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Donald E. Fantz (November 2, 1971)

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Whittier College

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Oral History Interview

with

DONALD E. FANTZ

November 2, 1971
Whittier, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: This is an interview with Don, or D. E., Fantz of Whittier, California. The date is November 2, 1971, Arena interviewing. Do you mind if I call you Don?

FANTZ: No, I wish you would.

ARENA: I wish you would call me Dick.

FANTZ: Okay, Dick, that's easy.

ARENA: We won't confuse it with the other Dick.

FANTZ: Right.

ARENA: Don, would you mind beginning by recollecting, in general, your contacts with the President, such as the 20-30 Club and the OPA [Office of Price Administration] experience. And then what we'll do after we get the general picture is go back and pick up with these things in detail. And possibly begin, so that we get an idea of the year relationship, give the year and place of your birth, and if it was not California, when you came to California?

FANTZ: Yes. Well, Dick, in answer to your question, I was born in Illinois, Robinson, Illinois, that's the southern part of Illinois. Actually, Robinson is the county seat of Crawford County. I was born September 22, 1910. And, just as I started my freshman year of high school--I had barely gotten

started in the school--my dad very suddenly died, and my mother and we six children finally landed out in California. Previous to that time I finished my first year of high school, of course, in Robinson.

ARENA: What year was that, Don?

FANTZ: Well, I don't know. I was born in 1910. I'd have to figure back a little bit to see how old I was when I got there.

ARENA: That makes you, roughly, three years older than the President, so you see the picture. He was born in 1913.

FANTZ: Yes, I knew that we were . . .

ARENA: Probably around '27, '26.

FANTZ: I was thinking we were around two or three years age difference.

ARENA: Right.

FANTZ: Then I went my sophomore year of high school in Houston, Texas. Then I went back home with my mother and the kids, brothers and sisters, to Robinson. And that summer my mother's mother and a couple of her brothers' families were out in Whittier. They wanted her and all of the kids in California, so they sent for us and we came to Whittier, landing here in 1927. And like Dick, if I am correct, I had only my junior and senior years of high school in Whittier.

ARENA: That's right, his last two years.

FANTZ: That's right, I did, too. My first in Illinois, as I say; second in Houston, Texas; and the last two here. And that is when I first knew Dick Nixon, during my senior year of high school, which was his junior year. And Dick and I were both, of course, new at the high school, and I remember especially Dick was, not considered, but he was the best orator the high school had, you know, debater, on the debating team. And of course, both of us being new at the school, I can't say that we had any close association, we didn't. We knew each other. I knew Dick. I knew him to be a rather serious-minded fellow who certainly had a nice personality. In other words, the type of fellow that you liked to associate with.

Then, my next close association with Dick was later in the 20-30 Club, you know. The 20-30 Club was--the Whittier group was a very active group--a service club comparable to Rotary [Club] and Lions [Club] for the older men, but as the name implied, it was for fellows between the ages of twenty and thirty. I think Dick joined the club about the time that I was president of the club.

ARENA: If it means anything, he came back from law school in 1937 and started practicing that year. . . .

FANTZ: Yes

ARENA: . . . and then, of course, went away to Washington and the Navy in 1940, so it would be the period between '37 and '40.

FANTZ: That's right.

ARENA: Would this be the period when you were president?

FANTZ: Yes, I remember when Dick came back from his law school and started practicing here. We fellows in the 20-30 Club were a very active bunch. The Whittier club was known all around the area to be an active group. We were a singing group. Dick used to play the piano quite a little for us. We were a fun group, and yet we did a lot of good things. Now, here's something that very few people, I'm sure, realize today, but I can remember well when it was the 20-30 Club who first started the Cub Scout movement in Whittier. We sponsored the first Cub Scouts, fellows like [Richard A.] Dick Myers of Myers Department Store. He was one of the young kids at that time who, I can remember well, was in our first Cub Scout troop. We used to also sponsor something that I think is a shame that somebody hasn't carried the ball and continued with. Each year we had what we called our Inter-Service Club Banquet. The 20-30 Club sponsored it, and we arranged a top notch speaker. It was for ladies, too, the members of all of the service clubs, as the name implied, the Inter-Service Club Banquet.

ARENA: By service clubs here, we mean things like Kiwanis and Rotary and Lions . . .

FANTZ: We mean Kiwanis and Rotary and Lions, and at that time there was the Progress Club. That about covers the field, I think, of the service clubs.

ARENA: By the way, on the service clubs, would that have been officers only or all the members?

FANTZ: All the members and their wives.

ARENA: That must have been a big affair.

FANTZ: It was a big affair. I'll never forget, I remember at one of our Inter-Service Club banquets our speaker was none less than Governor Jimmy Rolph. [James Rolph, Jr.] He came strolling in with his high boots on. He was Governor of the State of California when the state sales tax law was enacted, and it used to often be referred to as the tax for Governor Rolph.

ARENA: For a non-Californian, such as myself, just out of curiosity, what party did he belong to?

FANTZ: Well, let's see now. I think Rolph was. . . . Gee, you've kind of got me.

ARENA: Well, that can always be checked.

FANTZ: I really don't know.

ARENA: He must have been quite a colorful fellow.

FANTZ: Well, he was Governor of California. We had top notch speakers at these banquets, and . . .

ARENA: Excuse me, but you know, when you stop to think of it being the size that it was at that time, which I'm sure it was smaller then, do you recall just how you got such a fellow to come to your affairs? Was it through a personal connection or was it a routine, official letter that was sent?

FANTZ: Well, we, of course, were just a bunch of young fellows, as I say, between twenty and thirty years of age, but we didn't stop at anything. I'll never forget when we were planning one of these Inter-Service Club banquets, another member of the club and I had the gall to go to Will Rogers' home and try our best to get him as our speaker.

ARENA: Did you actually get to talk to him?

FANTZ: No, but we tried. You know, when you have the youth and the vigor, you'll tackle anything. But, I don't know whether any particular strings were pulled to get Governor Rolph. It might possibly have been at the moment that it might have seemed expedient to him to come out and talk to all of the service club members in the town of Whittier. Of course, Whittier was always pretty well represented in the assembly, you know, in years back. That was the time, I believe, when Harry Sewell of Whittier, who has passed away long ago now, was State Assemblyman, and he helped us.

ARENA: Speaking, excuse me, of this 20-30 Club, I was looking at the list of residences of the President. Do you happen to recall when he did live up at Worsham Drive?

FANTZ: Yes, as a matter of fact, we had several 20-30 Club board meetings up there. That's in the old Stooddy home. That's the home where Stooddy had a cupola on top in which he had mounted a large telescope, much in the manner of a small observatory.

ARENA: Do you happen to know Mr. Stooddy's full name?

FANTZ: Well, I think that was--there were two brothers, Bill [Winston F. Stoody] and Shelley [M. Stoody]. I think that was Bill's home. They're both dead now, but they started the Stoody Company in the Whittier area.

ARENA: What does the company handle?

FANTZ: Well, it's world famous for hard-surfacing welding rods and materials of that sort.

ARENA: I see.

FANTZ: That was the old Stoody home.

ARENA: Please continue. You're giving this overall picture of your direct contact with the President. That's the general picture of the 20-30 Club, and we'll look at in more detail later. And after that?

FANTZ: Well . . .

ARENA: Excuse me. This took place during his law-practicing days. Did you have any legal business with him, possibly?

FANTZ: No.

ARENA: He was never your lawyer.

FANTZ: No.

ARENA: No occasion to see him.

FANTZ: No occasion to in a professional matter, at all. Actually, Dick, I can't say I was buddy-buddy with Dick Nixon and give you a lot of intimate, interesting details at all. I knew Dick when we were young fellows, as I say, and thought very highly of him. I realized that, as a young man, he had a lot on the ball, let's say. One of the things that I get the biggest kick out of, when I think of Dick and what he has accomplished and where he has gone, is a statement that I've made on several occasions, that I, without knowing it at the time, made what I consider to be one of the very first political speeches for Dick Nixon, as I say, and didn't know it.

ARENA: How was that?

FANTZ: It was quite interesting. I owned and operated my own retail appliance business in Whittier for many years at that time. We were just young fellows then. That's when, actually, I was in 20-30. I was in my own appliance business. One day I got a telephone call at the store from my friend and banker, Herman Perry. Herman said, "Don, are you busy this

evening?" And I said, "No, I'm not, Herman." And he said, "Good, I want you to go to dinner with me. I'll pick you up at your house about, oh, a little after five. You're going to dinner with me. I want to take you and [Carl H.] Herb Wennerberg." Herb Wennerberg at that time was Superintendent of the High School District in Whittier. I don't know where Herb is now. I heard he's down on the desert area someplace. But just in passing I mention that he was with us. So, I didn't ask Herman where we were going or what the occasion was. I thought, "Well, if he wants me to go to dinner with him, fine. I'd like to go to dinner with him." So he picked me up at my home and we picked up Herb, and still nothing was said about where we were going, or why the invite to dinner. And he drove out--actually, to save my soul I couldn't say exactly where. It was somewhere in the Pomona [California] area. We pulled into the parking lot there, and it was a women's club, or an Ebell Club, or some sort of a clubhouse. I can remember, still, I didn't ask Herman what it was all about. I just thought, "Well, he'll tell me. I'll find out what it's all about." We went in. The banquet room was all set up for a big banquet, and we went in and soon were seated. Had a nice dinner. I'm sitting here Herman here, and on the other side is Herb Wennerberg. Herman is in the middle of us. And after dinner--there was a speakers' table, of course, set up--the chairman of the evening got to his feet, rapped the gavel to call the meeting to order, and immediately Herman jumped up. Now, nothing had been said why we were there, at all. We just ate dinner and enjoyed it and talked. And Herman jumped to his feet immediately, and I can remember, he said, "Mr. Chairman, I have a young friend"--and I was young at that time, that's been a few years ago. He said, "I have a young friend with me tonight. I'd like you folks to meet him. I want you to meet my good friend, Don Fantz." And I was stunned. I thought, "Who am I that Herman Perry wants these people to meet me?" And I sat and looked up at him and he smiled down at me, and said, "Don, I want you to get up and tell these people here tonight what you know about Dick Nixon." I sat there, numb, for a minute, and everybody applauded and I stood up, and Herman was still standing, and I leaned over to him and said, "Herman, you could at least have given me five minutes notice." And I thought--you can imagine what you'd think, Dick Nixon was the furthest from my mind at the time. He was still in the Navy. I hadn't seen him for a long time, and he might have said, "Stand up and tell these people what you know about Christopher Columbus," as far as I was concerned. Well, of course . . .

ARENA: Thinking back--and maybe you talked with him about that later--why do you think he used that method? Obviously, you were going to speak without any coaching, that was one thing . . .

FANTZ: You know, it's a funny thing, Dick, believe it or not, we never mentioned that, the way he did it. I never mentioned it to him. Things kind of started to move a little fast from that point, and I never once asked Herman, "How come, Herman, you didn't give me five minutes notice, or let me be thinking something about Dick Nixon. And why me?" Because he didn't ask Herb Wennerberg to speak. But why me? I mean, there were probably lots of fellows that might have been closer to Dick. Of course, Dick wasn't real close to anybody at that time, because he'd been away at school. I mean, anybody around Whittier, he wasn't. He was in the Navy yet, and Herman, of course, knew that I was in the 20-30 Club, because Herman was a good service club man, and I knew him well because of being in the appliance business. The Bank of America was my bank, and Herman was my friend.

ARENA: What was his official title then, could you recall?

FANTZ: Well, let me say, first, his unofficial title was "Mr. Republican". That's true. But his official title, well, I think the Bank of America called men in his position Vice Presidents. He was Bank of America's Whittier Branch Manager.

ARENA: He headed the local Whittier branch?

FANTZ: Oh, he was Bank of America--don't you ever forget it, he WAS. Bank of America had something in that man, in the Whittier area. Now, I'm getting off the subject, but I was a little disappointed and surprised recently when his son Hubert [Perry] got advanced by the bank but moved out of the Whittier branch. I think the smartest thing the Bank of America could have done was to have left Hubert Perry right here in Whittier. If they want to give him advancement, give it to him, but leave him in Whittier. Bank of America has been "Perry" in Whittier for a good many years.

ARENA: While you are on Herman Perry, and since obviously he did play an important role, what would you say about him--without any advance notice, either--how would you describe Herman Perry, and bearing in mind the type of community that Whittier is? I take it that these two complemented one another. For example, would I be correct in saying he was a Quaker?

FANTZ: Yes.

ARENA: And then you take it from there. How would you describe Herman Perry, personality-wise, business-wise, history-wise? If you knew, for example, when he or his parents first came to California.

FANTZ: Well, I don't know anything about when he or his parents came to California.

ARENA: It seems as though he's always been here, though.

FANTZ: Yes, it does. Well, how do you describe a man like Herman Perry, Dick? He was just a wonderful guy. He was a wonderful businessman. He was a fine fellow for a young man, like I was, running a little business, and it was a privilege to be able to go and pull up your chair along side of his desk if you had some problems or something, and talk them over with him.

ARENA: Does it seem, thinking back on the image, that the American politician has, you know . . .

FANTZ: Yes.

ARENA: . . . regardless of individual personality, but thinking about the image that they have, in general bad, they're always stealing from the public, and so forth; and here is a man who was the head of a bank, and bankers generally are considered conservative. Generally, they don't take controversial issues, you know, and all that. How did he seem to pull that off, in a way? Here, a well-known person, involved in politics, and a banker, and yet get along and have the--I assume he had--the respect of the community.

FANTZ: Oh, yes, yes. Well, of course, Whittier, so far as being involved in politics, I know exactly what you mean. When I was in the appliance business here for a long time, a group of fellows wanted me to run for Whittier City Council. I said, "No, nothing doing. I will not run for the Whittier City Council." I wouldn't want to be on it, even if I could be elected, so long as I am in business in Whittier, because you're going to make friends and you're going to make enemies, and let's face it, if you're in business you need all the friends you can get.

But, rather than answer that question right now, let me tell you something about the Herman and Dick Nixon story that possibly, in telling it, it may answer your question better than I could just sit here and try to answer it. After this meeting that I told you about, where Herman introduced me and told me to get up and tell them what I knew about Dick Nixon, evidently that had been a Fact Finding Committee that I was talking to, and that's why I laugh sometimes and say that I made one of the very first political speeches for Dick Nixon and didn't know it. But, after that, of course, things began to work and jell and worked rather fast, and Herman would call me once in awhile at the store, and he got a group of some of us younger fellows together. I remember how, the first time we really got together as a group, he said, "Now, somebody is going to have to kind of ramrod this thing here for you fellows, a chairman, I guess, of our little group." And he said, "I've taken the liberty to already appoint that chairman myself." He said, "Don, you're it." And I said, "Okay. Fine, Herman." So, we'd meet once in awhile, and he'd keep us posted

on what was happening. But, as I say, this will tell you more about Herman, I think, in the Dick Nixon story, some of the things that he said to us. I can remember, and I've thought about it so many, many times, how he was prophetic, more or less, and that's why I said before we started the interview, that it was such a shame that Herman Perry couldn't have lived until today, to have seen Dick actually become President. Because, I remember very distinctly hearing him say, "Now look, it's you young fellows that have to get behind Dick and work, because," he said, "you know something? You fellows are going to sleep in the White House some time. Not me. Because I won't be around here by that time." He said, "I'll be dead and gone when that time comes." That's why I say he was prophetic in two ways. Dick did become President. How many of the group have ever slept in the White House, I don't know, but that was only a term, see, that Dick would be occupying the White House. But, I felt so badly to think that this side of it being so prophetic, and then Herman saying, "It'll be you young fellows, because I won't be here when that time comes," because he wasn't that old a man. He should still be here today. But I think, maybe that gives you an idea of the kind of man he was, and his associates. He had a firm belief. He knew that, in offering Dick Nixon to the people, and particularly to the Republican Party of the congressional district then --they were looking for somebody to run against Jerry Voorhis-- he knew that he was offering them a man who had the capabilities of going right to the top.

ARENA: Did he ever, on subsequent occasions--Herman Perry--use any pressure on you or try to convince you that you should think this way or that way, politically? Or, did he act in subsequent years, as he did on the very first occasion? He left it up to you, more or less had faith in what you could or could not do.

FANTZ: No, he didn't try to force any of his opinions, at all, on you.

ARENA: The reason for my question is--you might guess it already--did he do that with that young political star, young rising political star, Dick Nixon? From your experience, did he ever do that with him?

FANTZ: No, no. No, you see, as a matter of fact, to carry this thing on a little bit. This may surprise you, I'm a registered Democrat, have been all my life.

ARENA: That is a surprise; I'm glad you're mentioning it.

FANTZ: The reason I am, at my home, my dad was a registered Democrat, my mother was a registered Republican, but they always got together and marked their ballots

together; they voted the same way. When I was a kid--twenty-one, now it's eighteen, it was twenty-one then--I just registered Democrat because my dad happened to be registered a Democrat. But I feel this way: I have never been a person who was a party person at all. I vote for the individual and who I think is deserving of your vote. Now, along that line, and here we're talking more about Herman Perry than Dick Nixon, but I don't see how Dick Nixon's life can be divorced from Herman Perry. I probably feel stronger that way than a lot of people, because I know. But I said to Herman one time, I said, "Herman, you know I'm still a registered Democrat. Everybody around here thinks I'm a Republican," I said, "I am, but I'm still a registered Democrat. I guess, maybe I'd better go down, my wife and I, both of us, and change our registration." He said, "Oh, no, you can do Dick more good the way you are." So, I didn't. In those days, there was cross-filing in California.

ARENA: That is not the law or practice today?

FANTZ: No, it hasn't been for a long time. So, when Dick was filing for Congress against Jerry Voorhis, of course he cross-filed, as was the custom. That way you could file in both parties.

ARENA: I do agree with you that in order to understand the President you have to understand the background, and Herman Perry is an important part of that background. And even though this is not the major interest of the Oral History Project at this time, since it has come up, and since you are really an outsider, we can see and talk to people, and I intend to, such as Hubert Perry, it's important from the standpoint of history to get as many different references, and from it all, it's not that you're checking up on another person, but you need all these different sources to get the truth. So that's why, if you don't mind, I'll ask you this question: If it isn't too personal, would you describe Herman Perry, the banker, from the standpoint of your own personal experience, and again, without getting yourself in any compromising position, say as much as you can on that subject, and bring in as much as you can from your personal experience, because no one could speak better about your experiences with him than you, of course.

FANTZ: Well, you say, would I describe him as a banker?

ARENA: Right, and include whatever you can in the way of personal contact; again, though, without compromising yourself or getting into an area you don't want to, but what you can get into for the record. This, of course . . .

FANTZ: I would say, very definitely, as a banker, that he was ruled by his head, certainly, and not by his heart. I mean, he was a banker, first and foremost. I was never in a position where I had to go to Herman or his bank and ask him for a bank loan or anything like that, but back in those days a lot of my sales, of course, were sold on contract, and I financed all of my contracts on the Bank of America because there was a tie-in there with the Bank of America and the public utility company, see? In other words, it was without recourse on me as a dealer. And the contracts all went through the Bank of America. So I gave Bank of America a lot of business in that way. I never had to go in and say, "Well, look Herman, I'm just in a heck of a spot. I've got to have \$10,000. How about it?" I never did.

ARENA: From what you know of people who might have been in that position--and again, without mentioning names if you don't want to--how would Herman Perry react?

FANTZ: Well, Herman Perry would react on cold facts, insofar as anybody who went in there and needed financial aid from the bank; it would be strictly a business operation. As I say, he was ruled not by his heart but by his mind and his knowledge.

ARENA: There are those old-timers, Don, whom I've had the privilege of interviewing to get the real historical background of Whittier, because the President's forebears, as you probably know, I'm sure go back to at least 1897. That's when Grandfather [Franklin] Milhous came. And in interviewing people of that era, you might know some of them--Richie Morris and, of course, Bewley Allen.

FANTZ: Oh, yes.

ARENA: They bring up--again, without going into names--cases of businessmen, some were bankers and some were not, but where a man's word would be enough. What I'm interested in knowing is: Did that continue on? Was that type of situation, where a man would make a substantial loan from a businessman or a bank, and still, say in that era, the 1930's, still his name alone could carry weight, do you think? Or does that go back to the early 1900's?

FANTZ: Oh, no. I don't think so, too much. By that time Whittier had. . . . You know, as I say, we came to Whittier in 1927. Of course, I was a kid in high school then, but the streets of Whittier then used to be--you'd see about as many of the old Dunkard families, you know, the men with their long beards and their long, black coats and the women with their little bonnets, and so forth. People thought they were Quakers, but most of these at that time were actually Dunkards.

ARENA: Yes, they were more prominent then than now.

FANTZ: Oh, yes. But those were mostly the Dunkards. But, at the same time, though, Whittier, even at that time, had become enough of a commercialized town that I don't think that it was ruled by the old-time Quaker . . .

ARENA: . . . personal . . .

FANTZ: . . . "love thee" and so forth and so on. It had grown up, even in those days. It was a town, a commercial town, the business people were here, and they had oil in Santa Fe Springs [California] and a lot of the people had made money there, and it wasn't a thing where you could say, "Well, a man's word is as good as his bond," which is fine, but still, if there were a lot of dollars involved, they would want his bond, too, I think, as well as his word, Dick. I don't think it was a case of that. And back to Herman Perry again and the bank, I mean he still, even though he was highly regarded, I'm sure, by the Bank of America superiors, and so forth and so on, he still was a part of the Bank of America organization. I'm sure he had people who wanted to see some cold facts. There are bank examiners, and I don't think that anybody could go in there and say, "Well, Herman, you and I are good buddies, I need \$20,000. How about it?" No, no, I don't think that those . . .

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you this from your personal recollection: What happened in the great crash? How did the Bank of America here in Whittier go? Or did it fall?

FANTZ: Oh, no, it did not fall.

ARENA: Did any of the main banks here fall, that you can recollect?

FANTZ: No, no. Of course, I was just a kid then, but I made more money in the crash of '29 than. . . . As I told you, my dad died when I was young and there were six of us, so I didn't even have the privilege of going on to college. From Whittier High School I went to work for the gas company in Whittier, and hadn't been there too long until, for some reason or other, they put me on as an appliance salesman, and I sold appliances on commission. And I was just a pug-nosed kid, and I made lots of money because I worked. There were men working and raising families on \$75 a month in those days, you know. But, I made what would be good money today because I worked day and night. I went out and I sold, sold, sold. Even during the depression times we sold appliances, because we were selling them \$5 down and five years to pay. No, none of the banks in Whittier folded.

ARENA: That's very interesting. Again, I was thinking that background is important, going back to that high school period. . . . By the way, is there anything else you wanted to say, at all, about Herman Perry and that incident, which I'm glad you brought out--I've never come across that before--and I know that this will tie in. When you say that you did not know the President on an intimate level, from the standpoint of history, you can never tell just how important, you know, one sentence could be. It might be the missing link in a picture that someone is trying to build up, you know, in another area. He might be trying to create a political event and just that thing is the missing link. So I can't help but tell you that it's very easy to underestimate your value to any historical interview, and don't apologize for anything, and anything you say is helpful.

FANTZ: Yes, but by not knowing him on an intimate level, I mean we didn't date together, double date together, or anything like that, but the young fellows around town here, then. . . . I was a young businessman, as I say, in the appliance business, he was a young attorney, which made him a businessman around town, and we were members of the young men's service club in the town, so in that respect we met every Tuesday night and we had our dinner and we sang and we had a lot of fun together, and a lot of foolishness, and that sort of thing.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you this--it is kind of personal, but it can be very helpful in understanding the personality of the President at that time--was he aware that you did not have a college education?

FANTZ: No. He knew it. You mean, did he know it or did he show it?

ARENA: That was the next question. Did he ever, in any way, make you feel uncomfortable, that he was too brainy, say, an egghead, because he did have the reputation, and maybe you knew it, of being a real top student, all up and down the educational ladder? Were you aware of that?

FANTZ: Oh, yes.

ARENA: He had won a scholarship to law school.

FANTZ: I knew that.

ARENA: You knew that, and yet you never felt uncomfortable, you personally?

FANTZ: Oh, no, no.

ARENA: Now, how about others in your same position that you might know of? Others who did not have a college education, did they ever say, "We don't want to hang around with him," or "Let's not go out with him," for any reason, that being one of the considerations?

FANTZ: No, no.

ARENA: He was easy to get along with?

FANTZ: Absolutely, absolutely. Look, I don't know whether I've told you on the tape, or whether it was when Evlyn [Dorn] and you and I were talking about it. Evlyn called me up here and wanted to see me about the appliance for Don's [Francis Donald Nixon] house. I don't know whether that's on the tape or not.

ARENA: Would you please give that account, because that was not on the tape, and that would be very interesting.

FANTZ: Well, you see, had it been true that he felt that I lacked something because I wasn't able to go on to college and get my degree, and so forth, I don't think he would have even bothered. But Dick was never that sort of a person. He was as common as an old shoe in that respect. None of the fellows felt that he felt that he was above them, that they were not his equal, at all, no. He couldn't have given anybody that impression.

But, we were talking before we taped, when Mrs. Dorn was here, about just things that happened in years past. I remember one time Evlyn called me at my store and she said, "Don, Congressman Nixon's in town. Dick Nixon's in town." He was Congressman at the time. "And he wants to see you. Could you come up for a little while. He's up here in the office. Just come in and I'll take you back to see him." I said, "Sure." So I came up and they had him kind of hidden away in one of the back offices. Evlyn took me on in. He was very friendly, of course, as always. And, it was wintertime, and he said, "Don, Pat [Patricia Ryan Nixon] and I are staying out at Don's." (His brother Don's.) This was when Don was living out on Whittier Boulevard, close to where the market used to be. And he said, "You know, he hasn't got any heat in that place. It's cold, boy, it's real cold." And he said, "I wonder if you'd do me a favor." He said, "Will you go out there and look it over and see what it needs, see what you could put in there in the way of some floor furnaces or some heat, or something, to make it warm and comfortable for them. They've done so much for Pat and me, and we're staying there, and we can't do anything for them. This is one way that I can kind of pay them back a little bit for what they've done for us." He said, "I want you to go out there and see about that, and let me know, and whatever it is, I'll give you a check for it, because that's the only way I know of I can do something for Don." So I did, and I thought that was a very nice thing.

Incidentally, you asked me awhile ago if I knew Dick when they lived up on the college hills on Worsham Drive. I sold his mother and dad the first automatic refrigerator they had in their home. At that time it was an old gas refrigerator. We called it an Electrolux then, but that was the first refrigerator they had in their home. I sold it to Mr. and Mrs. [Francis Anthony] Nixon.

Then, another time, to show you that Dick certainly wouldn't consider anybody without the education that he had as anything less than he is, than he would be himself. This was later, when he and Pat had a home out on, they called it "Hughston Meadows" at the time. It is now the Candlewood Country Club. The string of houses there before you get to the county club fairways.

ARENA: Excuse me. Would that be 14033 Honeysuckle Lane, Whittier?

FANTZ: Yes. That's right, Honeysuckle Lane.

ARENA: Near the Candlewood Country Club.

FANTZ: That's right.

ARENA: Just to get it precisely.

FANTZ: I got a phone call from Dick, himself, at the time and he told me that he and Pat were there and that he wanted to get an automatic washer and a dryer installed in the garage for her, and would I come out and look it over and see if we could put one in. And the day that I had my installers installing it I thought I would just circle by, as I always tried to do on those occasions, just to see if they were getting along all right, getting the hook-ups made. And I was talking out in the garage to my installer and Dick heard me out there, and he came running out the back door, and he said, "Don, am I glad to see you!" He said, "You got a minute?" I said, "Sure." He said, "I'm supposed to be a speaker at . . ." I don't know, some service club meeting over around Puente [California], over the hills someplace, I think it was Puente, some service club or something over there. And he said, "I just got a phone call. The fellow who was to pick me up and take me over there, something has happened. He can't make it, his car broke down, or something," and he said, "Can you run me over there?" So I said, "Sure, sure, Dick, get in." So I had the pleasure of driving him over the hills to Puente and dropping him off for his service club talk that day. And I'm sure that, being President, and with the very great, unbelievable problems and so forth, that he has on his mind today, that basically and underneath, he's just the same guy he always was.

ARENA: Speaking of that, and you would be a fellow who could answer this better than most people, knowing the pressures that any president would have, obviously, in a country such as this and its problems in the world today, can you think back in your own club, 20-30 Club, or other occasions when he was in high school and working part-time and running for office and winning, can you think back to those periods when he was under pressure and describe him under pressure; for example, if he was working on a committee of the 20-30 Club, maybe the Cub Scouts, how did he do his job? Did he do it in a kind of no-nonsense business--he was dedicated--and would he kind of lose touch with the people around him? Or, no matter how much pressure he had, he didn't show it? In other words, do you recall if you had the opportunity to observe him back in those days, if you can think back?

FANTZ: Well, I can't truthfully say, Dick, that I ever actually saw Dick when he was under what I would say, pressure, in any of those circumstances.

ARENA: Of course, by comparison today, anything like that wouldn't be comparative pressure, but I'm sure nevertheless . . .

FANTZ: No.

ARENA: It's a question of trying to think . . .

FANTZ: I can tell you a side to him that touched me very deeply.

ARENA: Please do.

FANTZ: It was after . . .

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

FANTZ: I was saying that there is something that I can tell you about Dick that--a side to him that touched me very deeply, in his early days. It's after he had been in Congress and made the decision to run for the Senate. Incidentally, I might say that I was fortunate to be one of those who also signed his papers when he cross-filed for the Senate. Again, back to the group of young fellows whom Herman guided along and helped in things that we wanted to do, because we all wanted to be a part of Dick's campaign and a part of him, because we were sold on him, and we thought that he was the kind of a man that the country needed. We had, at the Whittier High School auditorium, a giant meeting--there, again, you can check the date, that you can find out--as I recall it was at the time when we made the kick-off, or more or less the announcement of

the fact that Congressman Dick Nixon was going to be a candidate for the Senate. It was my great privilege to be the master of ceremonies at that meeting, and to have the honor of introducing Dick and Pat to the audience. And the high school auditorium was a pretty good-sized auditorium, and it was filled to brimming-over. There were many people standing outside, a great crowd. Well, it happened that my oldest son--I found out about this just at the last minute--I was very nervous about it and he was in high school at the time. He played the piano, but he was talking about playing the organ. And I thought, oh, he has a lot of fun on the organ. But anyhow, some of them got together and they thought it would be a great idea, since I was going to be the master of ceremonies of the meeting, if my boy, young Don [Donald R. Fantz], would play the organ before and after the crowd came in, you know. Well, I found out about it at the last minute, and it just scared me to death. I thought, oh, they're just leading that kid to the slaughter, because he's not an organist for a thing like that. But, anyhow, it was planned, and I'll never forget, as Dick and Pat and several of us were standing backstage with the curtain still down, hearing the first notes of the organ, I thought, "Oh, boy, here it comes!" My boy out there playing the organ! But, you know, it was beautiful, and I had all I could do to keep my eyes dry. Well, now, this same boy that was playing the organ, when he was five and a half years old--that's when Dick and I were in the 20-30 Club, all of us in the 20-30 Club together--we had him up in the Murphy Memorial Hospital, which doesn't exist now; you know where it is, though.

ARENA: It's part of the dormitories of the Whittier College.

FANTZ: That's right. We had him up there when he was five and a half years old. He spent six weeks there with spinal meningitis and a mastoid operation, wasn't supposed to live at all. And the whole town was interested in him and it was wonderful, the good feeling that we got from people around, you know. But the boy lived. Dr. [William] Bruff was his doctor. He's gone now. He was a wonderful man. And of course, the fellows in 20-30, you know, watched every day for reports on Donnie, as we called him, and how he was getting along. But the thing I'm getting at in this story is that here was this boy down there playing the organ. So when it came time, the curtain was up and I introduced Pat and Dick Nixon, and Dick took the platform to speak, you know the first thing he said? Now this shows you, I think, a lot about the character of the man. He didn't have to. A lot of fellows wouldn't have done that. He said, "Folks, didn't you enjoy that organ playing?" He said, "I want to tell you something. Do you remember here about ten years ago, all of us in Whittier were saying our prayers and watching for reports and just hoping and praying for a young boy who was up at Murphy Memorial Hospital who wasn't expected to live at all? That was

young Don Fantz, and he played the organ for you tonight." Now, a lot of fellows wouldn't have thought of that, you know. I mean, that, I think, tells a lot about the character, don't you, Dick?

ARENA: Let me tie that in with this question: You might be aware that they are replaying the Checkers speech.

FANTZ: Is that so?

ARENA: They are. And in some cases, the audience laughs. And the sincerity, the personal references the President made in that speech, which was the turning point--from what you have just said, that was nothing new. In other words, this direct appeal to personal situations such as that, he had done in the case of your own son.

FANTZ: That's right.

ARENA: And it wasn't something that was, you know, once in a lifetime thing. In other words, would I be correct in asking you, in saying that you were not surprised at the personal, sincere level--as you say, the tears came in your eyes, and I'm sure they came to some of the other 20-30 members. Evidently the reason some people would laugh at the Checkers speech is that they couldn't believe that he really was that way, and he is.

FANTZ: Yes. No, I wasn't surprised that Dick did it, but it pleased me very, very much because, you know, so many people, when they think of politicians, as you said earlier, they're thought of as being kind of smug, and a black cigar in their mouth, or something, you know, and patting a baby on the head, and so forth, but just to have a little nicety that way, you know, because this boy down here playing the organ didn't even have to be introduced to the crowd, as far as that's concerned. He's just somebody playing the organ, music while they walk in and walk out. And I thought, how nice it was that he would do that.

ARENA: Are there any other experiences, because really, your saying or my saying he is this or that, doesn't mean as much as your recounting firsthand situations such as the one you just did. Are there any others, all the way up and down the line, since the first time you met him in high school to, especially, the time that he went into politics? Can you think of things that would shed light on the personality of a man that maybe would agree or disagree with me, but the image is that he's cold? At social affairs, he's not comfortable. He doesn't like to dance. This seems to be the image of the man, as of now. I don't know, again, if you agree or disagree with that, but,

whether you agree or disagree, what experiences can you recall firsthand, and maybe describe a little more in detail, such as the 20-30 Club? When you said that he played the piano; when you said that they had social affairs, could you give some more examples, including, possibly, ones where he danced, and with whom?

FANTZ: No, I can't. As I told you earlier, Dick, in many, many respects that way I'm kind of a poor subject for you. I really can't. Of course, now, you see, here is one thing, too. Now, back in our 20-30 days, I was an old married man. I was married at twenty years old, and Dick was not, see?

ARENA: And he was not, until 1940. And by that time he was out
. . .

FANTZ: Yes, so that probably made it a little bit different, too. Dick has never been one for, I think, just idle talk. I can remember, back when I was in the Rotary Club in Whittier, during the time I was program chairman and a member of the board of directors of the Whittier Rotary Club, at the time of a lot of Dick's campaigning, and not only campaigning but between campaigns, when he was serving as Congressman, maybe it was Senator, too; I don't know, these things are all a matter of record, anyhow. But, in my capacity as program chairman, he was in town, and having him come to town and have him sit down at the head table alongside of me and introducing him to Rotary, and he'd give us a little talk at Rotary Club.

I remember one time in particular that we knew he was coming, and I had it planned that he was to be our program for the day, and something happened that the plane that he was on was late, or something, and the late O. C. Smith, who at that time was Chief of Police of Whittier and was a Rotarian--I remember they landed Dick in some little plane over at El Monte Airport someplace--O.C. took his chief's car, with his red light, and went over there and got him over here so we could get him in time so we could have him talk to us a little while. But, in sitting up there at the head table, having our dinner, or sitting there at the Rotary Club, with Dick sitting here on my right, I mean, there was no small talk, even at that time. Of course, then he had alot of things on his mind. But, you know, when people say that a man like that is, maybe, cold in a crowd, or a little antisocial or something--I've thought of this so many, many times, you've heard it, so has everybody--a man stands up there in a reception line, as he would do in affairs of state, or something, lots of people come by and want to shake hands, and so forth. We've all heard the old story about somebody coming by and smiling and shaking the guy's hand and saying, "You so-and-so and such-and-such," and the guy, you know, he's been in this line so much, he smiles right back and says, "Thank you, it's very nice of you," you know, because you

can say anything; they don't even know what you're saying, usually because, after all, it's an exciting time, and there's one person right behind the other coming by. I've been tempted sometimes--I've heard that so many times--to try it even at a wedding reception, sometime, to shake the father of the bride's hand and say, "Why, you old rat, you look like a reprobate, if I ever saw one," and see if he wouldn't smile back and say, "Yeah, thank you, gee, that's very nice of you." I think a lot of that must be taken into consideration when people say that the man is a little cool or something in public. I don't think any President or anybody that I know of in public life, I've seen go any further out of his way to make sure that he gets out and shakes hands with this guy or that guy, than Dick does, as far as that's concerned. Sometimes I imagine that the Secret Service people are probably about driven nutty with him.

ARENA: Can you think of any instance in your personal experience where he demonstrated courage, say, from the time you knew him in high school to the time he went into the service, comparable to the courage of the South American trip, where he was almost mobbed to death, in Venezuela, and he had to play it very cool?

FANTZ: No, I can't say that I've ever seen Dick, personally, in a position where such courage would be required.

ARENA: You can't think of a fight? There weren't such things as gangs in Whittier, I take it, at that time.

FANTZ: Oh, there were, I suppose, sure. But, no, I don't think Dick would have been one to have . . .

ARENA: . . . looked for one.

FANTZ: . . . looked for one, no, any more than I would have, no. I think, not from my own personal knowledge, but I think history has shown, that I've read and that I know are true, the kind of a boyhood life that he led, like I did. Of course, as I say, his dad was still alive, where my dad died when I was just starting into high school. There was my mother and six kids; we knew what a dime was worth. We worked, and Dick did, too. Now, when I was in high school here, my senior year in high school I was night clerk at the William Penn Hotel in Whittier. And I worked and Dick had to work. I mean, we weren't, either one of us, of the breed that had the so-called silver spoon in their mouth, you know. I had to work and Dick had to work.

ARENA: Did you, possibly, ever go to the market in Los Angeles [California] with him in the early morning period when he picked up his vegetables to sell in the store?

FANTZ: No.

ARENA: There was no occasion.

FANTZ: No.

ARENA: Maybe that was during the college years where he did that.

FANTZ: No, I never did that.

ARENA: Would you describe, Don, the debates or high school oratorical addresses that you might have experienced?

FANTZ: I couldn't, Dick. I couldn't actually recall. I remember that, of course, we had our--what did we call it--Cardinal and White, our high school paper that went out every so often, but I know that he was always top man on the debating team. I did a lot of dramatics in the school plays, and I was president of the boys' glee club, and did a lot of that sort of thing at school, so naturally I was interested, because I figured that debating was kind of a related interest. And Dick and Pat, as you know, met, of course, in the Community Players here in Whittier. I was very active in those. I was not in that play that they were in, but I've said many times, it's a wonder my wife didn't leave me. There were two straight seasons that I was in every play the Community Players put on in Whittier.

ARENA: Did you get to see the play, by any chance?

FANTZ: No. I don't remember whether I did, or not, Dick. Actually, I don't. I might have.

ARENA: And this would be true. I think there was another one in which he appeared as a lawyer.

FANTZ: Yes.

ARENA: And you don't recall that one?

FANTZ: I don't recall. It's been a long time ago. I just don't recall.

ARENA: How about your recollection of him on the athletic field, any school, whether it was the high school or college level?

FANTZ: No, I think that Dick was probably about the same kind of an athlete that I was. In the first place, I always had a job after high school, myself, and when I first started

high school, as I say, when my dad died, I was going out strong as a freshman for the football team because it was a good football town. I thought I'd play football, everybody was expected to, and then my dad died and I went to work, before and after school both, in a department store. And I liked the track events. I used to pole vault a lot. And I was cured from that with a stone bruise here in Whittier, so I think, athletically, that Dick and I probably were about on a par.

ARENA: Is there anything about the high school period that I've left out that you would like to bring up? His commencement address, that was a year ahead of you? Did you have occasion to attend that?

FANTZ: No, because I was out by that year.

ARENA: Were you about to say something before I interrupted you?

FANTZ: Well, no. I was only going to say that on this interview I've taken a lot of your time, and I doubt if I've given you a whole lot of information that's . . .

ARENA: Well, the thing is, no one can speak for Don Fantz, again.

FANTZ: Right.

ARENA: And you knew him. Now, how intimately, that's always something that's debatable, from the standpoint of how intimately does anyone know somebody else. The thing is you did know him, you were a member of the same club, and that is most . . .

FANTZ: Well, I think, probably, Dick, the way I personally sum it up, knowing him, yes, I knew Dick well, as far as young fellows around town and knowing each other are concerned, and being friendly, yes. But, I think, in my own mind at least, the most interesting tie-in in the course of events with Dick Nixon and me has to do with the little things like the very beginning of his political career, as I say, in laughingly saying that I made one of the first political speeches for him and didn't know it, with the Herman Perry incident.

You know, there are many, many things that happened behind the scene that Dick didn't even know was happening or was going on, that we young fellows here did. Sure, I know that he knew and he felt in his own mind that we were all pulling for him and were helping, but it's that sort of thing, magnified across the country, that makes Presidents out of men. It puts them in the Presidency. It puts them in Congress, or it puts them in the Senate. But the best qualified men in the world, for the job, any job, "Well, yes, here I am, I offer myself, I want it," but if he doesn't work for it, and if people don't work for him,

whether he knows they are or not, and I mean whether he's actually conscious of this individual or this particular group of individuals, he'll never become a Senator or Congressman, or President, or whatever he wants to become.

But what I am happy about is, as I say, first of all, that a man like Dick Nixon is the President of our country, and the fact that I even knew him, and the fact that I can feel in the very beginning that I was one of those who helped put him across. I'm proud of the fact that I can say I signed his papers when he first filed for Congress, I signed his papers when he filed for the Senate, you see. These things are nice to know, and my kids like it, and our family--the whole family has been--there couldn't be a Nixon who has been more rabidly for the man than we, than my whole family, my wife, Ellen [Fantz], my kids and all, because we like him and we feel that it's great to think that the country and the world could have a man like Dick Nixon holding the position of President of the United States; because, first of all, maybe it's partly because of us he's not just simply a figurehead. We know him. But, at the same time I think that he's a man who would have the feelings and would make the decisions the way that I'd like to have them, feel that a man who's President is making the decisions, and the feelings that I'd like to have him feel, for the country as a whole and for the world, with some compassion for the other man.

To me, sure, a politician, you go as far as the President of the United States, but you can't do it without being a politician today. But there are lots of different breeds of politicians. I am one of those who believe that a man can be a politician and go to the top and still not sell his soul, so to speak. Still have the compassion that I like for the President of the United States to have, for the other man, and not be mamby-pamby, either. You know, Dick Nixon was never any mamby-pamby. I mean, they could say, oh, sure, Quaker up-bringing and so forth and so on, and a little goody boy, go to church. Well, I go to church every Sunday, too, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that, but you can still do that and not be mamby-pamby, pantywaist or whatever. When he was out with us young fellows in the 20-30 Club, as we were then, he was one of us, there wasn't any goody-goody boy, you know.

ARENA: Knowing the Nixon before politics as you do, and knowing the Nixon of politics of today, and going over that little resume you were making about the need to win votes, and so forth, bearing in mind that people have made the Presidency--and it isn't necessary to mention the names--but there are people who have made the Presidency because of great accomplishments without being in politics; for example, [Ulysses S.] U. S. Grant, who was never a politician, and everyone realized it . . .

FANTZ: . . . or [Dwight D.] Eisenhower.

ARENA: Well, I didn't want to mention names. We'll mention a person like Grant. He's one type of a person who made it. Another type is a person who you might say is one hundred percent in politics. I'm trying to think of an example. A man, oh, maybe Theodore Roosevelt, who really worked his way up, and was a governor of New York, Vice President, and accidentally became President, who was very active in politics. And then there is, you know, a person like the President himself. What qualities do you see in him today that are very much the qualities that he had when you knew him, we'll say, in the 20-30 Club, and that don't surprise you at all? And, what things do you see in him today that appear completely new, that he's learned, one way or another, since you . . .

FANTZ: Those are difficult questions.

ARENA: It certainly is. And only a person like you who knew him before and now, could I ask a question like that.

FANTZ: Yes. Well, they're difficult questions, as I say. I don't know. First let's see if I can think of something that I see in him that doesn't surprise me, or that is typically the old Dick Nixon. Well, first of all, I'd have to say the way he can handle himself on his feet, at press conferences, and so forth. In my interest in politics, which, certainly, I've never been politically-minded, but I don't think there was ever a President, or anybody else as far as that is concerned, that I felt could stand up in front of a group of microphones with the press out in front of him like this and field their questions, have their questions thrown at him, and one, two, three, four, just stand up there and answer them off the top of his head, when he has nothing prepared. Now, I'm not surprised to see Dick Nixon do that, because I've seen Dick Nixon personally enough. I can remember in just contacts that I've had with him--well, here we'll talk about the 20-30 Club--I can remember board meetings that we had up there at the house that you were speaking of, and knowing him in 20-30, he was never one that you could throw him something, that he couldn't come up with an answer to, see. I'm not surprised at that. I actually expect that of Dick Nixon, because I know that he's got the answer. And of course, now has answers. The answers that he has to have now are not like they might be in a lot of questions in private life, personal opinions, or something, see. But the answers that he has to have today have to be world facts, world figures, but he's got 'em up here. The man's got a mind that's like a machine, I think, for figures and facts, places, and so forth. Sure, he's been every place, and he's had a lot of years working with world affairs and matters, but he retains the knowledge.

Now, as to anything that I've seen in him that surprises me. I can't say of any mannerism or action that surprises me. I might say this, that I'm a little bit surprised (and I probably shouldn't

even say this) but I don't think I'm alone in it, and I don't know, certainly, what's behind the scenes, but I'm a little bit surprised at his coming trip to Red China, so far as an action is concerned. But then, who am I to say that I'm surprised at it, and that I don't think it's the thing to do, because it could very well turn out to be, in history, one of the smartest and greatest moves that any American President ever made. It could very well be, and I'm sure that Dick Nixon looks upon it that way, as the smartest thing he could do, or he wouldn't do it.

ARENA: Do you think, from the standpoint of the question--and nothing about the Peking decision in itself--the visit to China, but from the standpoint of the basic question, that this might be comparable--if you are aware that this took place--his being a Quaker, as you mentioned, you know, brought up rather strict, Quakers being, especially in the Whittier area, historically, no smoking, no drinking, no dancing, he was the one who campaigned to bring dancing on the campus at Whittier College. Do you think that's a comparable situation? Here, the son of a staunch Quaker family . . .

FANTZ: You mean his visit to Peking?

ARENA: That, as you say, surprised you, in view of his over-all commitments, standing up to Communism and so forth--I take it that's the thing that surprised you, in view of his record against Communism, I assume that's where the surprise comes in--but were you aware of that stand that he had taken in college, which I understand--and you would know better than I, because I was not there at the time--there was quite a fuss raised among some members of the community, and I imagine especially some Quakers, about this idea of breaking with that tradition, allowing someone campaigning, especially a Quaker such as he was, and a birthright Quaker--not convinced, but birthright--and all that; do you think that might be a comparable situation?

FANTZ: No, I don't see any comparison between that and the Peking trip, and I can understand completely, even when I first heard about this, his being one of those campaigning for dances at college. I can understand that completely, because, while I am not a Quaker, my mother was, as she said, the "old time religion." We kids at home were not even allowed to have a deck of cards in the house. And we couldn't dance. I was really . . .

ARENA: Excuse me. Do you mind if I ask you what your denomination is?

FANTZ: For about six, seven years I've been Catholic. I married a Catholic girl and two of my sons studied for the priesthood. Neither one stayed with it, they're both married now and have families. But I joined the church about seven years ago.

ARENA: And your mother?

FANTZ: She was of the old time religion, Methodist, more than anything else, yes. So I can understand Dick campaigning for dancing in college because I married an Irish girl who could dance before she could walk, and we'd dance a hole in the floor at the least provocation. So I can understand that.

ARENA: Do you mind, again, if I ask you another question which, again, only you could give an opinion that would mean a lot, since you knew the President before and after. Again, if it's too personal don't answer it. But, Whittier is a small town now, compared to Los Angeles [California] and New York [New York]. It was a small town then. It was close to a big town, but it was a small town. Obviously the President holds his own, and has held his own quite well with big town boys, whether they're from New York or Paris or London. How can you account for that? Here a kid grows up, although in a grocery store, he was born on a farm. His father was a lemon grower, as you know, and the kid sold fruits and vegetables in the store. How can you, coming from that same background yourself, explain that a small town education and in a small town college can be a success, in this case in politics? I'm sure you can think of others who have been a success, maybe in medicine. In the Army there's a General, you might know him, James Ferguson, who is a four-star retired Air Force . . .

FANTZ: Yes, I knew him very well.

ARENA: Well, in other words, that's an over-all question, and I'd like to ask you if you've ever thought about it and what you think about it now.

FANTZ: Yes, I have. I've thought about it many times. Now, you've put it on a personal basis and so I'll keep it that way. I hate to bring myself into it, but I about have to to answer that. I was from a small town, just as Dick was. Of course, we came, actually, to Whittier about the same time. And I was from a family that--we had all we wanted, but we weren't wealthy people. And then when my dad died I had to work. But I was, I'm sure, like Dick, I was a very sensitive kid, very sensitive, shy, and I don't know, I think something happens to you if it's intended to, let's say, and if you have,

lurking in the back of your make-up, the possibility for it to happen. And some have it and some don't. Some remain kind of shy and a little backward all their lives. But I've known a lot of men, particularly, who maybe were shy as youngsters, but I think it's a part of growing up, and it's a part of what situations you might happen to be thrown into. Now, with me it was a case of my dad dying and my leaving my family and going with some relatives to Houston, Texas, that one year--just like that, uprooted.

ARENA: It was a whole different world.

FANTZ: Yes. It put me into an entirely different world, and while there my very best friend was a man who was, of course, my age in high school, but a very, very wealthy man. The poor guy's dead now. He was just my age; he died young. Had millions of dollars, yet you wouldn't know he had a dime, and we were inseparable buddies. Just going away and associating with other people did a lot to bring me out of my shell, and I think that probably. . . . Of course, I know that Dick had come out of his shell, I'm sure, to a degree, before he got out of Whittier College. But another step in his development was going on to Duke [University]. It's the people you associate with. Now, I got a lot of it from becoming a salesman when I was just a young kid, a salesman for the gas company, where you had to go out and you had to talk. You had to talk to people, and you learned not to be afraid of hearing your own voice a little. Dick was a debater and orator, and he talked and he learned to talk and he began to say, "Well, I must be doing pretty well, because these people say I'm good. Everything they say about me can't be all wrong. I must have some ability." So it gave him a little bit of an urge, you might say, to go on a little further. "Well, let's try it again, let's test it a little bit more." And each step that he would make would throw him in with people who were, maybe, a little bit higher echelon. It's like climbing a ladder. I think each step you make, if that works out, the next one is easier. Now, when he became a Congressman, and the Alger Hiss and the pumpkin papers and all that thing developed and came along, in the first place by his becoming a Congressman, to beat out a man like Jerry Voorhis in this area, which just seemed like, why, the guy's out, but he did. So that was bound to give him strength because he succeeded in doing the job he set out to do, and there's nothing that succeeds like success. So, I think that it's been kind of step-by-step with Dick, to where now, as you say, he's up to the place now where he's at home with kings and queens and no-matter-what. But it didn't happen just like that. It had to kind of come by steps.

ARENA: Don, I can't thank you enough. Thank you for this interview.

FANTZ: Well, Dick, it's been very great, and I appreciate this and it's nice to have met you, and I hope that something that I've said will be of help to you.

ARENA: It certainly is a help to history.