out. Over that — that would have been the summer of 1965, I guess. That's a long time ago. But at any rate that's where I first started getting, life started [to] actuate, as opposed to being just tuned into politics. I started to actuate on it.

MOR: You mentioned then that high school was more of a social experience for you, and that was here in Bellingham High School. Did you have any ideas before you went to Western about what you might do with your life, or were you just an open book still at that point?

PETTUS: No, I think I'd been pretty clear towards the end of my high school — I can recall my junior year of high school I wanted very much to go into science, because I liked math and I liked physics, and I wanted very much to do that. There was a sea change in there in my senior year I guess it was, and the factors involved I have yet to get the handle on. But at any rate it was — by the time I got to Western I was pretty clear about the fact that I wanted to become a lawyer. I actually enjoyed the — I started out in political science at Western. I was part of that thing that happened in the 1960s you know of being socially conscious and wanting to make the world a better place. It sounds a little cliché now or a little something anyway, but we really did believe those things then, and we really did want to do those things then, and it was for real. And I saw law as the way that — as the route.

And the other thing that I think that was key as I look back on it — again I came from a blue-collar family, and it was always clear to me that I was going to have to make my way

[7] Edwin Lloyd Meeds (1927–2005) served as a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1965 to 1979. He represented the second district of Washington as a Democrat. While a congressman, he was known for his work on conservation and education issues.

[8] Allan Byron Swift (1935-2018) served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1979 to 1995, representing the Second Congressional District of Washington as a Democrat.

in life. The trust fund wasn't there. And I needed to decide, and there is never any question actually from the time I was at junior high school, there's no question as to whether I was going to go to college or not. I knew I was going to do that. And by the time I started at Western, I decided what I wanted to do and was going on about doing it.

MOR: And you mentioned sort of your activist 1960s mindset then. Was the decision to pursue a career in law because you saw it as a way to get into politics or was it just law itself?

PETTUS: I think that I did a pretty sober analysis that law would teach me how things worked, how the structure of society worked and how to manipulate that structure. And I think that I saw that as a necessary and sufficient condition to making of a contribution in the world. Whether I actually — it's interesting. I don't know that I had my eyes on being president like Bill Clinton[9] did. I don't recall having in my senior year of high school or freshman year of college, saying, "You know I'm going to be president someday." And part of that I think was I never thought I could be president, so I didn't even have it in mind.

In fact I think there are amazing parallels — probably this is an aside, but I see that there are amazing parallels in my personality and Bill Clinton's personality. You know, there are probably — you're going to need more tapes than you've got there to really get into this. But I find myself — we grew up the same. And you know he came from a blue-collar family and it was troubled, and there was in his part of the 1960s — you had to have been there to really get the full feel for this, but it was a very powerful time. And looking back on it I see both Clinton and I as being driven by some of the same forces. I think Bill Clinton did a little bit better in life than I did, but I sometimes find myself musing about that. But at least I think he did better than I did. There are probably some people that would think that nothing Bill Clinton could do was good, so they might not agree with that, but I think he did a great deal better than I did.

[9] William Jefferson Clinton (born in 1946) served as the 42nd president of the United States from 1993 to 2001.

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

Tape 1, Side 2

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PETTUS: But the same kind of wanting to do constructive things in the society, and law was a vehicle to help me out in that regard. As it turned out, I think I was — I didn't know it then, but I know it now, I think that going to law school was one of the best things I ever did to that end.

MOR: When you were sort of coming to these conclusions as a teenager, were there people that helped you focus your thoughts, mentors or anybody?

PETTUS: Yeah.

MOR: Who were some of those people?

PETTUS: I think that my — the one that really provided — reaching back, I think my uncle on my mother's side. He was a professional — he was — he had a white-collar job at Mobil Oil Company in New York. He was a safety manager for Mobil Oil. I mean he was up in the corporate structure. And I can remember him coming out either to Los Angeles or down there or when we were here he'd come out, and he was the big deal. He was very much admired in the family as having achieved great success.

So he helped me out in a couple of ways. Number one, in the early years of my life he provided something to aspire to as being successful and so forth. And then he actually helped me going through college. He'd help me out with tuition and books and so forth. And so that was an important thing.

I think that for a young man, one of the first things he has to do is learn what a mentor is. And then once you've learned what a mentor is, you go back and you try to find other mentors. And he kind of played that role in my life. And so I searched out, and perhaps it was that my father wasn't really in the home, and I'm sure there's some complex dynamics going on here. But then Lloyd Meeds was really the one who became like a

father to me in a lot of ways. Lloyd was an attorney, number one. Number two, he was the congressman. Number three, he took the time with me. I don't know whether he recognized that I had something, I had a spark, or that I was ambitious or quite what it was, but he really took time with me to work with me.

I remember when right out of — well, I finished my first year at Western, and towards the end of that first year he had hired me to do a research project on Plant Roberts, Washington. I don't know if you know about Plant Roberts, but it's a bundle of problems from a public administration standpoint.

MOR: Because of its isolation there?

PETTUS: It's sitting out there isolated. People have to — in order to go to school they have to come through Canada to get into the Blaine school system, and ta-da, ta-da, ta-da. That's just tip of the iceberg. It goes on and on and on. So this is way back when, and he said, "Well, gosh darn, I'm going to try to do something about this." And he said, "What I want to do is turn this over to the International Joint Commission," which is a U.S.-Canada forum of parliamentary leaders, members of Congress to get at these kinds of problems. He said, "Before I do that, I need to do a kind of catalog of what are all the problems really, and sort out which one are real problems and which ones aren't, and what has been done on each one of 'em, and ta-da, ta-da, ta-da." And he came to me in my — I was what, I guess that must have been winter quarter. He said, "I'd like you to do this." And I said, "Sure, I'd be happy to do it." So I got to know him quite well there and began to work with him.

I kind of forget where I was going with that, but it seems to me I was headed some place and now I find myself [Laughs] wandering around here in circles all of a sudden.

MOR: You worked that project for a while...

PETTUS: Yes, I worked that project. Oh, I know what I was going to say. But I intended then to go down to Berkeley. And I enjoyed that project, and I said, "Lloyd, is there something on your staff (a position on your staff) that I can have, that I could just — I'd rather do that than go to school." I kind of liked the idea of working on a congressional staff, and I was getting ahead of myself. And Meeds said, "No, we're not going to do that. You're going to get your education." It was that kind of relationship where he channeled me at certain stages of my life. And so, the answer is yes.

And then I think I had a mentor relationship with Swift, but it was a different kind of relationship. Really, Meeds was more paternal in a sense that Swift. Swift and I were — I wouldn't say we were straight-across-the table colleagues, but we were friends. And there was more equal relationship with Swift than it was with Lloyd. I was always kind of looking up with Lloyd, even though Lloyd's not tall. [Laughs] I better not. I do get to edit little bits of this, don't I?

MOR: Can you tell me how you first met Lloyd Meeds?

PETTUS: Actually, as I recall I met him — I had gone up to Western in my senior year to take a course in calculus. Again, remember I wanted to be — this was when life was changing, and it was in transition, and I was still wanting to be a nuclear physicist. And the backfield was changing, and I was losing interest as I was going to the calculus class, but that's another story. And Lloyd was up at Western. He was speaking, and that's where I first met him.

MOR: He was just giving an address as the congressman to a group of students then?

PETTUS: Yeah. You know, again, I was ready to be involved because — how old are you, Michael?

MOR: I'm 58, actually.

PETTUS: Are you? You're a little like I am. You don't anywhere — I don't think I look — I'm 55. I don't think I look anywhere near as old as I am. But you remember all this then? The 1960s were this incredibly powerful time, and we went through — well, J.F.K. was assassinated in 1963. Martin Luther King[10] went down, when was that, in 1968?

MOR: 1968, I think that's right. Yes.

PETTUS: And then right afterwards, Robert Kennedy[11] was assassinated. And then we had the war thing going on. Those were much different time. So by the time — I had this family that was tuned into politics, but they weren't active. And by God I'm going to get active!

MOR: I imagine given your family's — you just mentioned the Kennedy assassination, I imagine that must have been a major event as far as your family was concerned.

PETTUS: Yeah, it really was. It was just a devastating thing. I can remember that four or five days from the assassination to the time of the funeral and all that stuff. It was an enormously difficult time. And glued to the T.V. set and the whole bit, but very sad. Very sad.

MOR: I think all of us who were around at that time remember it fairly vividly.

PETTUS: I remember I was in class. I was in study hall.

MOR: At Bellingham High.

[10]Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) was an American Baptist minister and activist, one of the most prominent leaders in the civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968.
[11] Robert Francis Kennedy (1925-1968) served as the 64th United States Attorney General from 1961 to 1964, and as a U.S. Senator from New York from 1965 until his assassination in June 1968.

PETTUS: At Bellingham High. I just got up and walked out, and got home. And it was clear to me that I wasn't going to finish school that day. I don't even know whether they let classes out or not because I was gone. It was very sad.

MOR: And of course you also mentioned that Vietnam was the backdrop of the 1960s also. Were you — I don't see on your résumé that you spent any time in the military, but you must have been of draft age.

PETTUS: Actually I joined the National Guard. I was in Air National Guard for six years. It was from 1969 I think it was, through 1975, I guess it would be. And [there were a lot of?] strange stories. So the National Guard unit was here in Bellingham. And I used to, when I was down in Berkeley, I didn't want to switch units down to Alameda County, because I saw myself being called up by the local California National — you know, Ronald Reagan calling me up so I could stand guard at the campus. So that didn't appeal to me at all. So what I would do as I maintained my position in the unit here, and I'd drive up every other month; I'd drive up from Berkeley to Bellingham so I could do four days' worth of guard drills. And then drive back down on Tuesday morning, or whatever.

And I had long hair, of course, and so I would have to put my hair up in hairpins. My wife had an old wig that she cut off so that it was a short haired wig. And she'd put my hair up in hairpins like this, put a stocking (one of her pantyhose) over the top of it, and then fasten the hair up in the stocking and then pull this wig over the top of it. So I passed muster. [Oh my God!?] And it was on and on and on like that. The whole — for six years. And there were a bunch of guys like me in the unit who were — well, it was a lot like *M*A*S*H,*[12] is what it was like. That's what it was like. It was – there were a bunch of guys that weren't taking it totally seriously, and we were a pain in the ass for the first sergeant and so forth.

[12] *M*A*S*H* is a 1970 American black comedy war film (and later T.V. series) depicting a unit of medical personnel stationed at a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) during the Korean War.

But a guy I can remember going through these — it wasn't so bad actually if it was just a four-day drill where you got to go home at night. But occasionally they'd have some special deal where you had to stay overnight on the base. This damned wig would start to go up on my head like that and be pulling my hair like that. And it got so bad they finally ended up referring to me as Mister Peanut because this thing would sit high up on my head. It'd work its way up. At any rate. [Both laugh]

MOR: I want to ask you a little more about the Berkeley days, but before we do that, you met Al Swift at Western also. Is that right?

PETTUS: That's right. See, he was Director of Public Affairs here at KVOS, the T.V. station. So he was in Bellingham. To be accurate he was Lloyd Meeds' administrative assistant from 1965 through 1969. Then he came back to Bellingham to resume his position at the TV station and was here in Bellingham until, it would have been April of 19 — oh, gosh, would that have been 1977? I think it would have been. I think it was April of 1977 he was at the TV station.

So what happened is after I graduated from law school in 1974 or 1975, I came back here to practice law. So Swift and I were here in town here for a good long while together, and I'd known him from those previous years. But it was those years back in town here — this is getting a little complicated, but it was those years back in town here where he and I really kind of cemented our relationship.

MOR: So you didn't know him as well then when you first met him?

PETTUS: Right, right. He was active here. When he came back in 1969, he got very active in local politics, both in the Democratic Party, and then there was a charter commission thing that was going on. There were several other community activities. After he got back from his first stint with Lloyd Meeds, he became very active in local community stuff.

MOR: And so Lloyd was the one then that turned you with your idea of going to work directly for him without finishing school.

PETTUS: That's exactly right. He was a great believer in education. When he started out in Congress, his first committee assignment was education, labor, and he was a great believer in education.

MOR: So had you already applied to Berkeley, or how did you make the transition from Western to Berkeley?

PETTUS: I'd already applied. Yeah.

MOR: And then you were three years down in Berkeley then? At a pretty interesting time. What was Berkeley like in those days?

PETTUS: By the time I got to Berkeley, the free-speech movement had turned to anti-war, and you had an increasing involvement with — there were more and more drugs around. And by the time I got to Berkeley, it was starting to become more of a happening than it was an idea movement. And I can remember going to demonstrations at Sproul Hall which was the administration building, and first of all, a significant number of the demonstrators didn't bear any relationship, didn't look like, talk like, and it was clear they weren't students. You had a lot of hangers-on. And so that's when I first got there, it had kind of gotten to that point. And I was part of the anti-war movement at the outset, and would go to the demonstrations. I wasn't tied into the organization of all that because I was new, and also I was there to get — again, this blue-collar things — I was there to get an education. And so I felt some — and we were paying through the nose. We were paying out-of-state tuition, and to me at that time that was a lot of money. It's a paltry sum compared to what kids are paying today.

So it was — I guess I didn't get deeply involved in it, because the nature of it was – by the time I got there it had started to change quickly. It was more of a happening, and there was more drugs involved in it. The anti-war part of it was fine, but it was starting to get into this, Black Power Eldridge Cleaver thing was going on on one side of it. Bobby Seale[13] was over in Oakland running around with the Little Red Book.[14] I remember Bobby Seale and several of his people were up on the campus selling these Little Red Books, Chairman Mao's, you know. So it had kind of lost its — it was scattered.

MOR: It wasn't as focused as it was earlier.

PETTUS: That's right. I think when the free speech movement started out, Mario Savio[15] and the boys, I think it was a pretty responsible, focused kind of changing what were some old education, old-school kind of policies. What the students' role on campus was and *loco parentis* and all that stuff. And that seemed to make considerable sense for a place like a liberal university like Berkeley. But what you had was this deterioration of student movement. By 1969, 1970, it started to get really radicalized, and you had all this, like I say, the Black Power people. You had — what did they used to call themselves? Not the S.L.A., not the Symbionese Liberation Army, but there was another group. I mean we're talking making bombs and robbing banks and stuff like that. It was quickly heading in that direction.

And the blue-collar side of me, the kind of — if I'd had a trust fund and didn't have worry about things in life, I may have been off doing some of that myself. I don't know. But it was clear to me that if I got into trouble — there's a difference between me and Patty

[13] Robert George Seale (born in 1936) is an American political activist and author who is widely known for co-founding the Black Panther Party.

[14] *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* is a book of statements from speeches and writings by Mao Zedong, the former Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, published from 1964 to about 1976 and widely distributed during the Cultural Revolution. The most popular versions were printed in small sizes that could be easily carried and were bound in bright red covers, thus commonly becoming known internationally as the "Little Red Book."

[15] Mario Savio (1942-1996) was an American activist and a key member of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement.

Hearst.[16] [Both laugh] Patty gets out scot-free; Drew goes to jail. So I didn't want anything to do with that. So I put some distance.

MOR: And was it at Berkeley that you met your wife?

PETTUS: No. I met my wife here, actually. She was at Bellingham High School when I was at Bellingham High School, and she wouldn't have anything to do with me. I'm sure there's reasons for that we won't go into. But then after we got out of college, and she was up at Western. She started at Western. She started a couple of quarters after I did, and it was in the spring of that first year where we were really, you know, its spring!

MOR: But you'd had your eye of her since high school?

PETTUS: Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah! It was quite a — I was always just — well, the first time I saw her I was stunned, and look what happened. [Both laugh] I've been stunned ever since.

MOR: So then after Berkeley, was it immediately that you went to Northwestern School of Law?

PETTUS: Yes. Yep..

MOR: So that was a little closer to home in Portland?

PETTUS: Yep, that's right. And that was basically a three-year hard slog of study, study, study, and I — not a lot of memories there, just study.

[16] Patricia Campbell Hearst (born in 1954) is the granddaughter of American publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst. She first became known for the events following her 1974 kidnapping by the Symbionese Liberation Army. She was found and arrested 19 months after being abducted, by which time she was a fugitive wanted for serious crimes committed with members of the group. At her trial, she testified that she had been raped and threatened with death while held captive. Her sentence was commuted by President Jimmy Carter, and she was later pardoned by President Bill Clinton.

MOR: Any particular part of the law that appealed to you as you started to learn more about it?

PETTUS: I liked contracts because I found the study of contracts and writing of contracts to be sort of a fun, intellectual exercise. Essentially what you're trying to do is write provisions that are favorable to your side, and one, are protective of your side, and two, or to the extent you can do it, favorable to your side, but you've also got to write it in such a way that it's acceptable to the other side. And I found that to be kind of fun. And I enjoyed the English language aspect of that, just to be as creative as you possibly could. So I liked that.

And I was intrigued by the rules of evidence because I guess — one of the frustrations in life is that you don't have nine lives. And one of the things that I would have loved to have done and never was able to do, is to do courtroom law, litigation. After I got out of law school I did a little bit of it. I came back here to Bellingham and did a little dinking over here in district court, and just enjoyed the hell out of it, because it's a creative — I guess what I liked about it is that you angst; as a law student you angst to a great deal about that, going into a courtroom for the first time. You know, you spent three damn years studying all this stuff and trying to cram it into your head. And when you're doing that, that's a lot of ground to cover, and you kind of put it in this side, and it slips out over to this side of your head. And you know you just are frustrated 'cause you haven't got it all. Again, I'm not like Bill Clinton that could remember it all and then toss it around in his head and come out with a whole new concept.

And the closer you get to going into court for the first time, the more angst you have about it 'cause you realize how much you don't know. And then you get in there, and you realize that certainly all of that is very important. 'Specially the rules of evidence, but this is really a — this is a people game.

MOR: Hold on, one second.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

Tape 2, Side 1

2002 June 5

MOR: This is a continuation of the interview with Drew Pettus on June 5th.

PETTUS: This is a people game. You get in the courtroom; it's a people game. It's just trying to get a sense of where the jury is or where the judge is, and you make an effort to read the jury or the judge. And you deal with witnesses, and they try to be evasive, and you go after 'em. And you know, there's a great deal of enjoyment out of that. And there's highs and lows out of it. And there's a roller coaster effect to it. If you win, by God you're higher than a kite, and if you lose, you're lower than a dog. So I actually always wanted to do that, but I just never had the time to do it. I just never was — you know, I got — I practiced here for a while. And the next thing I know, I'm working for Lloyd Meeds in the local office here.

I know I'm getting out of order here, but I'm working in a local office, and then boom! All of a sudden I'm in Washington, D.C. And I'm there for 18 years and I come back here. And by the time I'm back here, I felt it was a little too late to do litigation, and I've always kind of regretted that. If I win the lottery, I may just do it. I may just say, "the Hell with it! I'm going to go back, and I'm going to jump into this thing and probably won't make any money for a good long while," because that's part of it. You have to get good at it before people hire you to ruin their lives. I'm out of order. Go ahead.

MOR: That's okay. That's fine. We can have a little out of order. I'll drag you back to the timeline. [Both laugh] So during this period when you were going to law school, while for that matter even Berkeley, did you maintain your contacts with Lloyd Meeds' office?

PETTUS: Absolutely.

MOR: Summer work or anything like that?

PETTUS: Summer work, yep.

MOR: For the congressman?

PETTUS: I went back to D.C. and did an internship with him. And then I would see him at Christmas time and like that. We maintained a correspondence and so forth. It was during the school time, both college and law school, there wasn't time to do a whole lot, but I'd always had it in mind that doing staff work was something I wanted to do.

Now, I will tell you that, believe it or not, I didn't really think that I had an enormous shot at that, I think largely because the truth or the bottom line was, who the hell was I? I was a secretary's son from Bellingham, Washington, and my view of the working on Capitol Hill was sort of way up here, and I'm kind of way down there. I always aspired to it but didn't have an enormous amount of confidence that I would be doing that.

MOR: What year did you do your internship?

PETTUS: Darn. I'm trying to recall when that was. I don't really — let's see, was that 1972 maybe?

MOR: Yeah, the date isn't super important, and was that — that must have been a pretty interesting summer then. Was it the first time you'd been East, or…?

PETTUS: Yeah. It was a pretty big world.

MOR: I'll bet! Washington itself must have been pretty exciting for someone who was thinking along the lines of…

PETTUS: Yeah, it was. But my recollection is that it happened pretty fast, and I didn't really — it wasn't until — that one didn't hit me until I went back to work for him on the Rules Committee. That's when it hit me. [Laughs]

MOR: Okay, we'll talk about that in a minute. So you said you worked here in the law practice for a couple of years then.

PETTUS: No. What happened is I graduated from law school in (I forget; I'm vague on these) I think it was 1974.

MOR: I think that's right. That's what your résumé — your résumé said that you started working in the practice in 1974.

PETTUS: Yeah, so that was 1974. As I recall it was like October or something, 'cause you don't find out from Bar that you'd passed. That was another thing I wasn't sure I was going to do, but I did.

MOR: You say you took the Washington State Bar exam?

PETTUS: Oh, yeah. I was actually down in Berkeley when I — I was down seeing some friends. I was in a phone booth, and I called home because I knew it was about time. My mother — I had everything mailed to my mother's house, and she said, "The results are here." I said, "I'm in a phone booth, so okay, you'd better open it." She said, "You passed," and I almost tore the phone book apart. [MOR laughs] It was great! It was really great. So I came back here in October, November and just hung a shingle out. I have a friend here in town that I shared expenses with and practiced.

And then I guess maybe it wasn't until 1976 — I'm trying to remember, it probably would have been very first part (let me see)...

MOR: That you went to work for Meeds? That was the date on your résumé. It said 1976.

PETTUS: Yeah, 1976. Because he — that was at the time of the Boldt decision.[17] And Lloyd Meeds refused to tell the constituency that he would go back to Congress and repeal the Boldt decision. You've got to understand, this is fishing territory up here. And ever since I could remember, there were established families here who did quite well by going out and fishing in Alaska and then coming down and fishing in the Puget Sound. And they had a nice little — they make a lot of money.

And George Boldt came along and said, "I interpret the treaty to give half of the catch to the Indian fleet. And because the Indian fleet is immature and not developed, it's my decision that I'm going to keep the non-Indian fleet at dockside while the Indian fleet gets to go out and try to catch an appropriate number of fish to equal 50%." So you had all these guys who were significant in the community, made a lot of money off of this up until that time. The boats were parked out at the docks while the Indians were running around in their little boats trying to catch all the fish. The place went berserk! I mean it just went absolutely nuts and people were just seething mad. It's a wonder that more people — I don't think anybody ever got killed out of the deal, but Jesus, it was mean!

And so they went to Lloyd Meeds and said, "Lloyd, you're our congressman. You go back and repeal the Boldt decision." Which Congress has the ability to change…

MOR: Change the law.

PETTUS: Federal law, and pass a new law, and that's that. Meeds said, "No." Because, number one, he didn't think it was the right thing to do, and number two, he would be lying to them if he told them that he'd try to do that, 'cause he knew he couldn't do it. It would be fine if he would get one vote for that, and that would be it, his vote. But that was not the

[17] *United States v. Washington*, commonly known as the Boldt Decision was heard in 1974 in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, reaffirming the rights of American Indian tribes in the state of Washington to co-manage and continue to harvest salmon and other fish under the terms of various treaties with the U.S. government.

politically correct thing to say at the time, and literally it hit the fan. And he was in a tough, tough re-election effort, and it really happened on the northern part of the district. From Anacortes up was the kind of focal point of the fishing problem. And so he came to me and said, "Drew, I'd like you to open an office in Bellingham for me." So that's what I did.

MOR: So then you became the focal point for some of the anger. How did that go?

PETTUS: I was the point man. I was the heatsink as it were. Unbelievable. I've got to tell you it was just — the story is, and that sums this up, that really puts it in a nutshell. Shortly after I started and opened the office here, I get a call from the chief of staff, a fellow by the name of Leonard [Saurie?] who was kind of a cerebral guy and a good guy, but he kind of lived in his world. And he said, "Drew, the congressional delegation," which at that time was Magnuson[18] and Jackson,[19] six Democratic congressmen and Joel Pritchard,[20] the Republican — he says, "The congressional delegation is going to do a little dog and pony show around Washington state. Just come out and brief the — the election's approaching — so brief the electorate on what's going on in Washington. All the good things that they're doing for 'em, and all this sort of thing. And they're going from —" I'm trying to remember, I think it was like six or seven cities, Spokane, Wenatchee, Yakima, you know, around. "And we're coming to Bellingham on such and such a date, and what we're doing in each of these cities, we're asking the Rotary Club to sponsor the event." He said, "We've had great success, so what you need to do is call up the Rotary Club and just tell them we're coming, okay?"

And I'm listening to this. I'm a new man on the job sure, and I'm thinking, "Oh, my God!" I know this doesn't sound right, but I want to please and all that, so I say, "Okay, Len, no problem" I called around the Rotary Club. I called everybody I knew in the Rotary Club.

[18] Warren Grant "Maggie" Magnuson (1905-1989) represented Washington in Congress for 44 years, first as a Representative from 1937 to 1944, and then as a Senator from 1944 to 1981. Magnuson, a member of the Democratic Party, was Washington state's longest-serving senator.
[19] Henry Martin "Scoop" Jackson (1912-1983), a Democrat, served as Washington's U.S. representative (1941–1953) and U.S. senator (1953–1983) from the state of Washington.
[20] Joel McFee Pritchard (1925-1997) served in the U.S. House of Representatives and as the 14th Lieutenant Governor of Washington as a member of the Republican Party.

I called people that I knew that knew Rotary Club members, and they wouldn't have anything to do with it. They didn't want anything to do with Lloyd Meeds. And so we tried the Rotary Club; we tried the Lions Club; we tried 'em all, all the service clubs, and nobody would touch it with a 10-foot pole. We ended up having a no-host event over at the Leopold Hotel. And I'll never forget. The day of the event we had about 300 fishermen outside the hotel ready for the delegation to show up. They had a pickup truck full of dead fish, and they were going to throw them at congressmen and at the delegation and all this sort of thing.

[Laughs] So I'm on the phone, and I'm talking to Leonard, and he says, "Well, figure out some way to bring 'em in the back." So I did; I figured out a way to bring 'em in the back of the hotel. And I was stuck with the role of going out and trying to keep the crowd calmed down. Holy mackerel! So, you know. It all went off. Nobody got hurt; nobody threw any fish, but I earned my stripes that day, I'll tell you.

And so that was like in the spring. And it was a tough reelection effort, and the election wasn't decided until, I think it was the middle of November, or no, I'm sorry, the middle of December. It was so close. It was less than one-half of one percent. Went into recount. We had all kinds of — it was like Florida in 1976. We had people coming out, attorneys coming out from Washington elections, attorneys. And we were watching the polling booths. And Lloyd was popping Tums[21] right and left. It was a mess, you know. But on or about the 15th of December, they announced that Lloyd had won it by 529 votes out of 115,000 or something. I forget what it was, but I remember it was 529 votes.

MOR: A skinny margin.

PETTUS: Oh, it was "by the hair on his chinny, chin chin." And shortly thereafter, he called me up, and he said, "Drew, I've got an offer you can't refuse," and he said, "I want you go come back as my administrative assistant, my chief of staff." And I said, "Jesus, Lloyd, I know that you kind of lost perspective here, but I'm just a little guy from Bellingham,

[21] Tums is an antacid made of sucrose and calcium carbonate manufactured by Haleon in St. Louis, Missouri.

Washington." And I actually turned it down, 'cause I didn't think I was ready for it. I said, "I think I'd be doing you harm if I did that. I'm just not comfortable with it." So he put up a little resistance, but he said, "Okay." And then about two days later he called me up, and he said, "Now, I've got one you really can't refuse." He said, "The speaker just appointed me to the Rules Committee, and with that position there's an associate counsel's position for an attorney on the Rules Committee staff, and I want you to take that."

Well, you know, at that point I was a dead duck. [Laughs] Visions of sugar plums and all of this, and I said, "Yes." And the rest is history.

MOR: And so then you went to Washington and…

PETTUS: In March of 1977, I drove across the United States. And you know, first of all, it's a big country. That was one observation. Secondly it gets much more crowded about the time you get to Indiana. Again, you've got a West Coast kid here, and he's driving across the United States, and the difference between the East Coast and the West Coast really started to hit me as I hit that traffic, and ta-da, ta-da, ta-da. Then I hit Washington, and there was no orientation period. There was no — I just hit the workload, just like hitting a brick wall.

And I can remember, I never worked so hard in my life. I'd be briefing legislation for him, be up 'till three or four o'clock in the morning, get up at eight o'clock and back at it. And do that for four nights a week. And part of it was I didn't know what I was doing. You'd brief it like you'd brief a case. And I really in retrospect didn't have to do all that, because I was in the position of having to brief the substance of the legislation, and at the same time I'm trying to figure out the rules of the House of Representatives which are pretty complex. It's one squirrelly set of rules they've got and not easily amenable to just go into the rule book and reading it. There's a lot of custom and tradition and usage and all that stuff that you have to kind of know in order to make sense out of what the book says. And you've got politics going on at the same time. So I was pretty overwhelmed.

MOR: Climbing a steep learning curve there.

PETTUS: Oh, boy!

MOR: I had asked you earlier about your wife, and you mentioned that you'd met her in high school and then you got together with her in Western. So you married then at that time or did you…

PETTUS: Yes, we got married in 1970, and she did then end up going down to Berkeley with me at that point.

MOR: Okay. And then of course she would have made the cross-country trip with you too in the car?

PETTUS: Yes. Absolutely.

MOR: Now did you have any family by that time? Any children?

PETTUS: No. We never had any children. It was really kind of a fast track life for those years certainly, and we never had any children. She had her own business back East. She's got an art history degree, and she got involved in museums early on. And she in fact, when I was out here working for Lloyd, she was back in Washington running a bookstore for the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington.

MOR: Let's see. You were separated then for that period?

PETTUS: Oh, yeah. There have been two or three of those where she's gone off and done her thing and — well, I'm not sure. There haven't been two or three. She went back — actually when I came up here after law school, she went back to Washington to work at

the Corcoran. That's the way it worked, because I wasn't sure whether I was going to make any money or not. And I figured, Mary, if one of us has to starve, that's one thing, but I don't see any reason why you should have to starve. And she wanted to take this thing at the Corcoran. But then she came back. She just got back, and Lloyd Meeds calls up and says, "Do you want to go to Washington?" So there we are.

MOR: Your wife's name is Mary?

PETTUS: That's right.

MOR: Her maiden name was?

PETTUS: May. Mary May, believe it or not.

MOR: Okay. So then you are in Washington, counsel on the Rules Committee. Essentially I guess you were sort of reporting to Lloyd Meeds in that position, but kind of worked for the House generally, or the Rules Committee generally?

PETTUS: That's right. I was his guy on the Rules Committee. Each member of the Rules Committee has their own person to kind of take care of their business on the Rules Committee. Rules Committees — at that time there were only 13 members of the Rules Committee. I think in fact it may even be smaller than that now. I don't know. It's known as the Speaker's Committee, because it's the traffic cop for the floor.

MOR: And I guess occasionally interesting issues can surface in that committee. Anything notable that happened on your watch?

PETTUS: There were some amendments to the Clean Air Act. And I'm trying to recall whether there was much in the way of — I think the Panama Canal legislation went through

at that time. That was Jimmy Carter's[22] time, and I think that it was going through then. I can't be sure about that, but I do recall briefing out of — it was one of probably a hundred different pieces of legislation that I briefed in that time. It all happened — there are so many of 'em that, to be frank about it, it's kind of a blur.

MOR: Apart from the hard work, how did you find life in Washington?

PETTUS: The major impression or the major reaction was the workaholic aspect of it. It wasn't just me; they all do that. And this is probably Capitol Hill more — I don't know that I could speak with any real firsthand knowledge of any of the — whether it's the same in the executive branch or whether — I think it is, but I don't know that for a fact. Certainly if you are working at the middle level or lower level in one of the departments, I don't think they work that hard. But I think if you're at the White House or if you're working some place on Capitol Hill, it's all the same. And it's just intensive, dedicated kind of — people that are working in one of those offices are dedicated to what they're doing. And they work very hard at it, and the competition is very stiff. And, especially on the Hill, there's nothing in the way of Civil Service or any of that. You're there at the pleasure of the congressman, and if he's no long pleased, it's "good bye." And on top of that every two years you have to run again. So there's not a lot of job security, sense of well-being involved in it.

So that's, I think, kind of the overwhelming, major impression I have. It's an experience that I would do again, and I wouldn't give it up for the world. I think it was — the one thing about it, you've got your learning cap on the whole time you're there. Every day's different. There is a new thing coming on every day which becomes very frustrating after a while, because it makes it rather difficult for you to really sit down and plan ahead as to "this is what I want to do." You spend a lot of your time reacting, and that's pretty much true wherever you are, less so on a committee than it would be in a personal staff, but it's still on a committee, you're whatever's hot at the moment. But still it blows you out

[22]James Earl Carter Jr. (born in1924) served as the 39th president of the United States from 1977 to 1981.

of the water; you've got to be there, and you've got to be on top of it or else you're not there anymore.

So it is an enormously stimulating environment, and it's a fabulous learning experience. I have a friend that calls Capitol Hill the biggest university in the world. And there is that to it. The information flow is amazing. You've got any information on anything you need. Well, we didn't have computers in those days, but all I had to do is just pick up the phone and there'd be somebody at my office inside of an hour or whatever it is I needed. You call the agency or you call the lobbyist or whatever, and they get you whatever you want.

MOR: Position paper or whatever, huh?

PETTUS: Oh, yeah. And what you learn to do is get position papers from both sides, and you draw the line somewhere down the middle and "this is where the truth lies."

MOR: One thing you've already mentioned is the Carter administration. Did you have any impressions of Carter's administration, or were you just simply too busy to focus on the…

PETTUS: No, I think that — the sense was that he was never quite — he and his people were never quite up to the job. They came to town as if they wanted to maintain the Georgia office at the White House. And Hamilton Jordan[23] and Jody Powell[24] — Jody Powell was actually a bit more open and bigger and willing to try to work with the Hill and compromise and so forth. Hamilton Jordan was — he enjoyed being kind of a tough guy and doing things his way. And my recollection is that the relationship between Carter and the Hill was not all that good.

[23] William Hamilton McWhorter Jordan (1944–2008) served as Chief of Staff to President Jimmy Carter.
[24] Joseph Lester "Jody" Powell, Jr. (1943–2009) served as a White House press secretary during the presidency of Jimmy Carter.

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

Tape 2, Side 2

2002 June 5

PETTUS: And I think that this sort of stuff always starts at the top. You can't really blame it on staff. I think that with Carter there was sort of "I know what's right." It wasn't quite my way or the highway, but there was a lot of — but he was pretty moral, pretty sanctimonious I think, and it really — that's not the way that town works. That town works on compromise. The lubricant in that town is compromise. In order to work in that town, you have to walk into that town recognizing that this is one great big wheel. It's was just one great big machine; you're just one little cog in that machine. And everybody's got their legitimate interest, and it very well may be that the other guy's interest is every bit as legitimate as yours is, and somewhere along the line you're going to have to compromise. Jimmy didn't want to. He wasn't particularly good at that. And I think part of it was he sort of ran on the basis that he was different.

MOR: Yeah. Of course I guess to some extent Clinton was viewed the same way, although he was more of a politician, it sounds like.

PETTUS: He was — well, he had, one, that enormous mind, or that enormous ability he had — he was enormously able to use the English language and to craft something that more people would agree to. But I think that in his nature there was a need to please, and I think that drove some of his ability to kind of get along and work with the Congress in a little bit better way. Although the Congress, it's a separate branch of government, and they get pissy about every president that comes in there. I remember "god damnedest fag," and all these "damned staff people." Swift used to complain about "the Clinton people are all 22 years old and don't know anything."

MOR: Maybe we'd better get you to your time with Al Swift I guess. Lloyd Meeds decided not to run again. Was that what happened?

PETTUS: I got back in March, and I think Swift got back there in April. He came back as his administrative assistant. Again, I was still over on the Rules Committee dinking around over there.

MOR: And so he actually took the position then that was offered to you.

PETTUS: That's correct. And so then it was like in July, and I'll never forget one day Swift and I were out in the outer office and Lloyd came out of the office and said, "Come on in you guys. I've got something I got to tell you." Or "We need to talk." He says, "I really appreciate you coming back here, and I really —" and I forget exactly how he put it. It was sort of like, "I really love you guys, but I've decided I'm not going to run again." [Laughs] I'm still a kid you know, and I'm not particularly crestfallen about this. I wasn't real happy about it, but it's not the end of the world for me. But Swift was — he's 10 years older than I am — kind of interesting, Al's 10 years older than I am and Lloyd Meeds is 10 year's older than Al. Al, on the other hand, had uprooted, and hell, he had a record collection that cost him $4,000 to get across the country. It was a much bigger thing for him.

So this is like July of 1977 I guess (is that right?). Yeah, and the election is in 1978. So Swift and I went out and drank martinis for about six months, no, it was about three months I guess, trying to figure out what it was we were going to do. Like I say, there's no job security in that game. And then Swift just said, "I'm going to go out and run for it." That was a big move actually; it was a strong move on his part because Brian Corcoran who was Scoop Jackson's[25] press secretary, had already announced that he was coming out to run for it on the Democratic side.

Now, you got to understand, this congressional district that you're sitting in right now was Scoop Jackson's congressional district. And not so much up here in Bellingham but in Everett you mention Scoop Jackson's name and everybody gets down on their knees and bends over like that. I mean he's God! So Brian Corcoran, Scoop's press

[25] Henry Martin "Scoop" Jackson (1912-1983), a Democrat, served as Washington's U.S. representative (1941–1953) and U.S. senator (1953–1983) from the state of Washington.

secretary, coming out to run for it was — the common thinking was that he was going to win, that it was his. Swift said, "Nope, I'm going to go for it."

So long about March of 1978, Swift and I got in his 1972 Volvo and drove across the country, will not divulge anything about what we did coming across, and driving, get up to Bellingham here. Swift drops me off at my mother's place and I do a few things out here that I had to do for the congressional office, and I go back to Washington. Swift runs for the office, and he ends up winning.

MOR: Beats Jackson's…

PETTUS: Beats Jackson's press secretary, and then beat the Republican. I think it was only 52% that he got, but he beat. And so then Swift comes back and says, "Do you want to work for me?" and I said, "Sure." And that's…

MOR: That's how you made that transition.

PETTUS: That's how I made that transition.

MOR: So you never really skipped a beat then between the two [administrations].

PETTUS: One of the few times in my life I've seemed to have landed on my feet. [Both laugh] And then it was shortly — in my mind, I don't know exactly when it was, but it would have been, I would think, in March or April of 1979 when all these guys from the power community started showing up in our office saying, "Al, you've got to help us. The Northwest is in a terrible mess, and we need federal legislation to fix it." And that federal legislation — that was in 1979, and it was passed on December 5, 1980.[26] So literally from that time on, we ate, drank, slept Northwest power.

[26] Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 established the Pacific Northwest Electric Power and Conservation Planning Council and directed the Council to adopt a regional energy conservation and electric power plan.

MOR: And you just noticed the date of its passage on a copy of the Act that still hangs on your office wall.

PETTUS: That's right. This is one of the official things that — you know, you go to the White House and the President signs the bill. There's a little sketch and he hands you a pen; there it is!

MOR: The fact that it's still hanging here must mean that you have some pride in it.

PETTUS: Oh, I have to tell you that it was a wonderful experience. It was a fun, great group of people, and there literally were probably (I don't know) 20 people that were kind of involved from beginning to end, and sort of like we're all in the trenches together for that period of time. And it was really something and it was great fun.

MOR: Okay. Hold on for one second here.

[Tape stops]

PETTUS: [I] hope you know where we are here because I don't have the slightest idea where we left off.

MOR: Okay. Just before lunch you told me about the successful campaign of Al Swift and about how one of the first things that happened after you accepted his position as chief of staff in today's parlance, you were all of a sudden thrust into Northwest power politics. And I guess this is the beginning of the story about the Northwest Power Act. You said a lot of people came to your office and told you that they needed help. Who were these people?

PETTUS: I'm trying to name names, and I remember the guy's name, so let me get it out front, Larry Hittle.[27]

MOR: Okay. I've heard that name.

PETTUS: And it was Sterling Monro[28]...

MOR: Who at that time was Jackson's chief of staff?

PETTUS: No. At the time he was administrator at B.P.A.[29]

MOR: Oh, he was at B.P.A. Okay. This is later then.

PETTUS: So it was Sterling, Earl Gjelde,[30] and Larry Hittle. And Earl and Larry were kind of the brain trust from, or were Sterling's brain trust or B.P.A.'s main men, or whatever. But it is clear that they were — I don't want to say that Sterling wasn't the brains of the operation, because if you knew Sterling (Sterling's gone now), but Sterling would come back and grab me if I indicated in any way, shape or form that he wasn't the brains of the operation. But Larry and — Earl was, as I recall, the power manager, and Larry was out of the legal shop, both very talented guys. So that was the B.P.A. contingent.

We had John Ellis and Jason King from Puget Power. We had some folks from P.P.&L. [Pacific Power & Light]. I'm afraid I've forgotten the name now...

[27] Larry G Hittle practices energy and utilities law in Portland, OR, at Ater Wynne. He is a member of the Oregon bar with 54 years of legal experience.
[28] Sanford Sterling Munro Jr. (1932-1992) was an aide to former Washington Senator Henry M. Jackson. He was administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration from January, 1978 to February, 1981.
[29] The Bonneville Power Administration (B.P.A.) is a federal agency created by an act of Congress in 1937 to market electrical power from the Bonneville Dam located on the Columbia River and to construct facilities necessary to transmit that power. It is now the marketing agent for power from all of the federally owned hydroelectric projects in the Pacific Northwest.
[30] Earl Gjelde is the President and C.E.O. of Summit Power Group. He has served on numerous energy-related boards, and was Deputy Administrator, Power Manager and Chief Operating Officer of the Bonneville Power Administration from 1980-1982.

MOR: I've forgotten too I think, in one of the histories we have those names.

PETTUS: And really a grand person. And then we had a group from the public power, the most memorable was an older man by the name of Ned Billington, I think it was what it was.

MOR: Oh, Ken Billington.

PETTUS: Ken Billington. Isn't this awful how things stick? He was kind of the head guy for public power, as I recall. Ken Billington. And then Gerry Johnson[31] who was former Magnuson A.A. [Administrative Assistant] and represented the city of Seattle. And the reason I called (and this is terrible) — the reason I called Ken Billington Ned Billington was because Gerry would get irritated with some of the public power people from the eastern part of the state. He used to refer to Ken Billington as Net Billington. [MOR laughs] And what's terrible about it is that it kind of stuck I guess. It's awful.

MOR: That's a joke not too many people would get. [Both laugh]

PETTUS: Yeah, that's right. It had kind of a sharp edge to it which Gerry — do you know Gerry?

MOR: I don't, no.

PETTUS: Gerry was Magnuson's A.A. in the later years, for a period of time in the later years, and then he went Preston in Seattle. He's now I believe the managing partner of Preston in Seattle. And a good guy. Funnier than hell. And one of the people that I kind of

[31] Gerry Johnson is currently Managing Partner of Pacifica Law Group in Seattle, Washington. Earlier in his career he was legislative assistant and administrative assistant/chief-of-staff to former U.S. Senator Warren G. Magnuson.

grew up with. It was Gerry Johnson, Ed Sheets[32] and Sam [Spiena?], bunch of guys on Maggie's staff that was just really a fun time. But at any rate, Gerry was there with the city of Seattle. And a bunch of folks from public utilities, the mid-Columbia P.U.D.s [Public Utility Districts].

And then of course we had the aluminum companies, and that was Rick Redman[33] from, what is it, Heller or Eller Herman, or Herman Eller,[34] the law firm in Seattle. Actually I think they're a national law firm. They've got an operation in Seattle. And a fellow by the name of Brent Wilcox[35] who later started his own aluminum operation down in Oregon there.

MOR: And he was representing the DSIs [direct service industries] then?

PETTUS: The DSIs. And as I recall at that time Brent was with Rick's law firm. And we had some folks, a fellow from Intalco[36] that would come in, Bruce Meisner I think was his name. Real bright young guy. And like I say, there's John Ellis from Puget, Jason King from Puget, and then they had an attorney who was pretty much there for the about the first year from Perkins Coie who was the — Perkins Coie is Puget Power's law firm in Seattle.

So what happens is we're just kind of learning where the bathrooms are and getting settled back there in Swift's first term. Which is what you're supposed to do is spend your first term in the House of Representatives thinking of nothing else but getting reelected. The idea is you get elected the second time and then you're in pretty good shape, but don't let your guard down early on. So we're sitting there learning where the bathrooms

[32] Ed Sheets was the founding executive director of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council; He served for 15 years until December, 1995.
[33] Eric "Ric" Redman (born in 1948) was an author and climate activist. His first book, *The Dance of Legislation* was published when he was just 23 years old.
[34] Heller Ehrman LLP was an international law firm. It opened a Seattle office in 1983.
[35] Brett E. Wilcox is the C.E.O. of a Canadian clean energy company, Cvictus. He previously served as president and founder of Golden Northwest Aluminum, Inc. Before founding Northwest in 1986, Mr. Wilcox was the Executive Director of Direct Service Industries, a trade association of ten large aluminum and other energy-intensive companies that purchased electricity from the Bonneville Power Administration.
[36] The Intalco Aluminum plant was located in Ferndale, Washington and shipped tons of aluminum out of the Whatcom International Shipping Terminal. In 2001, Intalco had to close its plant for six months at the behest of the Bonneville Power Administration simply to ensure electricity for other local users.

are and trying to get the typewriters to work right; that was before computers, and literally it was intentional if malice of forethought that they all arrive about the same time. Of course they made appointments and all this. But all of a sudden there was this deluge of people coming back pleading that Swift become the spear carrier on this thing.

MOR: And requesting that something like the Northwest Power Act be drafted?

PETTUS: That's correct. That's correct. And of course they all had their own ideas as to how it should be done and how it should be written. And I think that there was some recognition by the time they came to us. I mean these are not dumb people. They recognized that they were going to have to make some compromises with each other in order to get this done. And they'd done some thinking about that, but you know it was still a little bit vague as to…

MOR: What do you think precipitated this desire on the part of all these different factions to further change the way that Bonneville and everybody else…

PETTUS: I think that the publics had the WPPSS[37] problem.

MOR: Right. The WPPSS was the big factor I would imagine.

PETTUS: It was a big factor. The aluminum companies wanted to work out some kind of scenario where they would have certainty in their contracts, and they wanted long-term contracts. Okay?

MOR: This was because Bonneville had earlier sort of threatened to shut off the juice to a lot of their customers I guess.

[37] Washington Public Power Supply System nuclear plants.

PETTUS: That's right. So they were pretty nervous. So I think it was a combination of — and the private power people recognized they had some nuclear power problems of their own of course that they wanted to try to get taken care of. 'Cause at that time as I recall, Skagit [Nuclear Power Project] was still in play. I'm trying to recall exactly where it was in terms of its ultimate demise, but I don't think that it had been totally clarified. They'd spent some money on it at least at that point. They had some costs embedded in the Skagit project. I believe that's correct. My sense of timing is not clear, but…

MOR: And there was some — although it was small ownership, there was some ownership on the part of the privates in WPPSS plant number 3.

PETTUS: That's correct. And they also saw this as an opportunity you see, because they wanted to get some access or some piece of the preference power rate. So everybody kind of scoped out — to some extent people were scared because if nothing was done — and recall that — it's difficult to put in perspective now or to recognize that the forecasts were still not clear as to what the needs of the region were going to be. There seemed to be some strong sense that maybe that the power needs weren't going to be great as they thought they were in the 1970s. But I don't think that they had a confident and clear fix on that. And as a result, there is their overarching sort of sense that, while it looks like the power demand isn't going to be quite as great as we thought it was going to be in the middle of the last decade, nevertheless we don't know that for sure. So we need some kind of guarantee that — and I believe that there was a sense even on the part of the publics that we needed some kind of a planning mechanism.

MOR: And the period of time you're talking about now is 1979?

PETTUS: It would have been 1979, yeah.

MOR: Which I think was just a little bit before, like a year or two before the WPPSS bubble actually fully burst. But there was a question about the financing on plants 4 and 5, which was made a part of…

PETTUS: That was part of the motivation.

MOR: Yes, yes. I suspect that was part of it, too, hoping to — I mean B.P.A. didn't have the authority at that time to back 4 and 5.

PETTUS: That's exactly right. And there was a question of whether or not they were going to be able to get the financing. And they'd already made investment in some of it, so they were all worried about being hung out to dry as I recall.

There is one other fellow from the publics, a young guy that represented the — there were a couple of guys with Public Power Council, Chip Greening[38] — I don't know if he's still around or not.

MOR: I've heard that name…

PETTUS: Yeah. He represented the Public Power Council. And there's a young fellow that was Jim somebody, represented — I think he represented just the publics which was a different organization than Public Power Council. (Oh, God. Well, maybe I'll think of it.) If I remember Larry Hittle's name, maybe I'll remember this guy's name.

And really what it was, like I said earlier, they were coming to Swift because he was appointed to the Energy and Commerce Committee, and they had to go through that; that was the committee of jurisdiction. And at the head of that committee was the ominous John D. Dingell[39] from Detroit. And back in those days Dingell was one of the most

[38] Robert M. Greening was manager of the Public Power Council in the 1980s.
[39] John David Dingell Jr. (1926-2019) served as a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1955 until 2015. A Democrat, he was a longtime member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, chairing it from 1981 to 1995 and 2007 to 2009.

powerful guys in the House, and people just — well, they were afraid of him because he could get a little surly once in a while. [Both laugh] And when he got surly, it's too bad for you.

So they all came to us, and they spent — oh, I guess it must have been a month and a half working with us as to getting us up to speed on what the issues were and so forth, because Swift didn't know an electron from a nucleus. I mean there's no way. And for that matter, back from my high school days, I did know the difference between an electron, but not much more than that. And so there's a learning period there where I think we realized we had to do this, but we hadn't committed to it. So Swift and I literally went to school, went to the library and studied a lot and got up a speed on all of it. So he makes the decision that yes, he'll do it. He'll be the principal advocate and that we'll carry it to Dingell.

MOR: And at this point the Act was just focused on power. There was no fish and wildlife or anything at that …

PETTUS: That's right. It was basically how to give Bonneville the power to or the authority to meet the requirements of the future with regard to electrical power production. And one of the things that Swift and I had talked about was the need to address the conservation renewables. Because, although neither one of us knew much about this, I had spent some time working on the Rules Committee with some of the Carter legislation in this area. And there was discussion with Carter — remember the sweaters that he'd wear to the office, about the need for conservation and renewable energy and this sort of thing. And so I had done some reading on it, so you know, we'd talked about it, and we'd sort of decided in our own minds that this was something we wanted to do. And it was something that, to be quite frank about it, as a political matter, we would need to do as well. Because we were not unaware of the fact that this could be easily characterized as a WPPSS bailout and all that. So we'd done considerable discussion on how we were going to position ourselves there.

MOR: Hold on for one second.

[End of Tape 2, Side 2]

Tape 3, Side 1

2002 June 5

MOR: The continuation of the oral history with Drew Pettus on June 5, 2002.

PETTUS: Neither Swift nor I, however, had given a great of consideration to fish. You know our association with fish was that when you go to the store, you buy it in a little package. Once in a while in my life I had gone out and gone fishing a couple of times. I don't think Swift had ever done that. And both of us had some anxieties about any time anybody'd mention the word "fish," we'd think of George Boldt and the Boldt decision and what happened to brother Meeds. So we got a little nervous any time anybody brought it up.

So we make the decision we're going to go forward on this. We knew it was going to happen anyway, but we had to — it was sort of a psychological thing. We needed to tell ourselves that we had some control over the decision. And we decided we were going to go for it. I should say Swift decided he was going to go for it, and the next thing then is to put together the great meeting with the great one, John D. Dingell. So Swift calls him up, and we get an appointment. By this time they had established — I think we're talking March or April. You know those guys first started showing up in the office maybe in February or so early on, and I think it was March or April when we finally went over to Dingell.

And I remember it was Swift, myself, Larry Hittle, Earl Gjelde, and I think Rick Redman went with us. I don't know if there — I'm trying to remember, for some reason I think maybe Roy was there, but I'm not sure. We go over to Dingell's office.

MOR: Roy Hemmingway[40] you mean?

PETTUS: Yeah. And we go over to Dingell's office, and you know you have to wait out in the lobby for a little bit. And finally after waiting for 10 minutes or so, you go in and there's

[40]Leroy H. Hemmingway (born in 1946) has been involved with Oregon public utilities and energy policy since the early 1970s. He represented Oregon on the Northwest Power Planning Council from 1981 to 1986.

the great — I don't know if you would recognized Dingell, but he's a big man. He's a big Pollock who is one of those, he's got (what do you call it?) presence; there's a term for it. Gravitas. And you know you're in the room with somebody special when you're in the room with Dingell. That's just the way it is.

So we walk in, and we all sit down. My recollection is that Dingell gets up to greet us. He's one of these people that's very congressional talk, very "my dear friend" and you know all of this, "My colleague from the state of Washington. I'm very glad to see you." Blah, blah, blah. All the formalities. And Redman who is somebody with a great deal of — I mean Rick Redman is one of the brighter guys around. I don't know if you know the history on Rick, but he was a child prodigy. He was very, very bright and graduated at the top of his class from Harvard and Harvard Law School, and then I believe — I'm not sure he was a Rhodes Scholar or not. And he's one of the people you meet, it's clear talking to him after five minutes that he's something special. He really is. And a good guy, not somebody who is unaware of how special he is, but nevertheless he's a good guy, and carries himself with a certain subtle sense of collected coolness.

Redman's got his briefcase in his lap, and Dingell comes over to shake hands with us. Rick gets up and the briefcase opens up and wham! It's all the way across the floor. [Both laugh] It was just one of those — I'm sure Rick will remember this for the rest of his life.

MOR: Shattered his cool, huh?

PETTUS: Oh, that shattered his cool. At any rate we got through that embarrassing moment, and so Swift makes his presentation. "Now, John, we got this little problem out in the Northwest, and we need to have some kind of a regional solution to this. And we recognize that the region has to be together on this, and we realize that it's a one-time shot and that the Congress is going to give us one shot at this, and if we haven't got our act together, we've lost it." And it went on like that, and he then talked a little bit about

what his thoughts on the substance of it was going to be, and Dingell's listening to all this. Dingell had his staffer in the room, a fellow by the name of Dave Finnegan.[41]

Dave Finnegan is one of those truly professional congressional staffers. I think he was out of the Interior Department, or he had an expertise. And Dingell brought him to the committee to do the expertise. Now that's more common on a committee to have someone with a strong track record, but still there are a lot of committees that just have friends of the congressman on the committee staff. Well, that's not the case with Finnegan; he's like an old Justice Department lawyer, a pro. And Finnegan is the most — there's nothing sartorial; there's no splendor there with Finnegan. He's a beer-drinking guy, he's down to earth, and he talks very fast, but you never thought if you saw him in the store or someplace, you wouldn't think he was anything special.

At any rate, so Dingell's listening to Swift go on. Swift finishes. "Well, my friend you've made a very good presentation here, and I appreciate very much you coming over, and I understand that you've got a regional problem. And I very much value your presence on the committee. You come highly recommended to us, and I've worked with you." This is the usual stuff that they do. "We've had some time to work together, and what I see, I'm very happy with. And so I want to make every effort to accommodate your needs here." So we were all kind of happy about that, 'cause it wasn't a 100% sure that that was going to be the case. He says, "I do need to tell my friend, however, that the pew rent on this effort will be — I need to take care of the little things that swim in the rivers out there and my furry friends."

I remember Swift and I looked at each other for a second. It was one of those pregnant-pause seconds when we were looking at each other and said, "Pew rent, what the hell is that?" Neither Swift nor I had been in a church in a long, long time, and we didn't know what that was. And suddenly almost instantaneously together it hit us. This was going to be his price. We had to take care of the fish. And number two, this man over here, Mr.

[41] David B. Finnegan (1933-2018) worked as an attorney for the Federal Government from 1960-1994, beginning in the Department of the Interior before moving to the U.S. House of Representatives where he was Counsel for the Legislative and Governmental Operations Committee and later the Science and Technology Committee. He was Statutory Staff Senior Counsel on the House Energy and Commerce Committee where he served Congressman John Dingell for over 20 years.

Finnegan, was going to be his guy that was going to make sure that that happened. And that's how the fish got in there. Just like that.

And what Dave and Dingell wanted was to make sure that there was mitigation on all the damage caused by the dams and so forth, and by God they're going to have to spend money on it.

MOR: Why do you think Dingell was interested in that issue?

PETTUS: You have to know Dingell. He's a grand outdoorsman. He's a sportsman. Now to put it another way, a lot of people say he wants to shoot everything that moves. He's a duck hunter, and he's a fisherman, and he's a great sportsman. And I think it really goes beyond — if it were just that, that would explain it. My personal feeling is that it goes deeper than that, that he has a pretty strong and respectable environmentalist side to him. There is not one environmental group on the face of the earth — well, I don't know if that's true. I was going to say environmentalists don't really view him that way. But you know the problem with environmental groups is that unless you agree with them 150% they think you're terrible.

Dingell I think — I actually got to know Dingell as well as anybody in the — a little guy like me on the edge of the power back there, just in that little congressional — in the House, I got to know him about as well as you could given the distance. He's older and he's a senior member, and I'm just a staffer and all that. He's a blue-collar Democrat, he's a working man's Democrat. And as I've said 15 times there today, so am I, and I think he saw that in me. And at the time that I was there, and he was there at the same time, there are fewer and fewer of us around. There were a lot of Democrats, but they were Jesse Jackson[42] Democrats or they were Kim Worth Democrats or whatever. And fewer and fewer of the working man's Democrats.

So anyway, that's the story. Dingell made it clear from day one that those fish provisions were going to be in there. It was Dingell's guy that put 'em in there, and nobody

[42] Jesse Louis Jackson (born in 1941) was a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988.

was going to challenge it. Nobody. Everybody knew that if they challenged those fish provisions, that Dingell would blow them away. It was just that simple. There was some sense that maybe the privates were going to try to do something on the Senate side, and I'm not sure whether they did or didn't. But of course Dingell's reach went clear over to the other side of the Capitol any way. And so the fish provisions are in that legislation almost 100% at the auspices of John Dingell. And nobody was going to screw with it. I do recall that there was some tweaking here and there towards the end they asked Swift to go to Dingell about, but they were small things. It was virtually as Dave Finnegan wrote it. That's my recollection.

MOR: The fish side of the Act.

PETTUS: Yeah. You know when you're the chairman of the committee, you can do that sort of thing. [Both laugh] Amazing.

MOR: So when you left the office, did you all of a sudden feel a little greater weight on your shoulders then? [Laughs]

PETTUS: I think there was pretty much (I'm trying to recall exactly) — I can remember walking away, and of course the group was with us, so it wasn't the kind of thing where Swift and I could talk totally frankly with each other. I looked at Swift, and I said something to the effect that I've never quite seen anything like that. It was amazing. It was just amazing.

So then from there it was just a process with regard to the legislation. It was pretty damn — just a, what, a thousand compromises, deals and provisions that we had to work out. And we pressed the conservation standards. We also pressed quite — the city of Seattle was the one that was strong on the [Northwest Power Planning] Council. As I recall, my recollection is that it was the city of Seattle that was really pressing to have the Council to be a strong one. What the publics and the privates and the aluminum companies all

wanted the Council to be advisory in nature. They did not want it to have any teeth. And Gerry wanted it to have teeth which was the Seattle City Lights' positions I recall. But importantly, that's one thing that Swift took up on. He really felt pretty strongly about the Council being a true power in the mix.

So we had to pretty much — you know Dingell's carrying the weight on the fish thing. Swift had to carry the weight on the conservation and renewables and to considerable extent on the Planning Council. There was quite a bit of resistance early on with regard to the Council being advisory. That is to say, they wanted a total advisory role only. And they eventually gave up on that. I'm trying to remember where in the process they gave up, but I know by the time we got through the first Energy and Power subcommittee markup, that they pretty much dropped that, that the Power Council had teeth.

They gave us quite a bit of resistance on the conservation thing, too. They just did not want to go with that. And I really think that that was more Bonneville than it was the aluminum companies or the power companies. I just think that it was real clear at the outset, and I think right straight through the process, although Gjelde and Larry were at least not being verbal about it, that Bonneville had the attitude that they knew what was best. This was a bunch of engineers who had run that system all off by themselves since the dawning of time, for a long, long time, and they knew about electricity and how the generators ran and all of that. It's not that they were offended by having other people play around in it, it's just that they didn't think we had any idea what we were doing, and they did. So there was the underlying attitude that Bonneville knew what was best.

Sterling had that attitude about everything, not just Bonneville, but everything, 'cause Sterling had been Scoop's A.A. for a long time, and he was kind of in the catbird seat there. So he was kind of used to running things. So there was that attitude, and it really came out with regard to the conservation renewables provision, that conservation renewables were sort of a silly thing. And they were looking at us as well as other people that advocated that sort of thing as a little goofy. But we held the line on it, and I think we came out with some pretty good provisions.

MOR: Who were the — what was the force behind conservation and renewables, would you say? Where was the impetus of this coming from? Was it just from Al Swift's office?

PETTUS: Yeah. I think that that's — my recollection is that it was just from our office. I do not recall there being anybody that came to us saying, "This is what we want." Again I have a vague recollection that there was some activity in the Carter Administration with regard to conservation and renewables. It's like in the Department of Commerce they have a kind of think group, and there's always some work being done on cutting-edge stuff in that department. And as I recall, there was some stuff in the Carter Administration before Jimmy got blown out of town by the people in mink coats and Rolex watches that had been done.

So we were aware of some of that, and so we kind of took that up as our *cause célèbre*. I don't recall that there was anybody coming to us on it. I really don't. I can recall, especially in the early days when we were pushing it, feeling like that we were pretty lonely on the deal. 'Cause again I had been into this thing three months, four months, and you've got the likes of — you're battling in the office, and Swift's sitting over there, and you've got Earl Gjelde over here, and Larry Hittle over there, and you got me sitting here, and I'm saying, "I think we need conservation renewables." And they're saying, "But" — and they put it in a fairly articulate kind of way, but it ended up Drew was goofy, and he didn't know what he was talking about.

I may be taking more credit for that. It may have been more people involved in it than that, but I frankly don't recall that there was. And again, as a political matter — there was really two things in my mind, three things. One, I thought it was the right thing to do. Here we built all these goddamned concrete structures, and they were talking about how efficient they were like that, and yet what I was reading is that they were costing eight times as much they were supposed to cost, and ta da, ta da, ta da.

MOR: Are you talking about the nuclear plants?

PETTUS: Yeah. And they were giving me gas about putting in shower stoppers on the — conservation measures that just didn't seem to – and I felt that a decentralized approach was — there was a great deal to be mined out of that. And I knew they hadn't done it, and so hold their feet to the fire. The other thing that I felt was that we — totally separate and apart from the political need for something to hang our hat on; I felt that we needed to let them know that there was a price that they were going to have to pay for our work in this deal. 'Cause it literally took over the office for a year and a half. I mean it was — we were Ground Central, and it was like a war room in there. And maybe it was a little childish on my part, but I wanted to assert that.

And the third thing was, I thought as a political matter, we needed something to hang this on, and Swift, it wasn't that I thought that, he thought that. When I say that I was thinking these things, you got to understand Swift and I were as about as tight as any two people could be in that kind of a relationship. We had this relationship back here in Bellingham; we got very close, and we worked very well together. So it all fit together, and once in a while I'd get out in front of him, and once in a while he'd get out in front of me. But most of the time we were on the same page of music. How are we doing there?

MOR: We're doing good; you can talk a couple more minutes.

PETTUS: Okay. And actually I think that Ed was (when he was still at Magnuson) doing the conservation renewables. I do recall that he was over there pushing on it. And we had had a couple of conversations, but it wasn't him feeding us or we feeding him. We were kind of arriving at the same place at the same time.

MOR: Now was Magnuson's office more involved in this than Jackson's office, or was it maybe just Ed Sheets'...

PETTUS: It would have been Jackson's office that was more involved, but it started on the House side. And so by the time it got over to the Senate side, it was all done anyway. I mean 99% of it was done which is — I better not say that. It was not at all unusual for the senators to leave the hard work, the details to the House side. And that's what happened. By the time it got over to the Senate side, there were some T's that had to be crossed and some changes made. Everybody has to throw in a little bit of this and a little bit of that to put their mark on it. And I think that Ed was, because he took this personal interest in it, Magnuson's office was more involved in it than they might have otherwise been.

[End of Tape 3, Side 1]

Tape 3, Side 2

2002 June 5

MOR: You mentioned the issue of the toothless Council versus the stronger Council, and I guess the Council was in there from the beginning, the idea of having this power planning body. Is that true?

PETTUS: My recollection is yes it was. As I say, the groups, the interest groups, public power, private power, aluminum companies, Bonneville, they clearly had been huddling on this for the previous year or longer. They recognized that they had this WPPSS problem, and they had some other, so this had been going on for a good long while before they came to us. I'm absolutely clear about that. And as I say, they're smart people so that they recognized that they had to have the outlines of something that would pull everybody together before they could come to the Congress and float anything. And it was fairly professional, at least to that extent. And it was my recollection that the Council was in there, but it was just an advisory board. When they came to us, there was mention of a council but that it didn't have the teeth in it.

MOR: I guess part of the reason that I ask that question is that one might think that Bonneville in particular would not be enthusiastic about this idea since before they pretty much had full responsibility and authority over the planning.

PETTUS: I think that would be a correct statement. That's my memory. I don't think that they were enthusiastic about giving up any of their power.

MOR: But then the other side of that would imply that there were other people that kind of wanted to get a little leverage over Bonneville and how they did business. It's an exaggeration I think, but I heard some people say that for a while it looked like the Council was going to be Bonneville's board of directors. And they never had that kind of authority,

but they did have the authority to tell Bonneville what they could and couldn't acquire in terms of a resource.

PETTUS: I think that there was some interest on — you know the aluminum companies wanted those contracts, and while they didn't feel real good about giving the authority to the Northwest power system over to a bunch of governors' representatives, I think that they nevertheless recognized that — in my recollection, I don't know I could prove this, but my recollection is that they were less resistant than some others to the idea that the Council had teeth in it. But I don't know; I'm less secure about that statement than most of what I've said here. Mainly because nobody was making themselves very obvious on this. [Both laugh]

This was a real dicey game for everybody on the Council on exactly how much power you wanted to have, and you know. And they'd all clearly formed alliances, the relationship with each other. I mean the aluminum companies had their relationship with the publics, and they had their relationship with the privates and *vice versa*, and so whatever they said was going to affect all these relationships. So everybody was being pretty damned careful all the way along. And you seldom had (I don't recall), again it was a pretty professional bunch of people. You did not have people coming in and saying, "Well, Al, this is what we say publicly, but I want you know what the publics really think, or I want you to know the D.S.I.'s really think." There wasn't any of that. They were careful about that sort of thing. An amazing deal actually.

MOR: Just the very structure of the Act in a way was interesting, too, because it sort of gave four states some authority over essentially a branch of the federal government which as I understand it, is actually not constitutionally permitted exactly. So it must have been kind of tricky in terms of structuring that, too.

PETTUS: There was considerable — I don't know, there was work done on that to put it in a form something akin to this interstate compact arrangement. And there was a

Supreme Court case that upheld an interstate compact arrangement similar to — we kind of modeled it close to that. I forget the case, but I remember we were hanging our whole approach on that. Not that we were entirely clear that it was going to work. As I recall Dave Finnegan was the one that really kind of — we all looked at it, but Dave, we felt secure with Dave making the call that, yeah, it would work. And also I think Ed did some work on that as I recall. I think there was discussion up until the last, as I recall, as to how many representatives there would be, whether there would be one from each state or two from each state. There was some of that going on. And I think Ed was the one, or Maggie's office was the one that finally cemented it down as two per state.

MOR: And you were talking about the conservation and renewables, and I guess in the final Act they were given a 10% advantage in terms of the way that the Council would rank resources that they acquired. Do you remember how you came up with the 10% idea?

PETTUS: Yeah. I was pushing for trying — I was trying to recall this morning because I wanted more than that. I wanted something put into the Act which would give Bonneville the authority to go out and purchase conservation, actually go out, although they didn't have the authority to acquire major resources. I wanted something put in that would allow them to go out and purchase, actually affirmatively go out and purchase conservation. You know that obviously if they could purchase conservation, or acquire conservation, then you ran into a little conflict with why couldn't they acquire major resources like that.

So I didn't win that one, but I got my 10% in there. That was a compromise. They said, "Okay, we'll give you 10%." And I remember they were all sort of huffy as they left the office, and saying [muttering sounds] like that. I remember there was a party at — [well, I just remember that?] some of the powers that be that let me know that they weren't happy with me. But I guess they got over it. I take that back. There is one in particular that hasn't gotten over it, but you win some, and you lose some.

MOR: Do you feel free to tell me exactly who the parties were?

PETTUS: No, I don't actually. He's a big enough guy that I'd probably end up paying for it, so I better not. He'd squash me like a bug. So I remain — we'll let it remain anonymous. [Both laugh]

MOR: You mentioned — you gave me some pretty good idea of who John Dingell was and also his chief of staff were there. I've forgotten his name already, but…

PETTUS: He's a committee guy, Dave Finnegan.

MOR: Dave Finnegan. Right. What about some of the other players here? I mean you mentioned Ed Sheets' name several times, but you haven't talked too much about him as a person in those days. Did you meet Ed in Washington I assume?

PETTUS: Oh, yeah. Well, I'd known Ed when I went back in March of 1977. Ed was one of the guys on Maggie's staff that — this is a long time before. This is when I was with Lloyd before we ever thought about the Power Act, and I had met Ed that way. And he had always handled some of the environmental energy-related issues for Magnuson. But it was — here we were. We were all young, and we were all — still got some testosterone left. And we had drinks after work and stuff like that, and got to know a lot of the Magnuson staff that way, and was closer actually to a couple of the Magnuson staffers than I was to Ed, simply because Ed was married and stayed home more, which I didn't do too much of in those days. But I knew Ed that way.

And Ed was always a very confident and fun staffer because he always — I think I mentioned to you at lunch — he was careful and wasn't immediately obvious that he was cause-oriented. He was very professional in his approach. But he was also, could be clever in his approach and had sort of a cause-oriented, progressive and environmentalist approach to things. And he used his cleverness to advance that approach, and he was quite good at it. And so we worked on a couple of things. As I recall, I don't really recall

what they were, just minor things, and it was fun working with him. So I'd already known him by the time we got to the Power Act. We had already conspired on a couple of things, and so it kind of — our working relationship had been established by the time we got to the Power Act.

Again, all the work was being done on the House side, and Ed knew that, and he would occasionally chime in from the Senate side and say, "Drew, what's going on here?" or "We need to do this there," and let the senators' wishes and desires be known. I think he no doubt did that with others as well. But because we were the lead on the thing, probably more so with our office than others.

MOR: You also mentioned Roy Hemmingway's name in passing a couple of times, too. Now was he somebody that you dealt with a lot during these days?

PETTUS: Roy actually dealt more — what Roy would do — as I recall he wasn't there on a continuous basis like some of 'em were. As I recall, he would be there for — he would come to town, he'd be there for maybe a week or two weeks at a time, so he clearly had a presence there. And we worked a little bit together. He tended to — what he would do, it wouldn't be so much in the drafting room, so to speak, as he would come in and talk to Swift as an official visit from the governor's office to the congressman and so on and so forth. On the other hand, he did that in such a way that he was easily accessible and open.

A lot of times the governor's representative comes to town and he thinks he's Henry Kissinger and makes a formal appearance and then leaves. And there's not much back-and-forth, not much discourse, and that was not the case with Roy. He was somebody you could talk to, and he could talk to us, and like that. As I recall, Roy had some — the State of Oregon had some play or some concerns about how the Council was formed, and, again, the discussion about whether it should be two people or one person. And I think that early on there was some talk about whether each state should have the same number of representatives or whether Washington should get more. And there was also very early

on, do you have interest groups represented, or should the tribes be represented and lots of that stuff. And as I recall, Roy chimed in on some of those on behalf of the governor.

I'm trying to remember, I think that Roy made some play (I can't really remember whether) — I have some recollection that they had an interest in how the exchange issue was sorted out, whether the private power exchange on the preference power for the residential customers, the private power companies…

MOR: Residential and farm customers…

PETTUS: Yeah. And I think there was a time when Roy came in and lobbied on behalf of that, but I don't know.

MOR: I think that you're probably right there, because there was this idea floated in Oregon just a couple of years before, that where Oregon — just because of the differences between Oregon and Washington in terms of the state laws…

PETTUS: And the make-up of things.

MOR: And there's a lot higher percentage of the Oregon ratepayers that are serviced by industrial and utilities , right?

PETTUS: Yeah.

MOR: And so there was this idea to come up with a Domestic Urban and Rural Power Authority, DRPA [Domestic and Rural Power Authority] I think they called it. And the Oregon legislature that was going to sort of try to do the same thing that I think the Power Act eventually wound up doing.

PETTUS: Yes, yes, yes, yes. I've a vague – I remember DRPA. I remember that. So that fits.

MOR: And so I wouldn't be a bit surprised that he was lobbying for that and I can't recall if he talked about it in his history or not.

PETTUS: But I guess the thing about — people were coming at us hot, heavy and fast, and we felt that we had good and trustworthy relationships with almost all of 'em. There were a couple of occasions where we didn't have that feeling. One of the private power companies switched people on us midgame, and then tried to disavow some of the commitments that they'd made earlier on.

MOR: You mean they just changed their representative?

PETTUS: That's correct. That seemed to displease Swift. [Both laugh] Al is not the kind of person that would get overly angry as a rule, but he got angry at that point. And it wasn't an Oregon utility. I'll just leave it at that. But Roy — just the sense of — we felt almost all of 'em were good strong people who were honest and trustworthy. I think Roy, just the sense we had was that he was up at the top end of that range, somebody that we knew we could rely on if we had to.

MOR: You mentioned that there were a couple instances of people that didn't play straight with you?

PETTUS: There was one in particular that was a Washington state private utility, and I'll just leave it at that. The one that I mentioned to you, I mean that incident where they changed representatives and…

MOR: And then tried to back away from it?

PETTUS: Yeah. They changed their legal representative.

MOR: It is interesting — you've already implied (or mentioned) this in your remarks, but it is interesting that she got everybody together finally on this legislation, because there really were some conflicts there of — in order to service I believe the synopsis of the Act that I read before I came down here this morning, was published in the Council's first report, said that the D.S.I. rates were going to go up, and part of the reason they were going to go up was because B.P.A. had the obligation to now service this new load in the residential and farm customers of the I.O.U.s [Investor Owned Utilities].That's just one example where at least the I.O.U.s and the D.S.I.s would be on the opposite side of an issue. You must have had a lot of that to deal with.

PETTUS: Yeah. It was an enormous job of — we had about 18 of those justice scales that we had to get all lined up. But what it came down to is, we had reached a point where everybody felt, each of the groups felt that they had given up some and they had gotten some, and that there was enough there for them to go with it. And the alternative was (in their eyes at the time) more disastrous than going forward, so they went forward. You know, those aluminum companies wanted those long-term contracts. They would have done anything for — I think they would have done probably — my sense of it was that they probably would have given up a little more than they gave up.

I think the privates tended to be the most volatile. My sense was that they would have been — I think the publics had to stick to the table, although they would posture that they were going to walk away from it. I think the downside for them was what the hell are you going to do about the power system, you know the obligations on the WPPSS bonds. But I think the privates — I always feared that they would be the first ones to leave the tent. And it was more just simply because that's the nature of the personalities and the chemistry of the thing, just seemed to me that it would be a little more volatile on the private side.

And they'd get a little pissy, and why should I have to mess around with all this government stuff, you know stuff like that.

MOR: And when you say that the publics were concerned about the debt on the WPPSS plants, are you referring specifically to the debt that they were shouldering 100% on 4 and 5, because the others were underwritten by Bonneville?

PETTUS: Oh, no, no. I'm talking about 4 and 5.

MOR: Yeah. And of course it turned out later on that they didn't actually get any help there. [Laughs] But I guess they didn't know that then.

PETTUS: A little bit of miscalculation there.

MOR: Another thing that I guess I've heard about this, and maybe you can tell me if it's correct or not, that there were a lot of the environmental groups sort of woke up to the fact that the Power Act might have an impact on them, actually opposed the legislation right down to the last minute. Is that correct?

PETTUS: You know to be honest with you I don't recall which one or where they were when. Okay? The reason is to be honest about it, we had — it's not that we didn't care where they were and what they thought. That would be a way over the top overstatement. But we had had — Swift was a professional. He'd been involved in politics for a long, long time, and he had been with Meeds beforehand, and we were not unclear about the way the environmentalists work. And there's just the sense that if we had wanted to please the environmentalists, we wouldn't have gotten involved in the thing in the first place, and that by taking on anything in the going forward move on this particular subject, the environmentalists were not going to be happy about it.

Their politics is one of a ever increasing advocacy. You know you give them one thing, and they want something more. There's no deals made with the environmentalists. What the environmentalists do is they — it's a handful of "give me," and a mouthful of "much obliged." So frankly, we walking in recognized we were going to have that problem with the environmentalists. And one has to, given that approach by the environmentalist organization, one has to make up one's own mind as to what one's commitment is to the environment. And then the question is, are you are peace with your own kind of cut on that? And you try to monitor that within your own framework, and you just move forward.

The environmentalists, different groups, and again I got to tell you I can't remember who was where when, but I recall that Jim Weaver[43] from Oregon was their standard bearer, and he would of been against the sunrise. He was just against the Act, and he was against the Act from the very beginning…

[End of Tape 3, Side 2]

[43] James Howard Weaver (1927-2020) Oregon's 4th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1975 to 1987. He was known as an advocate for environmental protections.

Tape 4, Side 1

2002 June 5

MOR: This is a continuation of the interview with Drew Pettus on June 5th, 2002.

PETTUS: Weaver was against the Act from beginning and he was against the Act at the end, and I honest to God don't think there was anything we could have passed that would have pleased him and I think I was quite convinced in my own mind that he was against the Act because in his congressional district it got him reelected, and he would have been against — like I say, if you put Santa Clause into the Act, he would have been against it, you know. So I don't think that — I think some of the fish and wildlife groups were happy with the legislation. And I think some of the environmental — I don't think we ever won over the N.R.D.C. [Natural Resources Defense Council], as I recall. Although I did think they did say some nice things in the end about the conservation standards. But I didn't read that very carefully. Again, it's not that I don't care what they think, but one can't spend a lot of time worrying about it either.

MOR: Now, you mentioned there was some talk about how many representatives each state should get and I think since the Council's come into being, there's a perception that the states of Oregon and Washington have perhaps held more sway in the Council itself and had more at stake, perhaps, than do the states of Idaho and Montana in particular. Because Idaho, anyway, and maybe Montana also, are not B.P.A. customers, for one thing. And so, I guess the question is, we talked about Roy Hemmingway, and Oregon's input via him. Were the other states involved much in this, would you say? I mean, Washington obviously was involved, but Idaho and Montana?

PETTUS: Yeah, that's an interesting question. I think that — well, we probably saw less of Idaho and Montana simply because there weren't as many bodies. Again, we were sort of almost bucking people in the office, so I tend to remember this as a logistics issue as well as everything else. But I don't think their people came to town as much, and I don't

think that they had a presence. My recollection is that there wasn't a Roy Hemmingway for Idaho or Montana. They would send people in and like that. Now, it was always our — we didn't really have any interest in trying to give Washington more than the other states. As far as our office was concerned that didn't appeal to us. We put down our markers in terms of the Council having teeth, number one. And it being constitutional. And I have some recollection that the representation on the Council had to be equal from each state as part of this constitutional equation. I think that's true; I'm not sure…

MOR: Okay, I see. The compact, you mean.

PETTUS: Exactly. The compact model has to be equal representation from each state and if there isn't, then they run into trouble with it. So I think that was part of the equation, too. But to answer your question directly, I don't recall Idaho and Montana had near the presence, just in terms of presence in the lobbying effort.

MOR: Now, did the Washington governor's office have a specific representative, a Roy Hemmingway, so to speak? Or was the fact that they had Al Swift putting it together sufficient?

PETTUS: That's a good question. Obviously they didn't have a big presence, 'cause I don't remember. I mean, I don't recall that they had an individual, and I certainly would have recalled it had they been immediately obvious. (Jesus, who was the governor?) Was that…

MOR: I'm trying to think for sure. Maybe it was Spellman[44] but maybe it was before Spellman. I'm trying to remember my own history now, too. [Laughs]

[44] John Dennis Spellman (1926–2018) served as the 18th governor of Washington from 1981 to 1985.

PETTUS: Boy, it's really sad, isn't it? I can't remember. They just didn't seem to have much of a play in it. Or maybe it could be that they were getting directly to — they didn't have an on the ground play. They did not have a big on the ground play. Okay? In other words. And had they — for instance the city of Seattle had Gerry Johnson. It was absolutely clear that they were there. There wasn't that kind of thing with the state of Washington.

MOR: Well, yeah, and I joked about them having Al Swift, but that's different than — a legislator is different than the governor, but a lot of the players were from Washington state I guess.

PETTUS: Yeah. I don't think that they felt — I think it's a big part of it they didn't feel particularly threatened. (Oh, Christ!) Trying to remember who was governor, that would tell you a whole lot right there. Now, so it was Scoop or Maggie. I guess then Maggie.

[Tape stops]

MOR: Okay. I guess we figured out that Dixy Lee Ray[45] was governor then.

PETTUS: Right. And I just don't recall — again I think that they didn't feel terribly threatened. And I don't recall that they had anybody on the ground putting intense effort into the Act. So if there was somebody there, they didn't make a very strong impression.

MOR: Anything else that comes to mind, any stories or anything else come to mind about the passage of the Act itself?

PETTUS: My problem is I'm running out of steam here. I'm frankly tired. And there are, I suppose, additional stories but I guess the way to sum it up was that it was pretty close

[45]Dixy Lee Ray (1914-1994) served as the 17th governor of Washington from 1977 to 1981. She was the state's first female governor and was a supporter of atomic energy.

to two years of intense effort on the part of a lot of good people who were able to forge the compromise. To some extent they were looking down the barrel of a gun and were concerned about the alternative of no Act was more frightening than an Act. But nevertheless it was I think a fairly admirable effort that you are able to pull together a region with all the diverse interests that we had and to come to a compromise, and then take it all the way through the Congress and then get the president to sign it. That literally did take two years to do that.

I don't know that the region will ever know what kind of work was done there. I suppose you could look back on the Northwest Power Act, and any time you do something like that you're always fighting the battles of the previous war. And you pass the Act and the whole damn environment changes. And I suppose in looking back on it and knowing what we know now, I think that we probably put a little bit too much process into the planning section of the Act that made the Council's response time slower than it should have been.

I think there is one criticism that I'd have of what happened that the Council gets bogged down in process, and they're not as able to respond to changing conditions and the changing energy marketplace that seems to be changing at a an ever more rapid kind rate. You know to some extent we've got technology that has changed. I don't think any of us really understood the role that gas turbine would play in the power mix. I think at the time there probably some people, maybe the engineers from Bonneville understood that gas turbine power could play such a greater significant role than it did prior to 1980, but most of us didn't understand that. And I think one of the problems was is that, as I recall, natural gas wasn't deregulated until right about 1978 or 1980. So that when we were doing the Northwest Power Act, the price of gas was much higher than it turned out to be after the Power Act. So we didn't really strongly foresee the use of those kinds of technologies.

One of the things about the process portion of the Planning Council and the Act, not that the fact that there is a Planning Council. I'm not saying anything about that, but I'm saying that we put in a lot of process there, and there's public hearings and all this good stuff. It was designed to prevent people from being in a smoke-filled room and deciding to

build huge nuclear power plants. And I think we did a pretty good job of that. But I think the process of doing a good job of that, we may have slowed down the Council's ability to respond quicker to the changing energy mix in the region.

Now, in back of all that is another thing that troubles me deeply, and that is that I think the future of the Northwest power system is increasingly — it's less and less in our hands. And our ability to plan and make things work right is greatly lessened by all of the energy deregulation activities that are going on at the federal level as well as some of the states, that the whole approach of the Northwest Power Act, which is one of planning and trying to get a hold on and some prediction on what the future energy needs are going to be and trying to accommodate those needs in an orderly fashion, really can't work when you have essentially unwound the system at the federal level by the deregulation efforts that are being made, and especially the work that FERC [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission] has done.

There is clearly a difference in philosophy here as the way things should be done. And for the time being those folks that believe that the market is going to provide all the answers, they're in control at the White House, and at FERC and in a number of the states, and so we'll just have to see who is right and who is wrong. I guess it's interesting that the deregulation in these kinds of utility areas, the economics is pretty much the same. And we look at what's happened to the telephone industry and with A.T.&T. [American Telephone & Telegraph] and stock and WorldCom stock and companies going out of business right and left, I think we should take a very careful look at whether or not deregulation and the marketplace is quite the appropriate moderator of these things that those in the White House and people in control of the House of Representatives think it is. I remain quite skeptical. But, again, I'm not in power anymore, so I can't do anything about it.

MOR: Well, back to — it's, I guess sort of a question that since the Northwest, even after the WPPSS failure and the dilution of the cheap hydro rates at Bonneville, even after that I think we still have the lowest rates in the country. So I guess it's always been a bit of a

question as to what this region anyway has to gain from deregulation to some extent. We've always enjoyed this resource of fairly cheap power.

PETTUS: Right. I think that's absolutely right. And I guess totally separate and apart from the issue of deregulation, I think our days are numbered here anyway in terms of cheaper power rates 'cause the rest of the country is having less and less sympathy with us. And we frankly don't have the power in Congress we used to have. You know when Magnuson and Jackson were there, and when Hatfield[46] and Packwood[47] were there, we could defend ourselves. But you talk to the members of Congress that are back there right now, and every year they have to give up a little bit more in terms of the special status that we've had for so many years. To get into how they do that and which ways they do that, we'd be spending another two hours here talking about it. But you talk to any members of the delegation, they tell you it's a very difficult and probably losing battle. And to hold the line against California — and this was a problem that we had before even deregulation came into place. And deregulation kind of pulls the pin out from the other side, so it's going to be treacherous.

MOR: Do you think that the deregulation bandwagon will continue to have the impetus it's had even after these recent disclosures about Enron and some of these questionable energy trades that have occurred?

PETTUS: I think there's no question that the train has slowed down somewhat. But I'm really worried about it because I think that the issues are pretty darn complex. They are second, third and fourth order abstraction. And this is all politics when it comes right down to it. And trying to explain to folks why deregulation isn't going to work for them. It may work for the big companies and big entities that are able to fend for themselves out in the marketplace, but individual consumers or groups of consumers, I'm sorry, I remain

[46]Mark Odom Hatfield (1922-2011) served for 30 years as a Republican United States senator from Oregon, and also as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.
[47]Robert William Packwood (born in 1932) was a U.S. senator from Oregon from 1962 to 1995.

somewhat skeptical as to whether they are going to be able to adequately bid in the marketplace even with big consortiums of consumers. I'm a little skeptical.

But trying to explain that to folks, you can't do it. This is the age of the 60-second or the 10-second sound bite, and if you have to spend more than two minutes explaining something to somebody, forget it. So although I think that the Enron situation and the problems of the stock market, you know, manipulation by stock brokers and all that sort of thing, and the kind of cheating that had gone on with California and the West Coast by Enron and some of the other power generators, I guess my real concern is I just think that slowed things down, but I don't think it stopped it.

MOR: Maybe just a few words about the Council and its history since you and everybody else that worked on this sort of brought them into existence. Now the first chair was, of course, Dan Evans[48] who was a distinguished governor from the state, and I guess you must have known Dan Evans because you were there in Washington with him when he was later appointed senator. Actually maybe before we talk about that, it must have been quite an event for the Washington delegation when Scoop Jackson suddenly died in office.

PETTUS: Yes. It was a real shock in a number of ways. We had a number of issues that there's a great vacuum that had to be filled, and that was very disconcerting. With regard to Evans, I didn't really know Evans. Evans was always governor even when he was senator, and there was sort of — not that he wasn't a nice guy, but he was (Evans was) — when I say he was always governor, he was not a natural legislator. He was a natural administrator. He didn't have the kind of outreach and desire to go around making consensus and forming consensus and opinions that a legislator has. And as a result, when he was in Washington, he just wasn't that accessible and so forth. You always felt like you were meeting the governor. Not that he wasn't a nice fellow and all that, but just didn't have that many opportunities to interact with him.

[48] Daniel Jackson Evans (born in 1925) served as the 16th governor of Washington from 1965 to 1977, and as United States senator representing Washington State from 1983 to 1989.

MOR: Of course he was just a one-term senator, too.

PETTUS: And he wasn't there that long. That's right. Now, let's see, what was the other question you asked me?

MOR: Yes. I asked you probably several questions in one.

PETTUS: I really am starting to wind down here, so you have to forgive me.

MOR: That was my mistake. One of the first things that they tell you about interviewing, you don't want to throw too many questions at once. [Both laugh] But I guess what I wanted to know was once you passed the Act and then saw the results of the Act, approve the Act, first of all Dan Evans was appointed chair which is perhaps fortuitous in view of what you just said.

PETTUS: Absolutely. Absolutely. And we felt that he did a great job there, and felt that he couldn't ask for — because I think that there was — when we passed the Act there is always some worry about, would the Council have the — back to this word "gravitas," the respect and the — or would it just sit out there and be ignored by everybody? And having Dan Evans there I think got it off to a good start in that respect.

You know the Council's had its predictable problems; I mean there is the builders' lawsuit on the conservation standards. We expected that like we expected the sun to rise. We just knew that was going to come.

MOR: And that was sort of a test of that compact structure, too, I guess wasn't it, a legal test?

PETTUS: Yeah. Not unlike a lot of things the builders have done; it didn't work. And so again, sometimes I think you can't make judgments about these things in your own timeframe. You know what is history — what are the historians going to write about? And I think they will say good things about the Northwest Power Act and the Council. They will no doubt put it in context of time, and like I say to some extent, the Act was fighting the last battle. But I think they will say good things about it. The only thing is that essentially in a way what we did once we passed the Act, we threw the continuing — it became — the crowd that was in Washington moved out to Portland, and they continue to fight their battles out there. So the Council was stuck trying to continue to get groups to work with each other and get a consensus, and fight some very powerful interest groups. And it seems to me that they've done a pretty good job of it, all in all.

Again, if I were to say is there anything we might have done different, maybe we should have — I'd always been a very strong advocate for processes, procedure and all that sort of thing. But maybe we went a little bit too strong in that direction. I don't know. You know hoisted on your own petard sometimes. [Both laugh] So I feel proud about what we did. You wonder whether or not you could ever pull anything like that together again, because Congress doesn't give deference to a region lightly. I mean to give — of course I think we were on the floor of the House for 10, 12 days, and to give 10, 12 days out of the national agenda to a region, four states, that's a tall order. They don't do that lightly. And to do that again might be kind of difficult. And now with deregulation I'm not even sure it would be relevant.

MOR: A while back you said that you think that deregulation might even make the past work irrelevant, or is that putting it too strongly?

PETTUS: No, no. I think that's right. Oh, I think that's right. I think that's absolutely right. As a matter of fact, if I had to predict it today — you seem to have more hope than I do that deregulation's going to go away. I don't think it's going to go away, and I think that it's going to get worse and if and only if it becomes clear that it really doesn't work and that

there's total disaster, then maybe we can come back and readdress it. Things don't work that way either. They just get sort of rotten and stay that way for a long time.

[End of Tape 4, Side 1]

Tape 4, Side 2

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MOR: After your passed the Act, do you remember any issues or times when people from the region would come to you to help the Council out with their moving forward?

PETTUS: I think there were a couple of occasions in the early years. There was some resistance on Bonneville's part with regard to the conservation standards and renewables as to whether they were going to back 'em and fund 'em and all of that sort of thing. Bonneville has to set aside a certain amount of money in their budget to pay for them. The budget process is a little convoluted, but they do have to kind of set aside money and come to the Hill and ask for it, like that. And so they were being a little stingy in that regard, and we were asked to chime in in that regard in a couple of occasions. Beyond that I don't really recall a whole lot more.

I think really we kind of — in a way what happened is they got off in Portland, and they kind of got stuck within the Multnomah County limits. And I recall that we really kind of hoped that they would ask for help and guidance more than they did, and we didn't seem to get a lot of requests in that regard.

MOR: Was it anticipated that the headquarters would be in Portland?

PETTUS: I think that's where the consensus, that it would be in Portland.

MOR: Probably because B.P.A. is there.

PETTUS: Yeah, and everything's in Seattle. Once you talk about getting stuck in Portland, it's once you get into Seattle, you can't get out. And so I think there was a general sense it would be in Portland.

MOR: I believe it was Ed Sheets told me, and maybe your office wasn't involved in this, but told me a story about the Army Corps also being resistant in terms of putting in fish screens in some of the dams, and that the Council had specified this in one of their Fish & Wildlife plans.

PETTUS: Yes, yes. I know the Army Corps was reluctant on — that they didn't dance willingly into that effort. And my recollection is that Mr. Dingell had spoken to the Corps about that. [Both laugh]

MOR: Given your description of Dingell, that was probably all that was necessary.

PETTUS: I don't think that it was a long conversation. I just think that Dingell made it clear. Oh, boy!

MOR: Want to pause here?

PETTUS: Yeah, why don't we?

[Tape stops]

MOR: One or two more questions.

PETTUS: Yeah. And I remember that Dingell did. Finnegan got after him a couple of times. Dingell used to — there was what we used to refer to as "the Dingellgrams." Dingell is an attorney and quite a good one at that, and all of these people were attorneys. And so Dingell — this agency or that agency or this company or that company would start to irritate Dingell as little bit. And he would call a hearing, and he would bring 'em up and indicate to 'em that he was irritated with 'em. And some of 'em got it and some of 'em didn't.

The ones that didn't, what he would do is he'd send one of these Dingellgrams to them. And what it was, it was a subpoena, a *subpoena duces tecum*,[49] a document subpoena. And it would go on for pages and pages and pages. [Laughs] "Please send all correspondence between the Department of Interior and the Department of the Army from January 1, 1904, to" — you know. And they'd — it just practically shut down the agency. And that's one of the reasons that people really feared that. And I think he had had other run-ins with the Corps of Engineers. I don't think that was the only time that Dingell had had to speak with them about things.

MOR: And they learned to fear the Dingellgrams. [Laughs]

PETTUS: I think so, yeah.

MOR: The other question I guess from this period when you were still on Al Swift's staff was that the extent of the WPPSS debacle became greater and crystal clear, I think it was just a couple years after the Act was passed. What sort of impact did that have on Washington, or did it make much of a ripple there?

PETTUS: It didn't really. I think that — oh, to be frank about it I think that most people realized that that was likely to happen, something close to it. Nobody could have predicted in 1980 exactly what it was going to happen and that it was going to be as bad as it was and all that. But we knew it was bad. We knew that it was unlikely that we could escape without having some major financial impacts. And nobody liked that. Everybody recognized that WPPSS was a major bungle, you know, but should have been — by the time it rose to any place where we had anything to do with it, all the mistakes had been made, so what the hell do you do? It's sort of like, you've got a major bank that's going to go under in South America or some place. Do you let the bank go down and the whole

[49] A *subpoena duces tecum* is a type of subpoena that requires the witness to produce a document or documents pertinent to a proceeding.

country goes down, and then you got all kinds of civil unrest and revolution, and the world goes to shit? You know, sometimes you just have to make those kinds of decisions, and they're not any fun, but you got to do it. And I don't mean to trivialize it, but I think we recognized that bad things had happened and that there was going to be a price to be paid, to try to make the best of it and to use the opportunity to do some good things.

MOR: At least part of why I was curious about that is that I think that at least the bills on plants 1, 2, and 3 were paid by Bonneville, and it was a great price that the whole region paid I guess because of that. But the public utilities, a lot of whom were here in Washington state, were on the hook for 4 and 5. And I think that some people in the utility community thought that the Power Act was going to save 'em, that WPPSS 4 and 5 would become recommended resources, and then Bonneville would get to acquire 'em. And even if they never produced a kilowatt, at least…

PETTUS: The whole process was one that unless they could prove that they were needed and that they were immediately available and that they were cost-effective, it was designed to fairly put them on an even playing field with other resources, and they obviously didn't make the cut.

MOR: And this is part of what you were referring to earlier about your own feelings at the time about the process, that you wanted to make sure that there was no process…

PETTUS: Absolutely. We got that accomplished, and so that was a good thing.

MOR: And it appeared to have worked at least in that instance.

PETTUS: [Laughs] It worked great. But in other areas maybe it didn't work so good, you know.

MOR: Maybe I've just about drained every last bit of energy you've got here, but let me just ask you, you left Washington in 1989 was it? No, 1979, no 1989.

PETTUS: 1989.

MOR: 1989. Was that because…

PETTUS: No, no, no. That's not right. I left Washington in 1994. After I left the Hill, I went down to Preston Gates. And I lobbied — the thing that I haven't put into the equation, again being on that Commerce Committee we had a broad jurisdiction. And after the Power Act was passed, I got heavily involved in telecommunications issues, Telephone Bill and Cable Bill. And I really spent — after that I left the energy issues and went to the telecommunications issues, because that was smack-dab in our court, too.

And right after we passed the Power Act, then all the goddamned telephone guys showed up in the office. That was an amazing thing, saying that we had to deregulate telephone companies. And part of their pitch was they were going to — if we just deregulated 'em, they would provide broadband fiber to the home with video-on-demand service. Okay? That was in 1980. We deregulated the telephone companies. Have you got broadband fiber to the home yet, delivered by the phone company?

MOR: No, not that I've noticed.

PETTUS: Bastards! I mean, you know. But at any rate, I got involved in that. So I spent pretty much the rest of my time dealing with telecommunications issues at the time I was with Swift. And then went to Preston Gates and did work before the F.T.C. [Federal Trade Commission] and E.P.A. [Environmental Protection Agency] on unrelated environmental issues. And did that up until 1994, and then we just decided we wanted to come back to the West Coast.

While I had, as I said earlier, very much enjoyed by time there and would do it over again. I wouldn't pass it up for the world. On the other hand, I'd never felt that that was my home. I've always been a West Coast guy, and it's really kind of a younger man's game. And I saw myself, getting back to our conversation about food, I saw myself — if I'd stayed there, I would have continued to eat the way I ate, drink the way I drank. They don't know what recreation is. Okay? If you're in Washington, D.C., or New York City, you don't know what recreation is. You don't go out-of-doors. You go to restaurants and eat, and you stay tensed up over the job all weekend and stuff like that.

So you get to a point in life where you figure. "Well, I've done my thing, been to every restaurant I ever want to go to, and done all that." And the other thing was the crime situation. We were right on Capitol Hill. (Jesus! the crime situation.) That was when Marion Barry[50] was mayor, and Jiminy Christmas! We lived right on 8th and A, Northeast on Capitol Hill which was in the gentrified or whatever you want to call it area. We loved our place. We had a townhouse; it was right on the corner. It had a lot of window space in it and everything; we loved it. It was like a little tree house that we had. But we were on a — 8th Avenue is a arterial that goes across like this to Pennsylvania Avenue. We were about right here and you then you go further — this is no man's land out here, and we had a lot of foot traffic going by our house. I had a young man murdered out in front of my house in broad daylight, had my car stolen from out in front of my house in broad daylight.

I remember one night, it was right about this time of year, when the weather was pretty nice so we had the windows open. It wasn't too humid or anything. And Mary and I were up on the third floor in our bedroom and had the windows open, and about nine o'clock the lights were kind of down, and all of a sudden all these flashing lights. It was like Christmas tree lights or something, and couldn't figure out — obviously something going on outside. So the next thing I find myself looking out the window, and there's like 15 A.T.F. [Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms] agents just below my window there, and they've got four or five guys on the ground. And all these A.T.F. agents are carrying little these HK submachine

[50] Marion Shepilov Barry (1936-2014) served as the second and fourth mayor of Washington, D.C. from 1979 to 1991 and 1995 to 1999.

guns, you know. I'm looking out there like a dumb shit. Then it hits me, those are submachine guns, and somebody starts letting off a few rounds; I might have been a dead duck.

So, it's just — and it goes much deeper than that. Actually the truth be known, you know I went to Berkeley and a West Coast liberal and all that, and I was the first in line in any kind of civil rights march or whatever. But you get back there, and it's a whole different ball game. And it's a — you've got a lot of the slave culture that came up from the South, and you know, that's their city; they just don't want you around. And you try not to let that get to you, but when it's every day — so, it all added up, and I said, "Let's go back." And that's what we did.

MOR: And you left Swift's office because you were — why did you leave Swift's office to go to your law firm?

PETTUS: I had left Swift's office because I had pretty much been there, done that. I had a friend who worked for another member of the Washington state delegation who had been there for 21 years, and I used to see him on the Hill for 21 years. Every day without fail he'd be down — at 2:30 you go down from the fifth floor — no, he wasn't on fifth — I won't tell you which floor — I love this guy, I don't want it to get back to him. At any rate, I'd be down in the cafeteria at that time occasionally. Every day he would come down to the cafeteria, get his ice cream cone and walk the hall and then go back up. Every single day. And I said to myself, "Drew, I don't know." I don't want to be doing this in six years. And I'd always wanted to go to the law firm to give it a try. And Lloyd Meeds was down there at the law firm. He went to the law firm. And so I said, "That sounds like a good thing to do." And that was a learning experience. I learned by it, like that. But after that period of time, five years, I said, "It's time to go home."

MOR: And since then you've been practicing law here in Bellingham.

PETTUS: Yeah. Actually I was next door for a couple years and then they moved me over here. So I've been here ever since.

MOR: Were you at the Port for a while?

PETTUS: No. I was just in the office next door. They expanded, and they said, "Drew, you can move next door or you can find someplace else."

I said, "I'll move next door." [Laughs]

MOR: Are you doing trade law or international law to start with the…

PETTUS: I'm doing mostly immigration.

MOR: Immigration. Oh, that's what you said.

PETTUS: Yeah. I do do some stuff overseas. I get over to China every once in a while. I've got some Chinese immigration stuff I'm doing, or immigration with Chinese that want to come. And I've gotten involved in setting up a foreign joint venture over there and some little things like that. And I've got — I represent the Iron Workers on — we're trying to change the law on a small piece of the immigration law that has to do with moving temporary workers back and forth across the border. So we've been flying back and forth to Ottawa, and back and forth to Washington. So that kind of reminds me of the old days a little bit.

MOR: Except you don't have to live with submachine guns? [Laughs]

PETTUS: Exactly. Exactly. I go in, come back, you know. [Laughs] That's a much more preferable way to do — actually I think from what I hear Washington, the crime situation has calmed down a great deal since I left.

MOR: Also in New York. I think New York is a much different place.

PETTUS: A lot better. Yeah. Giuliani[51] did a great job there, and I guess the same thing in Washington. Although I think you still have a problem in the police department in Washington, D.C. It's just — I watched this Chandra Levy[52] thing and I'm skeptical. There just isn't a great deal of focus in the D.C. police department. Life goes on, and eat a few doughnuts here, and like that. Don't get too upset about anything. Maybe they'll solve it, but I don't know. Unless it's changed a great deal since I was there. I mean when I had my car stolen right out from in front of my house, I never did talk to a live policeman about that, ever. To this day I've never talked to a live policeman about it. It's all about telephone transactions. They've got a number that you call and it's a recording, and they say, "Please leave the serial number for your car," and hopefully you've got the serial number, and I had it so I —. "Please give the make and year, da, da, da. Thank you very much. You will receive a letter from your insurance company." Click, and that's it. And I did get the letter from the insurance company. And again I'm a West Coast guy; somebody steals my car, it's like stealing my fucking horse. [Both laugh] "I want to talk to someone — where's the posse?" you know.

MOR: And you never got the car itself back?

PETTUS: Never did. Nope.

MOR: I want to thank you very much. It's been a very enjoyable conversation, and thanks a lot for taking the time.

[51] Rudolph William Louis Giuliani served as the 107th Mayor of New York City from 1994 to 2001.
[52] Chandra Ann Levy (1977–c. 2001) was an intern at the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Washington, D.C., who disappeared in May 2001. She was presumed murdered after her skeletal remains were found in 2002. The case attracted attention from the American news media for several years.

PETTUS: All right. I'm happy to do it. I would love to see — of course I would like to have a copy of the tapes, although I hate listening to myself. I really do. But if somebody does a book on this or something, I'd love to see that. And somebody that's good at that should do a book on it because it's a — again I think that 10 years hence, that they'll look back on this and somebody is going to say, "This is one hell of a — it was a pretty damn good compromise, and it really offered a great deal of promise for things working right."

MOR: Okay. Thanks again.

[End of Tape 4, Side 2]
[End of Interview]