

David Hall

The dramatic and controversial life
of Oklahoma's 20th governor.

Chapter 1 – 1:03

Introduction

Announcer: David Hall was the 20th governor of Oklahoma having served from January 1971 to January 13th, 1975. He served at Tulsa County District Attorney from 1962 to 1966. David Hall defeated incumbent Republican Governor Dewey Bartlett in the closest gubernatorial election in state history. Three days after leaving office on January 13th, 1975 he was indicted on federal racketeering and extortion charges. Two months later he was convicted of bribery and extortion. In this interview, David Hall talks about his traumatic upbringing, his days as governor and the lead up to his time in prison. After being released from prison in 1978, he lived in La Jolla, California where he was a successful sales executive and a senior Olympics athlete. We thank our founding sponsors for making this interview possible as we follow our mission of preserving Oklahoma's legacy one voice at a time on VoicesofOklahoma.com.

Chapter 2 – 13:47

Family Unrest

John Erling: My name is John Erling and today's date is February 13th, 2012. We are recording this interview here at the offices of VoicesofOklahoma.com in Tulsa. David, would you state your full name, your date of birth and where you were born.

David Hall: David Hall. I was born October 20th, 1930 at St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

JE: No middle name?

DH: No middle initial, we were too poor. (Chuckle) There's a story behind that John.

JE: What is it?

DH: When I was born my father and mother had a big argument about what to name me. My father did not like her Uncle John Sexton and my mother wanted to name me John David, rather than just David. So my mother, who was of course bedfast then after having me, left it up to my father to fill out the birth certificate. My father never filled it out. The birth certificate when I went to go in the Air Force read: "unnamed Hall child." So I had to get an affidavit as to what my name had been. My father who I lived with, as my mother was institutionalized most of her life, had called me David Hall all of that time, so I reasoned that was my name. I checked with him and he said it was. So I had my grandmother sign an affidavit, which now became my official name, David Hall.

JE: I am sure you have had to explain that hundreds of times.

DH: Yes.

JE: Tell us about your family. Let's begin with your mother and her name and maiden name and where she grew up and was born.

DH: Her name is Aubrey Nell French. She is one of four daughters of Ben and Estella Gertrude French of Sherman, Texas. My grandfather was a sign painter and a homebuilder and my grandmother had been a secretary in a day when secretaries that were female were very unusual. On my father's side, his name was William Arthur Hall, Junior. His father was William Arthur Hall, Senior who had started the Hall Beverage Company in OKC for which my dad worked and which later became the Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company of OKC.

JE: Where did your parents meet?

DH: They met in Sherman, Texas when my dad was a first-year student at Austin College and my mother was a senior in high school. They married a year later. She began as a student at CIA, the Congress of Industrial Arts in Denton, Texas, which later became Texas State College for Women. She got her degree as a teacher there. My dad transferred to Baylor in his second year and majored in chemistry and graduated a year before she did. So they both were college graduates at the time.

JE: About your grandfather Hall, can you talk to us about the ownership of the bottling business? What was the name of it?

DH: In 1929, when my grandfather started it in Oklahoma City on North Shartel, it was Uncle Joe and Aunt Ida's Bottling Company. That evolved into the Hall Beverage Company in 1930. Then in 1937 when Pepsi-Cola tried to energize its sales countrywide and started the Pepsi jingle, we gained the franchise for everything south of Oklahoma City. My grandfather had previously been a cotton gin salesman for almost 30 years in Texas. He had saved his money. He wanted to go into a business that would work out for his two sons, Wendell Hall, my uncle and my father William A., nicknamed "Red" Hall.

JE: As an aside, the fight between Coke and Pepsi was the difference in the ounces?

DH: Absolutely. Pepsi was trying to out-do Coke, which was 8 ounces by having a 12-ounce bottle that sold for the same price. But Coke had a lock on the market. In OKC, Henry Brown's Coca-Cola franchise outsold us 8 or 9:1 when we started. We were able to narrow that somewhat during WWII, but we never in all of the history of the company caught up with them.

JE: Did you work for them?

DH: Yes I did. In 1939 I had my first job sweeping out the plant. They called me a sanitary engineer. I worked that type of job until I got my driver's license. Once I got my license I became a truck driver and I had the route in the black district of Oklahoma City for two summers.

JE: Your father ran for the Oklahoma Legislature in 1928. Tell us about that.

DH: He was excited. He had moved to OKC from having been a coach in Schulenburg, Texas. He was very gregarious and very outgoing. He loved Oklahoma City and he loved the people he met here. My mother was very happy. They had a home on the northwest side of OKC. He was in the Chamber of Commerce and all sorts of civic organizations and he decided to run for the Legislature. It absolutely devastated him that he didn't win. (Chuckle) But that was the beginning of his lifelong interest in politics. Although he did not try to guide me into politics, when he found out later when I was 12 or 13 that that was what I hoped my destiny would be, we became a pretty good team.

JE: Tell us a little bit about your mother and her personality. What kind of a person was she?

DH: She was very outgoing and gregarious in her days at Sherman High School and later at what became TSCW. Her nickname in high school was "Frenchy." She was 5'9" and a graceful stately girl. She loved sports, but most of all loved people. She was a painter and she did oils but she loved teaching best of all.

JE: Along in here someplace she moved back to Texas?

DH: She did. She completed her degree work while she was expecting my brother. She was pregnant when she was commuting from Sherman to Denton, Texas. My dad was completing a yearlong contract at a junior college in south Texas, so he was not there to help take care of her. It was the strain of that pregnancy, plus a later strain during her pregnancy with me that caused her first mental condition.

JE: Then your dad moves to California?

DH: My dad at that time divorced my mother and left my mother and my brother and me in Sherman, Texas. He married a young lady from Broken Bow, Oklahoma, named Dorothy Denise Draper and they went to California to start a new life.

JE: Did he take Wendell with him?

DH: He did, but he took him in a circuitous manner. My mother and Wendell and I were living in a home owned by my grandfather Hall across the street from the Austin College

campus in Sherman. One day my brother was walking home from school and my dad came by and picked him up and took him to California without calling my mother. For most of my life, I thought he had kidnapped my brother without ever letting my mother know. The truth of the matter was my father had stopped just past the county line. This was about 6 or 8 o'clock at night. He called the local sheriff in Grayson County Texas and he told him to call my mother and tell her that he had taken my brother to California. The Sheriff put it in a file and never called my mother until the middle of the next day. My mother thought that my brother had been kidnapped by nefarious people. She had a complete physical and mental breakdown the evening that it happened. Within two weeks she was committed to the state hospital in Wichita Falls, Texas. She was about 30 years old then, but she spent the rest of her life until she was about age 72 in Texas mental institutions.

JE: How old were you at that point?

DH: I was about 4 years old, but I remember it as if it were today. It's like a brilliant flash of color every time I think about it because it was the most devastating time of my life up until that age. She was standing before the sink in the kitchen, wringing out a dishtowel. All of a sudden she let out this terrible scream and collapsed on the floor. I was standing next to her. I didn't know what to do. I went over to her and she didn't revive. We were in an upstairs apartment. I ran downstairs to ask the people there to come and help me. They came up and helped revive her and she was immediately taken to the hospital.

JE: This must have been awfully traumatic for you?

DH: John, it was absolutely the most devastating event of my life. It has haunted me ever since. I did not see her after that for almost a year while she was being treated. The first time I saw her, she had aged so much. I was five years old and it was traumatic.

JE: So whom did you live with?

DH: I lived with my grandmother and my Aunt Essie, who was the youngest of the four daughters of Ben and Estella French. It was right in the middle of the Depression. They were hard-pressed just to take care of themselves. To have a four-year-old boy added to their burden when they had only raised girls and knew nothing about raising boys was very difficult. After two years of that, they felt like they could no longer take care of me because of money and because of their inability to handle boys. So they called my father and asked him if he would consider taking me. By this time he had returned from California and was living in OKC working for my grandfather. My grandfather and my father and my Uncle Earl Hall were all three in the bottling business. They had built a new facility in Ada, Oklahoma and my father was running that. He agreed that he would take me and raise me. So when I was six and a half he came to Sherman and loaded up my clothes. There I was with a stranger. I hadn't seen him since I was four years old. He

takes me back to Ada, Oklahoma. He tells me as we were driving back that my brother is coming back from military school in California and would be there the latter part of the summer. That really encouraged me because my brother was my hero.

JE: So that did happen?

DH: It did, but again, it happened in a circuitous way. I came to live with my dad in July 1936. Wendell was returning by train to Dallas from California in August 1936. The first of August I developed appendicitis and had to have an operation two days before he arrived in Dallas. My stepmother and father stayed with me. Then two days after the operation they left me in the hospital and went to pick up my brother. So I was in the hospital by myself at age 6 in this strange town where I didn't know anybody. They were gone for four days and then they came back and picked me up.

JE: Do you think all of that had a major impact on you?

DH: Yes, there is no question. When I later became an educated person and finished college and law school, I studied a lot about Catholicism. I remember that interesting statement that all the priests had made that if you give me a child to age 7 he will always be a Catholic. I can understand that because that trauma at age 4, 5 and 6 has stayed with me all of these years.

JE: Didn't the Baptist Church at the time have a big influence on you?

DH: It did when I went to live with my father. My Aunt Essie and my Grandfather French were members of the Church of Christ. They were good with attendance, but they didn't really shepherd me into the church as much as my dad did when I went to live with him in Ada. We became members of the First Baptist Church in Ada, Oklahoma. What a wonderful church. Dr. C.C. Morris was the pastor of that church. He also owned the local radio station. He was the power there in Ada. I fell in love with the church. I loved singing and I loved the lessons. I loved the four summers I spent at Falls Creek. The very first one my brother and I were in bunks right next to each other. That's when I first began to read the Bible really seriously. You could choose one book in the New Testament and I chose the Book of Mark. I read it through. I didn't understand it the first two or three times. Maybe I didn't even understand it the third or fourth time—but it gave me an appetite for reading the Bible that served me so well for the rest of my life. I was so lucky too. My brother was four years older than me. He led me, shepherded me and took care of me all of those years in Ada. That was 1936 through 1940.

JE: Somewhere in here you moved to OKC?

DH: That's correct. We had an opportunity to sell the Ada plant at a great profit. I found this out later. So my dad and my uncle and my grandfather agreed to sell the plant and we would move to OKC. It was just when the country was gearing up for WWII. Most beverage-serving business businesses like ours were also experiencing a tremendous

up-climb in the business. Also, Pepsi-Cola was gaining by leaps and bounds over what it had been in 1937. So my father and our family moved to OKC in 1940 and bought a home at 18th and May. He moved my brother and my two half-sisters who were now in the family. We lived there from 1940 until Pearl Harbor. At Pearl Harbor, my dad, who had been in military school in WWI and had never gotten to serve in the service, volunteered to go into the Army Air Corps at age 40. It was very unusual for somebody that age to volunteer. He was accepted and he served as an administrative officer for several years. But what happened was that my brother never accepted my stepmother. They had an acrimonious relationship from the time that he came back from California. It became so serious that just before my dad went off to the service my stepmother and my brother could not live with each other. My brother went off to live with my grandmother. He lived two blocks away at 19th and Drexel. The family was split up again and I lost my hero. He was my best buddy. We had roomed together and slept in a double-decker bunk. It was very tough on him. At this time, I was 11 and Wendell was 15. Within six months of my dad joining the service, he was stationed in California. He decided he would bring the family out there—everyone but Wendell, whom he couldn't bring out because my stepmother couldn't get along with him. So my stepmother and my two half-sisters and I took a train from OKC to Oakland. We were met by my father and went to live in a home he had rented in Fairfax, California, which is in Marin County just north of San Francisco.

Chapter 3 – 5:57

December 7, 1941

John Erling: On December 7, 1941, you would have been 10 or 11 years old. Do you remember that day?

David Hall: Oh yes, dramatically. We attended church faithfully. We went to Sunday School every Sunday morning and in the evening we went to what was called Baptist Young People's Union (BYPU). I can remember that as if it were yesterday. Then every Wednesday, we would go to a prayer meeting during the week. We were faithful members. My grandmother Hall had been one of the attendance record holders at the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City for years. On the morning of December 7, 1941 we were at church. When the church service ended, we were driving home in a 1937 two-door Ford. There are my father and stepmother and my two stepsisters and I in the back. We heard this announcement of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It was just and indelibly

stamped in all of our memories that morning. It took us maybe 20 minutes to drive home. By the time we reached the front of our home and were parked, my dad had made up his mind to volunteer.

JE: Wow, as so many did at that time.

DH: It was such an outpouring of patriotism, John. It's hard to imagine through the Vietnam War and through the war in Afghanistan and Iraq how the public could have reacted.

JE: So this was another scary and traumatic moment for you—because you probably thought the whole country was going to be under attack?

DH: I did, but I have to tell you something. My pride in my father was so great that the attack part of the war didn't bother me. I felt like my dad could whip anybody. So when he volunteered, I felt we were going to win the war! (Laughter)

JE: That's great. So you're enrolled in school.

DH: I was going to Lynnwood grade school out at 16th and Portland. I had the great experience of being in the same grade school with my cousin Jane Hall, who is an entertainer in Oklahoma City and has been since she was 16. She and I then formed a really strong bond as cousins, which still exists today. She was my host when I was in Oklahoma City earlier this week for a book signing.

JE: How old is she?

DH: She's 6 months older than I am so she's 81. She'll be 82 in May. She's preparing an act for the Senior Follies, which are coming up in June.

JE: Then by 1942 you would be enrolling in middle school?

DH: That's right. I left Taft Junior High School where I was about 1942. I went to California where I enrolled in Fairfax Middle School in Fairfax, California. We rented a home there and we lived in Fairfax while my dad was stationed at Hamilton Air Force Base, which is on the north end of San Francisco Bay.

JE: Was this the first time then that you were involved in organizing a student council?

DH: It was, but it was a happenstance. Up until that time I had dreams of becoming a West Point person. I was so proud of my dad's work in the Air Corps that I wanted to go to West Point. My dad and I talked it over quite a bit in those first days in California. But, it turned out that Fairfax had never had a student council, so a group of us decided to form it. I was very fortunate and helped on the Constitution and all. I became the first president of the Fairfax School Student Council.

JE: Were you hooked on government organizations then?

DH: I don't know whether so much I was hooked on the effect I could have on people if I could solicit their help in doing something that was useful and important. To us in 7th grade, the Student Council was supremely important.

JE: How tall are you now?

DH: I'm 6'1". I used to be 6'2".

JE: So in the 7th grade were you one of the taller kids?

DH: I had reached my full growth. I was about 6'1" at the time. By the time I returned to Oklahoma City age 14 I was 6'2".

JE: But even though, that was pretty tall for that grade.

DH: Oh it was. My best friend, Carl Olson, who I teamed up with at school, we were the two athletes of that group in our limited experience there. Carl was a terrific baseball player in later played for the Red Sox. He was just a terrific man.

JE: What was your father's assignment?

DH: When he went to Hamilton Air Force Base at 41 years old, he was an administrative officer. They didn't know exactly what to do with him. So he became the mess officer for Hamilton Air Force Base and served in that capacity until he was shipped 2 England 8 months later.

JE: Was rationing going on? Do you recall that?

DH: John, there was an all-out effort on everybody's part to support the war effort. I got an allowance of 50 cents a week and I put 40 cents a week into war stamps. My dad of course was in the service and my stepmother was working in a shipyard. They put in more than 25% of their salaries into war bonds. I collected newspaper and scrap iron. I collected tinfoil from people who would chew Wrigley's gum. I would take the tinfoil and roll it up into little balls. When we got a ball that was about 10 inches in diameter, we would turn it into the war effort. The City of Fairfax organized a symbol of recognition for anybody that would help the war effort. It was a small felt that badge with a yellow background and a very dark "E" for excellence and effort stitched in the middle. I put that on my Boy Scout merit badge sash and today I still have it. I was so proud of that. I contrast that with what I see about people supporting our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are for them, and give them a lot of lip service, but they don't buy war bonds and they don't grab scrap and we are not paying for the war as we go. I wonder where that spirit went and why we can't bring it back?

JE: The only thing I can think of would be 9/11. I think there was tremendous patriotism then.

DH: I thought that President Bush did a fantastic job of rallying the country. It lasted I don't know how many months, but then it tapered off because 1% was actually pursuing the war, and 99% advice were just going about our business.

JE: Right.

DH: Had we had a draft, I think we would have had the same feeling that we had in World War II and it would have absolutely accelerated the end of the war.

Chapter 4 – 4:36**Suicide**

John Erling: Your brother Wendell, where was he in all of this?

David Hall: This was a tragic time for Wendell. He was with my grandfather and grandmother who at that time were in their late 50s or early 60s. They were not used to raising a 16-year-old boy and the trauma that you go through in high school—the questions, the problems. My father was in California and then transferred to England where there was no communication except by V-mail. My brother did have my aunt and uncle as a support system too. He also had a cousin, Jane's older brother, Wayne who was probably my brother's best friend then. Although my father showed love to him, he and my stepmother couldn't get along at all. From the time that he had gone to live with them at age 8 or 9, until he was a senior in high school, he did not have the benefit of a mother. So it was very, very difficult for him. He went to a school dance one night, October 22, 1943. At the dance, he was jilted by a girl he was going out with. He thought it was the end of the world. He had nobody to counsel with and nobody to talk to. I think if I could have been there, I would've helped. He went home to my grandmother's home at 19th and Drexel and got his .22 rifle out and went across the street into a vacant lot and killed himself. What was even more tragic is my grandmother thought he had gone to spend the night with somebody. She didn't realize that he was lying in that cold field next door. She even called Louis Troast a mutual friend in Oklahoma City, who is now a retired banker there. She asked Louis if he had seen Wendell at the dance that night. He said, "Yes, I saw him as he was going out the door to go home." She asked him, "Did you notice anything different?" He said, "No." Wendell was very introverted and very good at hiding his feelings. He had had to be all of his life. Another tragic part of that was you couldn't get a phone call through in those days. So my grandfather and grandmother sent a telegram without telling us what the cause of death was. A telegram just said, "Wendell died on the morning of October 23, 1943." That's all it said in the telegram. Now, to add to the feeling of that, which just devastated me, was the fact that when the telegram was delivered by Western Union, when the Western Union man came to the door we thought he was bringing a death telegram about my father, so all of us were up in arms. Then we found out it was about Wendell and we couldn't get a telephone call through. I did not know he had committed suicide until two years later when we returned to Oklahoma. My stepmother chose not to tell me when she found out.

JE: What did they tell you the reason was for his death?

DH: You may find this hard to believe, but I always thought it was accidental up until the time I got back to Oklahoma. There was no mention of a gunshot.

JE: Accidental how?

DH: Well, my stepmother never explained it to me and I did not find out until my father returned from England.

JE: How old were you then?

DH: By that time I was 13.

JE: Wow. This was another shock to affect your life.

DH: It was. I could not understand Wendell killing himself. That just did not register with me. We had been so close all of the years that we had lived together. We had shared our joys. We had shared our defeats. We shared everything. It was very, very difficult for me. I had a hard time. My cousin Wayne who was his dearest friend, to the day Wayne died at age 86, it still weighed on his mind. We had a talk maybe three months before Wayne died about how that had haunted him ever since.

JE: In your long life, did you ever counsel with people who had experienced suicide in their family and found out about your case?

DH: I've had three people that I have. I've never had counseling myself or gone to any sort of psychiatrist or anything because my attitude is more optimistic than most people. I never really felt that I needed that. But I have helped three other men and women whose three sons all committed suicide. One was a banker here in Tulsa—tragic, really tragic. It's unbelievably hard to cope with.

JE: Yes.

DH: The worst suicides are when it's a single child. That's very, very difficult.

JE: Then all around they blame themselves and ask what they could have done?

DH: Yes. I have a friend who I play basketball with who volunteers as a counselor at the Suicide Council Watch of San Diego. We have a bridge in San Diego that's about 200 feet high. It's a target for anybody that's thinking about committing suicide. That friend, Bill Henderson has probably saved 50 people from jumping off that bridge by working in the night session to counsel people that call in.

Chapter 5 – 5:40
Classen High School

John Erling: What about junior high school?

David Hall: I went directly from Linwood to Taft Junior High School at 23rd and May in OKC. I went to Taft for three months and then we moved to California. Then I came back to Taft as a ninth grader. It was wonderful coming back. I had this interest in student council. My best friend, Jim Webster, a dear, dear friend and still to this day my best friend, unbeknownst to me had been elected president of the first semester at Taft when I returned. Jim found out how much I liked student council so he proceeded to manage my campaign for student council president at Taft the next semester. It didn't hurt to have my cousin Jane who was an entertainer even in junior high school, also campaigning for us.

JE: Then tell us about high school?

DH: I went on to Classen High School at 18th and Classen in OKC. That transition was one of the hardest though—having been student council president at Taft and then going to Classen as a ninth grader. I was very lucky. Because I knew so many people, I got elected president of the 10th grade class. I was realizing more of my ambition to be involved in student government. But I got so high on myself that I lost sight of the fact that it wasn't me that was doing this, it was the other people helping me. I got too big for my britches. I ran for class president as a junior and got whipped. I was not just beaten—but whipped soundly by a wonderful guy named Bob Wood. That knockdown helped me more in politics than anything that happened after that time. I decided that it was me—not anybody else that was responsible. That's when I decided to learn every name of every student I could in that high school. I probably learned 90 percent of their names and I would call them by name in the hallway.

JE: How many students would that have been?

DH: There were 1,825 students then so probably 1,600 names I had absolutely down—not just their first name—I would remember their last name too. That turned out to be the best vehicle for helping me later in politics that you could ever receive. It enabled me as a second-semester junior to win the student council race without a runoff.

JE: Then in your senior year you were class president?

DH: Yes, I won it actually in the spring of my junior year to serve in my senior year. I came into my senior year with everything I had ever hoped for. I was president of the student council. I made the varsity basketball team. I was making good grades and was getting ready to go to college. All of the things that you dream about were coming true. I call that my salad days. (Chuckle)

JE: The ability to remember people's names, didn't you continue that?

DH: Yes, I did when I was in college. I tried to determine if I wanted to get into student government in college or try a different route. There was an organization on campus at OU called the Union Activities Board. It controlled every operation on campus except the elected student government. I thought I could learn more from the Union Activities Board. So I started working for them on the lowest level working on committees and then running projects until finally I was chairman of the Union Activities Board during my senior year. That took four years of college to get to that end. After I graduated from high school I had the summer to go back to work at the Pepsi plant and all that sort of thing to get ready for college. I went through rush and pledged Phi Gamma Delta with a marvelous group of men from all over the state that turned out to be some of my best friends.

JE: But in high school you actually played on the varsity basketball team?

DH: I did. I was the No. 2 substitute on the team. The first team was Pete Darcy and John Reddell, Guy Fuller and Bob Mosier and Pat Williams. Then Nate Graham from OKC was the No. 1 substitute and I was the No. 2. It was an absolutely marvelous group of men. We had lawyers and a federal judge, Tom Brett, was on the second team. We had a wonderful pilot, Dale Jones, who was also on the second team. We had Jimmy Gonders who was a worldwide oil engineer. They were the kind of men that you would dream about making good friends with. Jim Gonders and I just saw each other at a Classen School Reunion for Valentine's Day last Friday at the Boulevard Cafeteria in OKC.

JE: What fun that had to be?

DH: It was wonderful. Now, all of the people on the first-string team but one are dead. There are six of us still alive that just relish those days because that was a wonderful experience.

JE: In 1948 you made it to the state title?

DH: We made it to the state title and we beat Tulsa Central in the finals on a dramatic play by Pete Darcy and John Reddell. Reddell, as you know later became an All-American end at the University of Oklahoma under Bud Wilkinson. We were behind 30-29. There was a goal scored and Darcy was down under the basket at Tulsa Central's end. He had not started to make it back down to our end of the court. Reddell got the ball after the basket that made the score 30-29 and he threw the ball the length of the court to Darcy who had never started coming back. Darcy just turned around and took one step and put it in and the buzzer went off.

JE: (Chuckle)

DH: It was very dramatic.

Chapter 6 – 3:04**OU Jobs**

John Erling: Then we bring you to OU. You pledged a fraternity and that was a good experience for you?

David Hall: It was very good. At OU, I organized my time as well as I ever did when I was governor. I used to take a sheet every Sunday and mark out the whole week's calendar all of the hours from the time I got up until the time I went to sleep. I filled each square with what I had planned for that hour. I did that all the way until halfway through my senior year. I quit doing it the last half of my senior year so I could enjoy myself. But I knew to the hour how I was going to allocate my time for those years.

JE: You needed some extra money there at OU?

DH: My dad, to his wonderful credit had built sort of a lean-to apartment on the back of his garage at 18th & May that brought in \$50 a month. He told me that if I would help him build it, that when I got to college, that \$50/month would go to help pay for my college. That agreement worked out great for the first year, but then I started working at OU and I was able to live without that \$50 and he gave it to one of my sisters. I tried to figure out the best work I could do without endangering my schoolwork. One of the jobs I found was I could sell hamburgers to the sorority houses. So I searched around town and found a hamburger joint where I could buy the hamburgers for 15 cents and sell them for a quarter and make a dime profit on each one. I could make about \$2.50 a night. (Chuckle)

JE: So you did that for a while?

DH: I did that from September through January, but then it cut into my study time. That was one problem. The other problem was the owner of the hamburger joint drank too much. I would come down to pick up my hamburgers and he had not made them and I would have to cook them myself. (Laughter) He was a wonderful man though and just so helpful. The nice thing about that though, by having that job, I had to have a little truck to get around in. So I got around the no-car rule on campus. So for that first year I was lucky that I had some transportation. Then I also at the same time got a job collecting cleaning bills from the fraternity houses. That helped pay my way. The last semester of my first year I worked as a waiter in our kitchen at my fraternity house. I realized that I couldn't continue all three of those jobs. So I looked around the campus for a job that would pay me enough and help me enough. I was very lucky to get a job at McCall's Men's Store—a very fine men's clothing store on campus corner. I worked there and then served as a scholarship chairman for my fraternity and got part of my house bill paid—so I was able to survive without any help from home for the next three years.

JE: Just ahead of you in class was a man who would become governor of our state?

DH: Oh yes, a fraternity brother, J. Howard Edmondson. He was a dynamic, absolutely energetic very forceful man. He had been a good law student and gone to TU and began with Robert Wheeler a 28-year dynasty of one group of us being elected county attorney right after the other.

Chapter 7 – 2:13

OU / Civil Rights

John Erling: Because you are interested in politics, in 1948 Harry Truman defeats Thomas Dewey, do you have any recollection of that time?

David Hall: Oh! What a glorious night! During the 1948 campaign, Truman had come through Oklahoma and his campaign train had run out of money. Two or three Oklahomans got together and paid for the train for the rest of the campaign and really saved his bacon. So all of us who were interested in politics were following the campaign to see what was going to happen. When the paper announced that Truman had lost and Dewey had won, and then it was reversed, it was wonderful.

JE: I'm younger than you and I remember I was at Roosevelt Grade School in Grand Forks, North Dakota. As youngsters we were walking through the playground saying, "Truman in the White House, ready to be elected. Dewey in the garbage can ready to be collected."

DH: (Laughter) That's marvelous.

JE: Yes and it's stayed with me for all of these years. From 1948 to 1952 you are at OU. Those were the years of the Civil Rights Movement.

DH: Yes.

JE: What are your recollections about that? Blacks weren't able to use restrooms or water fountains?

DH: Nor could they enroll at OU. During that time they either had to go to Langston University or they went somewhere else to an all-black college. It wasn't until after 1952 that Ada Lois Sipuel was admitted to the OU Law School and finally broke the color barrier. But when I was in school at OU there was no black student from 1948-1952 at OU.

JE: Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher was admitted, one student, but that was kind of a sham law school set up wasn't it?

DH: That's exactly right. In fact, to try and circumvent having her there, they created a false law school at Langston University, which they tried to get her to attend to take her out of

being a student at OU. The OU Law School had her segregated in a separate seat away from the class. But to the credit of her fellow class members, they broke that barrier down. I was so proud of them. Then later she got full recognition and that was the end of the color barrier. I don't remember how many years it was until the first black student was admitted to undergraduate school, but she's the one that broke the barrier.

Chapter 8 – 3:09

Governor Johnston Murray

John Erling: In 1950 the Korean War breaks out and your friends were called for service.

David Hall: It was tragic because everyone that had been like me, so gung ho in World War II and patriotic wanted to be a part of keeping this country safe in Korea. That feeling was still there. A number of my classmates when they enrolled at OU signed up for something called the Platoon Leaders School in the Marines. They were sent in the summer to Camp Lejeune for training. Those men when the war broke out in 1950 were called out of school, some 500 of them from across Oklahoma. It was horrible because they were not finished with college. They were not trained like they should have been and yet many of them within several weeks were put on front line duty in Korea.

JE: Did you listen then when the famous speech by General Douglas MacArthur was delivered after he had been recalled by the war?

DH: All of our fraternity gathered around noontime in the big west living room of the Phi Gamma house there on West Boyd Street and listened to MacArthur's speech. Those famous words "old soldiers never die they just fade away" from the song—rang and resonated with every one of us.

JE: Then you get involved in another race that involved Johnston Murray?

DH: My dad, after his experience with that legislative race, was very interested in politics. In Johnston Murray's race, he decided that he would really become involved. He worked it out with my grandfather and uncle to leave the Pepsi business for that year and help Johnston Murray with the prospects that he would probably take some state job with the Murray administration if they were successful. As a result of him being in that race, he encouraged me to take a summer position. So I did. I was sent to live with the Green Funeral Home people, who were big Johnston Murray supporters up in Nowata. I lived there for 10 weeks in the summer working on the campaign. I had a marvelous experience. The Green family was wonderful. I worked with a guy named Jack Foose.

Jack was the best county campaigner that you could ever work with. He taught me so much about meeting people, about being current on my issues, about being able to take hard knocks when somebody was opposed to us—it was great training.

JE: He did become governor then?

DH: Johnston Murray won the governor's race. It was so tragic because Johnston, whose father had been governor and who loved the state and Johnston, who loved the state when he went in...after he left office...for some reason, decided he would publish an article for which he was paid \$2,500 by the *Saturday Evening Post* called "The Mess In Oklahoma." He outlined everything that he thought was wrong with Oklahoma. It was almost a treasonous act I thought because he had been given the greatest honor he could have been given by this state. For him to have written that article even though there were problems—but penning them as if it was just a mess and no one ought to come there, really made me angry.

JE: We should point out that his father was the famous and maybe infamous, too—

DH: Alfalfa Bill Murray

JE: Right.

Chapter 9 – 5:28

Harvard / TU

John Erling: Eisenhower-Stevenson Campaign in 1952 for President. Did you get involved in that?

David Hall: That was wonderful. I got involved in that and little did I know that Adlai Stevenson had duplicated exactly what I would duplicate at Harvard some years later. He had gone as a first-year student to Harvard and apparently did not make his grades so he went back to Illinois. He finished at an Illinois law school and then he went on to become governor. That's identically the same thing that happened to me.

JE: We should point out here that you had your sights set on the governor's mansion from a very early age.

DH: Absolutely. From the time I formed that Student Council in Fairfax, my mission in life as a goal for my career was to be governor of Oklahoma. One thing John, that helped spark that too, Californians when I came to their school were very anti-Oklahoman "Okie". They wanted to call everybody from Oklahoma an "Okie" based on *The Grapes of Wrath* story. I didn't have an accent like most Oklahomans when I went out there because I have lived in Texas and different places. If they called me an Okie I was ready to fight them. (Chuckle) I decided in my mind that I was going to erase that term if I ever got to be governor.

- JE:** While you were at OU Bud Wilkinson was the coach of the OU football team?
- DH:** Right. He was marvelous, absolutely marvelous. He was a good man and a good coach and role model for all of us because of his discipline.
- JE:** Yes, he won 47 games in a row. You then were commissioned in ROTC—Reserve Officer Training Corps?
- DH:** That's right. When I came to the University of Oklahoma, the Air Force had not been set out as a separate unit. I had joined the Army ROTC first, but when we had an opportunity my sophomore year to change to the Air Force, principally because my dad had been in the Air Corps— I decided I was going to change to the Air Force. It was a major good move for me.
- JE:** How long was your term of service?
- DH:** We had to serve four years in college ROTC—freshman, sophomore, junior and senior. We were commissioned Second Lieutenants in the Air Force on graduating in 1952.
- JE:** Where were you assigned?
- DH:** I went to Lackland Air Force Base for processing. During that time so many of us were non-fliers in the ROTC, that they did not know what to do with us and the Korean War. Most of us were assigned as administrative officers to various bases across the nation. I was assigned with 12 other Second Lieutenants ROTC to a small base in Texas called San Marcos, between Austin and San Antonio.
- JE:** So here's Harvard Law School—was that a dream or how did that happen?
- DH:** No. I never considered doing anything except coming back to the University of Oklahoma once I had finished my 2 years' commitment to the Air Force and graduating from the University of Oklahoma Law School. But while I was in the Air Force, my best friend in the service was a man from Boston named E.T. Ryan, Junior. Eddie Ryan was a 1952 graduate of Harvard. He and I became very close. He kept telling me that as good as my grades were at Oklahoma, and with what he thought were my abilities, that I ought to consider going to Harvard Law School. I thought maybe that was a good idea. So I took what we now call the LSAT test at Texas University. I did so well that I was offered a scholarship for free tuition for the first year at Harvard Law School. I decided that I would accept the offer and go back to Boston and try it for a year.
- JE:** Was that tough—going from the culture here in Oklahoma to the East Coast?
- DH:** It wasn't as tough as the two-year break I'd had from being an academician and being in the Air Force, really just having a good time, playing basketball and being in the service. To try and pick up the discipline that I had being a student at OU— that was the hardest. The transition to Boston and the people there was not hard at all. I love those people— accent and all. It was just terrific.
- JE:** So then how did that experience work for you your first year?

DH: My discipline was not what it should have been. I can't believe that I became so undisciplined at studying. For example, I had five courses at the first of the semester. Two courses I outlined religiously every night, but three courses were just modestly done. In Property, I really didn't do my job at all. The result was I made good grades in the two that I outlined, fair grades in the two that were just so-so, but I made a D in Property at the end of the year. So I couldn't get my scholarship back for the next year. Harvard would allow me to continue on in that class of 1957, but I would have to repeat Property and I would have to pay my own tuition. That was impossible. I couldn't earn enough money working. I did work while I was at Harvard—first as a referee at the business school basketball league and later at Christmas as a postman, but I couldn't make enough money to pay the tuition. So I had to come back to Oklahoma and get a job. I ended up at the University of Tulsa. I went first to the University of Oklahoma, but they were going to make me repeat the Property course. But I went to TU and they said that because of the competition at Harvard, even though I had made a D, they would give me credit for the D if I could show a grade average at about a 3.0 for the rest of my term in law school. Sure enough, I had maybe a 3.7 or 3.8 GPA for the rest of the years at TU. I also was involved in my reserve duty in Boston teaching at the MIT ROTC Program. I was going to have my first assignment in September have my second year. I had to give that up and I really hated that.

Chapter 10 – 9:46

Hall for Governor

John Erling: Somewhere along in here you meet a young lady named Jo?

David Hall: That was the best blind date I ever had. She started her career with American Airlines as a stewardess in New York City in 1952. She transferred in 1954 to fly the Tulsa-New York route to be closer to her mother who was a lady who had been deserted at Jo's birth her husband. She raised two children and made marvelous strides with both of them. Her brother became a detective with the Little Rock, Arkansas Police Department and then Jo went to college and then to American Airlines. She wanted to be close to her mother so she transferred to Tulsa. The second night she was in Tulsa I got to meet her. A law school classmate who sat right next to me was going out with her roommate. He asked me if I wanted to come out and meet her. I did and I was smitten from the first time I met her.

JE: Was she?

DH: I'm not sure. She says she was, but I'm not sure. It took me six months to convince her to marry me. She was having a really good time working as a stewardess and traveling the country. I think the catalyst and when we both realized that we were made for each other, was that the phone bills were so big we had to get married. (Laughter) We couldn't continue to go on. I remember talking to her one night on a date and I said, "We ought to get married or something." Jo looked at me right in the eye and she said, "We're going to get married or nothing."

JE: So we have a new governor in here—J. Howard Edmondson was elected governor and he was the youngest governor at 33 years of age?

DH: Right. He actually ran in 1958. I was at TU in my senior year of law school in 1958. I was working for State Farm Insurance Company doing claim adjusting for the Tulsa area. One of the firms that I worked with was one of the best, I think civil defense firms, which was Truman Rutgers' firm. His lead attorney was a man named Joe Best. Joe and I got to be really good friends. So when I came to my senior year, I asked Joe to introduce me to Bob Simms, who was going to be the new county attorney after he'd been elected when J. Howard Edmondson ran for governor. So, Joe introduced me to Simms, Simms hired me and it was the start of a wonderful career. But it was very unusual, because J. Howard Edmondson had stripped the office from taking his attorney friends with him to OKC. So there were not enough county attorneys coming in to Simms term when he was sworn in, in January. Two of us were still in law school and we were hired by Simms to be assistant county attorneys. It required both of us to appear before the state Supreme Court to get permission to be admitted to practice prior to the time we finished law school and had taken the bar. Mickey Imel who became the U.S. attorney in Tulsa and I were the two that were given that privilege. It was a wonderful privilege because it gave us an edge on any of the people in our class on trying cases.

JE: Then we come to the 1966 race for governor. Dewey Bartlett was a Republican candidate and a state senator at the time.

DH: Yes, he put on a very good campaign.

JE: Henry Bellmon could not succeed himself at the time and so that's what set this up?

DH: Correct.

JE: What did you think about this race for governor?

DH: I had been county attorney up until 1966 for five and a half years out of the 8 years I was in the county attorney's office. I thought the fact that Bellmon could not succeed himself left an opening for someone. I wasn't sure if I was ready or not. I was 34 years old when I made the decision—two years out from the 1966 race—and actually 36 by the time I filed to run for office. But I had had the advantage of major publicity as county attorney in a nationwide fraud case involving school district employees selling surplus property and embezzling the money from the school district. I had been the first prosecutor in the country at the local level to expose

that operation. I got great publicity. The *Tulsa World* helped immensely in that investigation. Ken Neal, one of their ace reporters had worked as hard as people in the county attorney's office in helping uncover what happened. His investigative reporting work really helped make that case. So having that kind of publicity and having been very active in the state DA's association, as well as having written a book for county attorneys on how to charge someone accused. Because we never had a form book in the history of county attorneys until I wrote that book and put it out there. All of the forms were someplace, but they were never put together in a reference book for county attorneys. I decided to try it even though I was young. I got great encouragement from Oklahoma City and my friends there, so I ran for governor in 1966 at the same time that Dewey Bartlett was running on the Republican ticket.

JE: You had a special train called the David Hall Cannonball Train?

DH: Oh, that was marvelous time. That was the largest train that had run from Tulsa to OKC since WWII. I think we had 39 cars. The cost of that train, which seems small now was \$9,000. We had to raise that to pay for the train. We left the Tulsa Union Station on a Saturday morning and took the train with several hundred people to OKC to their train station. Then we marched from their train station to the Skirvin Hotel where they held our rally where they announced my candidacy for governor.

JE: Back home, who was running the county attorney's office for you?

DH: S.M. "Buddy" Fallis. If it hadn't been for Buddy Fallis, I could have never run for governor, ever. It was a heavy burden on him that I did not realize. With me running for governor not only did he have to run the office, he had to prepare to succeed me and run a campaign himself. It turned out to be a difficult campaign because two of the other assistants decided to challenge him and it made it very, very difficult.

JE: You had a campaign song. Do you remember how it went?

DH: I can't now. It's been so long. I do remember that it carried very well.

JE: (Singing) David Hall Oklahoma, he's for all Oklahoma, he's what it takes to make our country strong. David Hall Oklahoma, he's for all Oklahoma, what Oklahoma needs is David Hall!

DH: With that voice of yours, it sounds a lot better than it did when we sang it.

JE: (Laughter) I can't sing! To cut costs on that campaign you actually hitchhiked to OKC?

DH: Yes, to save money—we didn't have enough airplane volunteers. So to save money, my staff in OKC would take me to the turnpike gate. I would hitchhike from the turnpike gate in OKC to the turnpike gate in Tulsa and another staff member in Tulsa would pick me up. It saved a lot of money. I probably met at least 200 people and bummed at least 200 rides. It got to be so publicized, especially in the smaller counties where it really helped me as being a man of the people.

JE: In the end, in that primary you lost to Preston Moore and Raymond Gary?

DH: I missed it by 10,000 votes statewide. I was absolutely hurt beyond belief. It took me about 5 or 6 weeks to get over it. I realized that the reason I had lost was because I had not done my homework in the rural areas of Oklahoma. I only visited some counties once during that campaign. So I set out then for the next four years to remedy what I had not done in that campaign.

JE: Then of course Dewey Bartlett wins that race.

DH: Dewey ran a very good campaign. He was a very good man and he did a good job as governor. I have no quarrel with him, nor would I ever disparage him for what he did then.

JE: The opportunity to run for the U.S. Senate came about?

DH: Yes. Gene Stipe approached me and said that a number of people would like for me to challenge for the U.S. Senate. He asked me if I would be interested.

JE: Challenging who?

DH: J. Howard Edmondson, who was running for the seat again. I can't remember who was on the Republican side. Also, the incumbent Mike Monroney had not decided at that time if he was going to run or not. Thank goodness I used my head this time. Instead of going with what my heart would say, "let's run the race," I decided I would canvas as many prominent Democrats in both Oklahoma and Washington to see what they thought about it. I did. I would say 90% of them counseled against it, but the most dramatic one was Bobby Kennedy, Junior.

JE: Who at the time was the Attorney General?

DH: Yes. My dear friend who was later my law partner, Ronald Goldfarb, who had been a rackets prosecutor for Bobby Kennedy took me to meet him. He arranged a good hour-long session for Kennedy to tell me what he thought. What's interesting is that Ron didn't know what Kennedy was going to tell me and neither did I. But he was adamant that I shouldn't do it and said, "I've got to be really blunt with you. You'll get no support from any of our team and we'll work against you because we're for Mike Monroney. But he said, "If you'll wait your turn, I'm not saying what will happen in a few years."

JE: He didn't just dismiss you. He talked to you for some time.

DH: Oh no. I thanked him profusely for his brutal honesty. It helped me more by getting completely off of that and staying on my original mission to become governor.

JE: So then it would have been how long later when he was assassinated?

DH: He was killed in June 1968 at the Ambassador Hotel when he was running for president. That's when Sirhan Sirhan shot him.

Chapter 11 – 10:23**Hall for Governor Again**

John Erling: But then in 1970, you pursue the governorship again?

David Hall: Yes, but this time I was ready.

JE: But this was against the incumbent Dewey Bartlett. Was he held in high esteem in the state?

DH: I thought he was. All of my advisers asked me, “Why pick a popular incumbent governor?” My thought was that certain things weren’t being done to help certain groups of people that might be exploited to the advantage of a challenger. Also, the metropolitan papers took it for granted two years out that Dewey Bartlett would be re-elected and gave small shift to anyone that was challenging. The result was that some of the toughest competition that I could have had in the primaries never filed, because they felt it was going to be too difficult. Although there were good men running against me, they weren’t of the caliber that could have run against me and made it very difficult for me. Something that helped that I didn’t like at the time...I had a heavy race in the primary and a primary run-off before we ever got to the general election. But it gave me the chance to expose my issues and to get people to know me on a big basis as far as getting publicity. By the time I got to the general race with Bartlett, I was known quite well in the state.

JE: Was it easy to raise money?

DH: No, it was very difficult. I am a middle-class person. I had not have family to back me up. We had to raise as many dollars as we could from as many people as we could. In that race we received 7,500 separate donations from people that made up our campaign. I don’t know what the largest one was, but I am guessing there was nothing over \$3,500.

JE: What were your main issues as you ran for governor?

DH: Number one was the lack of focusing on education and helping get the state in its proper educational picture. Teachers were underpaid. There was no kindergarten and no Vo-Tech schools. We ranked 46th in higher education funding and I think we ranked 47th in elementary school funding. I was determined that I was going to change that. My own personal life had been changed so much by education that I could see that that was the best way to bring us out of this stage of not being recognized into a competitive situation, which would help in the long-term lives of the people and bring new industry into the state.

JE: Your mother had taught you to read when you were four years old?

DH: I could read two years before I ever entered school. She taught me with flashcards.

JE: The governor, Dewey Bartlett had his own oil well that was apparently doing something that you found out about. Tell us about that.

DH: We were fortunate. A team of my young men, headed by a wonderful helped from

Shawnee named J.T. Weedman, went out and found a well that was leaking from the pool where they put the sludge into a free-flowing beautiful stream. Now, we didn't take any pictures of it. Instead, we hired an independent newsman out of OKC who was not necessarily a friend or even a supporter. We flew him to the site and had him shoot the pictures and give an affidavit to the effect. Then we created a TV commercial showing a proper well and the Bartlett well and we saved it until the last five days of the campaign. When we exposed that well, and to Dewey's credit I don't think he ever knew about their being such a well, I think he was completely oblivious to it, he thought it was a dirty trick, but it wasn't. We had found it and it was a legitimate source. It was an environmental issue and the environment was a big matter across the country at that point in time. So we exposed that and it may have made the difference, but I don't think so. I think the difference was the last week to 10 days Governor Bartlett withdrew all of his advertising in the rural newspapers because he thought he had the race won. He was 7-10 points ahead. The difference, approximately 2,100 votes came mostly from the rural areas. Had he left those ads in, my guess is that he would have won.

JE: So the returns start coming in?

DH: (Laugh) Yes. We were behind. I had four key coordinators. Each one of them had one corner of the state. They all flew to OKC to watch the returns. Every one of them that got off the plane said, "It looks bad. It really looks bad." All four of them said it. I looked them in the eye and said, "We are going to win this campaign. I don't want to hear any of that talk. Come on over to the hotel and let's see what happens." Well, it was 9:30pm before the trend reversed and that was so dramatic. Gosh. I have never had anything thrill me as much in my life. Between 9:30pm and 10:30pm we gained the lead and never lost it. Now the next day, here we go. You know, Democrats are always accusing Republicans of jimmying the polls and working the election. Well, the Republicans now are accusing us of having not done the right thing for the election. Governor Bartlett decided to call out the National Guard and guard the ballot box.

JE: Because the vote difference was so close he called for a recount?

DH: Yes, it was a difference of 2,100 or 2,200 votes. He called for a recount. Remember, under the rules of the recount, if he paid for the recount and if he ever got ahead he could stop right there and that would be the end of the race, unless I had posted an equal amount for the recount so it would go to the end. We immediately raised \$19,000 to post our side of it to keep him from being declared the winner if he ever got ahead. It was nip and tuck until the last 11 counties.

JE: Did you have your people volunteer? How did you get everybody out in the 77 counties?

DH: The problem is if you didn't have volunteers you couldn't afford to hire the poll watchers or the lawyers to be there. We got 200 volunteer lawyers, as many as three in some of

the counties to volunteer as poll watchers and make sure the count was accurate. Those men are all listed in a book that I wrote by name and by county, where they saved the election for me.

JE: So how long did it take? How many days?

DH: It went on for 21 days. It was nerve wracking. Bartlett would be ahead and then I would be ahead. It all boiled down to the last 11 counties. The very last county that came in was Nowata County.

JE: So, they were the rural counties?

DH: Yes, they were the rural counties. It was obvious by the last four or five counties that we had it won—but it was very nip and tuck.

JE: After you were officially elected, did you notice that the landscape changed with supporters or those who didn't support?

DH: We had never had a road contractor, we had never had a major oil person, we had never had any of the traditional big money people help any way in financing our campaign. But the road contractors of the state got together a fund of about \$400,000 or so and approached my finance chairman between the November election and December offering this money to help us pay off any campaign debts. I refused it. I turned it down flat. But I wasn't going to take it. Those people had never supported me and I did not want in any way to be beholden to them. I didn't want to be unfair to them—I just did not want to be beholden to them. That was a real first I think in the history of the state.

JE: Do you believe that maybe plans were already under way to undermine your administration?

DH: I don't think so at that time. I think the first indication to undermine it came in April 1971 when former Governor Bartlett went to see John Mitchell. I don't think that Governor Bartlett went there with the intent of creating a conspiracy. I think he went there with the intent of telling Mitchell that he should investigate me to make sure that I was not doing something that I shouldn't be doing. But I also think the big motivation was his political revenge for me having beat him in that race. That was absolutely I think the worst time of his life as far as his career.

JE: He was very bitter.

DH: Before he died he was still bitter.

JE: So that meeting took place in Washington, D.C. Dewey Bartlett, Attorney General John Mitchell and Deputy Attorney General Richard Kleindienst.

DH: That's right. From that meeting, Mitchell called Robert Martian and it was with two weeks after that that all of the IRS investigations began.

JE: The newspapers were printing negative stories about you?

DH: Especially *The Daily Oklahoman*, yes.

JE: As you look back on that, with E.K. Gaylord as the publisher, do you think a visit with him might have worked?

DH: I think after I won the race, if I had taken a peace pipe down to 4th and Broadway that we might have reconciled our differences. But I didn't do that. I should have done that. At the least I should have called them. But I had been vilified for so long, for a whole year—just unbelievably in that campaign, that I wasn't disposed to do that and I would live to regret it for the next four years.

JE: Why do you think they were so vitriolic?

DH: I don't think it was against me, I think it would have been against anyone that beat his man. I never thought that Gaylord, until a couple of years later, had anything personal against me.

JE: Then they hit on your tax relief bill?

DH: The tax relief bill gave relief to 95 percent of the people and raised the taxes for 5 percent. To give you an example of that, the *Tulsa World* supported me since I was County Attorney, every time I ran. After that tax bill passed, Byron Boone who was then managing the paper for the Lortons in Tulsa invited me to lunch in Tulsa. The purpose of the lunch was to tell me that they had been good supporters of mine, but that he personally was not going to ever support me again because I cost him \$6,000 in taxes with that tax bill. Now, I don't know what he made, but it was an enormous amount of money and the \$6,000 to him was not that much—but he was absolutely very unhappy about it. I am sure there were a lot of others in that 5 percent group that felt the same way. On the other side of the scale, the 95 percent that got relief didn't recognize it because the state tax people, instead of leaving the monthly amount taken out so that it could be seen at the end of the year, they upped the monthly take so that there would be no additional monthly taxes at the end of the year. Invariably, every wage earner thought that his or her taxes had been raised.

Chapter 12 – 7:06

Investigation Begins

John Erling: It seems that you were not the only Democratic governor that was going to be targeted for investigation?

David Hall: That's true. There were several others. Wendell Ford in Kentucky, Milton Shaft in Pennsylvania. Edwin Edwards in Louisiana. Jack Anderson over a period of years documented all of this. That was where we were getting some of the information that we were not able to get anywhere else. We had a meeting in Clearwater, Alabama, in which 19 Democrat governors all of whom at one time or another had been investigated

by the administration. Some more than others, but that's 19 out of 35 sitting governors. Understand that in the 1970 campaign, the Democrats won 35 governorships and the Republicans won 15.

JE: You took on the oil industry with a gross production tax. Where there some people in the oil business that decided that they didn't like you?

DH: Yes, but believe it or not, it was only the local oil industry people in Oklahoma—particularly the local independent oilmen. The people in Gulf and Shell and all of the major companies supported me. The reason was very interesting. Most states, like California and Louisiana had upped the gross production tax as much as 5 to 10 percent. Oklahoma raised it a very modest 2 percent. It did not affect the planning of major oil companies like Shell, because they knew what we found out—that oil was going to go up in price in the next four years regardless of what happened. So at the time I went into office, oil was selling for about \$3.75 a barrel. At the end of my four years, oil was selling for almost \$10.75 a barrel. That 2 percent was not only almost completely absorbed by the increase, but every independent oilman in Oklahoma who fought me, made more money than he had ever made during those four years.

JE: Enter the name of U.S. Attorney, former head of the Republican Party William Burkett.

DH: Burkett was the Republican campaign chairman for Dewey Bartlett at the time that Bartlett ran against me. He was another person that was just incensed when we beat Bartlett. It was a personal thing for him because it made him look like he hadn't done his job.

JE: Just one note here about your inauguration day. I noticed that Reverend Ben Hill and Oral Roberts were there. Were you good friends with Oral Roberts?

DH: Good friends. Oral Roberts got a lot of bad publicity for things that he really shouldn't have been credited with. He was a man on a mission who believed that the Lord worked through him. He never represented that he could heal people like many people said. But he felt like the Lord worked through him to help people. Oral had been a good friend of mine in Tulsa and I very strongly supported him. I asked him to be one of the two religious speakers at my inauguration. Ben Hill, who I considered to be the leader of the black religious community, I asked him to be the other. It was fascinating. Oral Roberts, who was a major TV star and religious figure was upstaged by Ben Hill's prayer. It wasn't that long—but it was just gripping. He prayed first and then Oral was to give the ending prayer and I think Oral really found it difficult.

JE: The state treasurer Leo Winters said, "Watch your back."

DH: Yes. He had had so many slings and arrows pointed at him that he had warned me all during the campaign. He was a very good advisor during the campaign and helped me avoid many pitfalls.

JE: Sonny Jenkins, tell us about him. He came to you with a fundraising scam?

- DH:** Well, it wasn't a scam at that time. I think he legitimately wanted me to get elected, but he apparently got just entranced with what money could be raised and decided that he himself could profit from it. I thought he was a loyal friend for almost two years. Then I realized he was secreting part of the money he was raising and in effect saying that I was a part of it.
- JE:** So you have the IRS and the FBI investigating you?
- DH:** Oh yes, starting in April 1971.
- JE:** You had a former private secretary Dorothy Pike.
- DH:** Right.
- JE:** They recruited her.
- DH:** Interestingly enough, you can say that they recruited her, but what it was is that they thought that Dorothy Pike who had been my secretary would have all kinds of knowledge about illegal activities, which she did not have. They secreted her in a secret safe house in Falls Creek, Virginia, so that we could not subpoena her and expose the fact that the IRS and the FBI had done this. That was when Steven Chandler disbarred Burkett for what Chandler considered a false statement made to the court in that hearing.
- JE:** So all of this is going on. The seeds of Watergate were planted and beginning to germinate in 1971. The Pentagon papers had been published. The secret history of the Vietnam conflict...The Plumbers formed by the Nixon White House burglarized the offices of Daniel Ellsberg, former defense analyst who leaked the Pentagon Papers. When did you become really suspicious that they are also coming on to you?
- DH:** Not until September of 1972. In September of 1972, I was already eyeing a possible run for national office in 1976. I was being helped in organizing some of the states that I thought would be key—New York and California I thought would be the most important ones to me. There were about nine others that we had modest work in. But, that was the first time that I became aware of it. It was through my former law partner in Washington, Ron Goldfarb, and others of his acquaintance who began to give me rumors of possible problems with the IRS. I didn't know about the FBI portion of this until almost 1973.
- JE:** Did you say, "I'm clean. Come after me?" How did it make you feel?
- DH:** Well, anytime anybody is going to investigate you, it's going to make you nervous. I'll give you an example. This was the second time in my career that I had had allegations made against me. When I was county attorney, a group of right-wing extremists accused me of being a part of the communist Jewish conspiracy to subvert the Tulsa unified school district. They created a petition to call a grand jury and got 200 signatures. A grand jury was called to investigate me. I had to step aside and let the attorney general investigate me for three weeks in my office. It was absolutely false. L.G. Burt, the man who circulated the petition, a very disturbed right-winger, after I was cleared, poor Mr. Burt was declared

mentally incompetent and died in Vinita, in the state hospital there within 3 or 4 years. It was very sad. But, I had already been through that. So knowing I was innocent, when this other issue came—at first, I didn't give it as much credence because I wasn't sure that they were that serious and that after they had gone through my records and this first grand jury was called and found nothing and they dissolved. Then another one was called in 1973. That's when I really, really got worried. That's when I hired my own counsel. We hired investigators and began to work our side of the case. But we had not within 10 times enough money to combat the IRS and the FBI.

Chapter 13 – 3:20

Navigational Channel

John Erling: We should point out that there are things going on while you're governor. The McClellan Kerr Arkansas Navigational System was dedicated June 4, 1971. That was a big ceremony and President Nixon was there.

David Hall: Yes and all of the principals in Watergate. It was unbelievable. You talk about small things that register in your memory. We had a dust up over where the security guards were going to stand around the podium. My security guard, Richard Wiseman, had taken the position that he wanted and the Secret Service tried to elbow him out. In the planning, typical small things make a difference. Of course, Senator Kerr is dead now. Senator McClellan was in a front-row seat, but there was no chair for his wife. I can't believe that whoever planned that didn't think of that. So I went back and booted a Secret Service man out of his chair and took his chair up and gave it to Mrs. McClellan. She was so gracious. That was the second time in my career that that has happened. I was at a governors' conference where they didn't have a seat for Mrs. Briscoe, Governor Briscoe's wife from Texas. I did the same thing. But those little things—it just wasn't right. If you care about people, you think about their comfort.

JE: What do you remember about President Nixon on that day?

DH: He did a very good job recounting history of the development of the port, but what he failed to mention was that he hadn't supported the legislation. There was a Republican on that stand who had supported that legislation, who never got the credit for what he did, and that was Page Belcher. Page Belcher in his early time as a Republican congressman had endorsed the idea of the canal. Had it not been for Page Belcher, this might have never come about.

JE: It should have had his name on it.

- DH:** It would have helped.
- JE:** A mutual friend of ours parachuted into that ceremony.
- DH:** Oh, Vic Bastion! What a jewel he is. Vic Bastion was an accomplished parachutist. Just before the opening part of the statements, he parachuted in right in front of the podium in full view of all of the people there. It was so dramatic. I've never seen anything like it. Imagine something like that happening today in a ceremony after 9/11, what the Secret Service would have done? They would have shot him in the air! (Chuckle) Nobody knew he was going to do this. It was a complete surprise and that was the best part about it.
- JE:** So it must have made the Secret Service very nervous?
- DH:** It made them very nervous, but not nearly as nervous as they would have been 10 or 20 years later. They hustled him off like he was an interloper though.
- JE:** We should point out that Vic Bastian was a newsman and he was salesman at KRMG for many, many years and that's how I obviously got to know him.
- DH:** John, he was a stand-up patriotic American. I thought it was wonderful that he did that.
- JE:** He was a good friend of yours wasn't he?
- DH:** Oh yes, a very good friend. About five years ago we had a wonderful time recounting that experience.
- JE:** Do you think the president and the men that were there with him that you named...they all were targeting David Hall as they sat on that stand?
- DH:** I think that John Mitchell absolutely did, and the president, but as far as stands, I don't know whether he was included in that. But I had been under investigation for six months at the time that that event took place.
- JE:** Meanwhile in June 1972 Howard Hunt and four other men were arrested trying to bug the office of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate Hotel.

Chapter 14 – 2:48

Prison Riot

John Erling: Then William or Bill Burkett was investigating the state treasurer Leo Winters?

David Hall: Right.

JE: At the time, you were thinking of running for president.

DH: Correct.

JE: You crisscrossed across the country and you bumped into whom?

DH: A farmer from Georgia doing the same thing, Jimmy Carter.

JE: But then we also have the riot in McAlester in the summer of 1973. Tell us how you were able to bring that under control.

DH: Well, I had had the example of how Attica was handled after Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York. His decision to storm the prison resulted in so many deaths. I was determined that if there were any way to stop that I would do it. So I counseled with all the people involved—the highway patrol, the National Guard and my advisors. Finally, all of us determined that the best thing I could do was to go to McAlester and try and negotiate with the prisoners who were holding 23 guards hostage. So I did that. As I walked into the prison late that afternoon, I walked past a young National Guard Captain who gave me a sharp salute as I walked in the door and I returned his salute. I saw it was David Boren. Here it was just a year before he became involved in the race against me. It was a very interesting time. So I went into the prison and having seen the dossiers on the main leaders of the prison riot, I thought that I might gain some help for the hostages, and that was to give those men the publicity that they seemed to crave about getting their demands out. But more than anything, they wanted to show that they were the big men in the riot. Well, the strategy worked. They were allowed to make statements that were broadcast. The result was that we were able to negotiate a release of the hostages and none of the guards were killed. One prisoner was killed, but that had happened before I came down there.

JE: What were their issues? Why were they rioting?

DH: They were asking for fewer people in the prison, better food and better accommodations. But all of those things were in process under a federal court order that we were administering that had been started six months before. It just had not all been implemented. You must remember a hot Oklahoma summer generates very big problems in those prisons anyway. I think that was what fermented the whole thing.

JE: Were you nervous walking in wondering if that was going to work or not?

DH: I was apprehensive. I didn't know what was going to happen. I was worried about my own safety of course, but I was more worried that if I said something wrong or did something wrong, they might kill a guard or several guards—I was more worried about that.

JE: Did you have a lot of security around you?

DH: I did. As I remember between myself and the prisoners there were two or three men, but it wasn't like I marched in with a guard around me, because I didn't want them to think that we were going to storm them.

Chapter 15 – 3:00**Switzer / Boren**

John Erling: You received a phone call I believe in November of 1973 from Coach Barry Switzer and he had a real serious issue?

David Hall: (Laughter) When Switzer first became coach at OU I called him and told him that anything I could do at OU to help him, I'd like to do because I loved the University and I was so proud of the record that they had run. I thought he was going to be a tremendous coach, which he turned out to be. So it was more than a year later that he calls for a favor. He called me up the night before OU is to play OSU at Lewis Field in Stillwater. He said, "Governor, I need your help." I said, "Sure." He said, "Those groundskeepers are out at Lewis Field watering that field so they can slow our boys down and they can win that game and make OU look bad." I said, "What can I do about it?" He said, "You can send the helicopter squadron up there and dry out that field tomorrow morning before the game." I chuckled. Now, Barry was dead serious. I chuckled and said, "There is no way I can do that. If I did that, that would be the end of my career. You are just going to have to live with it." Well, Barry lived with it, and won the game, but it was quite a moment.

JE: So we are into 1973 and because of the newspaper's agenda, it did take a toll on you and you were challenged in the primary.

DH: Yes, very much so, by Clem McSpadden a very experienced old-time politician, and by this new rising star David Boren, who was clean as a whistle and a good man. I liked him personally. We were friends and I never took offense to him running. But he couldn't have picked a better time, because I had so much bad publicity. Clem McSpadden was the old guard and David Boren looked like the knight in shining armor. It was the perfect time for it.

JE: Didn't he want the job as Vice President of OU?

DH: He did. Actually, his father in law, who had run on the American Party ticket, and gained 3,500 votes wrote me a letter my second year in office. He asked me if I could get David appointed as the vice president of OU, which in his career path hoped would lead to him becoming president of OU. Mr. Little wrote me this letter and said that he personally took credit for electing me by taking away 3,500 votes from Bartlett. So, I thought it was a good idea. David had been a very strong supporter of mine on the Appropriations Committee in the House. So I went to see Pete Kyle McCarter who was the provost at that time and asked him if he could help me do this. I just couldn't order it to be done because the Board of Regents, I had appointed two of them, but that was not enough of a majority to have any power on the OU Board of Regents. So McCarter investigated the matter and reported back to me that unless I had the majority of the people on the OU

Board of Regents, that it could not be done. So I had to go back and tell Mr. Little that it could not be done. Right after that, within six months or so, David announced that he was going to run.

Chapter 16 – 8:42

Investigation Continues

John Erling: In the meantime, though work of Bill Burkett continues. You hire private investigators yourself and you managed to get Bill Burkett disbarred.

David Hall: Well, he did it himself. We didn't set out to disbar him. We set out to gain access to Dorothy Pike to take a deposition to prove that the federal government was secreting her because she would have blown their case. They were hoping that she would testify against me—but in truth and fact she never would and had no such evidence. Burkett himself caused his disbarment. When Judge Chandler asked him if he had any knowledge about where Dorothy Pike was, he made a statement that Judge Chandler considered a falsehood. I did, too. I made a big mistake. When he was disbarred I should have gone to the local county attorney and demanded that a perjury charge be filed against him. Or, I should have circulated a grand jury petition and called a state grand jury to investigate him.

JE: Then you are called to testify before the grand jury?

DH: Yes.

JE: What did that feel like as a governor to walk into the courthouse in Oklahoma City for your appearance?

DH: Oh, it was unbelievable. You have to remember, I had been a prosecutor and handled grand juries all of my prosecutorial time and now I am the target. I was asked to come before these 28 men and women and I'm going to be questioned by my nemesis, who in my experience I knew could control not only the questioning but could shade anything that I said.

JE: Bill Burkett?

DH: Right. So I came into the room. I was prepared before I ever came in that I would not testify before that group, because I felt like there was no opportunity to tell my side of the story—it would be twisted. So I decided that I would take the Fifth Amendment and I did so after I stated my name and that was it. That's all I ever said, that I refused to testify on the grounds of the Fifth Amendment.

JE: How long were you in the room?

DH: Probably less than 3 minutes.

JE: What is the room like?

DH: It looks like a law school classroom. It's a tiered room with 6 or 8 seats on the first four rows. The hate within that room was almost oppressive. I could feel these people just thinking—I've got to get this guy. Again, they are not bad people. There was no big conspiracy on their part. But they had been brainwashed so much by what they had heard, without ever hearing anything from the other side. The FBI to go for any exculpatory things—they went for things that tried to show that I was guilty of something. I knew that they were hoping to vent their anger on me. I was not about to let Burkett use that tool to indict me, so I refused to answer any questions. Then I walked out the door and I was asked about it. I made a mistake. I should have told the press that I had taken the Fifth Amendment and why I took it. Instead, I just had no comment on that and they immediately published a story. *The Daily Oklahoman* must have had the headline set up ahead of time that I had taken the Fifth Amendment. I'm convinced that there was some sort of a signal arranged that the press would know without a doubt that I had taken the Fifth Amendment. I don't have any idea what it is—and maybe I'm wrong about that.

JE: In the meantime, how is your family handling all of this?

DH: Oh, can you imagine going to school? It was horrible.

JE: What are their names?

DH: My oldest child is Nancy Leigh Hall Zumwalt. She is divorced now. My second child is Douglas David Hall, who is married with two children in Houston in the software business. My youngest daughter is Julie Beth Hall Sexton, who is married to a professor at Pepperdine University. She is the youth and family church director at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Westlake Village. She lives about 10 miles from there.

JE: Then after the grand jury, there was this plan to move the Oklahoma Teachers retirement fund from First National Bank of Oklahoma City?

DH: That had been in process for sometime. The people in Dallas, Mr. Taylor and his staff had approached me about it. I found that I could have that fund guaranteed by the small business administration for approximately an 8% return, which was almost twice what the First National Bank in the other bank Liberty National Bank were paying the state on that fund. But, Rogers who was the chairman—

JE: And he was the Secretary of State?

DH: Yes he was, but constitutionally, he was the chairman of the Teachers Retirement Board. I appointed the other five members. But, Rogers was the chairman and could set the agenda. So Rogers went to Burkett and told him that in December—now this is just 30 days before I'm about to go out of office—that I had approached him and offered him a bribe if he would vote to place these funds in this plan that we had to get the guaranteed income and to actually, I thought, make more money for the state. To Burkett, it was

man from heaven. He had not been able to get an IRS indictment for almost four years. So he heard what Rogers had to say and Derryberry took Rogers to see the U.S. attorney.

JE: Larry Derryberry, who was the attorney general for Oklahoma?

DH: Yes, and who was planning to run for governor that next spring himself. So they took Rogers' spurious allegation as it was—but Burkett had this problem. If he took Rogers' word and attempted to prosecute me and it turned out that Rogers was lying, he had to have credible deniability that he wasn't involved in it. So it took them almost 19 days before he would issue a letter to Rogers saying that Rogers would not be prosecuted if he told him what he knew on the record before a grand jury. That 19 days was the time that was critical in Burkett's thinking because he thought he had upturned every stone he could to see if Rogers was telling the truth or not telling the truth, or what. It boiled down to Rogers' word against mine. What Burkett never told in the trial, was that Rogers was under investigation for impeachment at the time. Burkett knew that Rogers and his father were being investigated by the IRS for income tax evasion and were very near to the time that they were going to be subject to a federal grand jury also. So Rogers secured a letter of immunity from Burkett. Then three days after I left office I was indicted myself by the grand jury and a trial was set for March of 1975.

JE: John Rogers wore a wire to record conversations with you?

DH: I don't know how many—16 or 17 conversations. But John, there was no smoking gun. I never said to Rogers anything about a bribe, ever. There was one exculpatory tape, in which the most exculpatory statements, three and one half minutes were erased. Rogers said that his child bumped the tape recorder. That he had it on the phone that night and it wasn't on his body. We were talking on the phone in a telephone conversation and we were never able to validate that that tape had been erased. Jack Anderson, in his investigation, released a story stating, all of the errors in all of the transcripts of the tapes that had been made prior to the trial.

JE: Jack Anderson had a syndicated column called *Washington Merry-Go-Round* that he published.

DH: Of the press, he was my most dedicated champion. I didn't know Anderson at all. I met him and he wrote these articles in defense of our position.

JE: He had also confirmed in the early 1970s that U.S. attorneys appointed by Nixon began investigating sitting governors, so he knew you were a target of them. So then, January 17, 1975 the grand jury indictment was returned and arrest warrants were issued for W.W. Taylor. Why was he in on this?

DH: He was the financing company that would handle the transaction that was guaranteed by the small business administration. Kevin Mooney was a surrogate of his who was working as an agent for him to try and put the deal together, because Mooney had been a friend of mine—a very good friend in law school at Tulsa University.

JE: It was federal racketeering and extortion charges—

DH: Correct. Bribery and extortion...

JE: In a conspiracy involving you, Secretary of State John Rogers willfully steering state of Oklahoma employee retiree funds to investment funds controlled by Dallas, Texas businessman W.W. Taylor. That's what they said that you had done—you had offered Rogers a bribe or money?

DH: Right.

JE: Did they ever say how much it was?

DH: Yes, \$50,000. There was a check that was cut by Taylor in that amount that Mooney was to deliver to Rogers. It was nothing I had ever seen and nothing I had anything to do with. But I am certain that this is what happened—I am certain that Rogers and Mooney conspired together to do this, with Rogers receiving the payment from Mooney with the understanding that if they ever got caught they would say that I was the one that offered the bribe in the first place.

Chapter 17 – 5:18

Trial

John Erling: We haven't talked about emotions. You stood before Judge Fred Daugherty with Taylor and Mooney and you declared yourself as not guilty.

David Hall: Absolutely.

JE: What was going through your head?

DH: It was almost like a spiritual experience because you couldn't imagine that you, who had done nothing, are being put to this kind of a test—and for what reason? It had to be a political vendetta. It had to be someone who was trying to keep himself from going to prison. I had handled more criminal cases than anybody in that courtroom at the time I was entering my plea at the arraignment. More than Burkett ever handled—more than the judge had ever handled—more than any of the defense attorneys had ever handled and I kept thinking—why am I here? I am innocent. How could they bring this against me? But, I should have been much more realistic and realized that it was going to be very, very difficult. I felt at the time that I was so sure of my innocence that the quicker I got to trial, the better.

JE: We might point out that Frank Keating became governor?

DH: That's correct.

JE: But earlier, as he was a state legislator—he and other Republicans led a charge of impeachment against you?

DH: Yes, and attempted to get Atty. Gen. Derryberry to bring impeachment, but the legislature refused it.

JE: So, Frank Keating becomes governor and it was kind of a similar situation here?

DH: Yes, a very interesting situation. Keating was approached by a very wealthy person from back East who believed that a chemical substance given to prisoners could help take away their criminal thoughts and stop recidivism. Keating apparently agreed to allow the chemical to be given to certain prisoners. At the same time, under Keating's story, he was given a gift of \$250,000 to educate his children. There are two or three different stories that Keating gave about that, but it happens to fit on all fours with using the color of your office to affect personal gain. He was never indicted. A grand jury was never called. To the credit of the *Tulsa World*, they editorialized against this. They investigated it, but there is no grand jury ever called.

JE: But he paid for it later on didn't he?

DH: He did. It's amazing that the Lord moves in mysterious ways because after Bush No. 2 was elected, Keating had a chance to be the Atty. Gen. of the United States. Now, it was never released publicly why he was turned down, but I am certain that it was that transaction that the Bush Administration saw, investigated and determined that they could not take him.

JE: In your comments to Secretary of State Rogers, did you ever think to yourself—did I come close? Did I say something that he could have misunderstood?

DH: Oh no.

JE: Did you ever think about that?

DH: Oh I thought about it—you're not kidding I thought about it. I am convinced that Rogers, when he started that attempt to entrap me in that scheme, had planned it out for some time—that was later on confirmed to me by two people. In fact, one of his employees came to my book signing in Oklahoma City on Saturday and told me that Rogers had bragged to her that he was going to bring me down and that he was going to wear a wire. She said that she went to the authorities and that no one would listen to her. She volunteered yesterday at this book signing to give me an affidavit to that effect. It was so interesting. It's too many years past and long gone, but I thought, what a brave woman. She is in her 70s now.

JE: So here it is in 2012—

DH: And she comes forward. But, (chuckle) it sure validated my position I'll tell you.

JE: So the jury deliberates for how long?

DH: Three days.

JE: The jury comes in with a verdict.

DH: Whoa. You have to realize the dramatic part of the trial happened during the jury deliberations. Dell Meyer, a juror, suffered a heart attack and was put in the hospital. Her doctor advised her not to return to the courtroom on the chances that she might die. Judge Daugherty called a hearing and in effect ordered her back into the jury room because he berated the doctor, browbeat him until the doctor equivocated, and then Judge Daugherty forced her back into the

room. At the time she came back to the grand jury she was under the medications—Demerol and Valium. She had had such an amount that doctors today, would have said that not only was she in danger of a heart attack, but she was not capable of making a decision. The truth of the matter was she later told others that she was in fear of her life or she never would have voted for a conviction.

JE: How was she in fear of her life?

DH: Because she thought she was going to die—but the pressure was being brought by the other jurors to end it. The 11 other jurors that were convinced after my guilt told her that she couldn't hold out—that it was her duty to convict me.

JE: So when the judge asked for the jury's verdict, are you thinking they are going to exonerate me, or were you nervous?

DH: No, I was very nervous. I had seen what he had done to Dell Meyer. Judge Daugherty made the comment during the time we are having this hearing about whether she should return or not. He tried to coerce me into accepting 11 jurors and I refused to do it. These were his exact words in the transcript, "Oh, you want your cake and eat it too?" Now, this is a sitting federal judge who's supposed to be impartial, who refused to give us a change of venue.

Chapter 18 – 3:57

Guilty

John Erling: So you hear the word "guilty."

David Hall: It was like a hammer that hit me between the eyes.

JE: Jo was in the courtroom of course?

DH: Jo was there and she was so stoic. She wanted to stand up with me and I wouldn't let her stand up, but she was so stoic. She never showed any emotion until we got back to the attorney's office.

JE: Then both of you collapsed?

DH: Yes. It was horrible—horrible. That particular moment was reminiscent of my mother's breakdown. Jo didn't break down like that, but she started crying and it brought back all the horror of that situation.

JE: Two men from Tulsa came to your house?

DH: Right—Jim Head and Paul Johnson. This was the day after the conviction. They came in at 6 o'clock in the morning and I invited them in. They were two very good friends of mine from Tulsa. I was very curious about why they were there. Jim and Paul sat across

from me. They were on the couch and I am sitting in a chair and Jim said, "I want you to get down on your knees and forgive those people that you think have wronged you." So I got down on my knees and we looked at each other. He said, "I want you to forgive Burkett and the witnesses against you." It took me a good 3 or 4 minutes of just being silent and looking at him to determine what I was going to do. I was attempting to be a good Christian all of those years. This was probably the supreme test of my belief in Christianity in my life. I decided that I would do it. It was amazing how much better I felt. I can't tell you the difference and how I was feeling—it was almost like someone had had an adrenaline shot that was bringing me back to reality. I told Jim, "I forgive them. I am going to do my best to keep that commitment." I tried my best but I had to reaffirm it to myself at least five times after that.

JE: You could have resented the fact that these guys came to your house and asked you to do that?

DH: I wouldn't have thought that about those two. Now, if it would have been some Republican that had been against me—I might have been resentful. These two were devout Christians. They were men whose honesty, in my opinion, was unquestioned. I had gone to law school with one of them.

JE: The Oklahoma Supreme Court then revokes your license to practice law?

DH: That was really a travesty. I was appealing to the Supreme Court and what they were saying was without the Supreme Court ruling, we are going to rule that you are guilty. They had to say that in order to disbar me. I had appointed three of the men on that court. But I don't blame any of them, because *The Daily Oklahoman* would have ridden them out of state on a rail if they had allowed me to continue to practice.

JE: Meanwhile, you go to Saudi Arabia and you create business there and things are going well for you. You are even translating—

DH: We had planned to translate the encyclopedia into Arabic and put it at universities all around the world.

JE: Charles Van Doren who was a quiz show hero, he was working—

DH: He had a fall from grace himself. He understood my problem in spades. But we were not successful in getting the Saudi government to fund the \$15 million we needed.

JE: Then you learned that the 10th Circuit Court had affirmed the conviction?

DH: Yes.

JE: You were facing three years in prison. Then it goes to the U.S. Supreme Court. They turned down your appeal. Where were you when you learned that?

DH: I was in Saudi Arabia.

JE: That's when you found out that you needed to come home and face the music?

DH: Yes, to go to prison. I had three days to get back home. The rule in Saudi Arabia is if you are partners with a Saudi at that time, you had to give your passport to the partner to

hold until you wanted to leave the country. Then, if everything was copacetic—he would give it to you and you would leave the country. So that’s what I did.

JE: The plane ride home?

DH: That was horrible. Way could I have done? How could I have kept the family from suffering this? How could I have done better in the trial? Probably, I would have as good a chance—as good as the attorney that represented me and the attorneys that helped me, if I had put it off six months and tried the case myself, I probably would have been a lot better off.

JE: Hmm.

DH: But, who knows.

Chapter 19 – 5:35

Prison

John Erling: Then the day comes when you go to prison?

David Hall: I walk into prison and the first guy I run into of any consequence is John Ehrlichman. That was another test where at that moment I had to reaffirm my commitment to forgive those that harmed me. I did it and I had 18 months in prison with Ehrlichman. We had a number of experiences. None where I ever found out what his part was—if he had a part in it. I considered that he did, but I never got any validation in prison on it.

JE: Did the two of you talk about Watergate?

DH: Never. I never talked about his conviction and he never talked about mine.

JE: It’s interesting that—I guess both of you felt...

DH: Exactly. We felt that if we started that talk we might end up as enemies in the prison. I’m sure he felt that’s the way I felt. We had to do that time and we had to get through it. We didn’t want to create any more problems than we already had.

JE: John Ehrlichman was the assistant to President Nixon for Domestic Affairs.

DH: He and Haldeman and Nixon, those three were the principal architects of most of the future dirty tricks that were carried out.

JE: Charles Colson was special counsel to Nixon from 1969 to 1973. He pled guilty to obstruction of justice. He went on into Christian ministry. Did he ever reach out to you?

DH: He never did. I wondered about that one time—but I didn’t reach out to him either.

JE: The day that you enter prison, November 22, 1976 at 5:15 in the afternoon.

DH: Right. It was so dramatic I can’t even tell you. It was like a blur to me. I can remember my trepidation. I can remember Jo assuring me that we were going to make it and

that she would be out to see me. I actually hurt more for her and the family than I did myself. I knew that I could go in and do that time, but I didn't know how it would affect my family.

JE: What was life like in prison?

DH: It was like being in basic training in the Army but with more restrictions. It wasn't difficult in terms of someone beating you or someone not feeding you or something like that. But you have to remember my office had probably prosecuted 60,000 people from Tulsa in the 8 years that I was in office—that includes traffic and everything. To be, now, myself a prisoner was unconscionable.

JE: What was your job in prison?

DH: I had to start out gathering cigarette butts and cleaning the area around the camp. I did that for three weeks. Then I had a job as an assistant to the mess steward. I did that for six months and then I got the job as clerk of the maintenance department.

JE: Did the other prisoners come to you because they knew you were an attorney?

DH: Oh yes. And they came to Ehrlichman too and we agreed early on that neither of us would give advice to the same person. So the first question we would ask anybody is if they had seen the other.

JE: One day, you were waiting to use the telephone and John Ehrlichman was ahead of you. He had been talking to Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State.

DH: That's right.

JE: What did he turn and say to you?

DH: I was in line right behind him. When he finished his call it was my turn. He opens the door of the phone booth and he comes out and he says, "That was Henry Kissinger. He said to me, 'But for the grace of God I would be there with you.'" He never mentioned that again and we never talked about it.

JE: But you had to wonder.

DH: Oh wonder! (Chuckle) I couldn't believe it.

JE: Jo would visit you every weekend?

DH: She made 78 trips. It was 16 hours from OKC the first half of my term and 8 hours from Carlsbad, California the second half. I ended up serving five days at a time rather than 18 months.

JE: Didn't you write a letter on behalf of John Ehrlichman while you were in prison?

DH: I did. John Ehrlichman was trying to help an Indian tribe in New Mexico. He asked me to write a good friend of mine who was Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus. I wrote the letter, asking Andrus to do what he could to help this Indian tribe and mentioned that Ehrlichman was trying to assist them. Cecil wrote a letter back to me and said, "You tell that SOB that he's one of the people that put you in there, and I'm not going to help him

one bit.” That sort of snapped me back into reality, because I may have been dimwitted in attempting to help him. You do funny things when you are coping with prison life, but I never attempted to help him (after that) Ehrlichman and I never spoke after I left prison.

JE: To this day?

DH: He’s dead now, but I never talked to him again.

JE: You go into this parole hearing before the Parole Board?

DH: Yes, to plead my case. I felt pretty good though, because John West, an attorney from South Carolina whose father was a governor was a good friend of mine came and represented me. He couldn’t go into the hearing with me, but he counseled me. We are pretty sure that Ehrlichman had already been granted his parole and we were pretty sure that they wouldn’t turn me down unless there was something that I didn’t know about.

JE: How about depression when you were in prison? Did you fight that?

DH: Oh yes, constantly. The most damning physical thing was I was cold almost every night in the winter—not because I didn’t have enough cover, but because it was high-mesa cold and it penetrated me. That was just depressing as anything.

JE: You were in the Swift Trails Prison Camp in the southeastern corner of Arizona near the town of Stafford?

DH: Right. It was probably 3,700 or 4,000 feet.

JE: Did you sleep?

DH: Not at first.

JE: Your last week in prison—you were to be paroled in May of 1978.

DH: That’s correct. The last week was a really interesting time because everybody was saying goodbye and all of that. But also, my wife told me that when I went into prison, the second week she came out to see me there, it was like I had this strange glaze in my eyes. I talk about this in my book. I tried to create a situation where my physical body did the time, but my spirit was off to the side watching. As I approached that last week I was hoping that glaze had gone, but it took almost two years for it to leave my eyes. It was very tough.

Chapter 20 – 4:11

Optimism

John Erling: The stigma of being in prison—is that held over your head?

David Hall: Oh, the stigma is horrible. It took me almost three years to determine that I was going to wear my present situation as a badge of courage and not be ashamed one bit.

I wasn't guilty of what I was convicted—but—I felt that contrary to most people, I had paid my debt for all the other sins that I might have committed. I took those 18 months as a vindication of those. I never have felt that I didn't do something extraordinary by getting through it and being able to lead a productive life.

JE: Does it bother you today that your voting rights were taken away from you?

DH: Not as much as it does my relationships with people. John, I could never apply for a job. I could never hope to get into a business deal. I could never form a friendship without first telling them about my situation, because if I had gone ahead anyone of those times—the people would've thought that I was trying to fool them because I didn't tell them about my record. Consequently, every new person that I met that I wanted to be friends with—I had to go through the whole story.

JE: Were there other people in prison that you thought were innocent?

DH: No. I can think of the 50 people with me and I would be amazed if any of them were.

JE: When you came out you worked at a law firm as a legal assistant?

DH: Well, I worked in the real estate business helping a realtor. I couldn't get a real estate license that I could do other things to assist them. Then I worked as a paralegal assistant for two major firms in San Diego—for two marvelous men who trusted me and who gave me some very good responsibility.

JE: Just in your own words, you are obviously innocent of the charges that were brought against you?

DH: Absolutely, and I trumpeted my innocence every day since the day of the conviction.

JE: What Bible verses sustained you?

DH: Probably Proverbs 4. I'll paraphrase it because I had to leave it to the Lord to handle things that I was not capable of handling myself— that's the paraphrase.

JE: So why did you write the book?

DH: To tell my descendants my side of the story, number one. Number two, to show people that forgiveness can lift burdens that you can't imagine. I see the danger that the Arab world is falling into by not being able to forgive who they consider the infidels. I also see a problem with forgiveness among some of our own religious people about other religions. I don't mean the Arabs, I mean members of the Protestant Church—where certain members don't want to forgive the other ones. And then, that optimism will win the day, almost invariably. If you lose your sense of optimism, you've given yourself up to the devil.

JE: What do you want Oklahomans to think of you today in 2012?

DH: I want them to read the book and make up their own mind. Of course, I'd love all of them to believe me, but they aren't going to believe me. The ones that were against me are still going to be against me. But, even the enemy—even the enemies can learn something about overcoming obstacles and I hope it helps them in their lives.

JE: Sinatra sings, “Regrets I’ve had a few.”

DH: Oh, of course—of course. But, you know what? I’m 81 years old. I’m healthy. I’m married to the same lady. Every morning when I get up, I say, “It’s going to be a good day.” Believe it or not John, in most cases, it is.

JE: You got really involved in Senior Olympics in California and you play basketball yourself?

DH: Oh yes, and tennis. A partner of mine, who I went to high school with in Oklahoma City, was deputy editor of the *Union Tribune* and he and I competed together. In about a 10-year period he and I won doubles for our age group about 6 times.

JE: A lot of young people will listen to this. What would be your advice to young people whatever they are pursuing?

DH: Go for it with your whole body, soul and passion. Make the most important thing the mission, not the money.

JE: To those who may be listening who are wrongfully accused—what would you say to them?

DH: I would go to the Innocence Project and ask them to investigate my case.

JE: Well, I want to thank you very much for this time that you’ve spent here with us to get this all on record so that it will be heard for generations to come. And, we didn’t get into all of the wonderful things you did in our state while you were governor as a matter of fact.

DH: I hope people will take the time when they hear this interview here and investigate my administration. I think history is going to reward me very well—not in my lifetime—but comparatively. I don’t think there was a better governor ever for education than myself. Some of them are better than others in different fields—but not in education.

JE: Good. Thank you David. It was my pleasure to meet you.

DH: Thank you John, same here.

Chapter 21 – 0:30

Conclusion

Announcer: You have just heard the 20th governor of Oklahoma, David Hall tell the story of his journey to the governor’s office and his ultimate conviction and prison time. You may consult our bookstore for his book *Twisted Justice: A Memoir of Conspiracy and Personal Politics*. This story and many others are preserved on this oral history website thanks to our founding sponsors as we preserve Oklahoma’s legacy one voice at a time on VoicesofOklahoma.com.