

and watch the unraveling of the Nixon administration on the nightly news. Bill Coleman felt "a sense of hope" just as they were leaving law school, "a harbinger of the possibility of change." The team of Rodham and Clinton served together that spring on the board of the Barristers Union, running the Prize Trials. One day Clinton showed up at a board meeting with his hair trimmed and wearing white bucks. He was, thought Robert Alsdorf, who also served on the board, rehearsing for his journey home, back to Arkansas and a life in politics. Alsdorf took one look at Clinton and said, "Let me know when you're running for president, Bill. I'll help you."

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## HOME AGAIN

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CLINTON WENT OUT into the world as a favorite son, barely eighteen, and now, nine years later, a man of twenty-seven, he was back. He had survived the perilous journey through the sixties and come home with his mission accomplished. He had established his academic credentials at Georgetown, Oxford, and Yale. He had woven his way through the war years undamaged in body if not in soul. He had proved that he could compete with the brightest of his generation, and indeed had constructed a vast network of contemporaries who would stand by him for the rest of his career. He had discovered a wide world of women, including one who might help him get to where he wanted to go and who was, whether he always liked it or not, his match: bright, organized, ambitious, independent, sharp-tongued, unafraid of him and yet tolerant of his foibles. He had learned the ways of Capitol Hill and engaged in the rollicking and dirty business of electoral politics in Connecticut and Texas. He had visited the capitals of Europe and gazed upon Lenin's Tomb and Shelley's mausoleum and searched in the cold Welsh rain for the birthplace of Dylan Thomas. Now he was home in his green, green grassy place, his folk-tale Arkansas, here to begin Act Two: a political life.

The story of his return to Arkansas opens with a stretch, a peculiar exaggeration, a myth—harmless perhaps, but peculiarly Clintonian and revealing. The way Clinton would tell the story for years afterward, his hiring as an assistant professor at the University of Arkansas School of Law in the fall of 1973 was "a pure accident." The phrasing is reminiscent of his claim that his avoidance of the draft during the Vietnam War years was "a fluke"—which it most certainly was not, no more than his arrival at the law school in Fayetteville was an accident. In the tale as Clinton would tell it, he was driving home from Connecticut at the end of his Yale days and, acting on a tip from a friendly professor, stopped at a telephone booth along Interstate 40, placed a call to the Arkansas Law School dean, and talked his way into an interview and a job—simple as that, just a spur-of-the-moment bit of roadside serendipity. Wylie H. Davis, the law school

dean at the time, would encounter the Clinton version of events years later and find it “amusingly inaccurate and somewhat melodramatic.” And he would ask: “Why degrade a Horatio Alger-type story with a self-inflicted nuisance like the facts?”—to which he could only answer himself that he felt compelled by “neurotic lawyers and history buffs” to set the record straight.

Clinton began aggressively pursuing a teaching position at Arkansas several months before he got his law degree at Yale. He recruited a political friend from Fayetteville, Steve Smith, to serve as his intermediary. Smith was a liberal young state legislator who had become friendly with Clinton during the McGovern campaign, when he was the only Arkansas delegate at Miami Beach to vote for McGovern on the first ballot. He talked about Clinton to J. Steven Clark, an associate dean at the Arkansas Law School who was also part of the state’s political network. In March 1973, during his spring break from Yale, Clinton contacted Dean Wylie Davis, who would later recall that from that point on, “the entire process was as deliberate and formalized as it was—and had to be—in every new hire case.” The law school received glowing letters of recommendation for Clinton from several professors at Yale as well as a record of his grades, which Davis and his colleagues paid little attention to because they found the Yale grading system “a slightly arrogant and eccentric neo-British affectation”—a cutting but misdirected insult, since the pass-fail system was the product not of haughty academics but of rebellious students.

Clinton flew to Fayetteville in early May to appear before the Faculty Appointments Committee. David Newbern, who chaired the committee, had a curious first impression of the young applicant from Yale. On the morning of Clinton’s first day in town, Newbern stopped at the Holiday Inn where Clinton was staying to pick him up and escort him to the law school for a day of interviews. He encountered Clinton in the coffee shop talking to Steve Smith. Newbern wondered how Clinton knew Smith and why he would be engaged in such an intense political conversation on the morning when he was interviewing to become a law teacher. Later, he escorted Clinton from one faculty office to another. Finally, in an exit interview, Newbern asked the question that had been troubling him all day.

“Bill, are you coming to Arkansas to teach with us, are you coming because you want to be a law professor, or is this just a stepping stone?”

“I have no plans at this time to run for public office,” Clinton said.

It was, Newbern thought, the classic political response.

Whatever Clinton’s intentions, the Arkansas law faculty was greatly impressed. “He charmed us all right out of our mortarboards,” said Dean Davis, who thought that Clinton displayed “a wide range of interests and

Clinton talked politics incessantly during the

interview, but it did not bother Davis much because “in Arkansas, politics is a hobby for everybody, so it didn’t seem out of place.” Newbern, Mort Gitelman, and a few other professors raised questions about Clinton before the faculty voted on him. They were impressed by his Rhodes Scholarship and the rest of his résumé, but wondered whether he would make a good scholar. “It was very clear even back then that Clinton’s main goal was a political career,” Gitelman recalled. “The faculty debated the appointment on the theory of whether he would make a legal scholar and do the publications.” In the end they were convinced that he would excel as a classroom teacher, and was worth the gamble. The vote was unanimous. Clinton was offered the job on May 12 and accepted May 22.

He moved to Fayetteville in midsummer and rented a contemporary stone and glass one-bedroom house in the country about ten miles southeast of town along Route 16 on the road to Elkins and a route through the hills known as the Pig Trail. The mimosa-blossomed winding roads, rolling hills, lazy-looped rivers, thick pine forests, and green-gorge vistas of northwest Arkansas were hauntingly beautiful and familiar to him. He considered all of Arkansas his home, and Fayetteville in the Ozarks represented his carefree backyard, the place he had escaped to during the summers of his youth to attend band camp. But it also had another meaning that evoked profoundly different feelings in him. The university and its row of fraternity houses served as the social nexus and training ground of the Arkansas good ole boy establishment. Four years earlier, when he was contemplating attending the University of Arkansas Law School so that he could join the ROTC program there and avert the draft, the notion of returning to Fayetteville made Bill Clinton feel strange. Part of the equation that sent him back to Oxford for a second year instead of choosing the safe haven of the state university was the queasiness he felt about getting stuck in Arkansas, a place which seemed “barren” of global thinkers and intellectual stimulation, as he had written in a letter to Rick Stearns.

So his relocation in Fayetteville was not an entirely simple homecoming. His relationship with his state was shaped by a triangular internal contradiction that would stay with him from then on and is crucial to understanding Clinton’s political evolution. At one point of the triangle was myth: the way he would romanticize the Arkansas of huge watermelons and simple country folk, especially when he was away from it. At a second point of the triangle was pragmatism: the realization that Arkansas was the easiest base, the only base, for his political rise. At the third point of the triangle was ambition: a powerful desire to move beyond his provincial roots. Clinton would make it seem that he came home to Arkansas and stayed there for two decades out of pure love and obligation—but events would soon prove otherwise.

On August 22, 1973, Clinton was sworn in as the 44th governor of Arkansas.

party of the Washington County Democratic Central Committee in the sprawling two-acre backyard behind the grand old house of Ann and Morris Henry along Highway 45. The party regulars at the Henry house were local figures of the sort that any aspiring politician would need to know, hard-core committed Democratic loyalists who performed the drudge work of organization and were the primary sources of inside political gossip. Clinton swept through the crowd as though he were an honored guest. "He came in . . . he wasn't invited but somebody brought him . . . he had just got to town, he shook hands, he talked, and by the time he left he knew every single person there," Ann Henry recalled later. "It was a perfect way for him to leave an impression."

Clinton was eager to make an impression and quickly took on several projects outside the law school. He filed an amicus brief in support of his friend Steve Smith, who was a key figure in a voting-fraud case being heard in rural Madison County. Republicans charged that Smith had interfered in the 1972 election by helping elderly residents fill out their ballots at a nursing home. Smith said that he and two nursing-home employees merely helped distribute the ballots. Clinton, in his friend of the court brief, presented a legal argument placing Smith's assistance within the boundaries of laws relating to ballot delivery. The court eventually disallowed the twenty-five votes that Smith had garnered at the nursing home, not enough to change the election outcome. The case attracted the interest of political reporters in northwest Arkansas. "Clinton came up and sat in the jury box with us," recalled veteran political reporter Brenda Blagg of *The Morning News* in Springdale. "He was part of the crowd."

His first challenge to the local establishment came in Springdale, a comfortable middle-class community north of Fayetteville, where he formed a friendship with Rudy Moore, Jr., a progressive state legislator whose law firm had business and political connections to Senator Fulbright. Weeks before Clinton arrived, Fulbright had met with Moore and told him that a young man who had been on his staff was moving to the area to teach at the law school, and that he and Moore "ought to know about each other." Clinton called Moore when he got to town and they spent hours talking politics. "Right off the bat," Moore recalled later, Clinton became absorbed in a local issue involving doctors who were rejecting Medicaid patients. Medicaid was not a popular social program then among Springdale's doctors. Moore agreed to lend the clout of his legislative office to Clinton's informal poll, which found only one or two doctors in town who were willing to accept Medicaid patients. In his first political encounter with the health care issue, Clinton got nowhere. The Springdale doctors "crawled all over" Moore for "sending somebody to look into" their affairs. Moore and Clinton backed away, but not before Clinton had rung up one strike

There were no strangers in Fayetteville. Everyone seemed to know everyone else, and often it seemed they were all related and they all had political connections. During the last week in August, Clinton went to lunch at Wyatt's cafeteria with a group of professors and administrators, one of whom happened to be Rudy Moore's brother-in-law, Carl Whillock, a university vice president. Whillock had previously served as the administrative assistant to James W. Trimble, the former Democratic congressman from northwest Arkansas who had been defeated in 1966 by Republican John Paul Hammerschmidt. The talk among the group was almost exclusively about Watergate, the scandal that had become a daily television drama starring Chairman Sam Ervin and his colleagues on the Senate Watergate Committee. In the car on the way to lunch, Whillock, a dignified man who dressed conservatively, seemed unusually quiet. Finally, when they were all seated at the cafeteria, someone asked him what he thought of the scandal. "I think Richard Nixon would cause great bodily harm to close family members if it would help him politically," he said. Clinton was shocked. He had misjudged Whillock because of his appearance and his earlier silence. Now he wanted to know more about him, and the more they talked, the more fascinated Clinton became. If Clinton wanted to get anywhere politically up in these hills, he could not find a steadier guide.

THE University of Arkansas School of Law had never before encountered a faculty member quite like Clinton. With his boyish face and long curly hair, he looked like one of the students and he often acted like one as well. He was a student's law professor rather than a law professor's law professor. In part, his style reflected the contrasting philosophies of the school where he learned the law and the school where he was now teaching it. At Yale, the hard part was getting admitted: once you got in, you were part of an elite club, and it was virtually impossible to flunk out. Arkansas, the only law school in the state, was obliged to open its doors to a majority of applicants, four-fifths of whom came from within the state. The easy part was getting in. It was not unusual for 30 percent of the first-year students to receive failing grades. Several professors took pleasure in terrorizing first-year students. Clinton was the opposite.

Although Clinton wanted to teach the glamorous subjects, criminal law and constitutional law, he told the dean that he would be willing to take on whatever courses needed to be taught. In the fall of his first year that left him with agency and partnership, which he knew little about at the start, and trade regulation, an antitrust course that he had studied at Yale. He searched for ways to relate the material to the more lively world of politics. In the agency and partnership class, for instance, he often brought the class conversation around to Watergate. "We had long discussions

about whether the people involved in Watergate were agents of the president," recalled Moril Harriman, a student in Clinton's first class.

It was difficult to distinguish Clinton's class period from the rest of his day. Before class he could usually be found at the student lounge eating breakfast and "shooting the breeze—about anything," according to another former student, Woody Bassett. If a subject caught his interest in the lounge and it had the vaguest relationship to the law, he might continue the discussion once class started. Clinton worked the aisle during class discussions and displayed an early variation of the town meeting or talk-show-host style he would later use with great effectiveness. Other Arkansas law professors tended to be more deliberate and sharp in their use of the Socratic method. They came in with notes and a set of concepts they wanted to cover. They asked pointed questions and called on students at random. Clinton often spoke without written notes and lectured in a conversational tone. Students were free to enter the discussion when they had something to say. In the end, this pressure-free approach led to lively discussions in which the whole class participated. "There was some grumbling by faculty members about the grades in Bill's courses," according to law professor Rafael Guzman. "There were always an abundance of A's and B's, D's were extremely rare, and I doubt very much that Bill ever gave an F. The inside joke was, 'Bill doesn't give D's and F's because he might someday need those votes.'" As the law school dean, Davis took note of Clinton's grading pattern and considered it "on the high side," but "not enough to take him to lunch about it—he just didn't want to give anybody anything below a C."

As word spread that he was an interesting teacher who gave high grades, his courses became increasingly popular. Even his admiralty class on maritime law, a subject of limited interest to most lawyers in Arkansas, bulged with seventy students. But Clinton's casualness sometimes drove even his students to distraction. He was slow in marking exams and posting final grades. One running story at the law school during Clinton's time there was about two law students catching sight of each other across a golf course fairway in late spring and one yelling across to the other, "Hey, I finally got my grade in Clinton's class"—pause—"from the fall semester!" Once he accidentally left the final exam blue books in his car and they disappeared. It was never clear whether he lost them or they were stolen, though Davis found it "mind-boggling that they could have been stolen." His students were given the option of retaking the exam or getting credit for the course without a grade—an unsatisfactory prospect for most of them since they were counting on Clinton's generosity to raise their grade point averages. Another semester on the morning of exam day, colleagues chortled knowingly at the sight of Clinton in a frenzy because he had

waited until the last minute to prepare the exam. Students were answering the first question while Clinton was still writing the next. Clinton always seemed to be juggling too many things at the same time.

Mort Gitelman, as a senior faculty member, was asked to observe Clinton's classroom performance one semester to prepare a report for the tenure committee. Clinton was teaching constitutional law, Gitelman's specialty. His report "wasn't terribly kind to Bill," Gitelman recalled. "He was very good at engaging the students in the classroom, but a lot of times he was kind of off-the-cuff. I wouldn't say unprepared, but not terribly organized. He was not the kind of person who would prepare a class meticulously." On the positive side, Gitelman noted that Clinton possessed "qualities that went into the making of a good teacher. He wouldn't try to impose his views on people. He would draw people out." Had Clinton stayed in legal education, by Gitelman's account, "he would have been okay."

In the constitutional law class, Clinton devoted two weeks to a discussion of the seminal *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. According to Woody Bassett, Clinton told the class that he believed *Roe* was "the most difficult of all court decisions" during that era, and that he thought "they made the right decision." The legal aspect of the case that he emphasized in class was how the Supreme Court devised a way to define a right of privacy not defined in the Constitution. He also spent time dealing with other women's rights issues related to abortion. When one state legislator proposed a measure criminalizing abortion, suggesting that women who had abortions should be prosecuted for murder, Clinton asked the class to consider the possibilities. "What would you do if a woman was sleeping and rolled over and accidentally killed her unborn child—would that be manslaughter?" he asked. "It was an intense discussion about how far it would go," recalled Jesse Kearney, a student in the class. "Bill was good at posing the questions."

Clinton reached Fayetteville at a crucial time for black students at the law school. They were part of the first wave of African Americans, ten to fifteen students per class. Many of them were on probation, on the verge of flunking out, and looking for a mentor on the all-white faculty. L. T. Simes, who came out of the Mississippi Delta town of West Helena, Arkansas, and Ouachita Baptist University, arrived at the law school in 1972, one year ahead of Clinton. "The first year we were there was the most difficult of my life," Simes said later. "Black students in law school were not faring too well as a whole. It was sink or swim." Among other concerns, many black students thought they were not being graded fairly.

Along came Clinton, who to the blacks seemed different from the rest of the faculty. He quickly became their friend and champion. He was young

and outspoken in renouncing racism and the black students naturally gravitated to him. In the classroom, his relaxed style was a special comfort to the blacks. Outside the classroom, he became a tutor for many of the black students, holding sessions at his house or at the law school lounge. "He always had people around him, he was always holding court," Carol Willis, a student from McGehee, another poor Delta town, recalled. "Most black lawyers my age just about owe Bill Clinton for getting them out of law school. He would take the time to make sure you understood the material." Although his classroom style and tutoring helped the black students stay in school, so too did the grades he would give them. They could get a B in his class and a D in another and stay off academic probation.

The black law students eventually gave Clinton a nickname. They called him "Wonder Boy." "In the South at that time, whites would say one thing, but their deeds and words were often different," Simes said later. "So here comes a person where no matter what your relationship with him was, he was not prejudiced. He did not let race treat you different from anyone else. That's why we called him Wonder Boy. It was a miracle the way he was. He could have shunned black students politically. Fayetteville and northwest Arkansas was a white enclave. Wonder Boy Bill did not waver in respect to his conduct with African Americans."

YEARS later, perpetuating the myth that his life progressed in a series of accidents and uncalculated events, Clinton would insist that he embarked on his first political candidacy in Fayetteville reluctantly and only after he had failed to persuade several other people to make the race. In fact, he seemed eager, hungry—anything but reluctant. And he was especially eager for a political office that, if he won it, would take him away from Arkansas. He told Rudy Moore in the fall of 1973 that he wanted to run for office but believed that a seat in the state legislature would not satisfy him: "He felt he had to go bigger. He had his eye on a higher prize." At age twenty-seven—twenty-eight by the time of the next round of fall elections—there would be nothing extraordinary about Clinton serving in the state legislature. In the realm of state politics, then, he was too old to be called a boy wonder. Steve Smith, after all, had been elected when he was only twenty-one, and Mack McLarty, Clinton's childhood friend from Hope, went up to the state capitol as a representative when he was twenty-five.

The careers of Clinton and McLarty were rolling in different directions. McLarty, even more than his ambitious kindergarten mate, carried great expectations with him during his early life. People said that he was destined to be governor. They said it about him when he was the sixteen-year-old governor of Arkansas Boys State, when he was the star quarterback

of Hope High, when he was the popular student body president at the University of Arkansas, and when he was elected to the legislature in 1971 as the presumed leader of an activist freshman class. Yet by the time Clinton returned to Arkansas ready to dive into electoral politics, McLarty had already climbed out of the pool. He served a single two-year term in the Arkansas House and then quit. He already had a wife and child when he entered the legislature, and there was pressure on him to go back to Hope and take control of the family's lucrative auto business, which he seemed far more eager to do than run for reelection. He yearned for stability, he was more comfortable in the business world and was troubled by the uncertainties of elective politics. Helping out behind the scenes, as a party chairman or fund-raiser, was more to his liking than being the center of attention, the target of opposition. It was hard for anyone to imagine McLarty losing an election in Hope, or in all of Arkansas—but he imagined it. "What if you don't win?" he asked himself. Politics, he would later confess, always seemed like "a high-stakes gamble." During his one term in the House, McLarty was uncomfortable and barely noticed.

Clinton was comfortable with everything about politics except the notion of being a small fish in a small pond. There was one obvious choice for him. As far back as February 1973, when he visited Arkansas from New Haven to take the state bar exam, friends remember him pounding them with questions that indicated he wanted to come home and run for Congress in the Third Congressional District, which included Hot Springs and Fayetteville. Now he was back in the state, and the moment had arrived. In early December, he drove to the Little Rock suburb of Sherwood and spent a long night talking with Paul Fray, his friend from the Holt Generation days who had been waiting eight years for the time when Clinton would run for Congress. As Clinton devoured a salty Virginia ham prepared by Mary Lee Fray's mother, he and Paul Fray analyzed the congressional district county by county.

They concluded that Hammerschmidt, the Republican incumbent, had a nearly unbreakable hold on the district's largest city, Fort Smith, because of the many retired military families in that area and Hammerschmidt's ability to satisfy their concerns through the House Veterans Affairs Committee. The key to giving Hammerschmidt a tough race was to concentrate on the other twenty counties, especially the rural ones in the hills. They had to go out into the hills, Fray said, "and hammer the hell out of them."

Not long after the session with Fray, on a bitterly cold evening that winter, Clinton walked over to Carl Whillock's comfortable seven-bedroom house in the shadows of Old Main near the law school in Fayetteville. He had been a regular visitor at the Whillock residence all school year. Whenever he had free time he would drop by to joke around and make

peanut butter and banana sandwiches with the Whillocks' three teenage daughters, and then stay up late talking politics with Carl and his wife Margaret. On this night they were chatting in the parlor room, warming by a fire, when Clinton said, "I've been thinking about running for Congress. What do you think about it?"

"Wait right here, I'll go get my card file," Whillock said. He came back with a box that his wife had never seen before, brimming with names and telephone numbers and key contacts all across the Third Congressional District from his days as Trimble's aide. The two men sat in the kitchen late into the night going over the names in Whillock's old file.

Hammerschmidt had not faced a serious challenge from a Democratic opponent since he wrested the seat from Trimble in 1966, the year that Republicans had first gained a foothold in Arkansas with the election of Governor Winthrop Rockefeller. Hammerschmidt had won with two-thirds of the vote in 1968 and 1970 and then a smothering 77 percent in 1972. Over the course of his four terms in office he had become a popular figure among voters and public officials from both parties through solid constituency work and careful nurturing of the private interests in northwest Arkansas. As the only timberman in Congress, he was considered an especially valuable ally of the heavily forested district's significant timber industry. The odds were weighted against anyone seeking to oppose John Paul, as Hammerschmidt was known, even though it was an off-year, when the party out of power usually gained House seats and the Democrats seemed especially ready to do so as President Nixon's popularity declined with every new Watergate revelation.

Clinton solicited advice from other experienced political observers. Most encouraged him to run while holding out little promise that he could win. "I don't see how you can raise the money to make the race," said attorney James Blair, a major political powerbroker in northwest Arkansas who was managing Senator Fulbright's reelection campaign that year. McLarty, the state party chairman, considered Hammerschmidt "a wonderful man" who was "well regarded and well respected," and not a top-priority target for the Democrats. Blair's future wife, Diane Kincaid, a political science professor at Arkansas who had met Clinton during the 1972 presidential campaign, noted the poor showing of previous challengers to Hammerschmidt but thought that Clinton was the first "plausible candidate" to surface in eight years in that he "looked like a congressman" and "understood national issues and the dynamics of the district."

Clinton was not easily discouraged. He told Blair that he would overcome his financial disadvantage by working harder. In Arkansas, that meant traveling to every town in the district and meeting as many voters as possible and asking them for their votes. The concept of retail politics was

a sacred political belief in Arkansas. The political folk wisdom included a statistical component: it was estimated that 60 percent of the people voted for the candidate who met them first and asked them for their vote. Clinton thought he could ask that many. He also assumed that the Watergate scandal would help.

Watergate influenced Clinton's career decision in more ways than one. In December 1973, just as he was attempting to gauge how the scandal would play in the hills of northwest Arkansas, Clinton was offered a position as a staff lawyer for the House impeachment inquiry staff. Under the direction of former Justice Department official John Doar, the inquiry staff was being formed as an adjunct to the House Judiciary Committee to sort out the Watergate evidence and make the legal case for Nixon's impeachment. In building his staff, Doar recruited heavily from Yale Law School, where graduates were recommended to him by Burke Marshall, his former colleague in Justice's civil rights division. Clinton and Hillary Rodham were on Marshall's list. Clinton would later say that he considered the offer "a great temptation" and "a great opportunity—one that just about any young attorney would've given anything for"—but there is no evidence that he spent much time debating his options. David Pryor, who was working as a lawyer in Little Rock and beginning a campaign for governor, later recalled Clinton visiting him one day and asking whether being associated with the impeachment staff would have any negative implications in Arkansas. Interestingly, according to Pryor, Clinton put the question in terms of his friend Rodham and his relationship with her. "He talked to me about Hillary going to work for the Watergate committee," Pryor recalled. "He asked, 'Is that a good idea?' It was a career consideration. He knew that his career would be in politics and the question was whether Hillary's connection with the Watergate committee might have political ramifications."

DURING his lunch hour one day in early January 1974, Clinton sat in his cramped third-floor office at Waterman Hall placing telephone calls. One call went to Ron Addington, a doctoral student and instructor in the school of education who was interested in politics and had told a mutual acquaintance that he wanted to meet Clinton. "Why don't you come over and let's visit," Clinton said when he reached him. They had common bonds. They were born within a month of each other in 1946 in the same area; Addington grew up in DeQueen some thirty-five miles from Hope. He was an Army reservist, conservative in dress, bearing and haircut. Clinton was wearing blue jeans, leather moccasin boots, a checkered shirt with a tie, and a corduroy sports jacket. His hair was long and curly. His appearance

did not match Addington's expectations, which were closer to "the stereotype of a person who runs for office." But the two clicked, and Addington agreed to help Clinton prepare for his race for Congress.

Later that week, Clinton asked Addington to travel with him for a day of political meetings in Russellville, an important city in the congressional district some three hours away on the road to Little Rock. The journey ended in embarrassment. After meeting various political officials in town all day, Clinton and Addington were taken to dinner at the local country club as the guests of a wealthy attorney and political powerbroker whom Clinton was intent on recruiting to his side. As the dinner conversation dragged on, it became clear that Clinton was getting tipsy. Never much of a drinker, he was politely downing his drinks with everyone else at the table. His sentences became less and less understandable. It was clear to Addington that Clinton could not drink and remain coherent. In the car on the way back to Fayetteville, Addington scolded Clinton for his behavior. "I don't know whether you can drink while campaigning," he said. "Don't try it again." The lesson was brought home soon enough when the attorney endorsed another candidate.

Addington was in Little Rock, spending the weekend with his girlfriend, when Clinton called him from Fayetteville on the Sunday morning of February 24.

"I'm announcing tomorrow," Clinton said.

"Tomorrow?" Addington gasped.

"Yeah. We're setting up some press conferences."

"Okay, let's do it!" Addington said.

That was Clinton, he thought: impetuous, hungry, thinking that he could conquer the world in a day. And this was not even a normal day. It was a Sunday. And Clinton wanted press conferences in four cities—Hot Springs, his home town; Little Rock, the state capital and headquarters for the state political press corps; Fort Smith, the largest city in the Third District; and Fayetteville, Clinton's new base. Addington told Clinton that he would go to work on rounding up the press and meet Clinton in Russellville, a midpoint in the triangle between Little Rock, where Addington was staying, Fayetteville, where Clinton was, and Hot Springs, where they would both spend the night in preparation for the first press conference the next morning. They agreed to meet at the AQ Chicken House in Russellville that afternoon. First Addington called Doug Wallace, the editor of the University of Arkansas student newspaper, who was part of Clinton's team, and who had already spent Friday and Saturday preparing press packets. Then Addington got in the car with his girlfriend and headed north. When they reached the Chicken House, Addington hopped out and said goodbye to his girlfriend, who drove on to Fayetteville alone. From a telephone

outside the restaurant, Addington began tracking down reporters to let them know the plans for the next day.

Clinton arrived in his Gremlin, late, and he and Addington headed out over the mountain from Russellville to Hot Springs, one of the most perilous, twisting drives in Arkansas. Halfway through the trip, Addington turned to Clinton and said, "If we survive, you are never going to drive again when I'm in the car!" Clinton was driving as he always drove, carelessly, talking and gesturing the whole time, his eyes often off the road, every now and then swerving wildly into the oncoming lane or running his right tires onto the shoulder. The car had no passing power, but Clinton would try to pass anyway, usually when he was chugging uphill heading into a blind curve.

At eight o'clock on Monday morning in frigid twenty-two-degree weather, sixty Clinton friends and relatives gathered at the Avanelle Motor Lodge in Hot Springs for the announcement. Ten relatives from the Clinton family were there, along with the parents of his high school friends: Phil Jamison's mother, Ronnie Cecil's father, Jim French's dad. Elizabeth Buck, Clinton's old Latin teacher, stood in the back near Virgil Spurlin, his high school band director. Here, at long last, was the opening moment of Bill Clinton's political career. He went after Hammerschmidt right away, ignoring the three other candidates for the Democratic nomination. He characterized Hammerschmidt as a close political ally of Nixon's and tried to link him to Watergate by saying, "Of all the men in Congress, he is one of those who has allowed the President to go as far as he has." If the people "demand more honest politics," Clinton declared, "they'll get more honest politics."

His mother Virginia was nearby. "All smiles," as Addington remembered her. "All smiles and laughing."

CARL Whillock's old card file was not the only valuable collection of names that Clinton turned to when he began his electoral career. He already had a file of his own, a cardboard box stuffed with alphabetized and annotated index cards listing the addresses and telephone numbers of classmates, professors, political organizers, and others he had encountered during his long apprenticeship. He spent time each night combing through the file, placing telephone calls, and writing notes to friends who might help his campaign.

Two years earlier, while working for McGovern in Texas, he had told Houston organizer Billie Carr that he was going home to Arkansas to begin a political career that would culminate with a run for president. Now he called her and said proudly, "Billie, I'm on my way!" He also called Bob

Armstrong and John C. White and Taylor Branch, who was back in Washington serving as the Washington editor of *Harper's* magazine. Though Branch by then had soured some on electoral politics and was hardly wealthy, he responded by contributing \$250. It was, in a sense, a one-man phone bank and direct-mail operation. Most of Clinton's friends from Georgetown, Oxford, Yale, and Texas took note of the inevitable—their irrepressible pal Clinton had finally begun his lifetime race—and chuckled as they took his call or opened his letter. For the most part, they were charmed. Clinton was the master of the soft sell. He remembered the smallest details of people's lives, and his deftness at personalizing the notes tended to overcome whatever unseemliness might otherwise have tainted a blatantly political contact.

A letter he sent to Charlie Daniels, the plumbing contractor from Norton, Virginia, who had met Clinton four years earlier at the National Hotel in Moscow, stands as a perfect example of how Clinton would present himself: good-humored, humble, flattering, familiar: "Dear Charlie," he began.

I don't know if you'll remember me but this is the last day of the week we were together in Moscow four years ago now. I have been thinking of you, as I always do this time of year. . . . I am about to embark on a campaign for Congress against an entrenched GOP incumbent. I remember thinking when we were together what a campaigner you'd be—You're sure welcome here. Ha! My mother has never forgotten your thoughtful phone call upon your return from Russia. All the best, Bill Clinton.

Daniels was a registered Republican, but from then on, Clinton was his man. He visited Arkansas often, and even more often sent Clinton campaign checks.

The return rate on Clinton's personal direct-mail effort was uneven. Many of his young friends sent donations of between \$10 and \$50. "Sorry I couldn't send more," wrote Garry Mauro, who headed the Students for McGovern effort in Texas in 1972. Women friends old and new seemed to be reliable sources. Hillary Rodham wrote out two early checks for \$400. Lyda Holt chipped in with \$125. The Leckford Road connection was also fruitful. Strobe Talbott contributed \$300, as did Brooke Shearer. The rest of the Shearer family, who served as Clinton's hosts when he visited California, also supported his congressional bid. Brooke's brothers, Derek and Cody, both journalists, gave a total of \$450, and her mother, Marva Shearer, contributed \$200. The first \$10,000 of his campaign came from a source closer to home: a Hot Springs bank loan co-signed by his uncle Raymond Clinton and Gabe Crawford of the Oaklawn Pharmacy.

THE Third District was more than Fayetteville, Fort Smith, and Hot Springs. Most of the twenty-one county district lay out in the northern hills, the region that Clinton and Paul Fray had targeted as the key to the election during their meeting in early December. It was a vast rural region steeped in country folkways. To get to Washington, Clinton would have to travel deep into the backwaters of his native state. At an organizational meeting of Clinton supporters in Fayetteville a few days after the announcement, Carl Whillock unfolded a map of Arkansas and traced the two-lane roads and highways leading from one county seat to another in the Third District. He knew the distances from town to town: with twists and turns through the hills, destinations were always far longer in minutes than in miles. Each time his hand stopped at a town, Whillock had a story to tell about a friend in the courthouse or at the weekly newspaper. He proposed that he and Clinton spend a day together driving through the hills from courthouse to courthouse.

They left at dawn on Wednesday, March 6. Whillock had not prearranged any meetings for the trip. He knew the daily patterns of the people he wanted Clinton to meet. They would be where they always were, and no matter what they were doing they would have time for an old friend. The political explorers headed north and east out of Fayetteville on Highway 62 until they reached Berryville, a town that Whillock knew intimately as the home town of his former boss, the late congressman Trimble. The rural essence of the district Clinton sought to represent was brought home to him at this first stop. Berryville was a county seat of Carroll County—not the county seat but a county seat. There were two county seats, with their own separate courthouses: Eureka Springs on the western side of the Kings River and Berryville on the eastern side—a vestige of the days, not so long ago in these parts of Arkansas, when rivers were difficult to cross. At the Berryville courthouse they met Eileen Harvey, the circuit court clerk and recorder of deeds, who cherished the memory of Trimble as her "dearest friend" and had once been a member of the same church as Whillock. "Carl tells me you know how to run in these hills," Clinton said to Harvey. He asked Harvey for her help. She gave it, not only offering to take him around the county, even across the Kings River, but also persuading her daughter to work in Clinton's county campaign. "We hit it off," Harvey said later. "He loved people and loved campaigning and I did too. Politics is nothing more than a selling game."

From the courthouse, Whillock and Clinton drove out to the Methodist parsonage in Berryville, where they met a young minister, Victor Nixon, and his wife, Freddie Nixon, who were leading peace and civil rights



activists. "We sat around the front porch and visited for an hour or so," Whillock recalled. "And Freddie agreed to be Bill's Carroll County coordinator." That conversation on the porch began a long relationship between Clinton and the Nixons that was marked by deeply emotional moments. Victor Nixon would later serve as the minister at Clinton's wedding. Freddie Nixon would become one of Clinton's aides, and their friendship would bend but not break in a profound disagreement over the use of the death penalty.

The next stop was in the little town of Alpena on the border separating Carroll and Boone counties at a drive-in restaurant run by the wife of an old cattle farmer, Bo Forney, who served on the Democratic central committee. Forney was a rough-faced, gruff-talking, overweight character in bib overalls, seemingly a world apart from the young Rhodes Scholar with the curly hair and long sideburns. But again, Clinton knew how to talk Forney's language and won him over. The cattle farmer contributed \$405 to Clinton's campaign before the year was through.

Driving east on Highway 65, Whillock and Clinton reached Harrison, the county seat of Boone County and the heart of enemy territory, Hammerschmidt's home. Harrison was a major hub in northwest Arkansas, large enough to have its own daily newspaper, the *Harrison Daily Times*, and Whillock knew the editor, J. E. Dunlap. Whillock realized that Dunlap, who wrote a column under his initials, J.E.D., was an ally of the incumbent congressman, JPH, but he took Clinton in to see him anyway, hoping to "soften J.E.D. up." It was a surprisingly productive visit. In that afternoon's paper, across page 2 from JPH's "Capitol Report" column opposing congressional pay increases, J.E.D. took note of his visitors from Fayetteville. "One candidate has already hit the ground running. He's running on the Democratic ticket for Congress in the 3rd District," J.E.D. wrote. "Bill Clinton, native of Hope, graduate of Hot Springs high school, a Rhodes Scholar and a graduate of Yale Law School, now a teacher in the U of A Law School, was in town this morning with a former aide of the late Cong. Jim Trimble, Carl Whillock. Clinton was shaking hands on a tour through the Harrison area."

Highway 62 took the travelers east out of Harrison and along the White River through Yellville and Flippin. It was Clinton's first glimpse of a scenic region where he would later, much to his eventual regret, invest in a vacation home development enterprise known as Whitewater. They reached the northeastern terminus of their trip in Mountain Home, where they met with Baxter County treasurer Vada Sheid at her family furniture shop. "These two men walk in," Sheid recalled later. "I knew Whillock from his days with Trimble. He introduced me to young Bill Clinton, a very personable young man. We found a place in the store to sit down and

visit." Clinton cast his spell on another older woman. He was "the kind of person," Sheid thought, "who makes you want to be friendly with him." It quickly became clear that she and Clinton had much in common. They both loved politics—and more: "He said his birthday was August 19 when I asked him his age. I said, 'That's my birthday, too. That makes us both Leos!' I felt Leos had the same ideas about people. I agreed wholeheartedly to support him."

As Clinton rose to leave, Sheid noticed that a button had fallen off his shirt. "Now, Bill," she said, "you need a button sewn on your shirt if you're going to run for congressman." She had him sit still for a minute as she found a needle and thread and made him presentable again. It was the first of many times over the years when the friendly furniture store merchant would come to the aid of her ambitious young astrologically aligned friend. Two years after that first meeting in Mountain Home, she was elected to the Arkansas legislature, and a decade later she would cast a decisive vote that saved Clinton's reputation at the same time that it may have cost Sheid her career.

When they left Sheid Furniture, Whillock and Clinton temporarily split up. Clinton said he wanted to visit the newspaper office. "You do that," Whillock said, "and I'll go find Hugh and we'll meet at the drugstore at four." Hugh was Hugh Hackler, an old friend who had served in the Arkansas legislature with Whillock in the 1950s. At that point in the afternoon, Whillock guessed correctly that he would find the retired Hackler in the pool hall playing dominoes with his friends. Whillock took Hackler aside after the game.

"Hugh, I'm traveling with Bill Clinton, a fine young man running for Congress. I'd like you to meet him," Whillock said.

Hackler responded coolly. He said he had already promised people that he would support a candidate from Fort Smith, Gene Rainwater, in the Democratic primary.

"Well, I'm sorry you've done that, but Bill Clinton is going to be around a long time," Whillock responded. "One of these days he's gonna be governor or senator and you'll need to know him." That was enough to persuade Hackler to accompany Whillock over to the drugstore.

Whillock and Hackler found a spot in a red and tan booth with a black Formica table. They ordered coffee. Hackler was in his sixties and conservatively dressed. Clinton came in at four, sat down, and ordered a Coke. Whillock was not sure how his old friend would get along with his new one, but he need not have worried. The conversation began with a coincidence and only improved from there.

"Where'd you grow up?" Hackler asked.

"Hot Springs," Clinton said.

"I've got a good friend in Hot Springs. But I don't imagine you'd know him."

"Who is it?"

"Gabe Crawford. He runs some drugstores there."

Gabe Crawford was one of the closest friends of Clinton's mother and late stepfather. This was the same Gabe Crawford who had joined Raymond Clinton in co-signing the loan that gave Clinton the first \$10,000 of his campaign. "We practically live at the Crawfords," Clinton said. "We're over at their house all the time."

After fifteen minutes of easy conversation, Hackler turned to Whillock and proclaimed: "Carl, I'm gonna call my friends and change this. I want to support Bill."

The last stops on the trip were in Marshall, the county seat of Searcy County, where they met with newspaper editors, and then the little town of St. Joe, where they visited Will Goggins, chairman of the county Democratic party. It was after nine when they reached St. Joe and Goggins was already in bed, with the lights out, but he answered the door, invited Whillock and Clinton in, and talked with them for an hour. Goggins was a Clinton man for the rest of his life. From St. Joe they retraced their path up and across Highway 65, weaving through the woods and river valleys in the darkness of an early Arkansas spring. It was after midnight when they got back to Fayetteville. Whillock was shocked to see that his wife and children were still up. "You really missed it!" one of his kids yelled excitedly. What had they missed? It seems that the latest campus fad had reached Fayetteville that night. For several hours, naked young men and women had been streaking up and down Maple Street past the Whillocks' house.

A few days later, candidate Clinton was asked to take a position on streaking. "It's a little extreme for my taste," he told an Associated Press reporter. "I find it offensive, but I think it's just a passing fad. Something quite similar went around when I was in high school. You may remember it. They called it 'Mooning' where you drop your drawers and stick your fat out the window in a passing car." The story was printed in the *Hope Star*, where Mack McLarty read it. He clipped the article and sent it to Clinton with a scrawled note: "Bill—Excellent press. Appears you handled yourself in your usual style. Trust you rec'd my \$—Holler if additional help is needed. Mack McL."

In the small world of Democratic politics in northwest Arkansas, the center of the action was Billie Schneider's little restaurant at Hillbilly Hollow on the road between Fayetteville and Springdale. At a long picnic table in her back room, Schneider's friends gathered several nights a week to drink

beer and chew on large juicy steaks and even juicier politics. It was an eclectic crowd ranging from long-haired college students who called Billie "Momma" to wealthy lawyers who looked to her for the latest town gossip. One of the regulars was Don Tyson, the bantam rooster of the chicken-processing field, whose lucrative family enterprise was expanding into one of the state's most powerful companies. Momma was the Godmother of Washington County politics, a yellow dog Democrat who sometimes refused to serve diners whom she considered too Republican. She looked like a saloon owner from the Old West: her voice deep and raspy from too many cigarettes, her face craggy and shaped by the ups and downs of her life. She drank and swore and was not afraid to tell people what she thought about them. She had the outgoing personality of Clinton's mother, Virginia, and was not shy about offering the young law professor political advice.

One of the first press releases the campaign issued referred to William J. Clinton, which is how his name was printed in a local newspaper. Schneider saw it and called headquarters. "Ron," she screamed at Addington, who answered the phone. "You and Bill get your butts up here and I mean just as soon as you can!" Addington explained that Clinton was out campaigning and would not be back until later that night. "Well, when he gets in, get your butts up here!" Schneider said. Addington and Clinton walked into the restaurant just before closing. Schneider had some heated advice about what she had seen in the paper that day. The sight of Clinton's formal first name and middle initial sickened her populist soul. She wanted to make sure Clinton understood that he was back in Arkansas. This was not Georgetown, Oxford, or Yale.

"What is this William J. Clinton?" she asked. "You're not gonna run as William J. Clinton. You're Bill Clinton. And you're gonna run as Bill Clinton!"

CLINTON was a candidate now, but he still had to make it official. He had to travel from Fayetteville back to Little Rock to file. It was a four-hour drive each way, too long for him to make it down on the day he wanted to go and return in time for a big rally scheduled for that night on the University of Arkansas campus. A local nightclub owner offered the use of his airplane, a four-seat Cessna, but Addington had to recruit a pilot, which was a harder task than he expected. At the last hour, someone told him about a student at the university who had his pilot's license and could make the trip. They left on the morning of March 22. On the flight down to Little Rock, Addington told the pilot that he was taking flying lessons. The pilot said he had just earned his license a month earlier. It was a clear day and the trip down was free and easy.

They spent more time than planned in Little Rock. Clinton

found one more person to talk to. It was dark by the time they took off over the mountains on their way back to Fayetteville. Twenty minutes into the flight, Addington realized something was wrong. "I knew we weren't flying right, I could feel it in my bones. It was dark and this guy starts pulling out maps. Clinton was sitting up front with the pilot. He turned around and looked at me like, 'Where did we get this guy?' I said it would be all right." Addington noticed that they were flying over a town and told the pilot to dip lower so they could get a look at the water tower. It was the tower for Harrison. They were off course to the east. Addington told the pilot to set his compass due west for a flight path that would take them directly to Fayetteville. They arrived safely, though late, and with a furious, red-faced candidate on board.

On the drive from the airport to the campus rally, Clinton, sitting in the front seat, exploded. "God damn it!" he yelled, pounding his fist on the dashboard. "Don't you ever line up somebody like that again, Ron! I could have been killed up there. My political career would have been over before it began! I can't believe you jeopardized our lives like that!"

Addington wanted to point out that it was not easy for him to find a pilot, that Clinton had endangered them by being so late and making them fly at night, that Addington was as scared as Clinton and that they might still be flying somewhere toward Missouri if he hadn't had the sense to find the water tower and that Clinton, the worst car driver in the world, had little room to talk about endangering lives. But he could not get a word in. Clinton was fuming and would not stop for breath. Addington had never seen this side of Clinton before. It was a fierce, sudden temper tantrum. Pounding away on the dashboard. Madder than hell. The first eruption of his political life. For Addington and dozens of aides who worked at Clinton's side over the ensuing years, it would become a familiar sight.

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## AND NOT TO YIELD

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WHILE CLINTON DIVIDED his time between teaching law in Fayetteville and roaming the back highways of northwest Arkansas, Hillary Rodham was holed up in an office on Capitol Hill in Washington, surrounded by documents, protected by a double line of security, her movements circumscribed by the sensitivity of her mission as one of thirty-nine lawyers constructing a case for the removal of a president. More than twelve hours a day and seven days a week, Rodham worked at a desk in a mildewed suite on the second floor of the old Congressional Hotel. She rarely associated with anyone outside the closed circle of legal compatriots brought to Washington by John Doar, special counsel for the House Judiciary Committee's impeachment inquiry staff. She did not have her own apartment, but took an extra upstairs bedroom at the house of Sara Ehrman, a liberal Democrat whom she first met during the McGovern campaign in Texas. Ehrman, whose four-bedroom, four-bath house was a virtual youth hostel, rarely saw her industrious young boarder except around midnight when they might meet at the refrigerator in search of yogurt.

Rodham was twenty-six, less than a year out of law school, untested in the legal community, yet playing a coveted if minor role in the century's most gripping presidential drama. She did not arrive at the inquiry staff a complete stranger. She and Doar had met the previous spring, when Rodham and Clinton served on the board of directors of the Barristers Union at Yale Law and invited Doar to judge that year's student Prize Trial. After being selected by the Judiciary Committee to direct the impeachment inquiry, Doar built a staff quickly. Along with a few seasoned attorneys, his so-called chiefs, he needed a band of young legal warriors who could come to Washington for an indefinite period to work brutal hours for little pay. Rodham fit the job description, as did her classmate Michael Conway.

Prize recruits who showed the slightest hint of interest apparently were

not given much choice by Doar, at least based on the way he hired Conway. After his luminous years as a student at Yale Law, where he had defeated Rodham and Clinton in the Prize Trial competition, Conway had joined a major Chicago law firm. He had barely settled in when he took a call in the first week of January from his former teacher and friend at Yale, Burke Marshall. They had a one-minute conversation during which Marshall asked Conway if he was interested in working for Doar on the impeachment staff and Conway responded that it was a "fascinating idea" and that he would have to think about it. An hour later Doar called. "Mike, I talked with Burke and he said you'll be here," Doar said. "I'll see you Sunday." Conway was in Washington that Sunday. Later that week he was given a tiny side office in a suite at the Congressional Hotel which he realized had once been a bathroom. Appropriate, he thought, since he was assigned to a task force looking into alleged misdeeds of the Watergate-related group known as "the plumbers."

Rodham arrived at about the same time and took a desk next to Tom Bell, a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School who had been recruited out of Doar's law firm in New Richmond, Wisconsin. Their windows looked out on a back alley. Rodham's first assignment was less intriguing than investigating the plumbers. Doar had organized the staff into two sections. Most of the lawyers were assigned to task forces in a section called Factual Investigation, which was to collect and examine evidence on activities that fell under the rubric of Watergate, including the break-in itself, the alleged coverup, the use of other dirty tricks in the 1972 campaign, as well as several non-Watergate concerns, including the secret bombing of Cambodia. Rodham was placed in a smaller section known as Constitutional and Legal Research. Its first major project was to research the constitutional grounds for impeachment: an important but scholarly task that not everyone was eager to do.

Rodham's section analyzed the constitutional intent of impeachment and its historical basis in four hundred years of English history. Virtually every word in their report delineating the grounds for impeachment carried weight. At one meeting they spent four hours arguing over whether to use the phrase "to the modern ear" in describing how high crimes and misdemeanors should be interpreted. Their report concluded that "to limit impeachable conduct to criminal offenses would be incompatible with the evidence concerning the constitutional meaning of the phrase . . . and would frustrate the purpose that the framers intended for impeachment." They found that in thirteen American impeachment cases, including ten of federal judges, less than one-third of the articles of impeachment explicitly charged the violation of a criminal statute.

The thoroughness of the report impressed Doar, who believed that the

precise wording of articles of impeachment would be of supreme importance. Rodham became one of his staff favorites. It did not matter that she had a partisan past, that she had worked for McGovern, for she seemed discreet in her demeanor, reverent of the process, and impartial about the expected outcome of the endeavor, at least in front of the boss.

Doar was a seemingly nonpartisan figure: a moderate Republican who had held a high-profile role in the Justice Department's civil rights division during the 1960s and later served as president of the New York Board of Education. From his impeachment staff, he demanded objectivity and discretion. Fred Altshuler, a University of Chicago Law School graduate, was nearly fired during his first week for making a political remark that he thought was inconsequential but which Doar found injudicious. From then on, he understood Doar's dictum: Just report the facts. Doar pounded into his staff the notion that they had to show respect for the office of the president. Even in private conversations they were to refer to Nixon as the president.

Doar was solemn and complicated, variously eliciting frustration, exhaustion, and admiration from those who worked for him. His aides joked that he was the type of person they would die for but did not want to live with. He kept the door to his office closed. His obsession with organizational detail and neatness included a clean desk policy. A clean desk, he told his troops, represented a thorough and methodical mind. Early on Sunday mornings he roamed from office to office to reassure himself that no one had taken a day off. His occasional pats on the back, known as "Doar fixes," took on greater importance because of his belief in meritocracy. People were constantly being shifted up or down in the staff hierarchy depending on how Doar viewed their work, which gave the place a measure of egalitarianism but also increased the anxiety level in an already tense atmosphere.

The methodical approach that Doar took to the inquiry was in itself a point of tension. He was so intent on avoiding the appearance of being out to get Nixon that some partisan Democrats on the Judiciary Committee referred to him as "the Republican counsel." They preferred the style of one of his three senior associate special counsels, Richard Cates, a trial attorney and professor from Madison, Wisconsin, who had been brought in to help Chairman Rodino decide whether and how to proceed with the impeachment inquiry before Doar arrived. Cates and Doar respected each other, and years later became close friends, but at the time they held sharply different ideas about how to conduct the investigation. Cates was willing to draw conclusions about the evidence that had already been accumulated from the Senate Watergate Committee hearings and earlier investigative work. Doar started with a blank slate. Cates was a master of

the story line. He spent hours each day developing theories, placing details in their probable context. Doar, in the words of Tom Bell, "doesn't give a whit about" the story. "He is looking for detail after detail after detail, and when he's done, the story will take care of itself."

BOTH styles rubbed off on Hillary Rodham. Among the inquiry staff of ninety lawyers, researchers, and clerks, she seemed "the least perturbed by tensions inherent in Doar's meritocracy," according to Robin Johansen, who thought of Rodham as a self-contained person immune from the occasional backbiting. This image might have been both a symptom and a cause of Doar's regard for her. Bell, Rodham's office mate, noticed that Doar had more confidence in her than in most of the other rookie lawyers on the staff. "On occasion he would call her in and bounce something off her." One day Doar had Rodham stand by his side at a hallway press conference. (The way she would later tell the story, her presence inspired ABC News correspondent Sam Donaldson to yell out to her: "How does it feel to be the Jill Wine Volner of the impeachment committee?"—comparing Rodham with a young woman lawyer on the Watergate special prosecutor's staff. Donaldson has no such memory. "I don't mean this as a slam . . . but you've seen pictures of her in those days," Donaldson said later. "I don't think younger bucks like me paid any attention to her.")

Perhaps the television reporter did not pay much attention to Rodham, but her bosses on the impeachment staff certainly did. Bernard W. Nussbaum, another of Doar's top assistants, who came down to Washington from a Manhattan firm, drove Rodham home to Sara Ehrman's house many nights, striking up a paternal friendship and legal interdependence that would continue for decades. And Bell noticed that just as Doar took to Rodham, so too did Cates. "There were some tensions between Cates and Doar, and both confided in her. Hillary was in the middle." At the same time that she operated as one of Doar's favorites, she shared some of Cates's frustrations with the slow pace of the investigation. "This thing is going down in flames!" Tom Bell remembered Rodham fuming to him one day when one of the president's men was acquitted of perjury charges vaguely related to Watergate. She was "devastated with the verdict," according to Bell, fearful that things were moving so slowly that Nixon and his men might prevail in the courts and in Congress. Bell, who felt that his job was to be loyal to Doar, urged Rodham to be patient. "I said to her, 'This is how lawyers work.'"

Bell said that he and Rodham both "saw Nixon as evil," but in different ways. "Her opinion of him was more a result of the McGovern campaign and Vietnam and those kinds of issues. I saw him as evil because he was

screwing with the Constitution. She came at it with more preconceived ideas than I did." Their perspectives on Nixon paralleled to some extent the way in which the two young lawyers viewed their assignments in Washington. "She saw the work as absolutely the most important thing in the world," Bell said. "I saw it as important but also as a job. To her it may have been more of a mission."

The more Bell got to know Rodham, the more it became apparent to him that "she wasn't as ideologically pure as the program for the players would indicate. Not that she made any false pretenses or anything. We were just two young lawyers who shared confidences." Their conversations were blunt and open. "She wasn't afraid to say that you were full of shit. And if you told her the same, she would take it."

IT was natural for members of the impeachment staff to confide in each other so much because they had little time to interact with anyone outside their closed circle and were discouraged from doing so. "We're lawyers, not historians," Doar would tell them. "Don't keep a diary. Don't talk to anybody. Just do your work." When they left the office, it was usually in self-contained groups to eat lunch or dinner at their regular Greek and Italian restaurant hangouts on Capitol Hill. "We'd go out in groups and come back and work some more," recalled Fred Altshuler. This classic foxhole culture led to extreme familiarity and occasional explosions. Rodham was sometimes a consoling presence. Robert Sack, who had taken a leave of absence from a major New York law firm to serve on the inquiry staff, had "a small but nasty to-do" with one of the senior counsels and left the office one night feeling "very much put-down." As he was walking to his car several blocks away, he heard some voices behind him—"and there were Hillary and Fred Altshuler." Rodham wanted to buck him up and tell him that everything was fine.

Doar was obsessive about security. He instructed his staff never to talk in front of a window and to keep the shades drawn. He hired a retired Air Force colonel to arrange security in the office and develop methods of controlling sensitive information. Two types of wastebaskets were placed in each room, one for normal waste and the other for sensitive waste, meaning any papers or carbons related to the inquiry. Two clerks collected the sensitive waste each day, carried it to a van in the basement garage, and drove out to the District of Columbia waste-disposal site near RFK Stadium. Watergate reporters were hovering nearby at all hours of the day, especially columnist Jack Anderson's gumshoe assistants. One Anderson aide would camp out in the lobby and toss unanswered queries at staff members as they came off the elevator. Bell, who lived in an apartment

building up the street from the Congressional Hotel, found notes slipped under his door by an Anderson assistant that said, "We know who you are and it is your constitutional duty to let the country know what is going on."

Unlike the Senate Watergate Committee, where different staff investigators had protected their own informational fiefdoms with safes full of documents, Doar created a research library that served as the central repository for material gathered by the inquiry staff. The computer age was dawning, but Doar felt uncomfortable with the security of computer systems, so his staff worked with original documents and transcripts catalogued by a team of researchers and librarians. They built a sophisticated chronology of the Watergate case on seven-ply index cards which were carefully typed and cross-indexed and in the end totaled more than a half million. The ever-expanding library became the symbol of the impeachment case and the representation of Doar's style. He was a documents man. He preferred the certainty of records to the fallibility of witnesses.

The library was also where most of the women on the staff worked. Rodham was among only three female lawyers, and though she was not treated as a token of her gender, there was an undercurrent of sexism in the office. At one point the women felt compelled to place a sign on the coffee machine that read: "The women in this office were not hired to make coffee. Make it yourself or call on one of these liberated men to do so"—followed by a list of male lawyers. Rodham was not shy about debating the roles that women should play in society. She once got into a debate with Albert Jenner, the Republican counsel for the committee, when Jenner commented that there were no famous women trial lawyers. "Hillary pointed out that the reason was because women generally did not have wives," recalled Terry Kirkpatrick, another of the women lawyers. "She said that the reason male trial lawyers could be famous was because their wives packed their bags and ironed their clothes and were supportive of them while they were doing their work." Jenner was "singularly unimpressed" with Rodham's argument, but Kirkpatrick never forgot it. It helped spark her own interest in the politics of gender.

With its unrelenting pressure and foxhole mentality, the impeachment staff experience was much like that of a political campaign. There was one notable difference, according to Bob Sack. "The most extraordinary thing is how little sex there was. It was so much of a fraternal experience. It had the characteristics of an intense political campaign but with much less sex." Rodham developed strong friendships with several men on the staff, but everyone knew that she had a boyfriend teaching law and running for Congress out in Arkansas. "I remember that she was dating Bill Clinton and her saying to me once, 'He wants to stay in Arkansas and get involved

in politics'—and she kind of rolled her eyes a little bit," recalled Jeff Branchero, a staff clerk who had recently graduated from the University of California.

The Clinton and Rodham relationship during the months when they were apart was, as always, tempestuous. There were several young women clamoring for Clinton's attention, or he for theirs. Clinton's mother and younger brother thought that his bespectacled law school friend was not physically striking enough for him and tried to discourage him from getting too serious, but he would respond that in the long run it was Hillary or nobody. His physical attraction to other women would not diminish, but she was the only one he wanted to marry. Once, when he encountered a classmate from Georgetown, Melanne Verveer, who had married another Georgetown friend, Phil Verveer, Clinton blurted out—"I'm following Phil's example. I'm going for brains and ability rather than glamour." Melanne Verveer could have taken it as an insult of sorts. She accepted it as a compliment.

Rodham, for her part, seemed uncharacteristically passionate when it came to her Arkansas boyfriend. "She was absolutely, totally crazy about Bill Clinton," according to Kirkpatrick. "Besotted" is not a word I would normally apply to Hillary, but I think she was besotted. Bill came to visit her two or three times, and when he was coming to town her face would change. It would light up. It was very un-Hillaryesque." Rodham was circumspect in most matters, but did not suppress the highs and lows of her relationship with Clinton. The lows were provoked by his occasional inattention and self-absorption and indications that he might be seeing other women. The highs came with his overpowering personality and his future. "This is the honest-to-God truth," Bell later reflected. "She would come in some mornings mad because he wouldn't have called her. She would be cranky. But she would come in other mornings, hit me in the biceps, and say, 'You know, Tom Bell, Bill Clinton is going to be president of the United States someday!'"

Bernie Nussbaum heard the same audacious prophecy one night as he drove Rodham home from work in his Oldsmobile Toronado. It was enough to make him go "a little crazy." There they were, under great pressure handling a president's possible impeachment, and this young woman was boasting that her boyfriend was going to be president someday. Nussbaum, a thirty-seven-year-old New York City law partner, was only eleven years older than Rodham, but had an embracing nature that made him a father figure to her and many of the other young lawyers on the staff. He approached his impeachment assignment, like everything in life, with great intensity, what some of his colleagues called a "take-no-prisoners approach"—a style that was natural to him and had served him

well in his previous jobs as an assistant prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan and as a private litigator.

For Nussbaum and Bob Sack, any doubt about Nixon's impeachability was removed when they put on headphones and listened to White House tapes that the inquiry staff had obtained from the Watergate grand jury in late March. They spent one week playing and replaying the tapes at the side of former White House counsel John Dean, who had been present at many of the meetings with Nixon where the coverup was discussed. Dean now served as an expert translator of the disjointed and sometimes barely audible conversations that had been secretly tape-recorded. Sack thought to himself, "My God, in a hundred years people are going to sit around the National Archives and listen to these tapes. And they are going to wonder what the hell we and our clients, the members of Congress, were doing. How could people sit and listen to this and not do something about it? The evidence made it clear."

From the moment the secret tapes were delivered to the Congressional Hotel, they became the central focus of the inquiry. Doar stored them in a safe in his office and assigned Michael Conway to serve as the gatekeeper to control access to them. He brought in audio specialists to enhance the sound and held a competition to determine which staff members had the sharpest ears and could make the most sense of the conversations and accurately transcribe them. A special listening room was set up at the end of the hallway, not far from where Rodham and Bell worked. Staff members would file in, turn on the tape machine, put on headphones, turn off the lights, settle in on the couch, and listen to the president and his men. Sack felt "a sense of voyeurism—putting the earphones on and listening; like being a fly on the wall of the office of the president of the United States. We almost felt it was a little taboo."

Jeff Branchero proved to have the best hearing on the staff and, in keeping with Doar's meritocracy, spent the most time transcribing. He would take as long as an hour to work on one minute of tape, stopping, rewinding, and playing again and again until he knew instinctively the verbal habits of Nixon, John Mitchell, H. R. Haldeman, and John Dean. Rodham was in the room occasionally. She spent several hours listening to what they called "The Tape of Tapes"—"It was Nixon taping himself while he listened to his tapes, inventing rationales for what he said. At one point he asked Manolo Sanchez [his valet] 'Don't you think I meant this when I said that?'"

Rodham and Fred Altshuler, who became her closest male friend on the staff, worked together on an internal memorandum detailing the organization of Nixon's White House. By listening to the tapes and studying the presidential logs that listed the people Nixon met with each day, they

reconstructed the daily decision-making process inside the Oval Office—who had access to the president, how decisions were communicated up and down. They developed case histories for various events: If Nixon meets with Haldeman and Haldeman talks about that meeting to Chuck Colson, what happens? Studying how the organization functioned, Altshuler said, "was important in terms of finding out whether the president in fact made decisions or underlings made decisions. If the chain of events is, X sees the president and comes out and does Y, you can draw an inference. We found that the president really ran an awful lot of details."

THE end came quickly. In historic sessions at the end of July, the Judiciary Committee voted for three articles of impeachment. Within two weeks, the president had resigned. The inquiry staff was still at work that day, preparing documents for the full House debate on impeachment. They gathered in the library and watched Nixon's farewell speech on an old black and white television set. People sat on the floor and leaned against the walls and the sides of desks. The room was somber and quiet. No cheers from Rodham or any of the other lawyers who had been taught to repress their personal feelings for so many months. "It was like a game ending in overtime—sudden death," recalled Michael Conway, who had already been recruited to work on the Senate staff for an impeachment trial that now would never be held.

As a remembrance of their unforgettable time together, Doar gave each member of his staff a framed picture of the group posed on the front steps of the Longworth House Office Building. It is, like so many snapshots of Hillary Rodham, a reflection of her will. Before the picture was taken, Doar had instructed the lawyers to stand together in the front. Rodham had defied his request, calling it elitist. She stood in the back with her friends on the support staff. Doar signed each picture with an inscription from the last quatrain of Tennyson's *Ulysses*: "To Strive, to Seek, to Find and not to Yield."

MUCH like her boyfriend Bill Clinton, Rodham always worked on at least two levels at once. During her months in Washington, she often expressed ambivalence about what direction to take in her life. Her professional interests seemed to be on the East Coast. She could go back to serving as a counsel for the Children's Defense Fund. She could go to work for a high-powered Washington law firm and learn more about the political world of the nation's capital. She could delve into politics herself. Or she could move to Arkansas to be with Clinton. Taylor Branch had several long talks

with her about the future, continuing the confessional relationship that they shared in Texas. Branch could see that she was "at sea about whether she wanted to move to Arkansas." She told him that she did not know "how hard to be, how careerist to be." She believed in the feminist movement and in the freedom women were struggling to achieve. Would she be turning away from that by following her love to provincial Arkansas, a place that made her eyes roll when she talked about it?

And how would Arkansas receive her? That question inevitably arose in her conversations with Terry Kirkpatrick, who had grown up in Fort Smith and attended law school in Fayetteville when there were only a handful of women there. Rodham asked Kirkpatrick how the legal community would accept her in a state where women lawyers were still a rarity. It would be difficult, Kirkpatrick said. "You have to be three hundred percent better than any man to succeed. You have to pick your friends carefully. It's a very different culture. But the people when they accept you are loving and supportive and very willing to accept new ideas once they get past the initial shock." And there was something else attractive about Arkansas, Kirkpatrick told Rodham: "It's easy to make an impact there. You can be a big fish in a small pond."

Even on her final night in Washington, Rodham seemed uncertain. She went to dinner with Fred Altshuler and two of his friends, Marsha and Steve Berzon, who were just arriving in town as Rodham was leaving. At dinner, the others talked about the exciting legal work they were about to embark on, while Rodham reflected on the uncertain professional life that awaited her in Arkansas. "Hillary was showing personal affection for Bill, but she thought she would not face the same kinds of legal challenges," Altshuler said later. "She was somewhat uncertain. She had some ambivalence about it." The last thing on Rodham's radar screen, thought Altshuler, "was to head off to Arkansas."

But while on one level Rodham seemed ambivalent, on another level she had prepared for a move to Arkansas for more than a year in a quiet, careful fashion that made her decision all but inevitable. During her first visit to Arkansas in the summer of 1973, before Clinton began teaching in Fayetteville, she had joined him in taking the Arkansas state bar exam, just in case she would ever practice in the state. She and Clinton had even worried about whether it would hurt them in the future in Arkansas if they put the same New Haven address on the state bar applications. Clinton, during his first months at the law school, constantly talked about Rodham to Dean Davis and everyone else there. He told Davis that he and Rodham were "more or less informally engaged" and that he hoped that she would come out and teach with him at the law school. When Rodham visited Clinton in Fayetteville in early 1974, she was introduced to Dean Davis

and other law faculty members at a reception. "I mentioned to her before she left that if she were ever interested in teaching here, she should give me a call," Davis recalled. "I talked to faculty people who had chatted with her and all were favorably impressed."

Rodham called Davis a month later to see if the offer still stood. When he said yes, she made arrangements to fly to Fayetteville to be interviewed for a teaching position. She had to leave her work on the inquiry staff for three days to make the trip, a departure that did not sit well with Doar. When she reached Fayetteville, some of the law professors she met had an odd first impression of her. "Hillary came in dressed as if she had been shopping in Bloomingdale's the day before," remembered Mort Gitelman. "It looked strange in Arkansas. She was wearing one of those long skirts and black stockings and horn-rimmed glasses. She did not look Arkansas." Gitelman could not know it, but except for the glasses she did not look like Hillary Rodham, either. She paid little attention to clothes except when she thought she had to impress people. This was one of those times. Terry Kirkpatrick had taken her shopping in Georgetown to buy the khaki suit that she wore to the interview. Her clothes, in the end, made little difference, according to Gitelman. "Once she opened her mouth, it didn't matter what she was wearing. We were impressed." Davis made her an offer, and she called him back on July 9 to accept it.

Why did she call on that day, before Doar had completed his summary and before it was certain when the impeachment work would be finished? Rodham knew that in essence the impeachment work was over the day she agreed to go to Arkansas. July 9 was the day that the impeachment staff released transcripts of its version of several key White House tapes. The Judiciary Committee transcripts differed dramatically from previously released and heavily sanitized White House transcripts of the same tapes. "Transcripts Link Nixon to Cover-Up" blared the headline in *The Washington Post*. The key quote came from a White House meeting on March 22, 1973, in which Nixon, according to the Judiciary Committee transcript, is heard to say: "I don't give a shit what happens. I want you all to stonewall it, let them plead the Fifth Amendment, cover-up or anything else, if it'll save it—save the plan. That's the whole point."

RODHAM left Washington on a humid mid-August morning in 1974. It was fitting that she was not driving herself, but being driven, yet going someplace that she wanted to go and that the owner of the car, Sara Ehrman, her friend and landlady in Washington, did not really want to take her. Ehrman was horrified at the thought of Rodham, who to her represented the promising future of the women's movement, abandoning the most



powerful city in the world for a backwater law school in the Ozarks. But if Rodham was determined to go, Ehrman would at least help her get there. She came from a generation "where one follows one's man." She persuaded Alan Stone, a friend who had worked on McGovern's advance team in Texas, to come along as the driver. Rodham's life's belongings went with her—suitcases and a stereo in the trunk, a bicycle strapped to the roof. They drove through Virginia's lovely countryside, past Gainesville, Warrenton, Culpeper, on down to Charlottesville, stopping at Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson.

"You are crazy," Ehrman said to Rodham along the way, playing the role of surrogate mother. "What are you doing this for?" Rodham laughed. She was in a good mood. She said she loved Bill Clinton and wanted to take a chance. Stone defended her. He had been born in Arkansas and had fond memories of the state. The unspoken tension of the trip was that Rodham could not wait to get to Fayetteville and Ehrman, hoping to keep her, kept making detours to historical sites. To make up for the lost time of the side trips, Stone and Rodham drove late into the night. They passed through Nashville after midnight and encountered a surrealistic sight that kept them laughing halfway to Memphis—tipsy old men at a Shriners' convention tooting around on small white motor scooters. Finally, exhausted, they stopped at a roadside motel and all three shared a room. (Years later Stone would remember that night and laugh: he could tell the *National Enquirer* that he once slept with Hillary and another woman in a motel room in Tennessee.) On the way across Arkansas, Rodham ate her first catfish dinner. When they reached Fayetteville, they found their way out to Clinton's cottage and unloaded Rodham's possessions.

Clinton had just returned from a long stretch of campaigning in Bentonville. He was, as Stone remembered him that day, "kind of frantic."

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## RUNNING WITH THE BOY

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HILLARY RODHAM WAS not the first member of her family to reach Fayetteville. One morning during the spring primary season, a fin-tailed Cadillac with Illinois license plates had pulled into the parking lot of the Clinton for Congress headquarters on College Avenue in Fayetteville. A short, burly man in his sixties emerged from the driver's side, limping as he walked toward the door, accompanied by a young fellow. "I'm Hugh Rodham, Hillary's dad," the older man said to Ron Addington. At his side was Tony Rodham, the younger of Hillary's two brothers. The names were, of course, familiar. Clinton had boasted to his campaign staff about Hillary Rodham: how smart she was; how she was a counsel for the House Judiciary Committee staff; how he hoped that she would be warmly welcomed if she came to Arkansas. Once, at headquarters, he had read aloud from a letter she had written to him about her impeachment work.

Addington felt that he already knew Hillary. In the early stages of the campaign, he was constantly taking telephone calls from her. She would check on Clinton's schedule, then offer practical political suggestions. Even then, at the dawn of Clinton's electoral career, from halfway across the country, at a time when she and Clinton were uncertain about their relationship and while she was working long days and nights on the impeachment inquiry, Rodham was pushing Clinton's political interests. "She started calling from day one, several times a day at first," Addington recalled. "She was telling me, you need to get this done, you need to get that done. What positions we had to fill."

But apparently Hillary never mentioned that her father and brother were driving down from Illinois. "Well, how long are you going to be here to visit?" Addington asked.

"Hell, I don't know," Hugh Rodham said. "Hillary told me I ought to come down here and help you out."

The Rodham men had met Clinton a few times during his Yale Law School days, when Hillary brought him home to Park Ridge. Although Hugh was conservative and had never voted for a Democrat, his family was leaning to the liberal side, not just Hillary but also the boys, and he was, above all, a Rodham loyalist. If Hillary urged him to work for Clinton, that was what he would do. It was a matter of family, not politics. Doug Wallace, the campaign press secretary, thought it seemed irrelevant to Rodham "why he was down there, besides the fact that his daughter told him to do it."

The Rodhams reported for work the next morning. What should they do? The office was overcrowded; there were not enough telephones and desks for the staff and volunteers. But there were stacks of "Clinton for Congress" signs that needed to be put up along the roadsides in the rural counties. And so the Rodham sign detail was born. Day after day, they would load signs into the trunk and roam the back roads in search of prime locations for cheap political advertising. Sometimes the campaign staff got inquiries from the field about the Yankees in the Cadillac. The calls prompted a discussion about whether they should smear the license plates with mud to obscure the fact that the car and its occupants were not from Arkansas. But the Rodhams were quickly embraced by the campaign staff and most of the people they encountered on the road. The old man seemed "rougher than a corn cob, as gruff as could be," in Addington's words, but he was a straight talker and a hard worker. In some respects, as a handyman who loved fly-fishing, he was more of a natural in the Ozarks than Clinton, whose main backwoods talent was storytelling. And young Tony seemed to be having the time of his life.

There was another aspect to the presence of Hillary's father and brother in Fayetteville while she was still in Washington. One of the worst-kept secrets at headquarters was that Clinton had become involved in an intense relationship with a young woman volunteer who was a student at the university. According to Doug Wallace, "the staff tried to ignore it as long as it didn't interfere with the campaign." Aside from the Fayetteville woman, the staff also knew that Clinton had girlfriends in several towns around the district and in Little Rock. Perhaps they could disregard his rambunctious private life, but could Hillary? There was some suspicion that one of the reasons she sent the men in her family to Arkansas was to put a check on her boyfriend's activities.

Paul Fray arrived in Fayetteville with his wife Mary Lee to work on the campaign shortly after the Rodhams appeared on the scene. He quickly surmised that "Hillary had put the hammer on her daddy to go down there

One afternoon Fray was at Clinton's house in the country, going over the schedule for the next few weeks. "The phone rings and it's Hillary and she's raising hell" about Clinton's behavior, Fray recalled from what he heard of the conversation and from what Clinton told him after hanging up. Hillary, according to Fray, tried to make Clinton jealous by informing him that she was going to sleep with someone in Washington. Clinton "about broke down and cried" at that point, but rather than getting mad he launched into a long emotional appeal, saying that Hillary should not "go and do something that would make life miserable" for both of them.

In the May primary against three opponents and again in the June 11 runoff against Gene Rainwater, a state senator from Fort Smith, Clinton was a political whirlwind. He began with 12 percent name recognition and little money, and ended up easily prevailing in both races. The other candidates had regional power bases, but they were overmatched by Clinton's organizational skills and energy. The state AFL-CIO was ready to endorse Rainwater until Clinton appeared before the labor board's Committee on Political Education in Hot Springs. "Bill's knowledge and facility with words made our people fall in love with him," recalled J. Bill Becker, head of the state labor federation. "He just took it right away from Rainwater." Like so many of the people who were drawn into Clinton's orbit, the workers in his congressional campaign were alternately inspired and exhausted. College students accustomed to staying up late, but also sleeping late, had a hard time keeping pace with him.

He was always on the move from town to town, staying in the homes of old friends or newfound political allies, or at his mother's place if they ended the night near Hot Springs. His schedule was invariably on the remake, thrown off by his compulsion to stop and chat. He was, according to Jim Daugherty, a law student who was one of his drivers, "more interested in finishing the conversation than in finishing the schedule." Sometimes the Fayetteville staff lost touch with him. If he was working the southern stretch of the district, they would leave messages at the "Y" City Café, certain that he would stop at that tiny crossroads eatery on his way between Hot Springs and Fort Smith, lured by the gossip awaiting him there and the seductive coconut cream pie. A legion of law students served as his drivers and travel aides. On the road between stops, Clinton would take his Professor Quigley-inspired fifteen-minute catnaps, and scribble the outlines of his next speech. Chomping on a sandwich and talking at the same time, he would launch into a soliloquy about the ravages of inflation or of black lung disease, an issue in the mining towns of the Arkansas River valley.

For many politicians...

enervating aspects of public life. One face after another, one more plea for money, one more speech where the words blur in dull repetition—at some point it can become too much. Morriss Henry, a state legislator from Fayetteville who along with his wife, Ann, befriended Clinton in 1974, realized one night that he lacked the characteristic that he saw in Clinton, the energy required to go the distance in politics. Henry, an eye doctor, had worked all day performing cataract surgery and came home “totally beat,” but corralled the kids and his wife into the Dodge van to attend a pie supper outside Fayetteville. On the way down, he suddenly blurted out, “Do we really have to go?” Two-thirds of the way there, he answered himself. “No! We don’t.” He had hit his political wall, and he turned around.

Clinton would never turn around. To him, the prospect of attending a pie supper in “Y” City or Mount Ida seemed invigorating. Pie suppers rank among the most cherished political folk rituals in western Arkansas. On any Saturday night during an election season, communities gather for an evening of entertainment as pies and cakes baked by local women are sold at auction, with the money going to volunteer fire departments or other civic institutions. One savory pecan pie can sell for three figures, especially if the politicians in attendance try to buy some goodwill and end up in a bidding war, as frequently happens. The candidates vie for microphone time between pie sales and announcements. Homemade desserts, picnic tables lined with voters, plenty of talking and raucous storytelling, usually some barbecue at the rear counter—Clinton was never more in his element. He also realized that every pie supper he attended helped him transform his image from the long-haired Rhodes Scholar and law professor into a young man of the people.

Before his eyes he saw what could happen to a politician who failed to connect with ordinary people during that first spring of his electoral career when the state’s Democratic primary voters denied J. William Fulbright the nomination, unsentimentally ending his thirty-year career in the Senate. Fulbright had raised and spent more money than any previous candidate in Arkansas and barely received one-third of the vote as he was overwhelmed by Dale Bumpers, the popular governor. Bumpers had an 85 percent approval rating while Fulbright’s was in the low 30s. The polls showed that voters no longer accepted Fulbright’s stature in international affairs as a sufficient trade-off for his indifference to local concerns. The unease about Fulbright’s distance from his constituents had increased year by year. Now, finally, all efforts by his staff to make him seem like a regular guy were futile. They presented him as plain old Bill and outfitted him in flannel shirts, but the people had already decided that Fulbright was no longer one of them.

Clinton intended to assist Fulbright during the primary, according to

James Blair, the senator’s campaign manager, but became so involved in his own campaign that he never got around to helping his old boss. On the campaign trail, he more often found himself associating with Pryor and Bumpers when they stumped in the Third Congressional District. Arkansas political observers taking their first look at Clinton saw elements of Pryor and Bumpers in his style. He had Pryor’s ability to work a room, and Bumpers’s power to sway a crowd as an extemporaneous speaker. As the campaign wore on, the resemblances became more apparent: Clinton would study the two men, borrow a colloquialism from one, a hand gesture from the other, and incorporate them in his routine. It is not a contradiction to say that he was both a natural politician and an artful imitator, for those two types may in fact be one and the same; natural politicians are skilled actors, recreating reality, adjusting and ad-libbing, synthesizing the words, ideas, and feelings of others, slipping into different roles in different scenes, saying the same thing over and over again and making it seem like they are saying it for the first time. It can be at once a creative art yet wholly derivative, which is the best way to understand Bill Clinton’s political persona as he reached the public stage.

In early July, after he had secured the Democratic nomination, Clinton went to Hot Springs for his ten-year high school reunion, the first time that the class of 1964 had reconvened. The theme of the reunion at the Velda Rose Hotel was “The Way We Were,” the title song of that year’s nostalgic film starring Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford. Photographs from the Old Gold yearbook lined the banquet-room walls. The *Hot Springs Sentinel-Record* described Clinton as “the most prominent graduate”—a Rhodes Scholar, University of Arkansas law professor, and Democratic candidate for Congress. He was seated at the front table along with his friend Phil Jamison, the class president, a naval lieutenant at Pensacola who had flown helicopters in Vietnam. The article noted that Carolyn Yeldell had now married and was teaching music in Indiana, and that Jim French, the quarterback, was in New Orleans training to be a doctor. David Leopoulos, Clinton’s closest childhood friend, had begun a job at a community college in Florida. Of those present, there were twenty-one housewives, two lawyers, nine engineers, four secretaries, one minister, four bankers, and four doctors. “Lots of them,” Clinton was quoted as saying of his classmates, “are doing impressive things I haven’t done.”

Clinton delivered a brief speech, but the crowd seemed to have little interest in politics. At the ten-year point, Jamison found that his classmates did not seem particularly interested in looking backward or forward, but were “caught in the here and now, trying to make their way.” After the dinner, Clinton spent most of the night on the dance floor, enjoying himself with a string of old girlfriends. But not everyone was lost in the moment.

Jamison was cornered in the hallway by Rodney Wilson, a former Marine and Vietnam veteran. At first they traded war stories as though they were recalling old memories from high school, but the more Wilson talked, the more intense he became. He seemed depressed, and said he felt out of place and mistreated since his return from Vietnam.

Clinton, too, was still haunted by Vietnam that summer. The manner in which he had avoided military service in 1969 might be raised by John Paul Hammerschmidt's campaign. Hammerschmidt was a World War II Air Force pilot who strongly supported the war and had close ties to veterans' groups in the district. The documentary record of Clinton's actions after he received his draft notice at Oxford five years earlier, including the letter to Colonel Holmes in which he thanked Holmes for eventually saving him from the draft, rested in a file inside a fireproof half-ton vault at the University of Arkansas ROTC building a few blocks down the hill from the law school. Clinton's usual response to anyone who asked him about his military record was that he had received a high draft number in the lottery and was never called. He discussed the more complicated details of his draft history, and the letter to Holmes, with only a few friends. One was Paul Fray. "He told me what he said in the letter about the war," Fray said later. "I told him that he could get into a pickle if the Republicans got the letter and that he should try to get the original back."

Colonel Holmes had retired, and was living in northwest Arkansas. How Clinton contacted him and persuaded him to return the letter is unclear. Some members of the ROTC staff believe that Clinton relied on intermediaries from the university administration, where he had several friends and political supporters. Decades later, the colonel would label Clinton a draft dodger and claim that he had been deceived by the young man, but the evidence indicates that in 1974 he was still willing to help Clinton. ROTC drill instructor Ed Howard later recalled that Colonel Holmes called him one morning that summer and "said he wanted the Clinton letter out of the files." Howard, a noncommissioned officer, was alone in the office; most of the staff was at summer training at Fort Riley, Kansas. He called the unit commander, Colonel Guy Tutwiler, at Fort Riley and informed him of Holmes's request. Tutwiler instructed Howard to make a copy of the Clinton letter and give it to Holmes, but to keep the original. A member of Holmes's family stopped by the ROTC headquarters and picked up the letter.

Later that afternoon, Tutwiler called Howard again and told him to take the original letter and everything else in that file, which was among the records the ROTC had maintained on Vietnam War-era dissidents, and to send it to him at Fort Riley by certified mail. According to Howard, Tutwiler later explained that he had "destroyed the file, burned the file,"

because the military no longer maintained dissident files and he did not feel that Clinton's letter should ever "be used against him for political reasons." According to Fray, Clinton ended up with a copy of his letter to Holmes, and assumed that "the situation was done with." He did not know that Holmes's top aide, Lieutenant Colonel Clinton Jones, had already made a copy of the letter.

ON Friday, August 9, the day that President Nixon resigned, Clinton was campaigning in the northeastern end of the congressional district. He arrived in Mountain Home that evening for the third day of his stay with Mike and Suzanne Lee, who had made their home his regional headquarters. The Lees were old friends who had been in the class behind his at Hot Springs High. Mike had attended the Naval Academy with Phil Jamison, and he and Jamison had stayed at Clinton's Georgetown room whenever they could escape Annapolis for the weekend.

It was all part of the easy reciprocity of Clinton's world. He never had any money, he was always living off the grace of friends, yet his give-and-take spirit made it possible for him to sleep at other people's houses and clean out their refrigerators because he was bound to repay them with some act of generosity down the line. Now he was at the Lees' house in Mountain Home and the American political world was turning upside down. He sat in the living room and watched as Nixon announced that he was leaving the White House. Well after midnight, a reporter for the *Arkansas Gazette* called the house. Suzanne answered and went to the guest bedroom, awakening Clinton. He went to the kitchen to take the call, leaning against the wall, still half-asleep. It was, Suzanne said later, "amazing to listen to him. It was just like a rehearsed speech that he had been waiting to give. I couldn't believe he could do it right out of a deep sleep." But Clinton would not say publicly what he thought about Nixon's resignation: that it was good for the country but bad for him. "This is going to cost me the race," he confided to Mike Lee. The convulsions of Nixon's resignation, he said, would make the voters of northwest Arkansas less inclined to throw Hammerschmidt out.

Throughout that summer of the Watergate inquiry, Clinton had emphasized Hammerschmidt's friendship and support of Nixon. The Republican congressman tried to argue that "the people are tired of Watergate," but most evidence was to the contrary. Watergate filled up so much space in the political world that there was little room left for other questions, such as whether Clinton was too young and too liberal for the electorate. The more the public turned against Nixon, the more Clinton gained momentum. When Nixon resigned, as Clinton predicted, his campaign "went into

a stall," according to press secretary Doug Wallace. "The voters stopped to catch their breath. Suddenly there was no Nixon to rail against."

Nixon's resignation was one of three major transitions for Clinton and his campaign late that summer. One afternoon, Clinton's mother came home from her hospital work with a carry-out dinner for her husband, Jeff Dwire, to discover him dead of heart failure brought on by diabetes. Dwire had been a soothing influence on Virginia during their five-year marriage. He was a charming dandy who enjoyed life and had had his own scrapes with the law, but he was kind to Virginia and her boys, and he made her happy in a way that no other man had since Bill Blythe. During his year in prison, he had become a jailhouse lawyer of sorts, acquiring enough knowledge to discuss legal subjects with Clinton and Rodham when they were at Yale. Dwire had been the one member of the family to accept Hillary warmly, a gesture that was reciprocated by Bill Clinton, who wrote a letter of support when Dwire unsuccessfully sought a pardon.

Everyone at campaign headquarters knew Dwire. Shortly before he died, he had spent several days in Fayetteville answering the telephones and offering advice. Paul Fray noticed the flashy rings on Dwire's fingers and worried about what the Hammerschmidt forces would do if they learned that he was assisting the campaign. "The last thing we needed was for word to get out about Clinton's stepfather with a prison record."

Dwire's death and Nixon's resignation were matters of consequence, yet in terms of their sustained effect on Clinton, they could not compare with the third event of late summer, the arrival of Hillary Rodham, who provoked a complicated set of reactions in her boyfriend and the people around him. On one level, Clinton feared that Rodham was too much of a potential political star to make the sacrifice of living in Arkansas. Once, earlier, when Clinton told Diane Kincaid, the political science professor at Arkansas, how much she reminded him of Rodham and made him miss her, the professor asked him why he did not just marry Rodham and bring her to Arkansas. "Because she's so good at what she does, she could have an amazing political career on her own," Clinton said. "If she comes to Arkansas it's going to be my state, my future. She could be president someday. She could go to any state and be elected to the Senate. If she comes to Arkansas, she'll be on my turf."

That turf, Clinton realized, could appear inhospitable to his Yankee girlfriend. His mother and younger brother made little effort to hide their distaste for her. Whenever the Frays visited Hot Springs during the campaign, Virginia would complain to them about Hillary. "Virginia loathed Hillary then," Mary Lee Fray recalled. "Anything she could find to pick on about Hillary she would pick on. Hillary did not fit her mold for Bill." But even if it was not a natural fit, Clinton seemed determined to lure her to

stay in Arkansas. He encouraged his friends and political aides to make her feel welcome. "She was someone you had great expectations for and wanted to know because Bill kept talking about her," recalled Rudy Moore.

Yet at the same time that Clinton was earnestly recruiting Rodham to his state, he was still involved with the student volunteer, a relationship that had been going on for several months. The tension at campaign headquarters increased considerably when Rodham arrived as people there tried to deal with the situation. Both women seemed on edge. The Arkansas girlfriend would ask people about Hillary: what she was like, and whether Clinton was going to marry her. When she was at headquarters, someone would sneak her out the back door if Rodham was spotted pulling into the driveway. Mary Lee Fray, who liked both women, felt trapped in the middle of the triangle. She remembers times when Clinton wanted her to chaperone the Arkansas girlfriend and make sure that there were no confrontations with Hillary. "Bill would say, 'Go take her somewhere. Get lost,'" Fray recalled later. "It would put me in a funny position. He'd say, 'Go do something. Move it. Scoot it.' He'd get us out of there." If Clinton had made it clear that Rodham was his only romantic interest, Fray thought, the other woman would have disappeared. But Clinton would not say anything so direct.

Fayetteville, a university town, was the most culturally liberal enclave in Arkansas, but the mores of the wider Third Congressional District made it politically impractical for Clinton to live with a woman outside of marriage. Rodham took her own place when she arrived. She rented a three-bedroom house, an architectural showpiece replicating a Frank Lloyd Wright design, bow-shaped and glassy, full of odd-shaped rooms, with a large swimming pool in the backyard. The house belonged to Rafael Guzman, who was on temporary leave from the law school to teach in Iowa, where he was soon joined by his wife, Terry Kirkpatrick, who had served with Rodham on the impeachment inquiry staff. The place quickly looked like campaign headquarters, with Clinton signs everywhere.

To some Arkansans, Rodham seemed too aggressive at first, especially in contrast to Clinton, who was soft and ambiguous. On the opening day of school, when Rodham first walked into the criminal law classroom, Woody Bassett, who was then a first-year student, thought she "looked out of place. She dressed like a throwback to the sixties. There were not many women in the law school. It took a while to adjust to someone with a different accent who was as aggressive as she was." Some students were intimidated by Rodham's brilliance, and others, according to Bassett, "downright resented it. People were never indifferent about her. Some of the guys were not used to being taught and led by a strong woman. And there was no question she was a role model for some of the female students."

Anyone who entered her classroom expecting her to follow Clinton's pedagogical style was mistaken. Clinton was diffuse and easygoing. Rodham was precise and demanding. Clinton was amenable to a filibuster, Rodham was less willing to waste time. Clinton rarely confronted students, preferring to engage them in freewheeling conversations. Rodham would come straight at her students with difficult questions. She was more likely than Clinton to offer clear opinions on legal issues and not leave the class hanging, and she had what Bassett thought was an "unusual ability to absorb a huge amount of facts and boil them down to the bottom line." And unlike Clinton, notorious as the friendliest grader on the faculty, Rodham wrote rigorous exams and was a tough grader. Most members of the law school faculty regarded her as a better professor than Clinton, if not as animated in the lecture hall, more committed to the craft, as demonstrated by her writings in law journals about the rights of children.

Rodham was approachable but serious, Mort Gitelman thought. "She would not sit for idle chitchat. She was not a chew-the-fat type of person. She was always working on something and wanted to bring the conversation around to what she was working on. She was all business." During that first semester, along with teaching criminal law, Rodham also became the first director of the University of Arkansas Legal Clinic, in which law students took on needy clients under the supervision of licensed attorneys. Before Rodham arrived, preliminary work on the clinic had left several faculty members frustrated by resistance from the legal establishment and the paperwork demanded by the federal bureaucracy. Gitelman handed Rodham a ten-inch file that needed to be processed to get federal money for the program. He was impressed by how quickly Rodham sorted through the forms and got the money. Burdened as an outsider and a woman in what was then still a clubby male domain, she persuaded local judges and lawyers to endorse the program. She went to the county bar and negotiated approval for indigence guidelines on who could qualify for clinic assistance, in return agreeing that the clinic would take unprofitable criminal case appointments from the local courts. David Newbern, who helped Rodham with the idiosyncrasies of the legal world in Fayetteville, regarded her, above all, as "a prodigious worker."

"If you are looking for a battleground, go outside onto the streets where I grew up. Lift your eyes to the hills of north and west Arkansas! There is a fight in this Third Congressional District which is a clear and unmistakable struggle between what we are for and what we are against. For, in the words of Harry Truman, when you strip away the 'small talk and double talk, the combination of crafty silence and resounding misrepresentation,'

you find this seat in Congress occupied by one of the strongest supporters of, and apologists for, the abuse of presidential power and policies which have wrecked the economy. Today we must deliberate. Tomorrow we must take out of this hall the will to set things straight. Let us begin!"

It was at the Democratic state convention in Hot Springs on September 13 that Clinton delivered that fiery oration. He had been building a name for himself for months, and now, as the stretch run of the general election campaign began, party regulars who had considered him a long shot thought it possible that he had a chance of winning. His challenge was the hot race, the only tightly contested match in what was still a one-party state everywhere but in northwest Arkansas. Clinton packed the fall convention, bringing carloads of supporters from Fayetteville and supplementing them with a boisterous home-town contingent. Although he still privately feared that Nixon's resignation had cut short his chances, he regained some measure of hope the week before the convention when Gerald Ford pardoned Nixon. Hammerschmidt had swiftly tried to reposition himself as more of a Ford man than a Nixon man in the days after the resignation, bringing out newspaper ads that depicted him working closely with Ford during their days together in the House. But no sooner had the ads appeared than Ford's popularity sank when he pardoned his predecessor.

Clinton portrayed the pardon as the final dishonorable act of the Watergate scandal. "We have come together in the midst of one of our country's most difficult periods," he said. "After two years of turmoil, a president of the United States has resigned his office. His chosen successor, in whom Democrats and Republicans alike had at first placed such hope, has granted a 'full, free and absolute' pardon to the fallen president in advance of any charges being filed against him. This pardon has again opened the wounds of Watergate. It has undermined respect for law and order. It has prejudiced pending trials. It has tormented the families of those already in prison for the administration's political crimes. It is yet another blow to that vast body of law-abiding Americans, whose faith in equal justice under law has been shaken, then repaired, and is now shaken again."

The rest of Clinton's keynote speech was devoted to the economy, his rhetoric more strident and class-conscious than it would later become. He came across as a defender of the middle class and the working class against rapacious corporations and Republican policies. He deplored the "record deficits and recession" brought on by "six long years" of Republican control of the White House. He accused Republicans of keeping "prices high and profits high for the biggest corporations, while trying to hold down minimum wages and telling working people to tighten their belts." He spoke of a member of a road crew in Scott County, his apocryphal everyman, who told him that working people "want a hand up, not a hand

out." If President Ford "wants to pardon somebody," he concluded, "he ought to pardon the administration's economic advisers."

Clinton's principal issues adviser for the fall campaign was Steve Smith, the young Turk of the Arkansas legislature who had spent the summer in graduate school at Northwestern University. His return to Fayetteville came shortly before Rodham's arrival, at once lending the campaign more intellectual weight and making it more chaotic. Smith was a voracious reader who could match Rodham and Clinton's brainpower, and week by week he grabbed more of the candidate's time and interest as they developed issues together. "It was wonderful to work issues for the guy," Smith said later. "Every week I'd spend eighty hours doing research. I'd set up an issue of the week. We'd open Monday with a press conference, lay out our position and a handful of Hammerschmidt votes. I'd brief him on Sunday for the press conference on Monday. He would absorb everything I said, every detail, and draw conclusions and connections that I had missed."

The weekly news conferences began the Monday after the state convention and continued through November. At one in Van Buren, Clinton attacked the administration's agricultural trade policies, saying that wheat exports to the Soviet Union should be restricted and tighter limits should be placed on beef imports. "If we do not reverse these suicidal trends," he said, "the small, independent farmer will be forced from his land, and large multinational corporate farms will dominate Arkansas and the nation, manipulating the price of food much the same as the giant oil companies do the price of gasoline." Clinton called on Earl Butz, the Secretary of Agriculture, to "resign and return to the board of directors of Ralston-Purina."

Although Clinton was mechanically inept and had no real experience on the farm or in the factory, he now offered himself to the farmers and workers of his district as one of them. His childhood friends from Hot Springs might have snickered at this transformation. Clinton's potential as a skilled laborer was revealed to them in seventh-grade shop class. The teacher would not let students proceed to more complicated tasks until they had squared a block to his satisfaction. While most of the boys went on to craft breadboards and tables, Clinton spent the entire year trying to square his block. "Bill planed more blocks than any kid in the history of junior high," according to his classmate Ronnie Cecil. As to his aptitude on the farm, his formative experience there came at age seven when he was bruised and battered by an angry ram that had pinned him to the ground.

Now, as a candidate, he was the son of soil and toil. It was part of a strategy that had been outlined to Clinton by Jody Powell, an aide to Jimmy Carter, the former governor of Georgia who was heading the Democratic National Committee's 1974 campaign team. Powell came to Fayetteville to

advise the Clinton campaign for a few days in the early fall. Clinton's aides remember that Powell looked disheveled and "more hippieish" than he would two years later when his boss was running for president. He left behind a seventeen-point memo. Point number seven read: "Find a dramatic way to identify with agricultural interests before [Hammerschmidt] can label you as some sort of 'pseudo-intellectual liberal professor' who doesn't know or care about agriculture."

At the same time that Clinton plowed the populist turf, and attacked the corporate mentality of Republicans, he relied heavily on support from the Tyson family, owners of Tyson Foods Inc. Don Tyson, the chairman, was an eccentric, hardworking, hard-playing character who would later redesign his corporate suite in the shape of the White House's Oval Office. He wore the khaki work uniform he required of all his employees, including the top executives. He had shiny doorknobs in the corporate suite made in the shape of eggs. He was also a yellow dog Democrat who had long ties to the recently defeated Fulbright and most other leading politicians in the state. His chief outside legal counsel was Jim Blair, who had been Fulbright's campaign manager and counsel to the state Democratic party and was one of Clinton's friends and advisers.

Tyson Foods was aggressively buying out competitors in the early 1970s on its way to becoming the leading poultry firm in the nation. But 1974 was a difficult year, the only one in its history when the company lost money, going back to 1936 when John Tyson loaded five hundred spring chickens into crates and trucked them up to Chicago where he sold them for a \$235 profit. Don Tyson, the founder's son, placed much of the blame for the slump on the Republican administration in Washington, charging that huge grain sales to the Soviet Union had caused feed prices to rise sharply, destroying the poultry market. The Third Congressional District was home to Tyson's corporate headquarters, based in Springdale, as well as to hundreds of small farmers who raised chickens for the company. The growers were largely dependent on Tyson Foods and suffered when the company suffered. Clinton emphasized their plight, rather than the Tyson operation's annual loss, in his speeches and commercials. One of his radio spots featured an announcer who sounded like Johnny Cash, inquiring, "Pay too much for greens 'n beans? Forget what pork 'n beefsteak means? Push Earl Butz away from the trough!"

Don Tyson stayed in the shadows of the campaign, but would be called in occasionally by Blair when fund-raising problems arose. Clinton would meet Tyson and other major financial patrons in the back room of an old stone house up the road from headquarters, an unmarked restaurant that specialized in thick steaks and saltine crackers with picante sauce. Don Tyson's stepbrother, Randal Tyson, spent much of his time at Clinton

headquarters during the final months. "He busted his butt," recalled Paul Fray. "Randal wanted Clinton to win that race something fierce." The Tysons also donated a campaign telephone bank which operated out of an apartment near the university.

ONE way to catch fish, according to an old Arkansas folk tale, is for people to wade into a stream and kick their feet around the bottom until the water becomes so disturbed and muddy that the fish rise to the top. The story serves as an allegory for politics, which in Arkansas is both a popular sport and a muddy one. Bill Clinton was a fish swimming in muddy water from the beginning of his political career. Even then, in his first Arkansas campaign, rumors swirled furiously around him.

One rumor, which came to be known as "The Boy in the Tree," or "The Man in the Tree," was the easiest to disprove and yet the most persistent. In the fall of 1969, President Nixon, an inveterate sports fan, had traveled to Fayetteville to attend a football game between the Arkansas Razorbacks and Texas Longhorns, two of the nation's best college teams. The lasting photographic symbol of that Saturday afternoon in Fayetteville was a picture of a protester sitting in a tree holding a sign urging Nixon to go home, which was later reprinted in the college yearbook. The young man's face was not clearly identifiable. He resembled the Bill Clinton of 1969 only in that he had long curly hair and a beard. Brenda Blagg, who covered Nixon's visit for the student newspaper, was standing under the tree that day and knew the protester, a familiar campus character who was "certainly not Bill Clinton." At the time of Nixon's visit, Clinton was against the war and no fan of Nixon's, but it was impossible for him to have been in a tree in Fayetteville. He was at Oxford, beginning his second year as a Rhodes Scholar.

Yet five years later, during the congressional campaign, the word went out that Clinton was the boy in the tree. A woman called several newspapers in the district and, without identifying herself, said, "We're trying to get a copy of that picture when Bill Clinton was sitting in the tree. Do you happen to have that picture in your files?" At political rallies, unmarked handbills were distributed showing the tree picture and no explicit mention of Clinton, simply the inference in a question: "Do You Want This to Be Your Congressman?" The rumor was accompanied by whispers that Clinton had been a draft dodger, though his letter to Colonel Holmes and other ROTC records had not surfaced, and no one made the draft-dodging charges in public. Many of Clinton's aides noticed a level of vitriol in the attacks on Clinton that exceeded even the rough norms of Arkansas politics. "This was his first race, he had no political history to speak of, yet the

level of feeling for and against him was so intense," recalled Doug Wallace. "It was amazing to me. There was something in his personality and style that engendered that kind of passion on the part of people who wanted to keep him from being elected."

The boy-in-the-tree story hovered around Clinton for several years, until finally it was transformed into a joke by the journalists who covered him in later campaigns. One year, the press association in northwest Arkansas presented a satirical Gridiron show that included a skit in which Clinton was on trial as the boy in the tree and was found innocent based on "butt prints."

Rumors about Clinton's sexual behavior also began in that first campaign. As a bachelor, he was immune from charges of marital infidelity, but little else. John Baran, who had taught Clinton art in junior high school, heard rumors at his church, Grand Avenue Methodist of Hot Springs, during the final months of the congressional campaign that "Bill was a homosexual." Some of the same churchgoers spreading that story would later attack Clinton for living with a woman before he was married. Mary Lee Fray attended a Baptist church in Fayetteville where Clinton was criticized from the pulpit. She quickly learned that "some conservative preachers were crusading against him. They were constantly talking about drugs and women in the Clinton campaign." Nearly every week, Paul Fray would field a call from a labor organizer in Fort Smith who would utter the same lament. "We're catching hell down here about all you left-wing dope smokers up there at that damn yoo-nah-ver-sity, Paul. We're just catchin' hell down here!" Neil McDonald, a Clinton volunteer, was frequently confronted by hostile questioners who wanted to know about women and the campaign. "They were trying to pin Bill down on the women issue or anything else they could find. They would ask if Clinton was dating women out of the campaign. Most of us knew better than to answer that one."

Several office affairs bloomed at the College Avenue headquarters, but they seemed more a reflection of the sexually combustible nature of political campaigns than of any loosening of sexual mores among the under-thirty generation. There was a discussion once among Clinton advisers about taking the offensive and resurrecting a slogan that cropped up during Hammerschmidt's first campaign: "Send John Paul to Washington, the wife you save may be your own." That idea was proposed by Paul Fray, but vetoed by Rodham, according to Doug Wallace. "Paul wanted to play hardball, cut and slash. Hillary did not like it."

The campaign was not a haven for the drug culture, but neither was it a marijuana-free zone. Randy White, a college freshman who joined the campaign as a volunteer, was sent to work at a phone bank one night at an apartment in Fayetteville. When he entered the apartment, he saw "seven



or eight people in there smoking pot." He felt "terrified that the place would be busted" while he worked through his list of calls in another room. Whenever eighteen-year-old Roger Clinton, the candidate's younger brother, came up to Fayetteville, the scent of marijuana trailed him. "It was no secret Roger was blowing smoke," recalled Neil McDonald. "It ain't too hard to tell when you go into a room that Roger had just been in, and it smells like burnt rope. He and his buddies would be in the basement stenciling signs, and actually smoking joints." McDonald thought that Clinton knew that Roger was smoking pot in 1974. "Bill . . . tried to lecture him in a big-brotherly way."

INSIDE the Clinton campaign, Addington was known as "Ronnie Paul," Wallace was "Dougie," Fray was "P.D.," and they all called Clinton "the Boy." "The Boy's on a roll today," they would say. Or, "The Boy's in a pissier of a mood."

The nickname was in part complimentary: it evoked Clinton's youth, friendliness, and achievement. But it also had a subtext that addressed the immature aspects of his personality. The Boy never wanted to go to bed. The Boy had no concept of money. Once, early in the campaign, he called Addington and announced that he had to come over to Addington's apartment to take a shower and shave because he had forgotten to pay his utility bills and his water and power had been turned off.

The Boy had a tendency to talk too much and could not always be trusted to keep campaign matters in confidence. One day he told reporters about internal poll results, prompting Doug Wallace and David Ivey, the two aides in charge of press matters, to issue a blistering memo that was labeled "To all Distrist Headquarters Staff," but was directed primarily at Clinton. "The damage done by the release of the last poll without the accompanying previous poll can only be judged after some time, but it is obvious that it has hurt," they wrote. "From now until the time Bill Clinton finishes this campaign, NO ONE will talk, or even breathe in the direction of a news reporter, without first clearing it with David Ivey or Doug Wallace. THIS ALSO MEANS THE CANDIDATE." If Clinton ignored this edict, they declared, "All hell will break loose."

The Boy was sentimental and easily touched. He was near tears one day when he received a fifty-dollar contribution from two friends from Yale Law School who had little money. "It's like the widow's mite," Clinton said, comparing the contribution to the biblical story of the widow who gave more than she could afford at the temple, the smallest denomination of coin, a mite, which prompted Jesus to say that her contribution was worth more than all the riches donated by the wealthy.

The Boy could throw a fit when he felt frustrated. His temper was an accepted part of the campaign. There were testy notes if he thought the follow-through on something was not quick enough. He would explode in a flash, then act as though it had never happened. Neil McDonald witnessed some of Clinton's explosions: "There was a minor snafu and he blew off at us for no reason. But most of us knew better than to take it personally. He was under a great deal of stress." Harry Truman Moore, a law student who often traveled with Clinton and served as his photographer, remembered that Clinton would often snap at his travel aides when they tried to pull him away from a crowd to keep him closer to his schedule. "He'd say, 'Don't ever pull me away from a crowd like that again!' Then, ten minutes later, he'd say, 'Why are we late?' We'd all get used to it, the Clinton temper."

His most memorable eruptions came in arguments with Rodham, who seemed not the least bit timid about snapping back when he erupted. "They'd have the biggest damn fights, shouting and swearing," Addington recalled. "They had two or three battle royals." One day Addington, Clinton, and Rodham were starting out on their way to an event in Eureka Springs. Clinton and Rodham were debating how to handle a campaign issue. "Bill wanted to do one thing, she wanted to do another. They started shouting at each other. I was driving. Bill was in the front seat, Hillary in the back. He was hitting the dashboard. She was hitting the seat. They were really going at it. We drove up a street near the headquarters and stopped at a light. Hillary said, 'I'm getting out!' She got out and slammed the door. And Bill said, 'Go on.' We got out on the highway and I was going fast because we were late. Bill started venting his anger on me. It was one of the most uncomfortable times I've ever spent with him. Then he took a short nap. When he woke up, everything was fine."

Rodham was a central figure during the final weeks of the campaign. She was, thought Mary Lee Fray, "fighting for her man" romantically and politically. After sending Clinton's University of Arkansas girlfriend into exile (the young woman was not seen around the campaign from October through election day), Rodham took on several aides whose style she disapproved of, especially Addington and Paul Fray. Addington, who was sent to the Fort Smith office, came to think of Rodham as a negative force. "Our organization went to shit. We lost the spirit because of her. Everybody started bickering with everybody else," he said later. In a memo to Clinton, Doug Wallace noted that though he thought Rodham's "intentions were the best," her presence was more negative than positive. "She . . . rubs people the wrong way, and boy, did she ever," Wallace wrote. "She managed to antagonize almost the entire staff. . . ."

Most of Rodham's bickering was with Paul Fray, a strong-willed political

operator accustomed to playing a dominant role. It is an understatement to say that their styles clashed. "Paul was rough around the edges in how he dealt with people, real colorful and country, and that style didn't mesh too well when Hillary was around," Wallace recalled. The power struggle between Rodham and Fray reached a critical stage near the end when they got into several arguments over money. The campaign needed more funds to compete with Hammerschmidt on television and to ensure a strong get-out-the-vote effort, but Rodham advised against borrowing too much or taking it from questionable sources. In one instance, according to the accounts of Fray and several other campaign aides, Rodham took the ethical high ground, Clinton vacillated, and Fray was willing to do whatever it took to win. Fray says that he was contacted by a lawyer representing dairy interests who had \$15,000 ready for the campaign that could be used in Sebastian County "to ensure that you are able to win the election." The implication was that the money was dirty coming and going: it would come from the dairy industry with expectations that if Clinton became congressman he would serve their interests, and it would go to election boxes in Fort Smith where votes could still be bought. In several parts of Arkansas in those days, voters still cast paper ballots that went into cardboard boxes. There were frequent allegations that different boxes were stuffed and that payoffs were required to prevent stuffing. "The attorney already had the money," Fray said later. "It was a question of me picking it up and delivering it. I knew there were places where we could spend a little money and it would turn out right."

At a late night meeting at headquarters, Fray discussed the deal with Clinton and Rodham. Clinton did not have much to say. Rodham flatly rejected the proposal. "She nixed it," according to Fray. "She got adamant. She said to Bill, 'No! You don't want to be a party to this!' I said, 'Look, you want to win or you want to lose?' She said, 'Well, I don't want to win this way.' If we can't earn it, we can't go [to Washington]."

ON November 5, election night, the mood was buoyant at Clinton headquarters. Any disputes within the campaign seemed inconsequential compared with the energy and enthusiasm that Clinton had put into his candidacy, and now it was as though that energy was all that mattered. Reports from the field indicated that the race was close and that Clinton had the momentum. He had been out there traveling the back roads for eight months, while Hammerschmidt, slow to realize the seriousness of the challenge, had been back in the district only for the final three weeks. The campaign had election teams stationed in the courthouses in all twenty-one counties, calling in reports box by box. Fray and Clinton had

determined the minimum number of votes they figured they needed in each rural county to overtake what they expected to be a significant Hammerschmidt edge in Fort Smith. They tallied the results on a large tracking board. Hammerschmidt's totals were on the left side of the board, Clinton's on the right. The early results were encouraging. Rodham sat at a desk working a calculator. Fray stood by the tally board analyzing the numbers as Harry Truman Moore wrote them down. Clinton worked the phone, taking and making calls to the counties. He started getting concerned when the calls came from Garland County, which included his home town of Hot Springs. They knew that Garland County was conservative, but assumed that the favorite son could at least break even there. "What the hell's going on down there?" Clinton asked. Somehow, he had lost Garland County.

By midnight, every county had reported except the largest and most conservative one, Sebastian County, home to Fort Smith. Clinton was still leading by several thousand votes. Steve Smith was thinking about finding an apartment in Georgetown. But what was happening down in Fort Smith? Clinton supporters at the Sebastian County courthouse were picking up reports of vote tampering. "Let me call the sheriff," Clinton said. "He's a friend of mine." The sheriff told Clinton he was looking into it. Steve Smith and several other aides piled into a car and drove to Fort Smith. Ron Addington met them at the courthouse, and they milled around for a while, grumbling, but determined that there was nothing they could do and drove back to Fayetteville. Fort Smith finally came in with an enormous swing in Hammerschmidt's direction. The board showed that Clinton had lost by 6,000 votes. Fray started swearing and throwing things out the window. "It was the goddamn money!" he said.

The staff talked about challenging the election results, but Clinton chose not to. He realized that he had won for losing. His race was the most talked about contest in the state. He had become the darling of the Democratic party by taking on Hammerschmidt and coming within 2 percentage points of defeating him, by far the best showing any opponent ever made against him. He had been on the same stage with Dale Bumpers and David Pryor and compared favorably to them. "We accomplished a miracle out here," Clinton told his staff. "We started with no name recognition and look what we accomplished. We scared the pants off that guy." He then sent a telegram to Hammerschmidt: "Congratulations on your victory yesterday. I hope you will consider the merit of the positive positions I took during the campaign. They grew out of the long months of discussions I had with our people. I wish you well in the next two difficult years. If ever I can be of service to you in your attempts to help the people of the Third Congressional District, please call on me."

ONE morning after the election, Clinton drove to the square in downtown Fayetteville and started shaking hands. "Thank you for your help," he said to passers-by who had voted for him. To others, he expressed thanks simply for voting, or for listening to him. He stood in the square all day, talking and shaking hands. He was cooling down after nine months of nonstop campaigning, his friends thought. No, there was more to it than that. He was warming up. The next race had already begun.

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## GOVERNOR- IN-WAITING

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GARY HART OF Colorado arrived in the Senate. Jerry Brown became the new governor of California. Michael Dukakis took over in Massachusetts. Paul Simon of Illinois, Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts, and Tom Harkin of Iowa were elected to the House of Representatives. All of these Democrats were set on the path of presidential ambition by the elections of 1974. They were among the winners in what came to be regarded as a transformational year in modern American politics, a year when the old order started to give way to the next generation. The most dramatic change took place in the House, where ninety-two freshmen, including seventy-five Democrats, stormed Capitol Hill. They were known as the Watergate class or the Watergate babies. With equal measures of impatience and righteousness, they undertook the work of institutional reform, changing the rules of the place, upsetting the seniority system, overthrowing old committee chairmen, demanding a share of the power.

The road of ifs usually leads nowhere, but in the case of Bill Clinton and 1974 a brief journey down the path of historical speculation seems appropriate. If four thousand people in the Third Congressional District had voted for him instead of for John Paul Hammerschmidt, Clinton would have been one of the rambunctious Watergate babies. He would have moved to Washington that winter, meaning that his stay in Arkansas, the land to which he had always said he longed to return, would have lasted a mere sixteen months. Hillary Rodham, after four months in Fayetteville, certainly would have left with him, resettling in a place and a culture where they were on more equal standing and where she could pursue her interests in politics and law on a national rather than provincial stage. While the removal of geography as an issue might have made it smoother for the partnership in the short term, it is also conceivable that life in Washington eventually would have unraveled the couple's relationship by