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**the  
grapevine**

# THE GRAPEVINE®

## CLINTON INTERVIEW

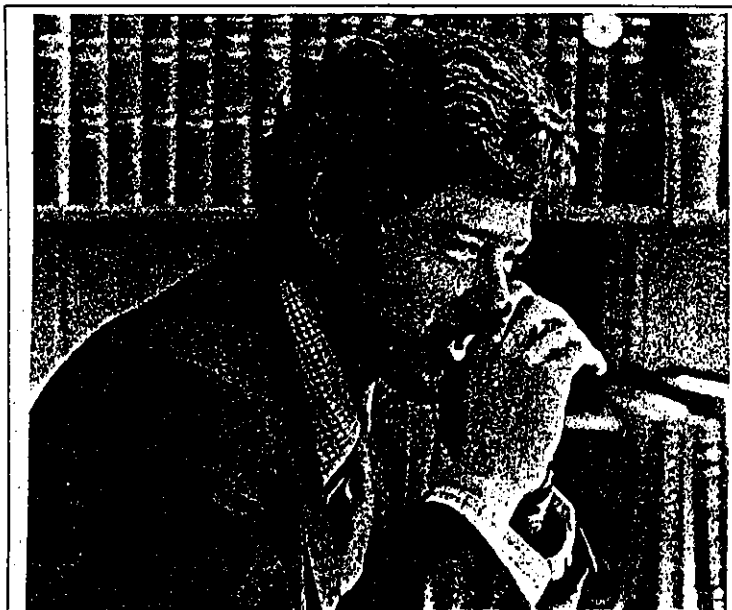
[By J. W. Whitehead]

I suppose everyone believes in miracles, but nothing could've saved George McGovern from defeat in 1972. To those of us who knew the empty feeling that accompanied the McGovern defeat, Bill Clinton could possibly be the reinstatement of the people's candidate. Though not officially declared as a candidate, he will run for the office of U.S. Representative from this district. His opponent, if he survives the primary, will be the incumbent Republican, John Paul Hammerschmidt.

Clinton, although an Arkansas native (graduating from high school in Hot Springs), attended Georgetown University in Washington, D. C. where he received a degree in international affairs. He had a definite reason for going to Washington, i. e. "Georgetown has a very excellent program in international affairs and economics. I wanted to be exposed to the national government so that I could get a very good background in American domestic politics just by the virtue of being in Washington. You know, Lyndon Johnson had just become president at that time and was very popular. He was trying to build his so-called great society programs. I was very young and idealistic and wanted to see what was going on so I went there."

While at Georgetown, Clinton gained two years of practical experience by working for William Fulbright. Then in his senior year at Georgetown he was selected as one of the thirty-two annual recipients of a Rhodes scholarship. During the

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summer following his graduation from Georgetown, Clinton worked for the U. S. Senate on the McGovern-Hatfield Bill (a series of amendments designed to reassert the war power in Congress).

Bill Clinton then entered law school at Yale. While there he worked on the McGovern presidential campaign of 1972. McGovern personally appointed him to coordinate the Texas campaign. After the election he returned to Yale where he was graduated in May, 1973.

With a law degree and presidential campaign behind him, Clinton returned to Hot Springs with the intention of starting a law practice. Before this idea had materialized, however, he learned of an opening on the faculty of the University of Arkansas School of Law. He applied for the vacancy and is now an assistant professor of law.

At a time when many congressional votes are controlled by outside influences, Mr. Clinton advocates public financing of political campaigns. Why? Because he believes that campaigns "could be done less expensively. More votes would be cast based on the particular congressman's own feelings rather than those of his contributors." What this means is that campaigns would be financed by a broad section of the community. Clinton sees this as a way of organizing people in order to restore in them some voice in the political decisions made in this country.

A major hurdle that Mr. Clinton must clear is that of the change which often takes place when people gain political office. There are campaign promises that never materialize and congressmen who cannot be pinned down on the issues. Watching Edward Kennedy, who may be our next president, dodge questions on Face the Nation Sunday was of little compensation.

Around midnight last Wednesday I had my chance to talk with a busy man. Clinton had just returned from Russellville where he had been speaking to a few people in the process of gaining support for his budding campaign. He was cordial, in a good

mood and ready to answer the following questions. GV: THIS PAPER IS ORIENTED TO THE YOUNGER class of people. If you are going to be a representative, how are you going to represent them?

Clinton: Well, I don't know what you mean by that. I...

GV: FOR INSTANCE, PEOPLE WHO ARE 16 years old can't vote. 16-year-old people can't do a lot of things, and that's discriminatory against a class of people. I mean, is there any way that you can help them?

Clinton: You mean, do I think 16-year-olds should have the vote?

GV: YEAH.

Clinton: Do I think 14-year-olds should have the vote?

GV: YEAH.

Clinton: 12-year-olds, 10-year-olds, 8-year-olds?

GV: IT'S A FACT THAT PEOPLE MATURE AT an earlier age now, and they're more competent at an earlier age.

Clinton: That's right, but we just lowered the vote to 18 a couple of years ago, and it's my feeling that I think there probably will come a time when the vote will be extended to people younger than 18.

GV: WOULD YOU BE IN FAVOR OF THAT?

Clinton: Not now, no. Not now.

GV: WHY?

Clinton: Because any dividing line between childhood and adulthood is to some extent arbitrary. I've dealt with this problem before, trying to deal with problems of children's laws. It's the same sort of an issue, and I recognize that and I know there are a lot of 16-year-olds who could cast a more intelligent vote than a 50-year-old. But I was involved for a long time in trying to get the vote for the 18-year-olds, and it was a big effort and I think there may well be enough evidence at this time to warrant bringing the vote down to 16-year-olds but I think it's sort of a people's issue

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as to what the considered judgment of the society is. Now the Supreme Court could uphold constitutionality of the 18-year-old vote by analogizing that vote for 18-year-olds to other burdens and benefits bestowed upon 18-year-olds in our society. There aren't those analogies with respect to people under 18. We're just talking about capacities to be citizens to people under 18. And I just think that at this time we would be better off working on other problems and waiting for a few years until society catches up until there is a little more evidence in and a little more arguments can be made for the 16-year-old.

GV: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF BOB DYLAN'S music?

Clinton: It's too broad a question. There are too many different Bob Dylans over time.

GV: WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Clinton: Well, I mean, you know, he's passed through many different phases. I think he's a genius, and I'm thrilled by the thought of this tour he's taking with the Band. One of the worst things about this campaign, this budding campaign of mine which is not yet formally declared is that I haven't been able to go anywhere where he's been to see him. I've been too busy with getting around to see people. But I've read everything I can about it, and it sounds like a good tour. I don't know, the stuff he's been doing lately I really like. He's been in some periods and said some things and done some music that didn't mean too much to me, but I still recognized how great he was. So you'd have to think that maybe he was on to something that I was incapable of catching because at other times I've been just as caught up on him as everyone else.

GV: I KNOW THAT YOU WERE THE SOUTHWEST director for the McGovern campaign. That is correct?

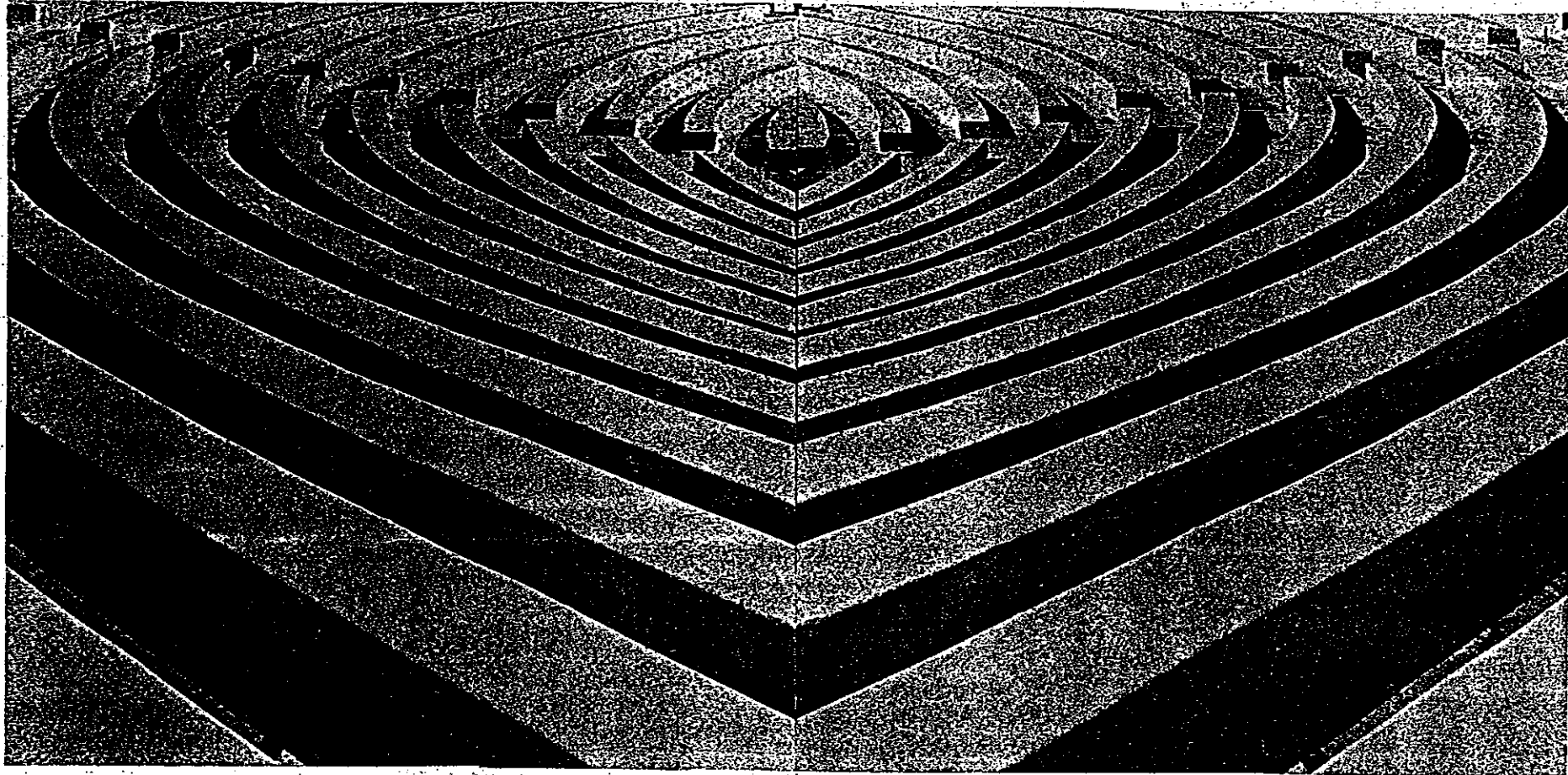
Clinton: Well, before the convention in Miami I traveled in the Southern states for him, yes, and then after the convention I went to Texas at his request and set up his campaign there. Another fellow and I were his Texas coordinator until November of 1972.

GV: I KNOW THAT YOU WERE CLOSE TO GARY Hart and the people that were running the campaign, but what do you think of McGovern's failure? He was humiliated in a landslide defeat. What was the problem?

Clinton: Well, there were several problems. The first was, of course, that Nixon was very strong and that the people were not yet convinced

as they now seem to be. The administration that was then in power, the staff that was then making very many of the decisions were quite reprehensible in many ways and so he was very strong and very popular. The average person could only think of four or five things in the election. For instance, the trip to China, the trip to Russia, the ending of the war, at least the direct American involvement, the wage and price controls, and maybe one or two other things. Nixon seemed to score four out of five or something similar with the average voter. Now I just think that he was pretty strong. McGovern made several critical errors, too. For example, very few people realized, I think, in Miami and after what a grotesquely distorted view of McGovern was held by the average person who is not terribly interested in politics and thinks of himself as a conservative but may have any number of liberal or progressive impulses on particular issues. This guy who has short hair and works at a job every day was just scared to death of McGovern's people, and we sought to convince him. He didn't understand the tactics of the McGovern delegates or the McGovern reforms, and he just didn't feel represented by the nominee or by his people by the time the convention was over. And I suppose that to some extent the populace was so fractured and the Democratic party was so fractured last year that the defeat was inevitable, that the things that Senator McGovern had to do and say to be nominated inevitably assured his defeat. You could argue that. I don't personally believe that. I just think that the war in Vietnam in particular and some other issues, too, had such a grip on the people and had so eaten us all up. We went at politics as if it were some kind of religion and everyone was either standing with us in the light or standing against us in the darkness. American politics are a little more complicated than that and a little less morally satisfying than that, and I just think that we weren't able to build a kind of coalition that you've just gotta build to win the election. You can't lose the Senate.

CONT. NEXT WEEK

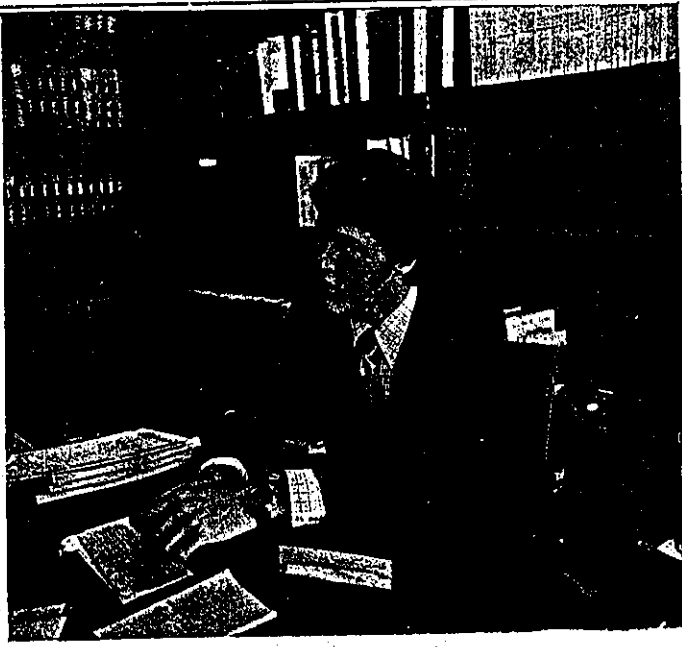


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# CLINTON GOES ON

Part II

[By J. W. Whitehead]

GV: DID YOU SEE THE MOVIE CALLED "THE Candidate"?

Clinton: Yes, I did.

GV: ROBERT REDFORD PORTRAYED A YOUNG, idealistic poverty lawyer who began as a truthful, honest candidate. By the movie's end, he had become as corrupt and phony as his elder opponent. What about this happening to you? Now you could say that you are in a pure state. What's going to happen to you later?

Clinton: Well, I think that's an interesting question. The corruption of the candidate involved in that movie was not that of someone who had lost his principles. I think the Candidate was someone who had very liberal views and then compromised them all, leaving him with a very conservative stance on the issues. What happened to the Candidate was he became a product of the modern mass industrial society, a sort of packaged product. He was nothing more to the people than a PR man's construction. He didn't say anything about anything. I won't let that happen to me. I'm deeply interested in issues. I have enough confidence in myself that I'm not going to get swept away. In the first place, I don't have the money to wage that kind of media campaign, and I'm not running for office in a state like California. Many of the so-called New South Politicians have been criticized for being too much like the Candidate. Often when they have found themselves in a difficult spot they have been known to give less than concrete answers. I personally don't believe that they are selling their souls when they do this. So, you see, I don't view this as a light and darkness thing, either. That's just not the way things are.

GV: THEN LET ME ASK YOU THIS. ARE YOU a politician?

Clinton: Yes.

GV: DO YOU AGREE THAT THERE IS A growing distrust for politicians?

Clinton: Yes, a lot of people distrust politicians because there are stereotypes of what constitutes a politician. But I think most people who are politicians in this country are fairly honest. They are more conservative than some, and they are capable of compromise. Most are trying to hold society together. Most are attempting, at least, to make some sustained progress. The thing that I object to about Richard Nixon more than

anything else is that he didn't keep any conservative Republican politicians around him. At least most politicians can talk to people from all walks of life. He got himself a bunch of narrow, mean advertising men and lawyers who had no experience with the variations of human experience.

GV: THEN YOU THINK NIXON SHOULD BE impeached?

Clinton: I think that there's probable cause to believe that he's committed gross improprieties in office, if not criminal acts. The questions of impeachment and removal are fundamentally political questions. The prior question of impeachment guarantees a trial. I thought impeachment was inevitable after Nixon had fired Cox but before Jaworski was appointed. If I were in Congress now I would think that the evidence for impeachment was very strong. Jaworski, of course, is now on the job, and the House Judiciary Committee has taken over the matter of impeachment. The Committee has appointed a special counsel, John Doar, whom I know well and trust. I suppose that what I'd do now if I were a congressman is I'd wait until John's staff turns out their report on what constitutes an impeachable or removable offense. They have studied the matter in greater depth than I have. If it is their considered opinion that we ought to have direct evidence of criminal acts then I would have to await the outcome of the judicial decision on the tapes. If there is a broader definition of what a person should be impeached for, then I think he's in trouble now.

GV: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE DEFINITION of impeachment should be?

Clinton: I think that the definition should include any criminal acts plus a willful failure of the President to fulfill his duty to uphold and execute the laws of the United States. Now, for example, the firing of Cox before he was forced to hire an independent prosecutor, Jaworski, represented, in my opinion, a failure to execute the laws. Cox was there. He was supposed to pursue this Watergate business. The Senate made a deal with Nixon and allowed him to appoint Cox. They didn't force Cox on him; Elliot Richardson suggested Cox. So I thought at that time that this in itself was an impeachable offense. You could argue that this has been wiped away now by the appointment of Jaworski who certainly hasn't taken a dive. He's pressed on and done a good job. The third factor that I think constitutes an impeachable offense would be willful, reckless

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behavior in office; just totally incompetent conduct of the office and the disregard of the necessities that the office demands. Law and order, for example. However, it would be far more difficult to impeach the President under my definition than it would be under the one offered by Gerald Ford who said the House could impeach for any reason at all.

**GV: I THINK THAT AT ONE TIME 70 PERCENT of the people polled wanted Nixon out of office. If this present Congress does not impeach Nixon, then do the people of this country have representation in Congress?**

**Clinton:** Well, the only polls that I've seen show that over 70 percent of the people believe he was involved in some way or other in the scandals. Only 46 percent of the people, I believe, have ever called for his resignation, and something less than that have called for his impeachment.

**GV: OKAY, BUT WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE are so hesitant about making a commitment toward impeachment?**

**Clinton:** I believe one major factor is that they fear the uncertainty that would ensue if the President were removed. It's the old problem of "the devil you know is better than the one you don't." The Harris Poll showed last week that the people have even less confidence in the Congress than they do in the President on every major issue except Watergate and related problems. The people sense that Congress is not able or willing to run the country and take responsibility for the future of America. It's no wonder that President Nixon has since 1968 embarked on a systematic effort to beat Congress to its knees. A lot of congressmen have helped him. They've voted to uphold his vetoes, applauded his impoundments, and otherwise supported his programs. This has degraded the Congress to a terrible degree. I believe that the congressman from this district has been one of those most responsible for this. When Haldeman and Erlichman were in power even the Republican congressmen couldn't get in to see the President or get him on the telephone. It was not until recently, after those two were humbled, that the White House and its staff began to talk again to the congressmen. I believe the people know that the Congress is weak, especially the House of Representatives. The people sense this, and they're uncertain. They just don't know what the alternative to impeachment will be.

**GV: MANY POLITICAL SCIENTISTS ARE NOW saying that a weak Congress is inevitable in our brand of society, a society run by ad-men type administrators.**

**Clinton:** I don't think that it's inevitable, and I believe, moreover, that if you don't have a strong Congress you can't preserve democracy in a modern industrial society. It's precisely because so many of the problems are technical and difficult and have to be handled on a day-to-day basis by administrators. We need a strong Congress to serve as a limiting institution.

**GV: ARE YOU SAYING THAT CONGRESS WON'T work?**

**Clinton:** I'm saying the government won't work unless there is a strong Congress. It must stand on an equal footing with the executive and judicial branches of our government. Congress has to serve as a limiting institution because Congress itself is needed to act as a strong and powerful brake on the abuse of power by the executive and administrative bodies. It also acts as a limiting institution in terms of setting the broad goals and objectives of the government. And it's very important to me that I attempt to aid the Congress in assuming its proper role in the constitutional framework.

**GV: THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE IN THIS country is becoming polarized. At one end of**

the economic spectrum we have the wealthy, the corporations like ITT. At the other end we have the poor. It is obvious now that the only way the situation can be remedied is through conscientious representation. Do you really think that you can help the average citizen?

**Clinton:** Yes, I do, but first of all I don't quite agree with your statement of the problem. There is much economic data which indicates that the rich aren't getting richer and the poor aren't getting poorer in traditional terms. The real income is rising for all levels. What I do believe is happening, though, is that people of all incomes are becoming increasingly powerless in the face of the present crises. The people perceive and rightly perceive what they believe to be abuses of power by organizations that are so big and so far away from them. They fear that no one has any control over what these entities do. If I were in Congress I would attempt to utilize the powers of Congress to place whatever controls are necessary on the ability of these companies to abuse their positions. For example, one action we need to take is to pass a very stringent law requiring disclosure of critical facts in all the energy industries. One of the most embarrassing segments of this fuel crisis has been that neither the Congress nor Ralph Nader nor anybody else except the heads of the oil industries has really known what was going on inside the big oil companies. The critical thing, in my opinion, is that we don't know whether or not there are any capped wells in Texas. Nader says there are, but we don't know and I don't think he knows. The Congress has simply not served its function whenever there has been a crisis because no one knows the truth until months after they should have. That's the kind of thing Congress ought to do something about, and it's the type of thing I'll do something about if I am elected to Congress.

**GV: BUT WHAT ABOUT THE LOBBYING POWERS that seem to have so much influence on Congress?**

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Clinton: The lobbyists for special interests are only strong when their interests, at least in part, coincide with the general interests of the people. Now we have a situation where a completely 'hands off' attitude exists with some of these industries. This is so unpopular with such a huge percentage of the people that we have a congressman like Hammerschmidt finally, at this late date, calling for a rollback in propane prices. Not only is this state the largest per capita user of propane for personal/private use but, also one of Arkansas' largest business concerns, the poultry industry uses it. The poultry industry is very important in this district. The rise in propane prices has virtually eaten up half the profits of that business. So when you get into a position where people who are very wealthy are suffering with people who are very poor, then even unresponsive congressmen begin to move. What is needed is a congressman with foresight who realizes that all the people have a common interest in seeing that such crises don't arise.

GV: IF YOU ARE RUNNING FOR POLITICAL office in the system, it would seem that you are part of the system. Obviously you are for the system. Why?

Clinton: I concede the system has problems. I'm for the system because it still provides opportunities for change and progress. I also believe that it provides for much personal freedom. I realize that if you have little money to buy food or if you live in a crowded city you have trouble getting your breath. Then, the theoretical or actual legal rights you have may not mean much to you. Those rights would mean more if you had something to compare them with. There are other countries that have the same problems that we have with big economic units, but their citizens don't enjoy the personal

freedoms we do. I suppose that's why I'm committed to the system and why I think it's worth working in. No system perfectly realizes its values. So our system doesn't perfectly realize its values. But our system provides opportunities for the increased utilization of those values. Of course, there are problems unique to every era, and in our age we have the present crises and problems with how we should organize society. We have the acute problem of whether society can be organized in big units and still be able to preserve individual freedom.



GV: WHAT BOTHERS ME IS THE FACT THAT the people at the head of the economic units that run our system are so huge.

Clinton: Those people are not any larger than you and I. It's just the fact that they are at the head of big economic units which give them concentrated wealth and power. They can be limited and controlled if the majority of the people are willing to support and demand a vigorous government which does its job. Congress has the power to keep economic organizations from asserting overbearing power in this country. The law can still be supreme in the land if the Congress is willing to enact it. It is necessary to pass the laws and then enforce them. You may think that this is all very idealistic and general, but many people have felt the pinch of the present crises. I believe the people are now willing to elect the kind of representative who advocates the position I have taken on the issues. This form of representation is necessary to insure a strong Congress.

GV: LET'S TALK ABOUT HAMMERSCHMIDT in specifics. Precisely, where has he failed?

Clinton: He's failed by being a passive congressman. I don't believe that he has recognized how weak the Congress is or how strong it needs to be. It doesn't appear that he has been concerned with a lot of the national issues that he certainly ought to be concerned with. Many congressmen think that the people back home don't care about national issues. These congressmen think that the people are only concerned about whether there's a bridge over the river or whether the local group gets an adequate tour of the Congress or whether their relatives receive some government benefit they are entitled to. All these things are important. I'm not diminishing them, but the national issues are important, too. It matters how strong the Congress is, and it matters what the congressmen say and do when the President is abusing his power. It matters whether the Congress is aware of what's going on in the Russian wheat deal because if they aren't aware of it the price of bread in Fayetteville goes up. It matters what the Congress knows about how much oil is in Texas because if they don't know about it the price of gas goes up in Fayetteville. Hammerschmidt has not been adequately concerned with the national issues until it was too late. Then he can't do anything about it. For example, his attitude on this Watergate business has been deplorable. He said month after month that it wasn't important. He's changing his position now, but for a long time he was saying "forget about Watergate and get on with the business of the country". However, that was the very problem because the Nixon people weren't forgetting about it. John Ehrlichman was more concerned with what was in Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's file than with how much oil was in the ground in Texas or how much wheat was planted in Iowa. That's why we're in trouble now. Congress should have done something about this and could have and didn't. That's why I want to run against Hammerschmidt.