

## Dobie Langenkamp

Raised with a rich family oil legacy, he practiced oil & gas law, served in the Carter administration, and founded his own company.

### Chapter 01 - 1:07

#### Introduction

---

**Announcer:** Both of R. Dobie Langenkamp's, grandfathers were Oklahoma pioneers in the 1920s in oil development. The younger Langenkamp worked as an oilfield roustabout, a pump station operator, and a refinery laborer while he was attending school. After Stanford and Harvard Law School, Dobie practiced oil and gas law in Oklahoma and twice was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oil and Gas for the Department of Energy, where one of his responsibilities was to supervise the Naval Petroleum Reserve. After service in the government he founded and ran his own small independent oil and gas exploration company for 15 years. Later he was appointed Professor of Energy and Director of the National Energy Law and Policy Institute at Tulsa University Law School. Dobie Langenkamp has also served as energy consultant for the State Department and Department of Energy in Kazakhstan, the Republic of Georgia, and Iraq. He has lectured on international oil and gas law in Ghana, Angola, Uganda, Egypt, and Argentina.

You can listen to Dobie talk about his days at Tulsa Central, Harvard, and Washington D.C. on the oral history website [VoicesofOklahoma.com](http://VoicesofOklahoma.com).

### Chapter 02 - 10:56

#### Dobie and Langenkamp Families

---

**John Erling:** Today's date is January 12, 2012.

Dobie, would you state your full name, your date of birth, and your present age?

**Dobie Langenkamp:** Robert Dobie Langenkamp. I'm seventy-five, born August 14, 1936.

**JE:** We are recording this in our recording studios here for VoicesofOklahoma.com in Tulsa. Tell us where you were born.

**DL:** I was born here in Tulsa, about 13th and Peoria. As I like to tell, and my wife is now tired of hearing me say, “I was born on the hottest day in the history of Oklahoma.”

**JE:** Okay.

**DL:** Which was 116 degrees, and last summer it got up to 115, but it has never passed 116 degrees. The building where I was born, it’s still there, it’s a small, sort of pink warehouse across from Long John Silvers, pink—

**JE:** What was the address?

**DL:** Like 1327 Peoria. It was an eight-bed osteopathic hospital. And now it’s a warehouse. We were osteopath people back in those days. There were sort of two classes of people, there were the osteopath people and there were the MD people. And the osteopath tended to be a little bit poorer.

**JE:** So it was less expensive?

**DL:** Yes, it was less expensive and it’s interesting because the doctor that delivered me, I got the birth certificate out the other day, and he turns out to be a fellow that was in the Atlas Life building when I started practicing law in Tulsa in 1964. I didn’t know this at the time or I would have gone in and met him, but his reputation was that he handled all the prostitutes. I mean, his practice had declined to the point that he had a small office in the Atlas Life building and serviced mostly the hookers in Tulsa. And this was the guy that delivered me in 1936.

But when he was in the Atlas building he had a medical office in the Atlas building. Back in those days, there were quite a few doctors that were downtown in the tall buildings and so forth.

But, anyway, I didn’t recognize it till later and I saw that name and I said, “Well, that looks familiar.” And then I got to thinking, *He was the one that everyone said, “Go up to the tenth floor if you want to see all the prostitutes in town come in for their tests.”*

**JE:** [both laughing] Okay, let’s talk about your family. Let’s start with your grandparents. Grandfather Langenkamp, where does he come from, where does he live?

**DL:** Well, he came from St. Louis. There was a large German population in St. Louis. His father came over from Westphalia. I’ve been to the town where presumably the Langenkamps came from. His father was evidently a foundling, either a foundling or his parents died shortly after he got over here. And he made money for a while as a cook on a riverboat up and down the Mississippi. Evidently the only asset he had when he got to the country was four or five recipes.

So he was a cook for a while and he ended up being a shoe salesman in St. Louis. And raised over twenty-five children. He had a bunch of children and his second wife had a bunch of children and then they together had a bunch of children. So my grandfather one time said there were twenty-five children raised in this brownstone house there in St. Louis, two-story.

**JE:** But you're talking about your grandfather's father.

**DL:** My grandfather's father, yes.

**JE:** So it would be your great grand—

**DL:** And my grandfather is one of those twenty-five.

**JE:** Right.

**DL:** And then what he did what many people did in those days is they took off and came to Oklahoma. My Grandfather Langenkamp came down to Drumright. He was a self-educated engineer. Had no college education but had taken all sorts of correspondence courses in those days. So he was an engineer for Prairie or one of those early companies and built a lot of the pipelines around Drumright.

In fact, he did fairly well in the oil business, in the sense that he kept getting promoted and eventually was located in Tulsa.

I have a great picture of my father in Drumright as a ten-year-old boy doing a handstand on a horse. And in the background, you can see the hillside covered with these drilling rigs. You know, you had the big boom in Cushing and Drumright.

Anyway, my grandfather came down, did that, lost his job because of mergers and acquisitions and so forth. And ended up with a number of different jobs. But at one time, he worked for Williams in the Panama Canal laying a pipeline down there. So he was a pipeline engineer. Had eight children. And was a typical sort of German autocrat.

**JE:** Didn't he at one time head up the WPA in Tulsa?

**DL:** Yeah. One of his jobs after Prairie Oil was acquired by Sinclair or someone and he lost his job, he took over the WPA in Tulsa.

**JE:** Let me just say that's the Works Progress Administration, was the largest, I suppose most ambitious New Deal Agency, employed millions of unskilled workers that carried out public works projects and public buildings, roads, and operated large arts, drama, media, and literacy projects. So the WPA, your father then in Tulsa, headed that up.

**DL:** Yes. He was like the regional supervisor, the district supervisor, because he had been basically a supervisor and superintendent of pipeline construction. And most of this work was building courthouses and streets and so forth.

There's supposedly a picture somewhere, I've never seen it, of all the crews out working. There are just thousands of people and many of them are lawyers and bankers and people who have lost their jobs who were, for the first time in their lives, forced to use a shovel.

He was a socialist, which was the other thing that was interesting about my grandfather. He believed that religion was the opiate of the people. And I remember as a small boy I was religious. The other side of the family were Episcopalians. And I remember him pounding on the table and saying religion was the opiate of the people. [laughs]

**JE:** [laughs] That's Grandfather Langenkamp. But then your maternal grandfather, would that be Grandfather Dobie?

**DL:** Yes. His name was Leslie Dobie and he was a Scot. All the Dobies had come down from Canada, where, as you know, many Scots immigrated. They came down into Wisconsin and were in the lumber business. His father was quite a plunger. And at one time, was the partner of Warehouser and later went bankrupt.

And his son went to the University of Oregon out West because that was lumber country. And he worked in the summers as what they call a timber cruiser, which is a guy who would walk through the forest and estimate in his head how many board feet that were in this forest.

Anyway, he eventually came back to Wisconsin and ran for the state legislature, heh (kind of a sigh), as one of La Follette's boys. La Follette, you know, the great progressive, and he got elected. And he was quite young.

My mother, in fact, was born in Madison, or maybe Superior, which is the state capital. They had very progressive platform. I've seen some ads for his campaign. They believed in an eight-hour day. They believed in no child labor. You know, they had a bunch of wild ideas like that.

He got beat in his first reelection bid by, what they called in those days, a stallwich, and they were the conservatives, the anti-progressives. And so he packed up and came to Tulsa. He was in his early twenties then. He had a college degree. Opened an office with his brother. They were independent producers until he died at age thirty-six, and never was able to really make the big hit that would have meant considerable money. He, in fact, was drilling a well in Arkansas. These rigs were all built by hand for that well by timbers.

At any rate, he was drilling a well in Arkansas when he got cancer and died. That left my mother and her brother and sister with only one means of support, which was my grandmother, and she was sort of a woman of some prominence in Tulsa.

**JE:** What was her name?

**DL:** Her name was Claire Dobie. I have a clipping of her from the *Tulsa Tribune* with a picture saying that she was going to be reading *Thanatopsis* for some club or some presentation. She was a thespian of sorts and was one of those that founded the Tulsa Little Theater.

And, of course, when my grandfather got cancer and died at age thirty-six, she was left almost penniless, or pretty close to penniless. And she spent the rest of her life teaching school out at Mingo. She was a little heavy horsepower for that little one-room country school. She was an educated woman. She decided to run for county superintendent of schools. And she had a stroke while she was making a speech and topped over dead.

So at that point, my mother and aunt and uncle were orphaned. My mother had just gotten married. So the Dobies had really some bad luck.

**JE:** Your mother and her name?

**DL:** Her name was Marybelle Dobie. She married my father, whose name was Robert Darwin Langenkamp.

My Grandfather Langenkamp named all of his boys after various liberal figures. One of my uncles was Eugene Debs Langenkamp, named after the socialist that got more votes in Oklahoma per capita than anywhere in the nation in, like, 1920. And actually went to jail. I think Eugene Debs was put in jail at one point in time. But he was sort of the patron saint of socialists in America.

**JE:** So the name trickled down to your family.

**DL:** Yeah, and another one was named Burbank. Burbank was a very famous person because he was an agronomist.

And then my dad's name was Darwin. And, of course, in those days, being fond of Darwin or supporting Darwin was pretty much fighting words. Probably 80 percent of the American people were opposed to evolution in those days.

**JE:** And your father and mother met here?

**DL:** Actually, when my Grandmother Dobie realized that she was a widow, she thought she had some funds. Because you know how oil business is, it's hard to say it and, of course, in those days, the price was going up and down. Just as family lore, and may not be true, but she was sold five acres by Cyrus Avery. The theory being that they were going to have a huge wonderful development in North Tulsa. It was right exactly where the airport is now, between the airport and the park.

So she bought this five acres and spent the first bit of money she had on a servants' quarters. The money dried up and she and my mother and uncle and aunt lived the rest of the life in the servants' quarters. The subdivision never made, they never got a decent road, they never got any water. They were stuck out there on this five acres and Cyrus Avery went on to other things.

But this was supposed to be a great development and they were the ones that bought the first lot. So they were trying to get water. The Langenkamps were nearby with sort of a semi-farm. And the only way they could get water was from the Langenkamps.

So my father, being a pretty handy guy, installed a gasoline engine pump and about a mile-long pipeline to pump water from the Langenkamps down to the Dobies. My mother met my father when he was connecting up that pipeline and setting that motor up. He was fifteen, she was thirteen, and they never, ever looked at another person for the rest of their life.

So they grew up geographically contiguous. So they were real honest-to-God Tulsans. They got married in '35.

---

**Chapter 03 - 4:55**  
**Langenkamp Land**

---

**John Erling:** Your father's profession, what did he do?

**Dobie Langenkamp:** My grandfather was one of these that believed college was really a waste and a real man went out and was, you know, it was the German idea. On the other side, they were Scots, everybody had college degrees all the way back to Scotland.

**JE:** That was on the Dobie side.

**DL:** The Dobie side. We had a lot of ministers and teachers and this kind of thing. On the Langenkamp side, engineer types. And he always felt that a college education was sort of frivolous. I mean, sort of almost effeminate.

So what he did is he got my dad a job, and it was Depression, of course hard to get a job. Dad had spent about a year at OSU, but he got my dad a job down in Seminole, which was the hot oilfield at that time. And his job in Seminole was as a field mechanic. In those days, we used gas from your oil well to run a pump that would pump the oil. All through the oilfield you had these gas engines pumping along, popping along, and you had to keep them all going. He had fifty engines he had to have running twenty-four/seven.

So he started off there. He eventually taught himself how to be a telegraph operator. A great story. My mother said to my father, you know, "You've got to get out of the gang and all this work and do something upscale, hi-tech." And the hi-tech thing at that time was learn how to be a telegraph operator. They were living in a little oilfield shack that the oil company—he worked for Gulf—would provide.

And she would tap on the wall and he would tap back and she taught him how to be a telegraph operator. The way he became a telegraph operator. Eventually he ended up moving up into the executive ranks and he eventually ended up publishing and running the company magazine in Pittsburgh.

Gulf had a very fine company magazine. This was back in the days when the oil companies were very flush. And they spent a lot of money on these company magazines. Gulf had one called *The Orange Disk*, which was sort of the class act of the oil company magazines. When Pittsburgh ran that my father traveled all over the world taking pictures and writing stories. Which was a dream for him because all the time he worked in the oilfields as a pipeliner, and he was also a line walker at one time. But all this time he was writing and he thought of himself as a writer.

**JE:** Let me come back here to this family farm. Didn't the Airport Authority condemn the family farm?

**DL:** Yeah. The Dobies' place was on the side. The Langenkamp place, which was about a mile away, right directly in the path of where they wanted to build the new bomber plant. And in 1941, they elected to build this bomber plant. This was before Pearl Harbor but Roosevelt knew what was happening. So they condemned the Langenkamp land.

The story, as my grandfather who was down in the Panama Canal working for Williams was not there. My grandmother was actually a step-grandmother, who was sort of an old pioneer type who dipped snuff and could plumb and plow and the whole business. I mean, she was the real Mammy Yokum type. Would hum these old Elizabethan tunes and she had hands just like axes.

But, anyway, she was there on the place and the bulldozers came out and she got the shotgun out and ran the bulldozers off. So the story goes—she got in a car, she had an old pickup, and drove downtown and threatened to kill Remington Rogers.

Remington Rogers, for people of my generation, was quite a name in Tulsa. Remington was the attorney for the Airport Authority for forty years. And he was a very distinguished guy and had played a lot of role in Tulsa. And very distinguished looking guy too, as a matter of fact. And one of Tulsa's better lawyers. He had been in charge of the condemnation.

Well, they condemned them and moved the Langenkamp place back about a mile. Then they came in later and took it a second time for the International Guard Office out there. So when you're going on the runway, that northerly-most pink large building, which is, I think, Airport Hanger Number One, or the American Airlines Hanger Number One, is right over where the Langenkamp place was.

And when I was a kid and the farm had been moved back, they were making night fighters. And you could hear them at night testing the machine guns and so forth. That was one of the first bombers plants in America.

**JE:** Bomber plants, what do they—

**DL:** One of the planes they made was a night bomber. It was a two-engine A1 or something of that sort. Now they later made other planes. But in Tulsa parlance it was called the "bomber plant."

**JE:** Two pieces of ground have been condemned. Did they ever receive anything, money or other land somewhere?

**DL:** Huh-uh (negative). I think my father got forty thousand dollars the second time, which he then used to buy a similar ten-acres. He was one of these people who always had a horse, always had cows. He bought some land out towards Broken Arrow.

---

**Chapter 04 - 3:30****Sister Killed**

---

**John Erling:** Brothers and sisters?

**Dobie Langenkamp:** I had two sisters; one is still alive and is in Charlottesville, North Carolina. She's a writer, she's the kind that you give your PhD thesis to and she cleans it up. And she also writes short stories.

**JE:** And her name?

**DL:** Her name is Susan Langenkamp. Actually, she's divorced so her name would be Susan Langenkamp Stunda.

And then I had a sister who was the closest in age to me killed in college in an automobile accident. I was at Harvard at the time, but it was evidently quite a spectacular accident that happened out there on the highway right near Sand Springs. I know exactly the spot where it happened. But she was killed and she was a sophomore at Oklahoma University.

**JE:** And her name?

**DL:** Her name was Bishie or Elizabeth Langenkamp, and she was quite an interesting person. I, of course, didn't pay any attention because she was younger and so forth. But, I mean, she was president of the student body, and, you know, she was a very popular girl.

**JE:** The first house you remember and where it was located?

**DL:** The first house was probably the company house down in Seminole. That house was a shotgun house, paid for and provided—and they may have charged a little rent—by the company, Gulf Oil. And they had these houses all lined up. They were all without paint. And ours had no inside toilets, they had outhouses. This would have been 1937. My father went in and built an entire bathroom. And then under the cover of darkness, laid the pipeline to the nearest sewer line and tied in so we had an inside bathroom.

My first night in my own house would have been a house that had an outhouse. But he eventually fixed that up. We were in the oil camp, we were in the Gulf camp.

**JE:** Why did they call them shotgun houses?

**DL:** Well, because you could stand on one end and shoot a shotgun out the other. It usually consisted of three rooms. There was sort of a living room, and then there was sort of a bedroom, and then a kitchen. Of course, they had little stoop porches, which was quite interesting because one of the people who lived in that Gulf camp, his family just died about a week ago. It was Paul Donovan. Paul Donovan was a priest, a pretty well-known priest in this area. He was one of many boys in the Donovan family and they were Gulf people too. And they lived in the same camp.

**JE:** Okay, again the first house was in, what town?

**DL:** Seminole.

**JE:** In Seminole.

**DL:** And my folks had been married in Tulsa, but the first job he could get was down in Seminole.

**JE:** The first school you attended, where was that?

**DL:** By the time I got to school age we had moved up into Indiana and Illinois. And my first schooling was in a town called Effingham, Illinois. Effingham was a little typical music man county seat right in the middle of Illinois. There's an oilfield there called Edgewater Field, and my dad, by this time, had moved up to be a gauger.

But, anyway, Effingham was a wonderful little town. It had a little courthouse, a little square. It had a newspaper and a radio station. And my dad there was good friends with a fellow who ran the radio station. And so this fellow asked my dad to have a radio program of classical music, which in the middle of nowhere was not anything to get.

So my father had a classical music program for, like, two years and never one time got a single sponsor. [laughs] But at the same time, he also wrote a column in the newspaper, which I have read and it's still funny. We had sort of become bigger fish in a small puddle.

My mother was the head of the Red Cross, head of the PTA. I played basketball because it was basketball country.

## Chapter 05 - 8:30

### Tulsa Central

---

**John Erling:** How then did you get to Tulsa, and when?

**Dobie Langenkamp:** So then my dad got a promotion from Effingham and goes back to Seminole. Some oil was being stolen from the Seminole field. And, you know, where you steal oil is between the time it's in the tanks and the time they come to pick it up.

So Dad was brought down there and his job was to sort of uncover and straighten out the field. And he did that for about three years. And then he got promoted to Tulsa. So I was now back at Tulsa where I had been born.

**JE:** How old were you then when you came to Tulsa?

**DL:** So when I came back I was a junior in high school. So I spent my first eight years in Effingham, where they had the Effingham Flaming Hearts for the basketball because it was the heart of the USA. And then I went down to Seminole and I was there for three and a half years. And then I came up to Tulsa. And I finished up my high school in Tulsa.

**JE:** All right. So you came as a junior. How old were you then when you came?

**DL:** Fifteen and a half, sixteen.

**JE:** And what school did you begin?

**DL:** I went to Tulsa Central. My mother was from the Dobie side of the family and education was pretty important to her. You had to really be sort of dense not to know that Central was the place to send your kid to high school.

**JE:** Yeah.

**DL:** And we rented a house at 16th and St. Louis. We never actually owned a house from the time I was born until I went away to law school. It was always a rental. But then we rented a house and I went to Central.

**JE:** That would have been what year?

**DL:** That would have been 1952.

**JE:** That you started at Central?

**DL:** Yeah.

**JE:** As a junior. Tulsa Central, this was a great time for that school when you came on.

**DL:** It was probably one of the finest schools in America and probably as fine as it ever had been. Now when my folks went there, both my mother and father graduated, my father, in fact, was in the class that Henry Zarrow was in.

**JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).

**DL:** And in those days, they had a little blurb under each picture. And my father was always embarrassed because he was a naturalist. And one of the things he could do is he could imitate bird calls, and under his picture it said: He models his whistling after the sounds of the birds. And he was so embarrassed by that, sort of wimpy description.

And I looked up in an old yearbook what Henry Zarrow was and it was: He paddles his own canoe.

**JE:** [laughing]

**DL:** But, anyway, so I went back to Central. They had three grades: sophomore, junior, senior. They had about a thousand people per grade, they had slightly over a thousand people, sort of like thirty-three hundred or so at Central.

**JE:** Some of the teachers' names that you would remember there?

**DL:** Well, I had the famous Isabel Ronan. She was legendary at that time. She'd been Tony Randall's speech coach. All the great Hollywood people that had come through Tulsa. I mean, there are not a lot of them, but Jennifer Jones, Tony Randall, those people had all come through Central. And Isabel Ronan was, she was almost nationally known.

And then there was another woman there who also taught English and speech whose name was Lulu Beckington. And you talk to any of the old radio people—you know, in those days, we had a close relationship with KVOO and the speech students of Isabel Ronan and Lulu Beckington took over KVOO for a twenty-four-hour period. And I was a

speech student, I mean, I was in one of their classes and I got the chance to announce the *Johnnie Lee Wills Show* at the Cain's Academy one afternoon.

And then they had a coach that was legendary at that time, his name was Lantz, L-a-n-t-z, he was the track coach.

**JE:** You were attracted to performing, to debating maybe, to speaking? Was that at the early stages?

**DL:** When I had been down in Seminole I had been on a debate team. Seminole had very good debate teams. And when I was a sophomore, I nominally won the state championship, because we had four teams and the four teams got to the quarter finals. And, therefore, we didn't have to debate each other. So I was nominally the state champion debater. The reality was the seniors were better.

So that sort of ended the debate because Tulsa didn't have it. So when I came up to Tulsa, I did some public speaking. I entered the "I Speak for Democracy" contest and I won the state contest there and got a free television [laughing] and a trip.

But the thing I was most involved in, psychologically most involved in was basketball. And I was always a fair basketball player and I had played in Seminole when I came up here. I played for Coach Ellers who was the coach at Tulsa Central right before the famous OSU Coach Sutton. If I had stayed at Tulsa Central for another year I would have had Sutton's first year as a coach. But Ellers was sort of an old-fashioned OSU coach; he believed in shooting two-handed set shots and he believed in shooting your free throws underhanded and all this old stuff.

We had some very good basketball players. In fact, the class ahead of me, Billy Tubbs, who became a famous coach. Billy was our star guard and he never shot a two-handed shot in his life. I mean, he was one of the first people to really capitalize on the jump shot and he was fantastic at that.

So I got a chance to sit on the bench behind Billy Tubbs.

**JE:** So you were a guard yourself?

**DL:** Yeah, I played a guard and then in my senior year, we started off, we had a zone defense. We had a one-two-two zone, which means the guy out front, he's the one that gets all the fast breaks. So I had a pretty good scoring average the first four or five games, six games.

And then we shifted to man-to-man and my average dropped way back. But I ended up being selected second team All-City. And I always sort of wondered how good I was. And one of the guys that was a year behind me, who was about what I was in, went to Harvard. He made the Harvard freshman team but couldn't make the varsity. Which I figured that would have happened to me if I had gone to Harvard instead of Stanford. I would have gone up there and I probably wouldn't have been able to make it. I just wasn't that good.

**JE:** Any other student names, maybe they're not famous but they were friends of yours that you remembered at Central?

**DL:** We had one that was quite well-known, a fellow by the name of French Anderson. Fr—one of the things I did was write the sports page. So I got to know all the track people, and French was on the state champion mile-relay team. And he won the National Science Fair one year. He won it by figuring out how to multiply, divide, and find the square root of Roman numerals, which is to this day, amazed everyone.

Anyway, French went to Harvard and then to Harvard Medical School and then the NIH. And he, for a period of time, was nationally known as the “father of gene therapy.” French was not only the kind of guy who could perform but he was a great self-promoter. His mother had been a well-known newspaper reporter for the *Tulsa World*.

But at any rate, he knew how to work the press and so forth. So in the year that Newt Gingrich was the man of the year for *Time* magazine, the runner-up was French Anderson. And we used to joke about French being a failure because he had not yet gotten the Nobel Prize. He had figured out a way to solve ailments with a genetic cocktail that he fixed up.

In the first case he had the girl had sort of a difficulty diagnose and not very serious ailment. According to science, he solved it, he cured her. Which, of course, made him one of the most famous people in science at that time. This would have been probably in the early, mid '80s.

The next time they tried it, the guy dropped dead. He was dead before he hit the ground. So that really sort of set back French Anderson's approach to medical science. And it wasn't his fault, I mean, it was something that had been attempted.

He went out to California then and took over a big institute. And while he was at the institute he had a young student that he taught Tae Kwon Do to. He had no children of his own. He became a very fine Tae Kwon Do practitioner and he taught this little girl and made her a national champion.

**JE:** Huh.

**DL:** She then goes to the police and complains that he has molested her and he is now serving a fifteen-year sentence for this one single rather questionable case involving these allegations. I've looked into it and I've even written a letter to Governor Schwarzenegger. A bunch of us have written letters to try to get him out.

So here this guy was the most famous and most respected guy in our class and he was given a fifteen-year sentence when he was seventy-one. So it's pretty close to a life sentence. He was one of the brightest men in America and he's out there in this prison.

And the case, of course, from a legal standpoint, is quite interesting, but we don't have time to get into that.

---

**Chapter 06 - 7:00****Tulsa in the Fifties**

---

**John Erling:** In the '50s, your memories just of Tulsa, downtown businesses, movie theaters, that type of thing?

**Dobie Langenkamp:** Oh, it was a wonderful place. Of course, I had come up here from Seminole, which at that time was a fairly bustling place because the peak of Oklahoma oil and Tulsa oil is somewhere between 1952 and 1960, in there.

But, anyway, I came up to Tulsa and it was wonderful. I'd go downtown and the men were wearing either white or two-tone shoes and straw hats and they looked like Wall Street. And they had a big male establishment called the Orpheum Grill, which had a blackboard and they were writing up, I guess, the results of horse races and they had poker and pinochle in the back. And they had a bar. Of course, it must have been a beer bar because at that time Oklahoma was still dry.

But Tulsa was an absolutely fantastic place. I remember my mother drove me all the way from Seminole to Tulsa when I was, like, in the freshmen class, to show me the Boston Avenue Methodist Church, which she said was one of the great examples of modern architecture. And to take me in and show me the mural in the First National Bank building. And I don't know whether you've ever seen that mural—

**JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).

**DL:** . . . but it's a wonderful mural. And now it's really sort of lost to everyone because they no longer have the public access to this area, or at least not very many people.

So Tulsa was an amazing, amazing place. And, of course, once I got up here, I got a job as a lifeguard at Southern Hills. So my summer of my junior year, I passed up a chance to go to Boys State because, well, we needed the money.

Anyway, so I go out there and I'm lifeguarding at Southern Hills, which is the *crème de la crème* of the oil barons of Tulsa. And I got to know all of their children, and I got to know a lot of them by sight. You know, those were the days when Tulsa may have had fifteen or twenty major companies located here. And they all, of course, played golf at Southern Hills and that sort of thing.

So that gave me a good sort of a nice view. I used to have to hitchhike out Lewis, it was a black-topped road in those days. You know, there wasn't much town past 31st. In fact, I was examining an abstract the other day and I don't think south of 31st came into the city limits until something like 1952.

**JE:** Hmm (thoughtful sound).

**DL:** So anyway, Southern Hills was beautiful. Downtown was beautiful. The First National Bank was sort of the key. The BOK had never really recovered from the Exchange Bank collapse. And so the BOK at that time was definitely second fiddle. I eventually came back in the late '60s, was a lawyer, and I met many of those bankers. But it was the First National Bank, the Boston Avenue Methodist Church, oil companies all up and down.

My dad worked on Main Street—Gulf had a big office on Main Street. Then they had the refineries, which were going full tilt.

**JE:** Wh—

**DL:** And the other thing was I got a chance to work in the refineries. If I worked in the refineries a couple of summers, so I got to sort of see that side of Tulsa. The refineries had just come out of a huge labor struggle that was still being talked about. This labor struggle took place, I don't know whether it was the late '40s or the late '30s, but, anyway, there was an attempt to organize it. And it got to the point where they had to call out the National Guard.

And many Tulsans knew the late Charlie Coffey. Coffey is sort of a famous name around here. Well, Charlie was a young lawyer and he got his fame as the lawyer from Mid-Continent, which was the name of the oil company. This was before Mid-Continent was bought by Sun Ray DX. This was a real knock down drag out labor fight. I mean, people burning people's cars and all this thing. And the union was broken.

When I went out to work there, people were still talking about it because some of the workers out there were still sort of bitter about the fact that they had lost the battle. So I got to see Tulsa—oh, and, of course, downtown Tulsa at Christmas, the windows of most of the stores like Vandevors and so forth had manikins that moved and you would go downtown to go from place to place to see the displays.

You'd get in the elevators and the elevators were jammed with people. And, you know, the woman operating the elevator would say, "First floor, lingerie; second floor, sporting goods," and so forth. It was a wonderful place.

And I remember I was interested in going to Stanford, so they said, "Go by and see Sam Brenner. Sam Brenner had a store, it was called Brenner's. His dad had founded it, on the corner of 4th and Boston, there's a brokerage house there or something, but it was quite a place. They sold shoes and—

**JE:** So it was a men's clothing store?

**DL:** Men's clothing, very nice. And about a black west was Wolf Brothers. Wolf Brothers had its own floorwalker. She was beautifully dressed, she had a waistcoat. I remember going in there one time to buy a shirt and I couldn't buy the one that had the brocade because it was five dollars. It had a sort of a white pattern in it. But Wolf Brothers was really a clothing store almost out of the movies. And, of course, we had real money in Tulsa at that time.

**JE:** You remember restaurants?

**DL:** They had a restaurant on Main Street called Bishop's. It was an all-night restaurant, or close to all-night. So if you went to a play or you went to a movie, you'd go to Bishop's at ten and the place was packed. And everyone was there. I mean, it seemed like in those days, you'd go out on a date or you'd go on an event and then you would go out and hang out in one of these restaurants for two or three hours.

You know, nowadays, people go to the movies and then seem to go straight home. There's no sort of night spot.

Well, Bishop's was quite popular and also a big luncheon spot. It would have been on Main Street between 4th and 5th on Main. I'm trying to think what else they had, oh, of course, in those days, if you had a lot of money and you wanted to take a girl to a fancy place you took her to the Louisiann. I guess the Louisiann stayed in business for quite a while. I never had enough money to take anybody to the Louisiann but that's sort of where you went.

There was another all-night place at the corner of 15th and Peoria. And it was a punk and holler type place but had a big inside area, and it was always filled with people late at night. It was amazing, there were three or four places you could go after the movies at midnight and find people. The people you knew and check to see if your girlfriend was out with somebody else.

**JE:** [laughs] Is it true that downtown during the day for shopping everybody, particularly the ladies, would get all dressed up and they'd have their hats and—

**DL:** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** . . . their gloves on and it was really a big thing to dress up to go downtown.

**DL:** Yeah. I can't remember seeing a man on the street in Tulsa that didn't have a hat on, now that I think about it, and, of course, most of these bankers and oil company people—you know, I have a picture of my grandfather from his farm. They had their two horses there and two of my uncles are on these horses. Everybody is sitting there.

And my grandfather is wearing a straw hat, a man's hat, snap-brim hat, white shirt and tie. And my father is wearing a tie. You know, of course, they dressed a lot more formally then but people really did get dressed up.

I remember, of course, when the airlines first came along, people would go out to the airlines and they dressed up.

**JE:** To fly?

**DL:** Yeah.

---

**Chapter 07 - 4:27**  
**Blacks in the Fifties**

---

**John Erling:** Blacks in the '50s, were you aware of them at all? I mean, they were in the Greenwood area and they really weren't welcome in the downtown area. Did you ever see that?

**Dobie Langenkamp:** [laughs] That's a good question. Only time I ever saw blacks was when I was working at Southern Hills. And they would hire the crème de la crème out of Booker T. Washington, which was an all-black school, to be the waiters around the pool. So I got to know those guys. Most of them were going away to college, to all-black schools, quite good students and so forth. So I got to know that group.

And there were these black bars on North Greenwood. We had one called the Rose Room. And if you were a real swinger you would go to the Rose Room on Saturday night, which was probably about 75 percent black, and things were wild and wooly in the Rose Room.

And the other thing we did was we had high school fraternities and I was in one. We would have entertainment, and one of the entertainments was someone would go to North Tulsa. There were these pianists who would come and play semi off-color songs in rinky-tink jazz things. Sort of like Fats Waller type stuff. And you could rent someone to play the piano at one of your parties.

We would periodically hire a pianist to come and play, usually an older heavy-set woman who could play these songs and tickle the ivories and the lyrics were always semi risqué. That was one exposure.

And then these bars in North Tulsa, the older guys and the bolder guys would go to with one exposure. Other than that you never saw them downtown, you just did not see any black people.

I remember one time when I was playing basketball for Coach Ellers, he said, "Well, we're going to scrimmage today. We're going to scrimmage the boys from Booker T. Washington."

They were these black guys that we'd never seen before and we scrimmaged them. And my recollection, interestingly enough, was that they weren't particularly competent. It probably was that we had a short scrimmage and they were badly coached, I suspect.

But at any rate, I do remember one small scrimmage, we didn't think anything of it, but I played probably fifty ballgames for Tulsa Central and I never saw a single black person on any of the opposing teams. And because they were segregated everywhere. And, of course, that decision came down in '54. So the first real integration occurred in Tulsa the year after I went away to college. So I never did get to see it.

**JE:** The decision to . . . ?

**DL:** Integrate.

**JE:** Integrate, right.

**DL:** The school, that was the—

**JE:** It came from—

**DL:** . . . Brown versus Board of Education. Of course, no one talked much about the Race Riot except in low tones. But Tulsa had always had a pretty distinguished black community. Now it was not as distinguished after the burnout but it still was a distinguished community. And they had movie houses and they had businesses and there really was a black part of town and the twain did not meet. But there wasn't much tension because the lines had been drawn. And I suspect that a, that Race Riot had left the black community intimidated to a certain extent.

I can't remember one single incident where somebody was either arrested or charged with anything. There were no talk about any kind of lynchings or anything like that.

Now when I was down in Seminole, and I was down there for three years, that was a small town, about ten thousand people, they also had a black area. They had their own black school and the only time I ever saw a black person in Seminole was one time the baseball team I was playing with played a black team.

**JE:** But in downtown Tulsa their money wasn't accepted when they'd come into these major department stores. They'd say no to them.

**DL:** Well, I assume that's the case. But it was an assumption that you would never see a black person and that they wouldn't be served at lunch counters and so forth.

**JE:** Right.

**DL:** And, of course, in those days, lunch counters were a very big deal. They're not much now, in fact, people really don't know what you're talking about. But Woolworth's and these places had big lunch counters with maybe twenty-five or thirty seats long.

**JE:** They'd sit on stools.

**DL:** They sat on stools.

**JE:** Right up to the counter.

**DL:** And the people waiting were always dressed up. There were more uniforms worn in those days, I mean, the carhops would wear fancy uniforms.

## Chapter 08 - 13:30

### Harvard

---

**John Erling:** In Tulsa Central you graduated in 1954.

**Dobie Langenkamp:** That's true.

**JE:** And so—

**DL:** With a thousand people in that class.

**JE:** . . . you excelled in sports? Did you write for the high school paper?

**DL:** Yeah I did.

**JE:** And were you active in speech?

**DL:** Yeah.

**JE:** So you had all those three things going for you?

**DL:** Yeah.

**JE:** So you graduate in '54, then what happens to you?

**DL:** Well, I applied to all the best schools and I had good luck and got into everywhere I applied. I always sort of had a desire to go to the Harvard Law School. So I turned down a chance to go to Harvard and went to Stanford. I've looked back on it, you know, I was not that much of an athlete, I mean, like I say, second team All-City, you know, 6. average. But I was the number one tennis player and I had won the eighteen and under tournament that summer.

But, once again, that wasn't enough to even be asked by any major university. So I was really not a major athlete and my newspaper writing was just like a lot of people did. So what I finally figured out, in those days the attempt by the major universities to get students from the Midwest who were not from prep schools and were pretty good students—it was sort of affirmative action before the blacks came along.

My friend French Anderson and another friend of mine by the name of Arch Edwards and one other friend by the name of Bob Coriell and I, between us we got sixteen major college scholarships. I got scholarships to Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and Stanford, full ride, room, board, and tuition, and travel.

One of my good friends at Stanford always sort of resented my scholarships because his dad was paying for him. [laughing] And in my third year out at Stanford I had a car. But I think those schools in those days were looking for kids from the Midwest whose family couldn't afford the school and who were "well-rounded." And I fit that bill.

**JE:** But were you a 3.89, 4.0 student at the, at—

**DL:** Yeah, I had one B in high school. But I was always big on the A minuses.

**JE:** [laughing]

**DL:** The smartest person in our school was Peggy Arducer, her name's Peggy Gates, and she was the smartest person. She was the valedictorian. I was five or six back, but we had a lot of really smart kids.

**JE:** All right, but your academic work, the tracks in Stanford.

**DL:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, I was a good—

**JE:** And so all these other schools—

**DL:** . . . I was a good student, I was a good student.

**JE:** . . . so you were a good student.

Here's a name we haven't talked about—Gene Comby.

**DL:** Oh, Bird Legs Comby. I wrote on the sports page and one of the things I like to do is give all these characters nicknames. Sometimes the team had already given them nicknames but sometimes they hadn't. I just gave them a name.

Anyway, his name was Bird Legs Comby and he was really a talented runner. In those days, people didn't run long distances, I mean, three miles was really considered huge. But, anyway, he was a two-miler and a miler and all this kind of business and he went to jail for murdering somebody and shooting someone at a filling station. And they let him out of jail.

He came back to Tulsa. I knew him well enough, I mean, I sort of knew him. He came up to me one time and thanked me for writing a story about him and where I used his nickname, he liked that.

**JE:** Writing for which?

**DL:** It was the *Tulsa Central* sports page. Tulsa Central had its own newspaper, its own printing shop and put out a weekly paper that was six pages. An—

**JE:** So was he a student?

**DL:** He was a student at Central, he was in our year and he came up and thanked me for that nice article.

But then they let him out of jail as a trustee. His record had been good. And he came back to Tulsa and killed two people. He was the bad apple.

Now we had some other bad apples. One, a friend of mine who was a basketball player until he got in trouble. He went to jail and was just on his way, I think, to being a real hardened criminal. And I saw him at the thirty-fifth reunion. And he was tall and he was handsome and well-dressed.

I said, "Ronnie, what in the hell are you doing?"

He said, "Well, I'm superintendent of production for West Texas for Shell Oil," or something like that. He had totally turned it around. He had been one of these boys, home boys that went to Central. We had a bunch of these kids who really were orphaned who would show up at Central. He was a hell of an athlete, a very good athlete. But he had no parents, and he stole to support himself.

The thing he really liked to do was to go into a restaurant, have a huge meal, get up from the table and run out through the kitchen. That was his Saturday night.

**JE:** Your experience at Stanford is a good one, I would imagine. And then you go on to Harvard Law School.

**DL:** Yeah, it was quite a shock. We had a number of people from Tulsa Central going to Ivy League schools and good schools. We had maybe three or four a year going to

Stanford. My year we had seven kids from my class go to Princeton. We had four got to Harvard, so Tulsa Central was really, I mean, if you could get really good grades and get a recommendation and come out of Central your chance of getting in anywhere in the country was first rate.

So Stanford was quite a shock, you know. I'd never been west of Oklahoma City and to see those palm trees and the ocean and the beaches, California was really overwhelming. And the weather, of course, was wonderful and everything was wonderful. So it was a good experience.

**JE:** Do you remember presidents that you either heard on the radio or you saw in person?

**DL:** Eisenhower was the president during my Stanford years. And, of course, it was sort of popular to sort of make fun of Ike. By this time, Ike had had the stroke and he couldn't speak very clearly. And, you know, recently he's been resurrected and now is considered by many to be one of the greater presidents we've had. But at that time, he operated behind the scenes and he was an orator. But he was sort of considered a little bit stodgy.

So you had Eisenhower. And you had Truman, of course. I remember being sort of a liberal student. We all supported the healthcare program that Truman had, which was labeled "socialized medicine." It never got out of the blocks. So I do remember Truman quite well. But he was out by the time I went to Stanford.

And then when I was in law school, of course, Jack Kennedy came on the scene. That was, you know, a bout a great excitement for everybody.

**JE:** Well, there you're out there in the East and he's, of course, an Easterner and Harvard and that was a big time—

**DL:** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** . . . for you. Did you get involved in politics at all at school?

**DL:** No. At Stanford I did a bunch of things. In a fraternity and I was one of the editors of *Literary* magazine and I debated. But when I went back to Harvard I pretty much limited to just studying—it was so hard, hard work. But actually I was in Harvard the vice president of a group called the Harvard Voluntary Defenders, which had been set up by Sam Dash. Sam Dash is sort of a famous name in the law. Basically, our job was to provide free defense to criminal defendants.

And Massachusetts passed a separate law that allowed Harvard to represent defendants in court at the preliminary hearing level. So we had a steady stream of criminal cases and I ran the operations for that group. But politics was all around us.

Mike Dukakis was a class ahead of us and Mike Dukakis, I didn't know him, but he was one of these guys that he was from Massachusetts. He was in Massachusetts politics and pretty active when he was in law school. The nexus between Harvard and Washington is very close. A tax professor went down and became the assistant secretary of treasury for tax.

Archibald Cox, who taught the agency, went down and became, I guess, attorney general.

When Kennedy was elected there must have been twenty or thirty people from Harvard who went down there in sort of the first big wave. And, of course, I was just getting out of Harvard, so I went down to Washington too like everybody else.

**JE:** Later, so then you graduate from law school. Then your first job, what is it?

**DL:** Actually my first job was with a K Street lobbying firm. At that time, the lobbying and non-lobbying firms weren't labeled that way. But a large part of their business was legislative work, you know, you would analyze bills and so forth. And it was on K Street. K Street has been very famous for being the location of all the money-grubbing lobbyists and so forth.

Well, my first address was 1410 K Street, or something like that. And it was a very small firm of about six or eight people.

**JE:** Stedman, Collier, and Shannon.

**DL:** Yeah.

**JE:** In Washington, DC.

**DL:** Yeah. They were all people that were well connected on the Hill. Collier and Shannon had both been general counsels or chief aids on the Hill. So what I got into was, as the youngest lawyer in the firm they'd given me all the real law cases that had come in. I mean, periodically there'd be somebody walk in with some real law case. But we represented trade associations like the steel people. The steel people were being clobbered by the Belgians and the Europeans who had just gotten their steel plants up and running. And this was the beginning of globalization.

And then we represented the shoe manufacturing association and they were being clobbered by the Italians and the people in Asia. What was happening was the great manufacturing companies in America were being destroyed right before our very eyes.

I got to Washington in '62, because I went in the army right after law school, for six months, as a military policeman. So I got to Washington in '62. Kennedy was just getting passed a bill called the Trade Expansion Act, which was the opening wedge of globalization and free trade. Before that time, we basically were still in the old mode of tariff protection.

And I remember going up on the Hill and hearing testimony. And, of course, all the internationalists were for it. Republican and Democrat, I mean, it was the latest thing. The unions had a handful of people like the shoe people and the steel people were against it. And Kennedy rolled right over them. It was really one of his big, big accomplishments. It was sort of the NAFTA, in that respect.

That began the surge of imports. I mean, they just wiped the shoe industry out. All the shoe companies that we represented, I imagine, in ten years they were all out of business. Which is an interesting little sideline because one of the things we tried to do was to try to get some protection for the shoes. And we were going to do it through the White House.

So my partners got an appointment with Jack Kennedy to go in and talk to Jack Kennedy about the problem shoe people were having.

And, of course, Kennedy knew all about the shoe people because Massachusetts and Maine were nothing but shoes. I mean, it's one of the major industries there. So they go in and bring in all these shoe manufacturers.

There was no room for me because we had the room all filled up with, basically, our clients. But I was waiting with bated breath in the office when they came back. And they came back and they'd had a wonderful meeting.

My boss, Tom Shannon, had known Kennedy back when Kennedy was a senator. And they'd both been Irishmen, wild hair, drinking, carrying-on type, you know, so they knew each other quite well.

So Kennedy said to Tom, "Tom, so great to see you," and he put his arm around him and all. "What can I do for you, Tom?"

He lays out the problem with the shoe business.

Kennedy turns around to his economic aid, I've forgotten what this guy's name was, but, anyway, he was well-known sort of a figure in the White House, and said, "So-and-so," he said, "take care of these boys. Make sure they get everything they want."

And about a month later, Kennedy was assassinated.

We were on the defensive all the time and, of course, we were wearing the black hats. When the firm went up to Harvard to interview several years later, after I had moved on, they picketed this law firm. This law firm had grown, because the law firm represented South Africa. Like I say, it represented all the manufacturers we were trying to prevent imports. The Japanese and the Chinese, particularly the Japanese, at that time. But the Japanese came in major force, so you would go to a congressional hearing and there would be some great looking blond, blue-eyed, Yale graduate testifying. And in the back row of the hearing room you'd have ten or fifteen of his Japanese employers.

They were taking the fanny of anybody who was the tariff side. And we've seen the result of that, and that is the destruction of American industry. I think maybe we're coming back now. But we got passed, I think I had something to do with developing it, called the Muskie Amendment, which was basically an import limit on shoes. It wasn't a tariff on shoes but there was a provision in the Kennedy bill that said that if it affected national security you could put a limit on it. It was called the National Security Exemption. And you read about it in the paper periodically.

Well, we took the position that an army can't fight without shoes and without boots. And we were able to sell that. Muskie was our—

**JE:** Edmund Muskie?

**DL:** Yeah. He was from Maine and, of course, a big shoe state. So we got the Muskie Amendment, which basically said, "After you've imported forty million pairs of shoes, no more shoes can be imported." And they eventually shifted that to automobiles.

So for a long period of time, we had import quotas on automobiles as sort of a substitute for tariffs.

**JE:** Hmm (thoughtful sound).

## Chapter 09 - 6:40

### JFK and MLK

---

**John Erling:** You were there until 1964. And then you came to Tulsa.

**Dobie Langenkamp:** Yeah.

**JE:** How did that come about?

**DL:** Well, I was a little bit disappointed in Washington in that it's a big pond, nobody knows anybody. In other words, you don't know the guy on the corner who's selling you the newspaper or, you know. Most people live forty-five minutes from downtown in one of the many communities. And you don't really deal with clients, you deal with associations, mostly.

So I thought I'd try some real law. And, of course, there's a big difference between practicing when you have a real person or a real corporation as a client, as opposed to, let's say, the National Hair Dressers and Cosmetologists Association. Washington was fun and I was doing well and so forth. I just figured, *Well, let's go to Oklahoma and try it out.*

I may have had, in the back of my mind, the idea of maybe of some politics. But, anyway, I got married in Washington to a Washington girl.

**JE:** And her name?

**DL:** Her name was Mary Alice Myers. She was a graduate of Georgetown and Penn State. And an artist, a pretty good artist. I remember in order to drive out here I needed three hundred dollars. I went to the bank to borrow three hundred dollars. And the guy says, "Well, what's the collateral?"

I said, "Well, there's no collateral, you're just going to have to give it to me." And I remember him giving me this three hundred dollars. And got that three hundred dollars and we drove out and it turned out right in the middle of the race problems.

Because we went through Mississippi. And on one occasion, a car came along at night and tried to run us off the road. And on a couple of occasions, we saw flaming bonfires out in the countryside. And on another occasion, we were refused service in a little Mississippi restaurant. I was wearing a cord coat and I had a Corvair with a Washington license plate. And we were as Georgetown-looking as you possibly be.

In retrospect, it was probably sort of dangerous. This was right around the time that those murders and disappearances occurred. But we drove up and got into Tulsa in, like,

February. Well, within three months of the time that Kennedy was killed I was in Tulsa. And that was a big watershed moment in Washington.

So then I started pounding the pavement looking for a job. But I had a couple of experiences in Washington that are worth noting. I had gotten a commission as an officer in the District of Columbia National Guard, which was a military police unit. That was two years of Saturday mornings at four o'clock. A terrible price to pay, but I got my commission, which I wanted to have. And we got nationalized for weekends.

One other time we were nationalized was the Kennedy funeral. And I had my own driver and car and I actually drove in the front of the White House with my car, driver, and radio operator and was right there when they brought the horse out with the boots in backwards.

And then my unit, which was a platoon of military policemen, had a sector where the parade went. Ted Kennedy and Jacqueline and Charles de Gaulle and all the family marched from the White House on 16th Street, down Connecticut down about eight blocks and then turned right and went to the church that was there. And we had the last block, my thirty guys.

We were told in advance that the Jackal was in town. And that we should look out for the Jackal. You remember the Jackal was the one that was supposedly trying to assassinate Charles de Gaulle?

**JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).

**DL:** That's a great movie called *The Day of the Jackal*.

**JE:** Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

**DL:** I said, "Well, how are we going to tell who the Jackal is?"

And they said, "Well, he's wearing a Shearling coat."

We were on the lookout for the Jackal, who never turned up.

But the most amazing event I got in was shortly before I got a commission. They picked all of us up one morning at five o'clock, all of the national guard, and put us in two-and-a-half-ton trucks and took us all over town, dropping us off at various intersections.

I said, "Well, what's going on here?" I hadn't paid much attention, I was practicing law during the week.

They said, "Well, there's going to be a big march on Washington."

As luck would have it, I and my other six patriots, all key ones in the military police with our white hats and our John Browns and our billy clubs. We're dropped at the Lincoln Memorial.

I said, "What's our mission?"

They said, "Well, you're to keep the crowds back." We put out a little picket fence, one of those little snow fences. We were behind it and it was, like, six thirty in the morning and there wasn't a soul there. Not a soul.

By seven, they were beginning to build a scaffold. By nine, the scaffold was finished, and by that time, the people came in and that afternoon, we had a half a million people. You know, you've seen these pictures of all the people stretching from the Lincoln Memorial all the way to the Washington Memorial, around the Reflecting Pool. Well, the six guys to hold back that crowd were the six members of the 281st Military Police Battalion. And, of course, we just stood there. It was quite interesting because there was a lot of people fainting. It was a hot day and when they were hemmed in they couldn't get any water. And we had a lot of heat prostration. But other than that, everyone was very well behaved.

**JE:** And that was the event of?

**DL:** Martin Luther King March on Washington.

**JE:** Right.

**DL:** He had made the "I Have a Dream" speech the night before at a church. But he got up and spoke. Peter, Paul, and Mary got up and sang. You know, it was the whole nine yards.

**JE:** And then you heard him speak there, obviously.

**DL:** I heard all of them speak and they were amazing. A lot of political figures came.

**JE:** What drove you to the military service?

**DL:** We had troops in Cambodia; Southeast Asia was just sort of a small blip. Kennedy began to get us into Vietnam. We didn't need many troops. But we had a law passed; every one of my fellow college students had to serve. You would get a 2S exemption when you went away to college. And if you didn't go to college, you'd go in the draft pool. You got that 2S exemption and I had it for seven years.

The draft boards were just waiting for you. You had thirty days when you got out of law school to sign up for something.

**JE:** This would have been in the year 19 . . . ?

**DL:** This would have been the year 1961, I graduated from law school. So each one of us would sit around have coffee and say, "What are you going to do?" You had these options.

Six left for the marine program. You got out, you had no commission. That's what Bobby Lorton did. Or you could join the marines, try to get into OCS, but that meant three or four years. Or you could go overseas with JAG, that was three or four years. So what I did was I joined a District of Columbia National Guard and went away for six months. Came back and went to an officer candidate school on weekend.

So what you do is when you see a man walking around on the street who is seventy-two years old or older, he had a military obligation that could not be avoided. And so virtually almost all of us went. I mean, it's almost impossible to find anybody in my generation that didn't serve in one form or the other.

---

**Chapter 10 - 15:34****Dobie Goes to DC**

---

**John Erling:** Let's jump into the '70s, because this is where we pick you up with President Jimmy Carter. How did you connect with him? Did you support him from the get-go? How did you get involved with Carter?

**Dobie Langenkamp:** I was active in politics here, precinct chairman, and at one time, I was the chairman of the District Democratic Party. You know, I was sort of active. In those days, if you gave a thousand dollars to a presidential candidate you almost got him over to your house.

I remember almost a one-on-one meeting with Mondale. And I was one of a handful of people who gave him a thousand dollars.

But, anyway, when Jimmy Carter campaigned, I went out to Oral Roberts to hear Jimmy Carter speak. And I remember coming out of that meeting and saying, "That's the first time I've ever heard a candidate use the word "Jesus Christ" in a speech."

**JE:** Hmm (thoughtful sound).

**DL:** I said, "You know, this guy is definitely a religious guy and he's different."

So we had our precinct meetings and I decided to support Carter, although I was also tempted to support Udall. And in retrospect, I think Udall might have made a better president.

But at any rate, I supported Carter. I was elected at the precinct, and then I went to another meeting and another meeting and another meeting. Finally I got to the district meeting and I was selected as one of two delegates to the national convention.

In those days, we're talking about actual selection of delegates at the district level, and the other person was Peggy Kadenhan whose husband was a congressional candidate at one time. And she was a good Democrat. The two of us and one other were designated as delegates. Well, this was very early in the process. After I was selected and Peggy was selected there were only twelve delegates in the United States, Carter delegates. I mean, this was one of the first—I think it was the first statement. So I was active in the Carter campaign.

When he got elected, I thought, *Well, you know, I ought to try and go to Washington.* And I remember it was very difficult, we didn't really have the kind of inside position that some people did. I mean, the guys who were actually on the campaign and we weren't from Georgia, and so forth and so on.

And I remember putting my name in the hat for the only thing that I could hold my head up and say I could handle, which was assistant attorney general for lands. And I remember they picked a general counsel of the Sierra Club for that job. Being an oilman and an oil country guy, I had no chance.

Anyway, I sort of forgot about it. But a friend of mine knew that I had had an interest in it and called me about a year later, and said, "A friend of mine is putting together a wing of the Department of Energy. I've told him about you and would you be interested in coming up?"

So I flew up, I met with this guy, I met with Schlesinger. The department had just been set up and it really didn't know exactly how it was going to work. And I was given a very big brief, I mean, as the Democrats are today they're very anti-hydrocarbons, you know, it's a party that's loaded with tree-huggers.

For instance, they took all the oily stuff and they put it under one deputy assistant secretary, which was me. So I had this huge brief. I ran the Naval Petroleum Reserves. I ran the Strategic Petroleum Reserves, which grew to be the biggest reserve in the world. And I ran the oil shell program; I ran the offshore leasing program. And I ran the oil and gas program. I mean, I had this huge thing, I had a four billion dollar budget. But I really was sort of peripheral in the department because they were so interested in things like wind and solar and conservation and so forth. I was just sort of the dirty guy that was—but, anyway, I enjoyed the time up there. And I spent about three years up there.

**JE:** So that was in 1977 through '81?

**DL:** That would have been '77 to '81.

**JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).

**DL:** Interesting little sideline, I tell people who were in Washington, "When your president gets beat and you're political appointee, the thing to do is to call your real estate dealer immediately, sell your house, and be prepared to move out. Because you never make the transition.

What I did was, I thought, *Well, I'll just stay here until they fire me or they let me go.* And, of course, I didn't have any other alternatives, I had no job.

**JE:** In '76, Jimmy Carter had been elected, and you went to work for him in '77.

**DL:** Yeah. I'd quit my law firm, I'd sold my house. There I was up in Washington, DC, no job, and this expensive Washington house. And Carter had just been defeated. Well, instead of quitting, I just stayed on. That would have been November, so I stayed on November, December, and in January, I got a mimeographed note that said, "Like to have your resignation by noon today."

**JE:** We should point out that Ronald Reagan then defeated—

**DL:** Yeah.

**JE:** . . . Jimmy Carter in 1980.

**DL:** 'Eighty, so I was there till the inauguration.

**JE:** Which was?

**DL:** January 20th, '81. But, anyway, I always sort of wondered, *When they fire the officers, how do they do it?* Well, they send you a little piece of paper. No one calls you in, they send

you a little piece of paper that says, "Please have your resignation on somebody's desk by noon today."

So at that point, I was out of a job. I had this big Washington house.

**JE:** Did you have any children by that time?

**DL:** Oh, yeah, I had four. I had four in Tulsa. And I took them all up with me to be with Jimmy Carter. Which was a huge problem, I mean, you know, four new schools and dentists and doctors. But, anyway, so then I turned around and came back to Tulsa.

Now some guys stayed there but I couldn't see a path, so I came back to Tulsa.

**JE:** What was your impression of the Carter administration? Of him personally? Did you have a face-to-face time with him at all?

**DL:** No, not much. I mean, I've met him a couple of times and I gave speeches in the White House and so forth, but as far as face time, where I was is my level wasn't very high. On the organizational chart you have a secretary, then you have a deputy secretary, and then you have a whole raft of assistant secretaries. And they're sort of like the generals. And then under the assistant secretaries you have deputy assistant secretaries. And that's what I was.

A deputy assistant secretary, in the right position is a wonderful job. A famous nuclear engineer Rickover was a deputy assistant secretary. Normally if you see a deputy assistant secretary on television, he really knows what he's talking about, because the permanent staff reports to the deputy assistant secretary.

By the time it gets to the assistant secretary, it's gone through one level of filter. By the time it gets to the secretary, it's gone through about three levels of filter. So the secretaries are always talking in generalities and generally don't really know what's happening.

The deputies really know exactly what's up. For instance, I was running the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and I literally flew my helicopter around to all the sites. I literally went out to Elk Hills and talked to the guys producing the oil and looked at the wells and all this kind of business. I went out to Colorado and looked at the oil shell sites. So I had a wonderful job.

Except that you're not well-known outside the department. Because generally it's the assistant secretary who makes the press releases and so forth.

**JE:** What kind of money were you paid for that job?

**DL:** Fifty-eight thousand.

**JE:** Was that considered . . . ?

**DL:** Uh, it's interesting because I went back again for the Clinton administration and they had doubled it to \$126 thousand. Well, it was a lot less than I was making in Tulsa but it was not less than most people were making.

During that period of time, the law business from our firm and from me was relatively lucrative, so it was a big cut in pay.

**JE:** So why did you do this? Why did you continue on and—

**DL:** Life's too short not to take an opportunity. And, of course, the point is, is that opportunity does not knock. And a lot of my friends have been bitten by this. When it's time that you want to go to Washington or you want to do something new, no one is asking.

I noticed this with teaching, you know, all my older lawyer friends say, "I'd like to teach." Well, you have to pay our dues; you have to get started early. I mean, you just don't reach fruition, and you just don't go to Washington when you want to. And this was a chance to go Washington; I thought probably the only one I ever had, and it was.

**JE:** It was a good experience, you enjoyed it.

**DL:** Yeah, I was—

**JE:** What was a highlight or two from your experience there?

**DL:** Well, first of all, the department had just been set up and we had probably the hottest name in America as our secretary, Schlesinger.

**JE:** Arthur Schlesinger.

**DL:** Yeah, he'd been secretary of defense and he had been head of the OMB and he'd also been head of the CIA. I mean, he was a tremendously powerful man. And he and I hit it off pretty well, because he was a realist and a hardnosed guy and he was not a moose and goose kind of guy whereas we had a lot of people in the department who were.

One of the more difficult things I ever had was we had a blowout in the strategic petroleum reserve down in Louisiana. Those salt caverns filled with oil are under quite a bit of pressure. And when you change the tubing they can blow out and catch fire. One did, blew out, caught fire, killed two men, big congressional hearing, and, of course, they blamed us for it. And I remember going into Schlesinger's office and some of what I would consider my adversaries in the bureaucracy—you always have adversaries—had control on who was going to be the number one investigator on this disaster.

And this disaster was of a huge national and international prominence because what you had was fifty thousand barrels burned up, turned into a gigantic Roman candle with smoke you could see forever. And we had two deaths. So we got this report.

What had happened is a subcontractor had hired a sub subcontractor called Baker, which is a famous packer company. And the guy who did the packer, who was sleeping in his car while this was going on, had miscalculated the pressure on this packer. And you know a packer is a rubber thing that sticks and is supposed to hold so many pounds of pressure.

Well, anyway, he miscalculated. And then the packer blew out like a cork out of a bottle and the oil came out and the gas came out and caught fire. There was no real government flaw.

Well, anyway, the report roasted all of us. [laughs] I remember going into Schlesinger's office. I handed him this report and he looked at this report, and he was one of these kind of guys that looked like he was always just about ready to have some kind of a blowup. He took this piece of paper I gave him and he threw it across the room. And he said, "We had one disaster, now we have two." [both laughing]

But, anyway, it was fun. I got to go to the White House and make speeches. And I got to go to the National Security Council and meet, you know, for an Okie who is in government is a constant titillation. And, of course, I learned a lot and it was really sort of shame to go up there so ignorant about the way Washington worked.

Well, of course, Carter himself was sort of ignorant. He got smarter and smarter and he would have been a wonderful president the second term. But by that time, he had burned his bridges. Carter came up there being really green and he did a lot of stupid things.

**JE:** What about the bureaucrats that work Washington? That's their life calling and they're there forever and ever. Are they talented people? Are you impressed by them?

**DL:** Yeah, I'm very impressed. In the Department of Energy, we got the crème of the crème because it was a brand new department. Huge budget. It was the energy crisis and there were lines of cars. Many of the people we got were people from other departments who had to fight and scrap to get put into energy.

Now I went back twenty years later and the same people were there. And it was sort of stodgy and less impressive.

But the best people in Washington work harder than anyone I've ever met in the private sector. Anybody, I mean, if you look at the White House or the Executive Office building lights at night and early morning and weekend you'll see those lights burning. Those are people working. I mean, it is not at all unusual to have Saturday meetings, Sunday meetings, work till midnight. They're superstars, they actually use that phrase, are usually people that are GS-14s and up, GS-15s. The GS-15 is paid the same that a deputy assistant secretary is paid.

But these guys work incredibly hard and they have degrees and they're spo—this idea of a bunch of sleepy bureaucrats is not true at all.

And the other thing is, is it's very honest. We were trying to settle a case with DuPont. And I went up to Michigan and they took us all out to the country club for lunch. And I had a club sandwich. We went back to our negotiations.

When I got back home, there was a seventeen dollar check on my desk to send to DuPont. We never had a lunch that we didn't pay for. Because if I had a guy from Tulsa who was a friend of mine come up and take me to lunch I didn't go through this. But I had one rule and that is, I never had a lunch, I never had anything where we didn't compensate them.

Now the Hill was a completely different thing. And the Hill was like a brothel up there, I mean, it was so disappointing to see how the Hill operated. I mean, they had no supervision. They took whatever they could get.

I one time flew out to California for testimony. We'd had an oil spill. So we go out there and we take Air Force Two. The Department of Energy had to pay somebody for Air Force Two. I had a thirty-five dollar per diem in San Francisco, maybe it was forty-five. And the Congress guy had no per diem. The night we got out there, they all went to La Bourguignon, which was one of their fancy restaurants at two hundred dollars a plate. And booze and partying.

And I was over there eating at a Chinese dim sum, trying to get by on my forty-five dollars a day. And that's sort of the way the Hill and the Executive Branch work. The Hill is an undisciplined wild, wild West.

**JE:** Are we talking about our senators and our representatives when you say that?

**DL:** We're talking about the staff.

**JE:** Yeah.

**DL:** And, of course, the senators too, I mean, they take all these trips. But there's really not much supervision over Congress except for the press.

**JE:** Yeah.

**DL:** And if the press doesn't blow the whistle—whereas in the Department of Energy if you did anything controversial, we had an inspector general who would come in and blow the whistle on you. So there's no inspector general for the Hill. Most of those guys are honest enough, but look at Tom DeLay, you know, those trips overseas, and . . .

**JE:** Well, he's paying a price for that. He faces a three-year prison sentence right now. But the bureaucrats that you say work so hard, not major pay, I suppose. Why do they do that? Couldn't they—

**DL:** Well, it's like many of these people, and, of course, I'm talking about maybe the highlight of American bureaucracy, because we had a new department. It was messianic. A lot of it is personal ambition because you can't get promoted and better jobs unless you have a good reputation.

And you can get a guy like Henry Kissinger, Simon, and all these guys, they were famous for what they call "torquing" their staff. Basically, if you're not in there on Saturday, and you're not in there late at night, and you don't get that report out that he gave you at four o'clock in the afternoon and he wants tomorrow morning at ten o'clock, you know, he just moves to another job and he takes his good people and leaves you there in the bowels of the department. So a lot of it is personal ambition in order to continue.

There's always a higher level. Some of it is just patriotism or a desire to do a good job. And, of course, there's some people who really don't do very much. But at my level,

I mean, nobody ever got to the level where they're dealing with the deputy assistant secretary unless the guy had spent a lot of late nights putting stuff out. Because there's just a tremendous amount of paper being shuffled. And it's hard to shuffle paper. It's hard to write good reports and have them on time and that sort of thing.

---

**Chapter 11 - 15:40****Oil Collapse**

---

**John Erling:** So you're back in Oklahoma. Talk about the collapse of the oil boom in here. The collapse of Penn Square Bank, and we had many bankruptcies. Bring us into that era.

**Dobie Langenkamp:** Well, it was sort of interesting, I come back, all the oilmen that had hated Jimmy Carter, I mean, Carter had a few people who voted for him in 1976, because Carter was more modest than some. He talked about gas prices and so forth. But by the time he had done the windfall profits tax and he had the disaster in Iran, there wasn't an oilman in America that was for him.

And one of the things he had done, and I was in the midst of all these things we did, one of the things we did was we passed a bill called the Natural Gas Policy Act. It was the first step to gas deregulation and Carter got no credit for it. Carter also started the deregulation of oil. He got blamed for the regulation of oil, but the regulation of oil had been done by Nixon and he inherited it. In fact, Schlesinger had a big role in Carter taking the position that we're going to deregulate.

Reagan got credit for deregulating oil, when it was Carter that did it. And the Natural Gas Policy Act was the first act that—you remember it deregulated deep gas? Caused all those problems? Well, the guy who regulated gas was Eisenhower. It was very unfair the treatment—but, anyway, I come back and the oilmen are rich as Croesus. The word was that there was a millionaire every day in Oklahoma City. There were something like two thousand new companies in Oklahoma, all of them making money hand over fist.

I mean, I came back and went into partnership with my uncle in an oil business and it was fun. I mean, money was flowing in, you could get wells drilled. The first year, this would have been 1982, the first year we—

**JE:** Yeah.

**DL:** . . . drilled twenty-five wells. You know, we were a three-man company. We didn't even have an engineer. What happened was is that when I got out of Washington, we'd had the big energy price spike because of the Iranian crisis. When Ayatollah Khomeini came in, the country shut down. So there was four million barrels a day taken off the market

immediately. This was about 1979, '80. That four million barrels a day drove the prices up to over forty dollars.

When I came back, oil was thirty-eight dollars and beginning to sink. And between that time and 1985, it had sunk, well, like fifteen dollars. So we were at a point that even a decent small well was losing money.

And in that period, and Penn Square Bank suffered. They made these loans based on evaluation of the oil and when the oil value declined every loan was in default. Every loan in America, oil and gas loan, they didn't know what to do. The oilmen didn't know it, nobody knew what to do. I mean, Exxon had projected that oil prices would continue to raise. I saw, I was privy to the Exxon projections before I came back from Washington in 1981, and they were totally wrong. Everyone was wrong, and so everyone was caught out. They had borrowed all this money based on forty-dollar oil and it was now ten dollars.

So everybody was bankrupt. Penn Square started it and it just dominoed. And we had a terrible bloodletting, which I always thought was sort of ironic, because under Reagan the industry never suffered more than during the Reagan years. And Reagan was really partly responsible for that.

One of the things that Reagan was very proud of doing was driving oil prices down and thus cutting off the cash to OPEC and cutting off the cash to Russia. The country that suffered the most from the price declines was Russia. When Brezhnev was president of Russia oil was at forty dollars. Which is the equivalent of about a hundred dollars now.

What happened was is that Brezhnev was replaced by Gorbachev. All prices went into the toilet and Gorbachev got caught with an incredible deficit.

Reagan and Schultz were laughing all the way to the bank because here America's great adversary was unable to pay the bills. And at the same time, Reagan upped the ante by advocating Star Wars. So the Russians were in a terrible bind.

And if you will look at the situation with Gorbachev, Gorbachev, poor Gorbachev was in there during that period of time those oil prices were just totally—and so the Russian net receipts were cut in half or more.

So I come back, I get in the oil business, oil's thirty-eight dollars. We drill a bunch of wells, we're doing fine. All of a sudden, oil goes down to ten, fifteen dollars and we just barely hang on. Really, one of my greatest accomplishments is that I was able to go through that era without going bankrupt. I mean, there were two thousand Oklahoma companies that went bankrupt.

We hadn't borrowed any money and we operated, which meant you could always make \$150 to \$200 a well by operating. And we did a lot of overhead. And at one time, we cut all of our employees back by 10 percent. And my partner and I forewent any kind of pay ourselves.

So we managed to make it through these bad times up until '96. And then he was getting older and we just sold the company out in '96. And when we sold it out oil was eighteen dollars.

**JE:** You were the trustee for many of those failed companies, weren't you?

**DL:** Well, this is a bit of luck that really helped me put bread on the table during these bad times. I had done some bankruptcy work before and I was asked by a bankruptcy judge to take over a small company that had five wells. Down around Okmulgee.

I managed to get it turned around and get a buyer for it and all this business. And I told the judge, "A little more business like that and I'll really be starving to death. Because it was a labor of love."

So maybe because of that comment, the next time one comes down the pike he calls me again. And this is the Kenneth Tureau bankruptcy, which was probably one of the more flamboyant cases ever in Oklahoma history.

Tureau had been sort of a conman. He was an All-American honorable mention football player from Michigan State, Tank Tureau, T-u-r-e-a-u. He started off with a sort of a swindle of other NFL football players. These were swindles in the sense that everyone claimed they were swindled but they were necessarily prosecuted. And then he went into something else and the SCC barred him from any further trading and so forth. So he had this terrible record.

In fact, we figured out that the day he came to Oklahoma he had been turned down for financing a Chevrolet in Ann Arbor where he lived. But this hadn't prevented him from buying a lot of stuff. He had a fifteen-bedroom home in Palm Springs. He had thousands of acres out in New Mexico. He had lots of acreage here in Tulsa. And he came down here to get in the oil business. And he managed to borrow \$30 million from Penn Square Bank.

He did it based on a little field down here around Okmulgee that I ended up operating. And after much difficulty, I was able to sell it for a million dollars.

But he went into Penn Square Bank and I think there was some payoffs involved. He would buy horses from people for, you know, \$750,000. He was sort of a charming guy, in a way. He was a charismatic guy but very sort of spooky. He and I developed an interesting relationship.

He finally was killed in a car wreck. He was a huge drinker. He was the kind who would pass out in his plate. But, anyway, he had at the time of his bankruptcy, maybe fifteen corporations. Which I pierced the corporate veil on all of them. He had \$27 million worth of quarter horses.

**JE:** Huh.

**DL:** Nobody has ever had a lock on the quarter horse mares like Ken Tureau.

Well, before I was actually appointed and during the period of time he was wrestling around

with the court, he was able to lay off a good \$20 million of them. And, of course, a lot of these were very high dollar.

So when I took it over he had \$3 million worth of quarter horse mares all over the country. And one of my greatest accomplishments was to pick up every one of those horses.

Mares you don't keep on your own place. Mares you send off where the stud farms are, so he had no ranch, he just had his horses stationed. They were in eleven states. And, of course, I had a great bankruptcy lawyer, Sam Bratton, and I also had Gary McDonald, two of the best bankruptcy lawyers in the country right now.

Actually, most of them cut their teeth on my cases, but, anyway, you show up at a ranch in Montana and the guys owed ten thousand dollars for hay by a guy in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And you come up to pick up the horse, it's pretty hard to do that.

We got them all picked up and we had a big auction down in Oklahoma City. We got the Ruidoso Super Select, which is probably the biggest, fanciest quarter horse sale operation in America. One of the mistakes I made was that I didn't charge admission for this. So many people came, it filled up the biggest sale operation, one of the biggest in America, filled it up. And a lot of the bidders were out in the hallway.

**JE:** In Oklahoma City?

**DL:** It was down in Oklahoma City and I've forgotten what this place is called. And I had the Brinks guards there. We got about three million dollars out of that one night. We would have gotten more except when we announced our auction, a couple of other people who were bankrupt, ran in and conducted auctions the day before.

But, anyway, I had several auctions for Tureau. I ended up settling one of the big cases that he had. He had a lot of real estate that was not paid for and so forth. And I ended up making a fifteen, twenty cent on the dollar distribution. But, you know, I had to hire a U-Haul to take all of his Picasso's and his Rouault's and all his other art up to New York City. We sold it at Sotheby's.

I had an auction out here at the fairgrounds, an all-day auction. He had airplanes, one of which had been John Wayne's airplane and had these expandable rubber tanks that you use when you're bringing drugs in from Mexico. It was just an exotic thing and he was sort of an exotic kind of guy.

And then he got a crony to come in and propose a reorganization. This guy's name was Negrelli. He had a very checkered reputation, and so I made it a point to have someone in the room when I talked to Negrelli. And he left the room and went right out and had a press conference with the *Tulsa Tribune* [laughing], in which he said that he had offered me \$50 million or whatever it was and that I turned it down because I wanted to continue to get fees in the bankruptcy case.

Well, what he didn't mention was that there was not cash, these were letters of credit from a bank that was so unknown I was never able to find anybody who had ever heard of

this bank. So he had \$50 million worth of letters of credit from, you know, the Kuwaiti First State Bank. I mean, it was the most palpable bit of fraud I've ever seen.

Negrelli later showed his colors down in Texas in a couple of big deals.

Anyway, so I got rid of Ken Tureau with pretty good results. In fact, the real crown jewels, he had a huge area of real estate down in Florida and Jupiter Island, which is a lot of the wealthy hangouts. Had a big subdivision down there and I had to sell that and manage it. But he owned two hundred acres at the corner of 91st and Memorial. I had to sell that and I broke that up into pieces and sold that and I got what, \$20 million off of that?

When it was all over, he had debts of \$90 million, I think, and I think we might have gotten \$25 million back. But that was probably the most interesting case.

**JE:** Where was Ken Tureau from?

**DL:** He was from Michigan.

**JE:** Did he live in Oklahoma at any time?

**DL:** No, what he did was he'd gotten such a bad reputation, SCC had brought an action against him. He was a larger than life character. I'll tell you how he got his gas contract from Phillips. He called Phillips and said, "I've got all this gas and I want to sell it to you."

Phillips said, "Well, you know, we're not that interested."

"Naw, I want to come up."

Ken Tureau had a limousine, one of these white stretch-limousines and he drives it up to Bartlesville, loaded with his aides and so forth.

Well, these people in Bartlesville were up there in that office building and when Ken Tureau drove they're all looking out their windows and they see this guy get out and he's got the cowboy boots and he's got long sideburns. Very powerful guy. They said, "Who is this guy?" And he had purchased \$14 million worth of pipe from NewCorp, or maybe \$5 million, but it was a huge amount of pipe and it was all fourteen-inch pipe. And nobody ships gas through a fourteen-inch pipe unless you're shipping it down from the North Slope or something. But he had all this fourteen-inch pipe stacked down here in Okmulgee. And, of course, he hadn't paid for that either. That was his demonstration.

And then, of course, he had a reserve study saying that this field down here by Davis had all this oil and gas. And then he had the \$30 million loan. So he was able to turn that around and get this big contract with Phillips. He was one of these kind of guys, when he moved into town he took an entire floor of the Williams Tower and had all the furniture made, handmade, for him.

I had a hard time getting it out of there and selling it. He had a deal down in New Mexico where he and Jimmy Connors were going to this big tennis club and at the same time they were going to have the Ruidoso races brought in by television. And he owned all these thousands of acres out there. All this stuff was bought on credit. He was the most amazing guy.

Like I say, when he borrowed that \$30 million we found out he'd been turned down by a bank in Michigan for a car loan. But it was a showboat thing. He would go to the Super Bowl, he'd fill up the plane with his buddies, and he'd have these girls dressed up like stewardesses. He had all these hangers-on. He was sort of the prototypical boom kind of guy.

His own personal cook was a guy he had picked up in Germany who was a real smart kid. As they went on, he turned more and more stuff over to this kid. And he owned a big cowboy bar down in Oklahoma City, you know, the kind where they drank the champagne out of the boot.

**JE:** But he did live in Tulsa for a time?

**DL:** Yeah. Well, he lived in so many places, but he had many, many houses in Tulsa. But, no, his real residence, he had sort of a ranch elegant farm up in Ann Arbor. He had this huge house right next to Ivan Lendl's house in Palm Beach. I had an aerial photo but I could never go in it because it was exempt. It had fourteen bedrooms. It looked like a small college, from the air.

And then he had some big stuff out in New Mexico. He always would take from Peter to pay Paul and he's always refinancing and buying. His companies were called Sackett, Sackett Petroleum.

**JE:** How did you get connected with that case?

**DL:** Appointed by the bankruptcy judge.

**JE:** Did he make any waves in Tulsa?

**DL:** There was an awful lot of newspaper. If you go back, there was a huge amount of newspaper stories because at first they were trying to untangle this web of corporations. One of his tricks was to have, like, three different corporations and they would all be the same name but they would be incorporated in different states.

So you could never find out what corporation you were dealing with, whether it was the New Mexico Corporation or the others.

Anyway, when that case was over—it took a long time to work out—I then got asked to take over the bankruptcy involving the Republic cases. Partly because I'd had this good result in the Tureau case. I was a successor trust to a fellow by the name of Jones, who had been the original trustee but was old and wasn't in good health. So I took that case over. And that case took ten years to wrap up.

**JE:** Hmm (thoughtful sound).

---

**Chapter 12 - 5:15**  
**Occidental Purchase**

---

**John Erling:** We should mention, of course, you went back with the Clinton administration and you were appointed as deputy assistant secretary then for a second time. You did that in '98 and '99.

**Dobie Langenkamp:** That's correct.

**JE:** Did you decide you'd had enough of that, is that why?

**DL:** Well, I had finished up all my bankruptcy cases and I sold my company in '96. Basically, I was on the beach. I hadn't started teaching yet and I was asked to come back and handle the sale of the Naval Petroleum Reserve, which is one of the things I had run when I had been up there before.

And I said, "Sure." I went up there and the government had decided, even though this was a Democratic administration, this was part of Al Gore's simplifying America, what was his, you know, he had a project for making America more efficient. Well, one of the ideas was we would get rid of US ownership of the Naval Petroleum Reserve.

Now the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is oil in Texas and Louisiana, put in the ground in salt domes, that can be taken out very fast.

The Naval Petroleum Reserve is just a big oilfield that the US government got involved in back in the '20s. That you can't produce very fast from because it's an oilfield but it has a lot of oil in it. It really doesn't serve as a Strategic Reserve because it produces a hundred thousand barrels a day, and when you need a Strategic Reserve you need maybe three or four *million* barrels a day.

So the idea was sell it! And there was a big debate up there on how to sell it and who to sell it to. This fold was owned 80/20 by the government and Chevron.

Chevron thought they had the inside track for buying it.

I was sitting here in Tulsa and I saw this bill go through that provided that the Naval Petroleum Reserve was going to be sold in six months. Well, you do not sell something that's worth billions of dollars, that's two thousand oil wells. You don't sell it in six months. That would have meant nobody could bid on it except Chevron. And I think I know who the guilty party of that was. He's gone to political prominence in Texas.

But, anyway, somebody derailed that and they got a new bill passed that said we were going to have a year to sell it. Well, of course, that meant that everybody else could get in the act and we could have real competition.

So that's when I went up there. So I had the benefit of the new statute. We hired investment bankers. We ended up selling it to Occidental for about three and a half billion dollars. At that time, everyone was laughing at Occidental. I used to not tell this but I do now—left a billion dollars on the table.

We had Occidental petrified they weren't going to get this field. And we were going through this vest and final and we were down in Houston on the phone. I had an armed guard at the door to give it sort of the pizzazz. We had a special security phone so we could talk to Washington. And we had to go the CIA and get this special phone. We called it the "bat phone."

Anyway, we ended up getting this three and a half billion dollar from Occidental, and we were absolutely thrilled. You know, there's a guy here in town by the name of Hentschel, Dave Hentschel?

**JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).

**DL:** I remember seeing Dave Hentschel and he was, but I thought, a little bit shamefaced about this because everybody in the industry was laughing up their sleeve at Occidental.

Now I always thought Occidental knew more about the field than anybody else, but our projection showed oil at thirty dollars. Oil at that time was nineteen dollars a barrel. Our projection showed it moving very slowly up to thirty to thirty-five dollars a barrel. And that's Exxon's projections. We spent \$15 million on experts. [laughs]

Well, you know what happened? It wasn't any time at all oil was \$50. And now it's \$110. So Occidental has made out like a huge bandit. And the guy that made the deal, who was so desperate to make this deal, and we didn't know why he was so, he has become the president of the company. He believed in this damn field and the result is that what looked like an absolute steal at the time for the federal government, now you look back at it and you say, "Well, you know, why did we sell it for three and a half billion dollars?"

But at that time, I made the call to Shell or Chevron and gave them my best and thought. You know, you call them and you say, "Okay, we've got the first round of bids. Now we're going to go our best and final."

They wouldn't raise their bid a penny and basically slammed the phone down on me.

**JE:** But Occidental could not know. There was some dumb luck here, wasn't there?

**DL:** It was luck, yeah.

**JE:** Right.

**DL:** The optimists have made out like bandits in this business.

**JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).

**DL:** I mean, when you figure that you could have bought any field in America and paid ten times its value in the '60s, '70s, '80s, and '90s, and still made money. Anyway, so they made money. And I was very glad to see them do it because they were the only ones who came through and really gave us—see the appraisal on it was about two and a half billion. So they gave us a billion dollars more than our best appraisal.

**JE:** Dave Hentschel, what was his position in Occidental at the time?

**DL:** He was, he was the, he may have been president of the Canadian branch. But he was involved in it.

**JE:** In the purchase of it?

**DL:** Yeah, he was involved in it.

**JE:** Right, yeah.

**DL:** And the president of Occidental is an Iranian by the name of Irani. And this second in command was probably also either an Iranian or a Canadian, but Hentschel was in the top tier of executives.

## Chapter 13 - 9:35

### Langenkamp Children

---

**John Erling:** About family and your children, you have a famous child, Heather Langenkamp.

**Dobie Langenkamp:** Yeah.

**JE:** Talk about her because she's best known for her role as Nancy Thompson from *A Nightmare on Elm Street* films; served as executive producer and narrator of the documentary *Never Sleep Again: The Elm Street Legacy*. And did it ever dawn on you as she was growing up that she would be this accomplished?

**DL:** Well, I knew she would be something fantastic because she was such a bright, energetic child. Of my children, she was the fastest out of the gate. She was hardworking, hard-driving. She's a pretty good little athlete. She played tennis; she and I played in a bunch of tournaments. She was always at her best when she was challenged. And she was accepted to Harvard and Stanford and, you know, she was a first-class student.

In fact, she was at the National Cathedral School in Washington when I was up there in the Department of Energy. That's the school where all the senators' kids go. So she had all these really interesting young girls who were with her.

In fact, one of her closest friends, the only one that really outdid her—Heather won a lot of prizes—but the one that outdid her and is now quite well-known is Elizabeth Rice, who is now the ambassador to the United Nations. And she's Heather's age.

So I always assumed Heather would go into government or law or something like that. Well, she was in Tulsa one summer and she was working for the *Tribune* as a copy girl or something, and bored, and they came to town to make these movies. Coppola did.

**JE:** Francis Ford Coppola.

**DL:** Yeah. So, anyway, she goes out to try out. And she was a pretty girl, she wasn't a, a ten, but she was a good solid seven and a half to eight, very wholesome. Anyway, she goes out there and meets one of the casting directors, a woman, who I think has some connection with Oklahoma. Anyway, next she goes to Stanford and then she gets a call at Stanford, "Would you like to come down and try out for a movie?"

She goes down and it's a movie called *Nickel Mountain*. It's never made anything other than HBO, but it's played a lot, it's a pretty good movie. But it never quite made the theaters. She had the lead in that. And based on that she was asked to do the *Nightmare* series.

And then based on *Nightmare* she did another series and some specials. And all the time she was doing this she was flying back and forth to Stanford, to go through Stanford. So she eventually graduated from Stanford and she's married a fellow who has a company—or she and this fellow have a company—called FX Studios. And they do everything from makeup to pretty good sized special effects like monsters and this sort of thing. Her husband is an artist.

All these things you see, these monsters, all have to be sculpted. First they're sculpted out of clay, then they're converted into plastic. And then you have to have somebody get inside of them and operate them. They're in that business. They did some pretty important work in Tom Cruise's *Mission Impossible*. So that's the kind of stuff she does.

And every once in a while she gets asked to have a part in a series or something. But now she's forty-three, forty-four, so she's out of the en genoux era and now in the middleclass woman.

**JE:** So the movie that Francis Ford Coppola was producing here in Tulsa, what was the name of that movie? Out—out—

**DL:** I think that was *Rumble Fish*.

**JE:** Out—

**DL:** *Outsiders*?

**JE:** *Outsiders*.

**DL:** Yeah, in fact—

**JE:** Di—

**DL:** . . . I think she was in the movie but I think it got cut. And if you're in a movie, unless you have a speaking line, you can't get a SAG card. You have to have a speaking line to get a SAG card. And I have a funny story there, you know. She got this role and she went to get her SAG card. They said, "What name do you want to act under?"

And she said, "Well, Heather Langenkamp."

And the guy said, "Well, let me look and see if that's taken." [both laughing]

**JE:** You had three—

**DL:** Yeah.

**JE:** . . . other children?

**DL:** The next one is a boy. His claim to fame is he became very proficient in Chinese. And he went over to Taiwan and married a Taiwanese girl. He has spent his life in Asia. He's now in Auckland running a small company he set up in Auckland.

But his most unusual event was when he was going to a Langley school over in Taiwan, he and a friend—and this was way back when China was locked up tight as a drum—decided that they would try to go across China without permission. They put together mountain bikes and talked their way across the border on the assumption that they were just going to ride around Guilin and come right back out.

Once the guy let them across the border in Guilin, they took off on their bikes and they went all the way to Katmandu. It's over three thousand miles. And, of course, they were illegal the whole time.

They gave me an interesting perspective of the Chinese because, in a way, the Chinese are much more civilized than some people give them credit for. They would periodically get arrested. And generally when they got arrested they would tell them, "Just head on out. You just get out of my town tomorrow."

And then lots of times they were wined and dined by the mayor of these towns because the Chinese have been relocating the Han Chinese. These are the basic Chinese. All through Tibet and Western China. They keep moving the Han Chinese in, trying to repopulate the area with Hans. So they'd go through these Western villages and, of course, they spoke Mandarin.

One time the mayor invited them to dinner because it had been so long since he'd been able to speak Mandarin to someone. And that happened to them several times.

Anyway, he went all the way to Katmandu. And then he became an investment banker over there in Hong Kong. He went through two or three different companies.

**JE:** His name?

**DL:** His name is Matthew.

**JE:** Okay.

**DL:** Matthew Langenkamp. Matthew went to George Washington and was Phi Beta Kappa there, which I thought was great. He's got two children.

His younger brother is named Dan. Daniel went to Columbia. He got out and joined the Peace Corps and went to Hungary and taught English. He got out of there and then he went to work for Reuters for a while. And then he went back and got an international relations degree from Tufts. And then joined the State Department. And married a girl who was in his class at the State Department.

He's forty. He's been to Afghanistan, where he got a medal. He slept on the ground and traveled around. The name of the game is to sit on your flak jacket. Because when you drive over one of those IEDs they come through the bottom.

He had this tour in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Uganda.

**JE:** With the?

**DL:** State Department.

**JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).

**DL:** He's a foreign service officer. Now he's on the Turkey desk. His wife is on the NATO desk.

**JE:** And then your last one?

**DL:** The last one is Lucy. Daniel and Matt both graduated from Booker T. Washington. That was the formative years for them and I'm very fond of Booker T. Washington. I think it was a great school.

And Lucinda, she ended up going to a school in Washington, like my first daughter did, because I was back there at that time. She is now a nurse practitioner. And she is a pretty good artist. She has a statue that's in front of the Fine Arts building in Vanderbilt that she sculpted. She's a pretty good actress; she had the lead in a summer stock in Massachusetts last summer in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. And she studied art in Tibet for a year and came back with a couple of Tibetan style paintings, which were amazing.

Then she went through nursing school and got a masters in nursing. And now she's running a clinic in Brooklyn. You know, they're now moving those nurse practitioners into line as doctors. The last time I went to a doctor they steered me to a nurse practitioner. Only here in Oklahoma they don't call them nurse practitioners, they call them physicians' assistants. But basically they're permitted to write prescriptions.

**JE:** That's a pretty eclectic family. And we point out that you're married today to your wife, Sandra. You've been married for how many years now?

**DL:** Well, since '95 or something like that.

**JE:** Then you think about these four children and how accomplished they are. And, of course, you too, and then you think about what we've talked about, your grandparents, their great grandparents and how they were very smart but they had to fight tooth and nail for their survival. So that eventually we have this great generation that's followed them. That's a great story.

**DL:** Yeah. I think there are thousands of these stories. I mean, I don't think people realize how many people who in 1935, particularly down in this part of the country, my friends don't realize how much people struggled. My grandmother, the one that was the teacher out there at Mingo, the one-room schoolhouse, she got paid with warrants.

**JE:** Paid with what, war?

**DL:** Warrants. Basically, a warrant was a promissory note from the school board that you would have to discount. So you'd take the warrant to the bank and the bank would give you eighty cents on the dollar for the warrant. Otherwise, you had to hold it.

My grandmother—this is a woman who was college educated, the one who would deliver these one-act plays and all this. She had a cow and they had twenty chickens and a garden. And the cow and the chickens and the garden were extremely critical to their existence.

**JE:** And now here today you're seventy-five?

**DL:** Seventy-five.

**JE:** You're writing poems.

**DL:** Um-hmm (affirmative).

**JE:** You brought me a couple of plays here that—

**DL:** Nobody has put on.

**JE:** And this book of poetry, *Plenty of Gun*. And probably had more in the mill.

**DL:** I have one more and it's gonna be entitled *The One-Monkey Zoo*. The title poem is about a zoo we had down in Seminole that consisted of one animal, and it was a little monkey on a chain. [both laughing]

## Chapter 14 - 5:18

### Good Advice

---

**John Erling:** So, advice to students. And here you can hand out advice in many areas. As a lawyer and the oil and gas business, government service. Students listening to this, what do you have for them?

**Dobie Langenkamp:** Well, I had a couple of things. One was, if you're a young person with no money and no family, really, basically no important family, you need to go to a place with some real growth potential. And Tulsa was that place. I don't know whether it is today, to the extent it was in 1960. Tulsa was still pretty much on the cusp of the oil boom and all that kind of business. I don't know whether Tulsa is, but it certainly was then. Oklahoma was growing.

So you want to go to a place with an expanding pie, I think. And I think you also want to go to a place where you don't have ten generations of families.

**JE:** When you say go to a place—

**DL:** I'm saying when you get out of school. When you get out of school, go to a place that's open and free. And you know what I found? And it's Boston, Boston's a wonderful town, it's got everything that you want, sailing, and pro football. Boston had layers upon layers upon layers, I mean, you had the Cabots and the Lodges and the next generation and the next generation. And then the Italians and then the Irish. I mean, for a person to go in there it's like getting in the bottom of a twenty-layer cake.

Whereas in Oklahoma, everything was, you know, in Tulsa, very Democratic. Nobody went back any further than my grandfathers. My two grandfathers came in about 1911. Before that it was Indians.

I think going to a place that's open and free. California is a classic example of that. All my friends that went to Stanford, they made money quite easily because California is particularly during the years from, say, '60 to '90, it was such a wide open place. That's one thing.

The other thing is, is that there's a real advantage, I think, to going small rather than large. It depends a little bit on how able you are but it's the big frog in the little puddle.

I used to tell my law students, particularly the ones that weren't absolutely law review type. For the law review guy can immediately go out and get a job. Actually, in Dallas, if he wants to. Tulsa, Dallas, Oklahoma City. But if you're sort of in the middle of the class, give some consideration to going back to your home town. Go back to some place like Muskogee. Run for county attorney, and you'll get elected eventually because they need one. And run for the state senate. Go buy some land, raise some cows, get on the bank board, and so forth.

That life is a pretty good life. And a lot of these guys have done quite well by going small rather than going big. If they can talk their wife into it, and that's usually the problem. Usually she has no interest in being that far from Utica Square, you know. That's the problem.

The other thing I would say is that people are the most important thing. And never miss a chance to make a friend. You know, that means doing things for people where you don't expect any immediate payback. Because, you know, it's a long life and there's no reason to make an enemy if you can make a friend.

I mean, like my government position and the political connection meant absolutely nothing. But this friend of mine was a Tulsa Central guy who knew me and was a good friend. He basically called me up and set me up with this guy and it really changed my life. It cost me a lot of money because it wasn't a particularly lucrative thing to go to Washington, but it totally changed my life. And it was a good friend that did that.

**JE:** And his name?

**DL:** His name was Arch Edwards. He was a wonderful student. He was another one of these four-and-four. He took the Princeton scholarship. Actually, he got scholarships to Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Tulane.

But, anyway, he went up to Princeton and he was a Phi Beta Kappa at Princeton. And then he went up to the Harvard Business School and he was a baker scholar. Baker scholar is the top. And then he went to work for McKinsey & Company, which, if you're a business school guy, that's sort of the highest level.

He had tried to recruit me for McKinsey & Company one time and I had said I wasn't interested in business consulting.

So friends are really important, I mean, they really are. And in order to have a friend, you have to be a friend. That means you have to do things for people just because you like them.

**JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).

**DL:** And if nothing ever comes of it, then fine, that's just the way it is. I've got a lot of people that I've tried to do things for that they may not even know you exist. But, anyway, that's one thing.

And the other thing is, of course, when you get old, your family is so much more important, you know. When you get to be seventy-five and you go to the class reunion, everyone is asking you how many grandchildren you have. At the fifteenth reunion, they're all asking you if you're a partner. And how many second homes you have.

I went to my fiftieth, at Stanford, it was sort of a sad thing. I don't know whether I'll ever do it again because there are a handful of people in pretty fair shape but then there are a handful of people who are just basket cases. So I think that may be the last reunion I go to. They were just too sad.

**JE:** To see what old age has done.

**DL:** Oh, yeah. You'd have a friend who was really sharp and you'd talk to him and you'd realize that there's nothing there. People begin to deteriorate mentally, probably at age seventy. And this one friend that I just mentioned, who was one of the more brilliant people that I've ever done business with, he now has Alzheimer's. He can't get out of the house.

**JE:** But one can be seventy-five and look how you are.

**DL:** Yeah.

**JE:** You're fortunate, you're blessed to have—

**DL:** So far.

**JE:** . . . it all with you.

## Chapter 15 - 6:33

### Greatest Sports Story

---

**John Erling:** You've done so many things, how would you like to be remembered when people look back on your life?

**Dobie Langenkamp:** Well, you know, one of the things that I'm sort of proud of is that I don't think I ever did something that was unethical. And I was raised, I don't know what it was, but it was Scottish, German, whatever it was. Nobody ever talked about cutting corners. I'm sure they were no better than anybody else, but no one ever talked about cheating on taxes and all this kind of business.

And I had all those bankruptcy cases, and the temptation in those bankruptcy cases was just huge. So many of these people either got tempted to do things they shouldn't

and didn't get away with it, or they got tempted to do things they shouldn't do and did get away with it.

One of my wife's friends was talking about these bankruptcy trustees getting all this money and inside deals and so forth. And she said, "Well, Dobie did that, didn't he?"

And my wife said, "Of course he didn't do it."

And so I look back at fifty years of practicing law and so forth and, you know, I took all kinds of cases. I don't have anything I'm really ashamed of, so ethically, I feel good about that.

The chance of making money by treading the line pretty close is pretty easy and I never did that. And I'm proud of that. And, of course, I have all sorts of little things that you're proud of, you know, like your athletic prowess when you were a kid and all that kind of business, some of those things. Like family I'm proud of.

**JE:** Yeah.

**DL:** And, you know, the fact is you're not going to be remembered. I mean, you just might as well forget it. You know, Walt Helmerich, as much as he did for Tulsa, and he really has been a great Tulsa citizen, how long will Walt Helmerich be remembered, except by his family?

**JE:** We should point out here, since this will be heard years later, Walt Helmerich, eighty-eight years old has died two days ago. His funeral will be tomorrow, as a matter of fact. He contributed largely to our community in major, major ways. The Helmerich name will still be there because it is on buildings—

**DL:** Yeah.

**JE:** . . . it is in museums and that type of thing. But beyond that, he—

**DL:** Yeah, and, of course, he has a lovely wife who will perpetuate it for a while.

**JE:** Right.

**DL:** And he has a bunch of kids. He has a business and so forth.

**JE:** Right.

**DL:** But Walt Helmerich would probably be about as good an example as anyone in town as someone who will be remembered. I mean, he has his name on a corporation. But by and large, it's pretty ephemeral. Anyone who really wants to be remembered for a long time is probably putting his eggs in the wrong basket.

**JE:** [laughing] All right. Well, you've done a great job and you've been a great storyteller. I want to thank you for giving us this time. Very interesting.

**DL:** Well—

**JE:** Students will be interested in it, general public will be. No question about it. Your story now can be preserved in this oral history fashion.

**DL:** Well, I've never been accused of being anything other than garrulous. And this is sort of a dream come true for someone to come in and tape-record a long description of your own life. I mean, you don't really have that much opportunity to talk about your own life. And

to be able to do so is wonderful. And I just think of all the wonderful stories I didn't get a chance to tell.

In fact, to my friends, I always say, "Do you want to hear the greatest sports story in the history of America?"

And they say, of course, "Yes."

And I say, "Well, I was a little boy down in Seminole and I played on the B team." And if you scored a lot of points on the B game the coach would let you suit up for the A game. You didn't have a warm-up, they didn't even let you shoot before the game. You just sat there.

So I didn't shoot before the game and I didn't have a warm-up, and I sat there and I remember the gym was just as cold as it could be. Seminole playing Bristow in February. That gym was drafty and I was cold and my sweaty uniform had cooled off and I sat through the whole game. Never got in, didn't shoot at the halftime, so I was just totally—and with about twenty seconds to go, this coach, his name was Don Slagel, I always loved this guy. Don Slagel never knew anybody's name. He called all the Indians on the team, Chief, and everybody else was Hey You. And we were about half Indians down there.

So he points to me and he says, "You, get in there." And I remember exactly who he sent me in for, a guy by the name of Hammett Atiyo, who must have been Middle Eastern, Arabic name in Seminole. Later killed in an oilfield accident.

But, anyway, I went in for Hammett Atiyo and I looked up at the clock. And the clock was one of these clocks that when it was a minute to go it turned green. And when it was ten seconds to go it turned red.

So I ran out on the floor. We were doing a man-to-man and I started trying to guard my man. I hadn't been in the game fifteen seconds and the clock turned red, meaning we had less than ten seconds. So I decided to run for the ball and the guy who was dribbling the ball, took his eye off of me.

I took the ball on a full run and realizing I didn't have very much time, I dribbled across the center line of the court and let fly with the first shot I'd shot in about two hours. Of course, it swished.

**JE:** Was the score tied when you came in or was it a point behind or—

**DL:** We were a point behind. As a matter of fact, I was allegedly fouled. They got me back out of the dressing room, where I had gone, cleared the floor and I had a free-throw shoot. Now why they would do that—but, anyway, I walked up. I had a free-throw, and I made the free-throw. So I had three points that year. I had shot one field goal, one free-throw, made them both, and played less than thirty seconds.

And I say, "That's the greatest sports story ever known to man." People ran out on the floor to celebrate.

**JE:** You had won.

**DL:** And then later on that night there was a fight and a kid got knifed, I mean, it was critical but he was knifed. This was a rumble between Bristow and—Bristow at that time, was a pretty big town, a bigger town.

So the next morning in the Seminole papers, there was a big headline that said: Substitute Wins Game. And they didn't have my name because I wasn't on the, I wasn't on the program. [both laughing] I would love so much to have that newspaper.

So the coach lettered me that year. That coach was transferred to Tulsa Central. The year I went to Tulsa Central. When he found out that I was at Tulsa Central, he put his arm around me and walked me down to Ellers and says, "Put this guy on your team. He'll win ballgames for you."

And that's the reason I was able, in a school of a thousand students, just getting on the basketball team was really difficult. Coach Slagel put his arm around me and said, "This boy will win ballgames for you." He was a wonderful coach.

He also coached baseball. I was a pitcher for him. And, enough of that.

## Chapter 16 - 0:33

### Conclusion

---

**Announcer:** This oral history presentation is made possible through the support of our generous foundation-funders. We encourage you to join them by making your donation, which will allow us to record future stories. Students, teachers, and librarians are using this website for research and the general public is listening every day to these great Oklahomans share their life experience.

Thank you for your support as we preserve Oklahoma's legacy one voice at a time, on [VoicesofOklahoma.com](http://VoicesofOklahoma.com).