

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
NUMBER
542

Interview with
JOHN HENRY FAULK
June 9, 1981

Place of Interview: Madisonville, Texas
Interviewer: J. B. Smallwood, Jr.
Terms of Use: Open
Approved: John H. Faulk
Date: 10/18/81

COPYRIGHT © 1981 THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF NORTH TEXAS STATE
UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF DENTON

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Coordinator of the Oral History Collection or the University Archivist, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas 76203

Oral History Collection

John Henry Faulk

Interviewer: J. B. Smallwood, Jr.

Place of Interview: Madisonville, Texas

Date: June 8, 1981

Dr. Smallwood: This is an interview with John Henry Faulk in Madisonville, Texas, on June 9, 1981, by J. B. Smallwood, Jr. What we would like to do in the beginning of this interview is to get a little background information about the person we are interviewing. So if you would be willing, would you start off by describing your background, maybe perhaps something about your family background, your education, your early life?

Mr. Faulk: Well, I was born and raised in Austin, Texas, out south of Austin, actually, on a farm. My father was a lawyer there in Austin. I was born on August the 21, 1913, and I'm coming up on sixty-eight years old on my next birthday, which is a month or so away. I grew up there and went to the public schools, four more at Austin High School, and then the University of Texas.

Dr. Smallwood: I notice that you have a degree in English.

Mr. Faulk: Yes. I was going to be a lawyer, actually, and I went to three years of academic school. I started in 1933. I went to three years of academic school and then went to

law school at the University of Texas Law School. At that time, you didn't have to have a degree to get into law school, and my purpose had always been to follow Daddy's footsteps into the legal profession. But I hadn't been in law school but about a month before I realized that it wasn't going to be for me, although I went on to complete one year--rather poorly, I might say.

Then I went back into the academic school. My reason of doing that was that I had fallen under the influence of J. Frank Dobie. I had a friend there, Alan Lomax, the son of John A. Lomax. They were great folklorists. They had stirred my interest in listening to "the people," as it were. Dobie's great theme, as you know, was that we must turn our eyes toward our own resources in this society. He had a great influence on me. It was through Dobie that I had fallen under the influence of Dr. Webb, and the greatest of all Texans in my opinion, as far as a spacious mind and a liberated mind was concerned, Roy Bedichek.

Smallwood: What about Roy Bedichek.

Faulk: I met him through Dobie and Webb and Lomax. They were kind of a cabal, actually. They were a group there that shared a great many interests,

Smallwood: Were you saying that Bedichek was the one that you thought

had the great mind,

Faulk: Yes, I would say that Roy Bedichek had one of the finest minds. He had achieved what I regard as the highest level of living--that of living in harmony not only with the natural phenomenon of earth but with the society. He had a very critical attitude toward society, but a positively critical attitude, and he helped shape a lot of Dobie's attitudes, too.

At any rate, I went back into academic school, but I first went off a couple of years across the country to find out first-hand what the world outside Texas was like. I got as far as California.

Smallwood: Would you say that these three men were very important in helping form your philosophy?

Faulk: Well, they weren't the primary force. My father was an old, early day civil rights lawyer. My mother had been a school-teacher, and my father took a very active interest in politics and the affairs of the community there. He was very interested in them. He was a socialist. He grew up as a sharecropper in Texas. By the time he was twenty, he had learned to read and write and through a set of fortuitous circumstances went to the University of Texas. He went to law school and became a lawyer there back in the 1890's. He had always had an intellectual and a very deeply felt personal feeling about the community in which he lived and the responsibility of a

citizen for all aspects of the community. In 1904 or 1905, he was a very successful lawyer in Austin, Texas.

Smallwood: So Dobie, Bedichek, and Lomax to some extent may have reinforced...

Faulk: Yes. And I greatly admired...they had the same approach that my father had to social responsibility and political responsibility and civic responsibility. They cared very deeply, and they were all first-rate minds. So I had a natural inclination to them. Alan Lomax, who was my age, had gone up to Harvard, and he came back to the University of Texas and had a great influence on me as far as my interest in folklore was concerned. He had been very active with his father in traveling over the South collecting forkllore with very awkward, but fairly effective, portable recording machines.

So I went back to the University of Texas and got my bachelor's and master's and was going to teach at the University of Texas. And since I wanted to write, I figured that teaching was the best cushion for that (chuckle). As Dobie would say, "Them that can, do; and them that can't, teach." (Chuckle) So he taught, and I taught. I taught at the University of Texas in the English Department.

Smallwood: How long did you teach?

Faulk: Two years. At the same time, I received, through the good offices of Lomax and Dobie, a Rosenwald Fellowship. The

Rosenwald Foundation, founded by Julius Rosenwald and funded by Julius Rosenwald, had placed a great deal of emphasis on the blacks of the United States, particularly in the South. It started libraries...was interested in projects that would study the problems of the black. I became very enmeshed in that, as a folklore first, collecting folk materials in black churches. Most blacks lived in rural communities in Texas prior to World War II.

Smallwood: And you published from that collection?

Faulk: I did articles for the Texas Folklorist Society's publication. My mother's master's thesis was on ten Negro sermons, preached by illiterate blacks, that I regarded as epic poetry. I used that as a basis of my thesis for my master's degree. I continued to take graduate work at the University of Texas with an eye toward getting a Ph. D.

However, the war intervened, and although I'm blind in my right eye, and was barred from military service, Dobie, who had become a very close and very influential friend of mine at that time, was quite determined that he and I go fight Hitler and Mussolini. He loathed and despised fascism, and, by the way, Dobie had become politically very aware at that time. When I first knew him in 1934, Mr. Dobie had kind of a jaundiced attitude toward the political arena. He had no use for politicians.

Smallwood: In other words, he was sort of disaffected by the whole

political system?

Faulk: Yes, at first--when I first knew him. Neither Webb nor Bedichek ever were, but Dobie in a way was a cause of despair to them because he was very racist in his attitudes. By that, I mean, he accepted segregation as a natural way of life.

Smallwood: He accepted the Southern tradition.

Faulk: Yes, and he never questioned it. But by '36 or '37, he had become much more active politically and had taken a greater interest. And as the war clouds in Europe built up, and Hitler was on the move, Dobie began to read because he had this spacious mind and an inquiring mind, and he was a very honest man. He and I arrived about the same time at a conclusion that Hitler's anti-semitic laws, his racist laws, were not at all unlike those that were on the books of most Southern states. So this had a very profound effect on us both. We became very active in matters that related to the segregation of the races, the legal Southern segregation, what we called the "Jim Crow" laws, in every Southern state, and the deprivation of citizens because of their color, their rights of full citizenship.

Dobie also had affected very strongly my folk approach to our society--that the people who did the work and who had sang the songs and created the stories had a lot to say about the way life was in the United States. As a result,

I shared the attitudes of both Dobie and Bedichek and, to an extent, Webb.

Smallwood: Now perhaps I missed this, but did one of these three men direct your master's thesis?

Faulk: Dobie did. He encouraged me tirelessly. He was a great, very charitable, and warm, humane creature. He took a real interest. There evolved in our relationship kind of a father-son...not exactly a father-son. He was never patronizing but was encouraging and very helpful.

Smallwood: A mentor relationship?

Faulk: Yes, I would say mentor would be the proper description of it. And Bedichek was very important to me in this respect, too. Bedichek, as I say, read Latin and Greek and had a classical mind. He was born Texan, too, just as Dobie was, just as Webb was. You see, just as I had been. They set a high-water mark for me as...they inspired me, in other words.

Dobie's God was a very...he suspected organized religion with a very real, almost antagonistic, attitude. But he cherished most of the precepts of the Judeo-Christian ethic in terms of justice, individual justice. His God... was 'the liberated mind,' His quarrel with organized religion was that it had found the truth; it pronounced the truth. Dobie said, "The truth is forever to be sought and that there should be no bounds on where

a man's thinking could lead him,"

Smallwood: He was very Jeffersonian.

Faulk: Yes, yes, yes, very Jeffersonian as a matter of fact... and James Madison. I would say they were two men with whom I have become well-acquainted through their writings and all since then. I realize, just as my father, that James Madison was the one of the wisest of the Founding Fathers, a man whose writings contributed profoundly to the establishment of this republic, to the releasing of the human potential that our establishment stood for. The creating of the First Amendment that James Madison participated in...Daddy regarded the First Amendment as the linchpin that held up and made our democracy work, made this a self-governing republic.

Smallwood: He would have been a candidate for the ACLU.

Faulk: Oh, yes, yes. In Daddy's early day, in the 1920's, he corresponded with Roger Baldwin, Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas-- knew them all. Of course, my home had that literature in it, you see, so I came naturally, as it were, to this...

Smallwood: ...belief in the First Amendment?

Faulk: ...position that I more and more solidified the more and more I learned. Dobie and my father both regarded gant and doctrine with a jaundiced eye, too. They didn't think the answers all lay anywhere. Daddy's position was that we had been afforded in our society a golden opportunity to

build the humane society. Dobie had come to that, also, and I had come to that position through their influence and also through my own efforts.

Consequently, I went off into the merchant marines because Dobie was very anxious for us both to get active. They wouldn't take him, but they took me (chuckle), and I went off on a tanker of high test gasoline to England in 1942. That was the North Atlantic run. I was keenly interested and very depressed by the ravages that Hitler was making on the European continent, and what he really symbolized, which was the suppression of human dignity and decency. Fascism frightened me. Dobie and I would consult constantly, I mean, on all my return trips home.

Then I went into the Red Cross. Doctor David Stevens of the Rockefeller Foundation was a friend of ours. Henry Nash Smith was a professor of English at the University of Texas at that time and became a part of our group. We had kind of a little club. We'd meet informally, four or five of us would. We'd go out to either Dobie's ranch or Webb's ranch and spend the night just talking, oh, two or three times a month because they regarded conversation as the richest human experience--the exchange of ideas. The sky was the limit. Any subject under the sun would come

up, from whether mockingbirds really mocked other birds or whether blue stem grass was better for grazing (chuckle) than some other kinds. They lived close to the earth; they leaned their ear over close to catch the sounds and rhythms of earth.

And this was very exciting and had a very positive influence on my life. When I was recording, incidentally, I early on had a very keen ear for accents and for folk speech and for the vibrancy and color of folk speech. Consequently, I discovered that I could do as well as a recording machine sometimes in reporting the subjects that I had recorded. And not only that, the recording machine was very awkward at that time. They had an acetate disc, and they were very difficult to transport around. So I evolved a method of talking about these people, doing the characters myself. This won me considerable attention from civic clubs and women's study groups around over Texas. I became, and quite incorrectly, to be regarded as an expert on "Nigra" folklore, as they called it then. People would say, "He really knows the 'Nigra'". Now Johnny goes out there and hears those songs, by George, and hears those sermons, and he can do a 'nigger' sermon just about as good as any 'nigger' can." This was the public's attitude. Doobie and I had gone through a process of learning to say "Negro" instead of "Nigra" or "nigger," which was the common

description, And it was a very difficult learning process (chuckle). Alan Lomax had been the one who pressed us the hardest on that.

Smallwood: My generation had to go through learning to say "black" instead of Negro (chuckle).

Faulk: Yes, that's the whole thing (chuckle). I've learned it pretty well now because I figure that if anybody has a right to say what they want to be called, it's the black man. If the black man prefers "black" to "Negro"... and I think "Negro" does have a patronizing attitude, perhaps. Well, it still suggests "Nigra" to a lot of them, which was regarded as the proper Southern pronunciation.

The upshot was that Dr. Stevens of the Rockefeller Foundation suggested that I would be doing a lot better with my time, more useful and make a great contribution to our society, by going into the Red Cross as a field director. They needed them, So I went into the Red Cross and was shipped to the Middle East, stationed in Cairo for a year, as an assistant field director with the troops. And there I got a good look at men that were really at the front because the North African and the Italian campaign was on then. You see, this was in 1943, and I was there in Cairo when Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang came to the Cairo Conference.

Smallwood: Did you have an opportunity to see them?

Faulk:

Yes, but from a distance. They didn't call me for any advice whatever (chuckle), although I would have been happy to give it to them because Mr. Dobie and I were full of advice for all of the damn leadership of the country.

Of course, at that time the Soviet Union was our ally, and Dobie and I both took a very dim view of the anti-communism that was rampant not only in our armed forces but in our leadership at the time, besides Roosevelt, who had made peace with them. We considered the Soviet Union an ally that was bearing the brunt at that time of the entire Hitler campaign. You see, Hitler hadn't been stopped until he turned East, and he was going through Russia like a dose of salt through a widow woman. He was just heading for Moscow, and all of our best military minds, as well as our best commentators, were predicting that it would be a matter of weeks before he took Moscow. They were accepting Mr. Hitler's definition. Dobie early on had taken the position, "Well, they might have bit off a chunk that they ain't going to be able to swallow," And, of course, then news started coming from the Eastern Front that Mr. Hitler's troops had begun to bog down. You have to understand that at that time Hitler had not been slowed down by anything. He was regarded as

almost unstoppable.

Smallwood: Let me ask you if, among your group, Dobie and that group, there was at that time any concern with what later became the detriments of communism.

Faulk: No.

Smallwood: In other words, there wasn't much critical analysis of communism going on at that time.

Faulk: I would say, to the contrary, there was almost an enthusiasm... not for the doctrine because, I daresay, Dobie knew no more about it than I did. We suspected the doctrinaire... see, the Communist Party is very much like the "foot-washing" Baptists from our point of view, or any other group that has the truth and the solid truth; and if you deviate from this truth, well, you're beyond the pale, you're not saveable. This wasn't the issue. Dobie felt, and I felt, too, at that time, that the current and very popular belief that "Well, let's let Stalin and Hitler destroy each other," was a shortsighted view. The real threat to mankind came from Hitler, not from the Soviet Union.

Smallwood: In other words, the issue was Hitler, not communism, at that time. It's not that people embraced communism, but they saw it as an ally.

Faulk: Well, yes, and, well, Russia was an ally. Of course, our leadership accepted it as an ally. But there was a great deal...particularly in the armed forces, when I was in the

Red Cross overseas, you see, there was a great deal of, "Goddammit, why do we have to help the damn Russians? They're just as bad as the Germans! I hope that they all destroy each other!" This struck me as a dishonorable position to take when they were withstanding the brunt of Hitler's attack, and it struck Dobie that way, too. That was his position. And we felt the same way about England, that England was withstanding the brunt. I know in the merchant marine most of the men hated England: "What the hell are we risking our lives by taking gasoline to a bunch of Limies?" I was so determined to see Hitler destroyed...

Smallwood: So this was really more of an anti-European attitude than it was simply an anti-communist awareness among the troops.

Faulk: Yes. I would say that in the officers corps I ran into this anti-Russian thing. It wasn't anti-communist because nobody knew what the hell a communist was, see. Now the domestic communists here in the United States had gone all out for the Stalin-Hitler pact. Then when Hitler attacked Russia, the Communist Party had switched and gone the other direction. But I never regarded, and neither did Dobie, even during that period, the communists as a domestic threat to this country (chuckle). They were to me, and I would say to Dobie, too, because we discussed it...we had the attitude that they were like the...well, as I say, the

"foot-washing" Baptists or the Vegetarian Party or the Prohibitionist Party.

Smallwood: They were just some doctrinaire group.

Faulk: Yes, that one couldn't get along with. You see, during this entire period, the FBI would come to me to ask about boys who had been in my classes when I taught, and to Dobie, too. Dobie got very suspicious of them because of the kinds of questions they asked because at that time ol' J. Edgar Hoover was carrying on a campaign against "left-wingers." I never saw it as an anti-left-wing attitude at all. I saw it as an anti-Roosevelt, anti-New Deal attitude because, as I say, the communists never were a threat probably because they never could elect anyone to office. They represented a minute and traditional American minority party that has the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and they're going to preach it very ineffectively. No blacks that I ever knew became enchanted with and enmeshed in their doctrines.

Smallwood: They didn't have very good appeal to Americans.

Faulk: No, because, you see, basically--and Dobie and I discussed this--a doctrinaire communist, the ones that we had met--and we had met a couple of them--weren't mean people. They were very sincere American citizens who had embraced this doctrine. They weren't destructive people. They weren't carrying bombs around and plotting and planning to

overthrow the country by violence, at least in terms of our experience. They were doctrinaire people, and this was my objection to them. But I have a sister who was a very doctrinaire Roman Catholic, and with our protestant ethic down in Texas (chuckle), this was regarded as a terrible anti-humanistic attitude, but we didn't feel like punishing them and destroying them. You just answered them in open debate.

But, as I say, Dobie had been disturbed, and I had, too, by the level of questions the FBI asked. You have to understand that communism had been a very hot issue in America. We had a strong anti-communist orientation, and it was very unacceptable to many Americans that we made alliance with Russia. And so this was an issue and something we did discuss a great deal.

The upshot was the Dobie had taken a position, and I'd taken a position, that the number one enemy was Hitler, and we didn't have time for this kind of nonsense. Of course, at that time the current attitude was, "Oh, well, the communists are going to get you any day." You know, the Dies Committee was rampant in the country. It had attacked the University of Texas as a hotbed of communism. One of our best friends, a man that we admired very much, Homer P. Rainey, president of the University of Texas, had been charged with sheltering communists on the faculty there by

the Dies Committee. So this was an issue. Neither Dobie nor Webb or Bedichek had any use for this issue, whatever. They considered it a stalking horse, and that, I would say, summed up our attitude. It was a wonderful political issue and was exploited politically by politicians. Any move toward the removal of the restrictions on blacks voting or going to school or receiving anything like an opportunity was regarded as communist propaganda at that time. In this sense, we regarded communism as a stalking horse, a false issue, a fraud on the American public, and an unworthy one. It destroyed our capacity to reach reasoned and intelligent and balanced positions on issues that were very pertinent to the welfare of this society. If you're arguing over whether Roosevelt was a communist or not, and trying to establish communism in this country, you're arguing a false issue. You see, quite obviously, he wasn't. And whether they had any indication would only exist in the minds of some of my relatives (chuckle) and some of our politicians down here, if you follow what I am saying.

Well, at any rate, after a year in the Red Cross, I came back and was accepted in the Army on limited service, and I was a GI. And I went into the Army as a GI, and I was in the Army from, I believe, March, 1944, until March, 1946. In the meanwhile, I was in the Medical Corps. They made me...I was an assistant to the psychiatrist (chuckle),

is what I was. I was assigned to a psychiatrist at Camp Swift, Texas, which was one of the "dangerous" battle fronts of America. It was right down there in Bastrop County, thirty miles from home.

Smallwood: You were there the...

Faulk: ...yes, the whole two years. And I was psychiatric social worker. That was my title; that was my rating. During that time, the whole two years, of course, I could run up to Austin--it was only thirty minutes away--and I spent a great deal of time with Dobie and Webb and Bedichek. Webb had gone to Oxford as a guest professor. Dobie was around, but he then went to Cambridge in the latter part of 1944, I believe. I know he was over there in 1944 and 1945 and 1946 as a guest professor at Cambridge, a professor of American history, with which he was saturated.

In the meanwhile, I was called on by groups all the time to talk about folklore and to do characters. And I had evolved a whole gallery of folk characters that illustrated the point that I wanted to make about attitudes, and it maintained my interest in political situations very closely.

Smallwood: Had you done any kind of media work up to this point.

Faulk: Never. But I went up to New York at Christmas of 1945, and Alan Lomax was my host up there. He was in Special Services, in the Signal Corps. Lee Falk, the cartoonist,

and Alan Cranston were his big buddies then.

Smallwood: Falk was a cartoonist?

Faulk: Yes, Lee Falk does, I think, "The Shadow" and "Mandrake the Magician." Alan had a party for me. Alan had done a show on CBS, a folk show, "Back Where I Come From," and knew all of the CBS executives. And Alan conceived of me as the great new voice of America, a folk voice of America. He had them all down and had me entertain. And as far as I was concerned, it was living room entertainment, but it impressed the CBS folks, and so they made a deal with me, that as soon as I got out of the Army, as soon as I was released...at that time they were releasing men on points, the ones that had been overseas. You see, my Red Cross experience in the Middle East didn't count--my military points--so I got out late. I got out in April of 1946 and was going back to teach at the University and continue my education. But CBS took me to New York and found me an apartment and put me under contract to do a folk show as a folk humorist. I was to be a folk humorist because I did satires on the political scene and that sort of thing.

It was an exciting period, and I was very inadequate because I wasn't a professional entertainer. But they bore with me and farmed me out to a small station there, WOY. It was a foreign language station except in the early

morning, and I played cowboy music, country-western music, from five o'clock until seven o'clock every morning, six days a week. I learned to project on radio.

In 1947, I went out to WPAT in Patterson, New Jersey, as a folk humorist and ran a show out there for a year-and-a-half, and then CBS brought me back to New York, and I went on my regular radio show. Television was evolving then. This was in the later part of the 1940's and early 1950's, and I got on all the early shows. I was a panelist on "We Take Your Word," which was an etymological show, because I had an academic background. Abe Burrows and John Dailey were also on it. John Dailey was the moderator, and Abe Burrows and I were panelists, and we would have a guest panelist like Cornelia Otis Skinner or some other literary light. Listeners would write in. There wasn't any network television at that time; this was strictly local. But as the networks got into television, I went into television, too, but maintained this daily, five times a week, hour long show at CBS.

This was during the emergence of the McCarthy period, which could have been called the Richard Nixon period, too, because he made his political hay mowing in the same fields that McCarthy mowed in. They were saying the Democratic Party was the party of treason, that we'd had twenty years of treason under Roosevelt. And I got outraged at the

Democrats for backing water and ducking and trying to out-do them. Anti-communism became literally a national religion. Persons who had been enthusiastic New Dealers were hauled up before the House Un-American Activities Committee and various other forces of repression. J. Edgar Hoover emerged as the great leader of our land, although he was nothing more than a police chief to me. In my opinion his function wasn't to pronounce on loyalty of Americans but was to search out crime, which is the function of police in our society, and prevent it and to apprehend criminals. But the FBI became a political force, and a very important political force, in our society that all Congress and the Democrats backed away from. You would find Democratic leaders making these idiotic speeches prefacing every speech with, "I hate communism worst than the Republicans do," and trying to out-do them.

Smallwood: Even President Truman.

Faulk: Yes, President Truman fell into this trap. In 1947, I believe it was, he had issued an official proclamation that all federal employees would be henceforth subject to FBI surveillance and had to be cleared. Well, my quarrel with that position was that it was contrary not only to our constitutional guarantees of freedom of thought, but association, peaceful association, and assembly. I presume that the Soviet Union was laughing at this idiotic position--

Roosevelt and his minions being part of the Communist Party (chuckle). But the Republican Party swept into victory in 1952 by utilizing precisely the technique of the manipulation of fear and exploiting it for political purposes.

Dobie, Webb, and Bedichek and I, particularly Dobie and Bedichek, were at one on this matter. We would have endless conversations about it. And Dobie was attacked, you see. He was denied a passport to go to Turkey to teach at the American University in Ankara, I believe it was.

Smallwood:

There's one in Istanbul, I know.

Faulk:

Istanbul. Well, it was Istanbul. But I know that it shocked Dobie speechless that this...well, Dobie was very pronounced and very open in his views, you see, and he never compromised them. He was a very straightforward man. He expressed his opinion as it lay, as it were, and didn't hide his light under a bushel at all. This was very offensive, and he had taken a very, very active part in fighting the board of regents at the University of Texas, which had been appointed by ol' "Pappy" O'Daniel. As Dobie said, the board of regents knew as much about university education, cared as much about the functions of a university in society, as a razorback boar cares about Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn." So Dobie had become a political issue in

Texas, and the University of Texas board of regents fired him for his defiance of them and his pronouncements on them. But it didn't slow him down a darn bit. Of course, a number of distinguished universities in the United States offered him a professorship at once because he was a nationally known and loved and respected academician. But he wouldn't accept any of them. He stayed here in Texas, did his writing.

Smallwood: The University of Texas seems to have a history of doing that to some of its best professors.

Faulk: Yes. It drove Henry Nash Smith out, and Ted Hornberger out of the English Department, you see, during the Rainey fracas. It did cost us some of the best minds we had. They went away to more congenial surroundings, and they were welcomed there. Of course, Henry Nash Smith is regarded as one of the leading academicians in his field. He's a gentle and kind and lovely man.

Well, the upshot was that by the mid-1950's I had become very unhappy about the developments in our society because radio became a very vapid experience. You couldn't say anything lest it offend someone--anything of a controversial nature. My position was that this country was not only born in controversy, but it was a natural substance that we lived off of. In the Soviet Union, they have no controversy; the government is the law. As we took on more and more the

attributes of a totalitarian society, it became more and more depressing to me as we adopted more and more... well, the secret police that the FBI represented, the surveilling of American citizens for their political beliefs. The House Un-American Activities Committee hailing librarians and ministers of the gospel and professors up before them to examine them on their beliefs and associations was terribly offensive to me.

In our own industry, there grew up this organization in Hollywood and New York called Aware, Incorporated. It was operated as a vigilante group. Aware, Incorporated, made it its business to publish a list of names a couple of times a month of persons in radio-television--singers, dancers, directors, writers--anyone associated with the entertainment industry who had in the past done something that Aware regarded was an indication of their lack of patriotism or lack of loyalty to the principles of the United States, as Aware interpreted them, which is typical of a vigilante group. It was a classical vigilante group. A vigilante by definition is one who does not believe in the established institutions for the administration of justice in society and sets up its own set of standards and institutions, passes its own laws and becomes its own judge, jury, prosecuting attorney, and executioner on its victims. The Klu Klux Klan, Aware,

Incorporated, and the whole business does this, very much as Jerry Falwell and his Moral Majority are doing now.

Smallwood: Do you think that we're entering a period similar to that?

Faulk: Yes, however, I think that the memories of the McCarthy period are too fresh in the nostrils of the American people. Too many people can remember the injustices and the grievous abortions of justice that went on during that period. For "Ronnie" and the boys--his men who work the strings up there around him--to dare pull it...they're doing their best because they are generating the same kind of fear and hatred and suspicion of learning and suspicion of free speech and the exercise thereof in our society that marked that period. Basically, the McCarthy period...and this is something Dobie and I arrived at early and opposed very vigorously, just as ol' Roy Bedichek did. My father had died in 1939, so he was no longer on hand to consult with. But they felt that actually the McCarthy period was basically about shutting down the dialogue, and the political dialogue, in America--cutting it off and distorting it, by the use of epithet and labels instead of discussing issues.

So I became embroiled in a union fight up there. Our union, the American Federation of Radio/Television Artists, there was dominated by Aware and excepted Aware's

standards for who could make a speech. And blacklisting was rampant because persons listed by Aware weren't ever called in and confronted with any kind of allegations at all. They were simply dismissed because the networks and the advertising agencies and the sponsors didn't want to get involved in the quarrel one way or the other. It's much easier to replace a man. So the blacklist grew and many people had their careers completely destroyed by being mentioned by Aware. To publicly criticize J. Edgar Hoover or the House Un-American Activities Committee could get one listed by Aware, I had never gotten involved in any kind of fight like that, but I was outraged that the union would participate in this. Since I belonged to the union, I got some of my friends in 1955--Charles Collingwood, who was a commentator, Gary Moore, and a number of distinguished friends of mine who loathed and despised this business of blacklisting because it was widespread, and it was a shocking thing that was going on--to run in a union election with me against this bunch, and we wiped them out. We were all elected to the Board of Directors of the union.

We beat the daylights out of them, and they put out a bulletin on us, an Aware bulletin, saying that this man, John Henry Faulk, and Charles Collingwood, why, they're not communists--and maybe they aren't--but let's see what kind of record they have, And they raked up some things that

I had done in the past, four or five things that I had allegedly done. Three or four of them were false, but others were partially accurate,

Smallwood: Would you be willing to put on record what they said.

Faulk: Well, hell, yes, because it resulted in a great trial where it was all on record. They put out this bulletin, and one of the true allegations they made was that I had made a speech in 1947--I believe it was in May or something in 1947, or 1946 perhaps it was--when I first went to New York. They claimed that I'd appeared at a dinner under the auspices of a pro-communist organization, and there had been present there an unrepentant communist that had never repudiated his background. This might sound idiotic to you. They didn't say I was a communist. I looked it up in my diary, and, sure enough, I had been at the dinner at the Astor Hotel. What they failed to mention...and incidentally, their assertions had never been challenged before. Your way of handling their assertions was to try to buy them off publicly repenting it, volunteering to go before the House Committee or the FBI and tell all about all your friends and how you got involved in this terrible conspiracy.

This charge that they made against me--one of the charges of the four or five of that nature--was that I had appeared and had entertained. This was the kind of thing they indulged in. They said really nothing about

me because then they would always say, "Well, this is just fair comment. All we're doing is just making fair comment on this man's history and letting the public decide." Their clear implications was to raise a cloud over my loyalty to this country and to associate me with the Soviet Union.

Smallwood: Guilt by association,

Faulk: Yes, yes, and they had never been challenged. Typical of their methods was the thing that they had issued on me about this Astor Hotel thing. Actually, it was the year one birthday party of the United Nations Security Council that was sponsored by some thirty-two or thirty-three-- I forget how many--national organizations, including that well-known left-wing outfit called the American Bar Association, the National YMCA, the National Association of University Women. The co-chairmen were Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt and Mr. Harold Tckes, former Secretary of Interior under Roosevelt.

Smallwood: This was the communist group they were accusing you of appearing before?

Faulk: Yes, They didn't say that it was a communist group. They said it was a pro-communist group. Now this is ten years later that they're hurling this accusation at me, or near on nine years later. Sure enough, the entire Security Council was there, all five members of it, including "His Eminence" Andrei Gromyko, who is not only un-American

but remains so until this very day--a communist--or he wouldn't be in office. Trygve Lie was Secretary General. The principal speaker at the thing was the Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. Edward Stettinius. But none of this was mentioned. It was broadcasted full network over CBS radio, and I was sent by CBS radio. None of that was mentioned, you see.

This is the nature of the kind of charges that they would circulate, and the innuendoes and distortions and outright falsehoods. Several of the things they said was outright falsehoods--that I had spoken before a group at Jefferson School. I didn't know where it was, and I never had heard of it even. You must understand that they didn't have to be circumspect in their pronouncements. That wasn't necessary.

Smallwood: You're implying here that the networks were more or less intimidated by this.

Faulk: Oh, yes, completely. They capitulated to them entirely. The networks paid them for this information. This came out in my trial, because I got a very mean lawyer. I was a friend at that time, a very close friend, of Edward R. Murrow, who despised AWARE. He had met Dobie over in England, and they had become great friends, and that's how I had met Ed up in New York. Dobie had told me to be sure and look him up when I got there. Ed was on

the board of directors at CBS at that time. He was completely out of tune with their blacklisting practices. He loathed and despised it, recognized the injustice of it. Ed was very glum. He thought America was going to become a police state because there are all the marks of a police state. There are all the trappings of a police state--the punishing of citizens because of their beliefs, their associations.

Well, the upshot was that I got a man named Louis Nizer to take the case. He was very powerful lawyer, and he also loathed and despised this practice in Hollywood and New York. It was rampant in both places, and he realized that this was a classical case.

So I filed suit against them for conspiracy to destroy my reputation and my career by falsely alleging that I was subversive. We charged that they did this because I had threatened to unmask their racketeering practices, because they were making a lot of money out of this. They were being paid and were being hailed as great American patriots for their services. CBS would write them letters to the effect, "Thank you for this service," and telling us not to use so-and-so on a show again--evil thing. And this case attracted a great deal of attention, and I got fired from CBS sometime later,

Smallwood:

Do you remember the date, the year, on that?

Faulk: In 1957, I was kicked out of CBS--the summer of 1957, a year after the suit was filed. They fired me on the grounds that I was no longer a good entertainer, that I was not acceptable to them, and besides that, they wanted to change up the programming. They used a whole lot of excuses. They never, neither the advertising agencies nor the networks, ever in any way publicly indicated that they were submitting to a blacklist.

Smallwood: Now it was the year after the trial?

Faulk: No, after the suit was filed. It took six years to bring the suit to trial. Their attorney was Roy Cohn, who had been an associate of,...

Smallwood: The same one associated with McCarthy?

Faulk: Yes. A despicable man. This case was regarded as a great trial on whether blacklisting could be legitimized. If I lost it, obviously it would be institutionalized; if I won it, it would probably be the end of it. So it was regarded as a great case.

Dobie and Bedichek and Webb rallied to my support, and most of my friends did...close friends. Superficial friends shunned me like I'd caught the plague because I'd done the unpardonable--I had challenged these guys before the public.

I was very pleased with what I had done. I felt that it was a beautiful opportunity to test my understanding

of the basic principles and ideals of this republic, as opposed to them. They symbolized everything that I felt was a threat to our society. They represented the dark "underbelly" of the American personality to me, the meanness, the suspicion, and the cultivation of fear as a national passion in our society. This I loathed and despised.

I came back down to Texas, to Austin, to survive. I brought my wife and three children down.

Smallwood: Would you comment at this time on the psychological and economic consequences to you?

Faulk: Well, the economic consequences was that I went flat-broke. You see, I was living pretty high in New York. My income was cut off. As Nizer put it before the jury, "As sharp as a knife, his career was ended." I became an untouchable. I opened a little advertising agency in Austin. I borrowed a great deal of money from friends that thrust it on me, literally. They felt that I was carrying the burden for this thing, Mrs. Roosevelt was one of them--a great number of people. You have to understand that this country has more good people in it than it has evil people in it. These groups like Aware, I regarded them as threats to our society. If the majority of people heard the issues presented to them openly, they would support my position. I have a great deal of faith in our American

system of justice but was perfectly aware of the risk that I was taking...Webb was the only one that took a dim view of my actions. He felt that I was risking my career in a vainglorious effort. Dobie didn't; Bedichek didn't. They despised what Aware symbolized in our society. Fear was rampant. You have to live in that period, really, to understand what a terrible period it was--how fear and suspicion literally dominated our whole national scene and paralyzed the American people in terms of any intelligent action.

Smallwood: How do you explain the difference between Bedichek's and Dobie's position on one hand and Webb's on the other?

Faulk: Well, Webb felt that the...he didn't object to my position, but he had very serious doubts, and he personalized it: "Johnny, you're taking on more...you've bit off a bigger chunk."

Smallwood: He felt it wasn't worth it to you?

Faulk: That's right, that it would end my career. He was interested in my career.

Smallwood: Did it?

Faulk: Yes, it did--certainly temporarily. As far as I was concerned, I was never just a career man. I had too many friends who were very successful career-wise who had ulcers, were alcoholics, and lived pretty miserable lives. I'd seen what success in the entertainment industry could do

to people, so it wasn't all that great a deprivation to me, although I did enjoy the public applause and the idea of being the center of action, because I had celebrity status, and I had a special table at Toots Shor's, and I had a special table at Sardi's, and I was recognized. This all played to my ego, but it wasn't essential.

I came back and spent a lot of time with Dobie and Webb and Bedichek then. We had a helluva good time together because we would go out and literally talk almost all night long on all kinds of subjects. They were so protective and rejoiced so in what I did. And Webb went along with that, but he just felt, "Well, you made a damn fool of yourself, Johnny. By God, somebody else can do that--somebody with more resources than you." But personal resources never did impress me...I knew you couldn't starve to death in the United States. I understood that. Well, with as many kinfolks that I got in Texas, you can't (chuckle).

Smallwood: How did your family react to this?

Faulk: They all were completely supportive. They were outraged about the injustice that I had suffered. And they're all relatively political, that is, in a mild, kind of a New Deal Democratic sense. They'd taken an active interest in racial matters--the betterment of relations between the races. In other words, they were very positive in their

support.

But the outcome was that six years later, in 1962, I went to New York, and the case had been completely forgotten by everyone else then. But Nizer is a master craftman, a great legal mind, as well as having assembled the most unbelievable library of their evil and wrongdoing. You see, we'd charged conspiracy, and this enabled him to gather all kinds of information on them, and it was pretty shocking, the revelations that he had. The newspapers took a great interest in the case.

The case was tried for three months in the New York Supreme Court in Manhattan in 1962, from the first of April until the end of June. Nizer had set a ferocious trap for them. You have to understand that McCarthy had become a stench in the nostrils of America at this time, so the result was that when they mouthed these idiocies as witnesses on the stand, Nizer just turned them into mush. He had CBS up there because CBS had joined Aware in this thing and came in court as witnesses for Aware. The position Aware took is that "this man was incompetent and not an entertainer at all, and we didn't do him any harm. He just couldn't make a living, and he used this suit as a crutch for his faltering career." Nizer made hash out of that. He did such a thorough job. Incidentally, the account of the trial was on the front page of the New York papers

every day...because the issue in the case was for more important than my personal career. (The issue was whether blacklisting would be tolerated in our society, in our system of justice--whether the punishing of people because of their beliefs or alleged beliefs would be tolerated, whether vigilante-ism could flourish in our society.)

The jury came back with a \$3.5 million judgement for me. This was headlines across the country because at that time it was the highest libel judgement that anyone had ever received. It broke the back of blacklisting. Suddenly all of the networks and the agencies were put on notice that if you get involved in blacklisting it could cost you \$3.5 million. This had a very therapeutic effect on them, and they all denounced blacklisting as an evil of evils and adopted pretty much Mr. Nizer's position that this was the antithesis of American justice and that my case had vindicated the system and had sent the blacklisters packing.

However, the networks were quite outraged by my trial because a number of witnesses had gotten up, from networks and advertising agencies, and admitted, "Yes, we did go along with this." They were very prominent people like Gary moore, David Suskind, and Mark Goodson of the Goodson-Toddman Corporation, who got up and said, "Yes, we had to

go along with it," Gary Moore told of having to fire people from his show without telling them because CBS demanded it at the behest of Aware, Incorporated.

The upshot was that the revelations in my case were so shocking and unbelievable that suddenly I was projected into the outer space as a man on a white horse that had slain the dragon bare-fisted, not even a sword. This was a very pleasant sensation, But the networks were quite outraged by the revelations of their own participation and their own actions with Aware, and they were rather unfriendly toward me, although the working press, Ed Murrow, Walter Cronkite, other...on NBC as well as CBS, and ABC, I was a hero to them. I had destroyed a dragon. I hadn't done it; my lawyers had, quite obviously. But I got the credit. It was Faulk vs. Aware.

This case was appealed all the way to the Supreme Court, The Supreme Court refused a certiorari on it because they said it was a clear-cut case of evil malice, that it wreaked with malice on the part of the defense, who had set out to destroy me and had done so so far as my career was concerned.

So I remained in New York to appear on various network shows. I signed a contract to write a book for Simon and Schuster on the whole experience, the whole matter of blacklisting, called Fear on Trial, which I

wrote, and it was published in 1964 and very well-received. It was the first book that had been written on blacklisting in TV/radio field. It really revealed the details of how they operated in the union as well as in the industry.

By this time I had evolved considerable reputation as an after dinner speaker, a humorist, so I survived by making speeches before various groups, chambers of commerce, and whatnot. I had also learned a great deal about the history of this country and who the men were who really brought us about. We call them the Founding Fathers, and I had made it my business to become conversant with them.

Smallwood: Could you comment on how this experience affected your philosophy? Did it make any difference in the way you felt about things?

Faulk: Yes. It sharpened my sensibilities as far as encroachments on liberties and freedoms, our guaranteed liberties and freedoms. It sharpened my sense of respect for who we really are, as an American people, and for those forces and those traditions that derived from 1776 and certainly from the Constitutional Convention of 1787, the profundity of the history-making, earth-shaking meaning of the founding this republic.

Smallwood: You deepened your respect for our own heritage?

Faulk: Yes. I would say it made me more keenly aware of those breaches, more sensitive to the breaches, of our fundamental laws.

Smallwood: It didn't leave you more cynical or bitter?

Faulk: To the contrary, it had a most positive effect on my determination to fulfill what I regard as obligations of all citizens to take an active and real interest... though interesting enough, Nizer said, "You've won. You're not only vindicated, but your beliefs and philosophy have been vindicated in this great trial. Now enjoy the fruits of it." Well, my interpretation of the fruits of it was to become a more active and alert citizen of our society, Nizer's interpretation was to enjoy the economic fruits of it and not to get involved in controversy anymore.

Smallwood: Were there any economic fruits in a sense of payments from the suit?

Faulk: Well, we got \$175,000, which went to pay off the debts of the lawsuit, which cost conservatively a half-million dollars to get to court. But Nizer had absorbed that, the Nizer office had. Oh, it gave me some prestige, not as an entertainer necessarily but more as a litigant. I was called on to speak on this case--how you won \$3.5 million by suing somebody,

As my Uncle Lee put it, "Johnny, what in the name of God did them fellows do to you--I seen it in the Houston Post--that they had to give you a three-and-a-half-million-dollar judgement?" I said, "They hurt my feelings." He said, "My Lord, I didn't know John Connally's feelings get hurt that bad," He couldn't understand. He thought that calling people communist was a regular course of action, and part of the scene here as a way of dismissing people you didn't like, opinions you didn't like: "Well, they're communistic."

Smallwood:

Let's turn now to your involvement in environmental issues. Would you say that your background and your experiences prepared you in any way to become involved in what we call the environmental controversies or the water controversies of today.

Faulk:

Yes, I had, through Bedichek and Dobie...both of them were great environmentalists long before the term environmentalist had any meaning to the public. Webb, on the matter of water...Webb was a great discoverer, at least discoverer from my point of view, of the importance of water to the economy. In all the lands west of the Mississippi River, he said this was a great dominating force. You see, back in the 1940's, he was preaching this to us. He had gone out to the high plains in West Texas and said their use

of water, ground water from the Ogallala Aquifer, was a foolhardy and shortsighted move--to use those deep wells to pump dry that aquifer to establish an agricultural economy out there in a land that obviously was suited for marginal grazing. Well, you come from Snyder, so you're bound to know that this was very shortsighted, that the day would come when they would deplete the water supplies. Well, this struck me as a weird thing. I felt the underground water was endless. But Webb made the very simple observation that the only water on the North American continent rains on it, and it has to get there by clouding up and raining on it. It is limited and they can estimate precisely from year to year how much water will fall in certain areas.

Smallwood: It took centuries to build up that water supply.

Faulk: Yes, and they were taking months to pump it dry. This had alerted me to the importance of water to our society. Of course, I had been raised on a farm, and rain had always been welcomed. Rainstorms never bothered me. Clouding up and thundering and lighting was always a welcome sign that we were going to have something positive happen on the land. My New York wife had felt only terror and fright, and she saw no purpose in it whatever--raining. She lived and was raised in different circumstances and different culture.

Smallwood: What part of New York was she from?

Faulk: Manhattan, right in the heart of New York. Dobie and Bedichek, of course, were great naturalists--both of them--and very concerned with things that grew out of the earth, flew over the earth, and crawled around and trotted around on it. So I got early into environmentalism that way. The despoiling of the land had distressed me because, after all, the earth's resources, I realized, were limited. This was back in the 1950's.

By the 1960's, the issue of protecting our environment... I had met Rachel Carlson up in New York and had become acquainted with the profligate use, of the dangers of the profligate use, of insecticides and these supposed technological advances we had made to cure mankind's problems here on earth and some of the inherent dangers in that.

Of course, Bedichek had preached against air conditioning. He said that a man was meant to be warm in the summer and cold in the winter, and your hide is ready for it. He never had air conditioning in his home. He had his study fixed up, and it was very cool and pleasant. He did it with curtains and by observing the natural laws.

Smallwood: What would you say was the event or series of events that got you involved in water issues?

Faulk: Well, in 1968, I'd come back to Texas from New York. They had begun the quarrel over the Trinity River Authority,

over canalizing of the Trinity River. I was in the Sierra Club, and I'd taken a very active interest in what was happening to my own native city, Austin, Texas, in terms of unrestrained development and the wrecking of Barton Creek, which is a magnificent natural phenomenon, the builders acquiring lands for heavy building on the land that I felt should be very judiciously used, the bulldozing down of great live oaks that had taken five hundred to six hundred years to grow and had adapted themselves to that Edwards Plateau and the Balcones Fault that runs through Austin. This had distressed me. I would be before the Planning Council and denounce their plan to canalize creeks there and allow building in the flood zone.

Smallwood: You did this in Austin?

Faulk: Yes. I had evolved a theory that the statement in the scriptures that man was given dominion over all the earth and the things thereon was claptrap. That was the vanity of man at play, not reality, because actually man belonged to the earth like the other creatures of the earth, and it was best to learn to live in harmony and congenially with his surroundings, and to exploit them and to devastate them for short term advantages of either housing developments or commercial use was a very shortsighted view. That evolved as the intensity of growth in the Sunbelt evolved.

Then when I moved down to Madisonville, a friend of mine, Mr. J. R. Parten, who had been chairman of the board of regents during my days up at the University of Texas, and was a very great spacious mine...

Smallwood: Now is this Randy Parten's father?

Faulk: Randy Parten stayed with us in Austin while he went to the University of Texas Law School. He was the first one that acquainted me with the Trinity River Authority. He was very sympathetic to it.

Smallwood: Now let me get the chronology straight. J. R. Parten was on the board of regents while you were a student and teacher at UT Austin.

Faulk: Yes, he had been appointed by Jimmy Allred, the governor of Texas, in 1935, and he served until 1941 or 1940. At any rate, his name was legion with Dobie and Bedichek because he was a very civilized man. He had a very civilized attitude toward blacks, which was a very important issue then. They weren't allowed to go to the University of Texas. There was no graduate school for blacks, and Parten established the first graduate school for blacks. He was instrumental in it, so they wouldn't have to go out of state to do graduate work. For the few that had had the good fortune to get out of college to go, I think the state had a stipend it gave them to go out of state.

Smallwood: You're a close freind of the Partens, both J. R. and Randy. Do you feel that they have influenced your thinking in any way about environmental issues, and on the other hand, do you feel that you had an effect on their thinking about environmental issues?

Faulk: I'm not sure that I would be able to say. I know that I share their thinking on it. J. R. Parten has a great respect...he has thousands of acres of land here in Madison County. He respects the land very much. He considers himself in a position of stewardship of that land, and that's very basic to his philosophy, that is, not to fall for every technological advance that's made. He's a preeminent producer of oil. He's been a very successful oilman in Texas, an independent oil producer. He's acquainted with the ways of big business and corporate thinking. He was the one that, I would say, first enlightened me--he and Randy. Randy was in law school there and had become very interested in the Trinity River Authority, which, as you know, is a quasi-official organization set up by the Texas Legislature back in 1950's, I think in 1956 or something of the sort. At a time when it was all the style to spend federal money on projects that enriched private individuals, you'd find private individuals very supportive of these projects that was supposed to conserve our water supply, catch it before

it got to the Gulf of Mexico, save it. J. R. Parten early on,..I don't remember at what point. You see, I knew him before I knew Randy. In fact, Randy came up to stay with us--because I knew J. R.--when he went to law school. He had graduated from Amherst. He had absorbed a great many of his father's attitudes toward his responsibilities to the earth. He would be described as a liberal in his political thinking as well as in his attitudes toward the preservation of our resources.

J. R. Parten, when he drills an oil well, for instance, is very protective of the streams around it. The custom of many drillers is to drill an oil well to get the oil out of it, and that becomes their principal preoccupation, that is, to say, "The hell with it," with the slush that they let wash into creeks. They discovered this is very destructive to the environment, so they passed laws (that are mostly unobserved), and all kinds of tricks and stratagems are used. J. R. Parten would not participate in anything of that sort at all, and he don't care what it costs him. He is very careful about the waste, about pumping saltwater out of wells and turning it loose in running creeks and destroying the life along creeks.

Consequently, when the Trinity River Authority was on the move, Randy at first was very supportive of it. It would create a canal, and they had all kinds of pictures

of deer playing along the park lands that would be created for the benefit of the people.

Smallwood: They made it seem very attractive.

Faulk: He saw through this and early on put me next to it. This was when he was still living with me in Austin. This was a move actually engineered principally by the big interests in Dallas who wanted to fight rail rates and trucking rates by making Dallas the head of a barge canal, making it a seaport town (chuckle) some three hundred miles inland (chuckle).

Smallwood: Do you know what Senator Inouye said about the cost of this? He said, "Wouldn't it be easier to move Fort Worth and Dallas to the Gulf?"

Faulk: No, I didn't know Inouye said that. Did he? Literally, this became a position with me, too.

But the point is that they were very well-organized and had their offices in Arlington. Randy began to give me literature that they were putting out. They were going to have a great election because the law read that they had to be supported. For every so much money the federal government provided for them, the citizens that were along the Trinity drainage basin, the Trinity Basin, would have to contribute so much in taxes, that their land would be subject to taxes. Fortunately, when you bring up the matter of raising taxes in Texas, you have a very

ready audience to listen (chuckle).

So Randy came down then during this election, and I believe it was in 1973. It was all going one way because it had, I think, close to a million-dollar budget to advertise and sell the public along in the Trinity Basin that was eligible to vote on supporting this barge canal. Randy got together with a group of friends, ranchers and farmers in this area and over in Walker County and other countries that bordered...

Smallwood: Would you say that Randy was more or less the spearhead of getting opposition organized?

Faulk: Yes, he was certainly the most important person, and he was backed by his father entirely. The Parten name is a name to reckon with in this part of Texas.

Smallwood: Who else in this area was active in organizing opposition or involved in opposition?

Faulk: Randy would be the best person to give a picture. Mr. Jeff Farris, this rancher that I was telling you about, was one of them. He saw it as a tax issue.

Smallwood: Would you say that the majority of the more well-to-do people here, or for that matter people here, saw it primarily as a tax issue, or did they see it primarily as an environmental issue?

Faulk: Many of the landowners saw it as a tax issue; none of them saw it as an environmental issue. They didn't comprehend

that,

Smallwood: Did they see it as a threat to their economic interests in the sense that it might destroy or impair ranching?

Faulk: No, because one of the big come-ons of the TRA in their literature was that it was a flood control project, that these devastating floods that come down and run over the lands would be stopped by this series of dams and locks along the Trinity River. These lands would be turned into park lands, and a man could safely plant his crops without a fear of doggone near annual overflows of the Trinity River.

Our position was that floods were nature's great purging and that there had grown up over the centuries a whole ecological system that was congenial to this flooding. The solution was not to build and not to plant in flood areas, in the flood plain areas. This was the wise solution.

But the well-organized, carefully orchestrated program of the Trinity River Authority in putting out its literature, letters, and its slick brochures on what this would do to benefit people and what great economic as well as recreational benefits would flow to the people from this was very attractive. Most of the bankers in every town along the Trinity Basin supported it because they were well-organized--these interests were well-organized--and

it was pointed out, "My God, this will bring untold fortunes to you, and there will be port areas where you could ship goods out."

Smallwood: This is very attractive to the growth advocates, those people who wanted to revitalize commerce and industry?

Faulk: Yes. "Let's get with it. After all, we tax the people to build highways, don't we? This is just another highway," So all the people would be taxed, and a lot of ranchers would lean back and say, "Well, hell, it doesn't mean nothing to me, by God, if they can ship cargo all the way from Dallas, Texas. Hell, that's Dallas, Texas, business!" TRA would reply, "Oh, no, you misunderstand this. The construction of this will not only afford great employment down here..." They had all kinds of come-ons at this time--what a great boom this would make.

But when Randy waded in and started taking full-page ads...and, incidentally, I have all this stack of stuff for you here so you can sort it out and take it with you. I'd like to get it back. But there's stories on the great boondoggle. Randy started taking these ads out in the paper, he and several others. He'd go to these ranchers, who respected his father and his father's judgement, and get their support. Citizens for a Sound Tax Policy, I think they'd called themsleves.

Smallwood: COST.

Faulk: Yes, well, that's the Dallas group.

Smallwood: The one down here,..did it have a name, too?

Faulk: Citizens for a Sound Tax Policy, which was a very attractive name to anybody (chuckle). So I came down and joined the fray, but not until 1974. But in 1973, I followed it very closely,

In 1973, I think, they held the great bond election. I think it was in April. TRA's plan was defeated. This came as a hugh shock because the Texas Labor Association supported it. All of the politicians of Texas supported it. John Connally threw his weight behind it. It was pronounced by one and all as a great boon, and how could anybody oppose such a progressive and wonderful new experience for the Texas people?

My position was that it was a huge boondoggle that would cost billions of dollars and was utterly pointless because by this time we had the Arkansas-Oklahoma canal up there that was supposed to have created a great trade center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, or somewhere up there where it ended up (chuckle). Actually, they were spending three, four and five times a much money just dredging the damn thing out (chuckle) and proved that the cost ratio played a very important...

Smallwood: Cost-benefit ratio.

Faulk: Yes, the cost-benefit ratio just could never be reconciled

with this. But most important of all, my principal objection was twofold: number one, that environmentally it was disastrous, that this great natural resource, the Trinity River, was a boon to coming generations. I shared Bedichek's and Webb's and Mr. Parten's position on this matter that we are just temporarily here, and to do irreparable harm and to alter a great thing of natural beauty and importance to coming generations was not only shortsighted but almost savage. It was indicative of an attitude that was growing in the United States: "Get it now and to hell with tomorrow!" I opposed it on that basis.

Smallwood: Do you think that you and Randy were able to convince very many people in this area of that view?

Faulk: I convinced everyone I talked to of it because they weren't that interested until one put it to them like that. I used, of course, the religious approach. As ol' Carl Sandburg said, "The rivers are God's fingerprints along..."

Smallwood: That would have an appeal to the people in this area.

Faulk: Yes, to some extent. You understand that by this time the environmentalist movement had gotten in gear--the Sierra Club and various others.

Smallwood: Were they involved in the opposition down here in this part of Texas?

Faulk: No, because there is no Sierra Club down here. I was the only

member. I'd been a member for years. But, yes, the Sierra Club took a very real interest, and an active interest, particularly in Dallas, in the matter.

Smallwood: Not in the Madisonville area?

Faulk: No, there's no Sierra Club down here. But this series of ads, as I say, turned the tide, and the bond election was defeated, I moved down shortly after that, early 1974.

Smallwood: You said that you had two objections. One was the environmental objection, and secondly...

Faulk: And secondly, the ruthless big business aspect of it. I felt that the private groups in the Dallas and Fort Worth area and along the Trinity River did not represent the interests of the people of Texas. They wanted to suck on that Washington tit, get the people's taxes to finance something that was a personal benefit to them. I saw a great hypocrisy in this. The same men who would stand up and denounce government spending and denounce government waste were perfectly willing to charter an airplane and fly to Washington to lobby Congress to appropriate millions of dollars for what they believed would be a personal benefit to them. I found this not only an irony but hypocritical, and I objected on that basis-- using the tax money of the people of the United States to finance projects that would accrue to the profit of

private groups. This was the principal reason... these men certainly weren't charitable souls. They weren't men of...none of them that I ever met were men who thought in terms of the public's interest. They thought in terms of their own private interests, in the huge sums that would accrue to them in terms of the land they owned abutting the canal and the increase in property prices that would result from this, as well as the economic gains that would be had at the Establishment's hands up in Fort Worth and Dallas. They didn't fool me any because I knew these birds. The same man that would say, "I'll tell you, that ol' crippled, syphilitic Roosevelt is just ruining the country," would use all his political know-how and chicanery to go up there and take advantage of these same tax monies because that money was being appropriated by the federal government to the Trinity River Authority or the Corps of Engineers about which I had learned a great deal. One of their sole functions in our society is to lobby. They were combination lobby and executioner of the results of their lobbying (chuckle) and building dams and creating lakes, all under the guise of benefiting the public when actually it was approved to the benefit of very few members of the public, members of the public who profited greatly from this activity.

So I came down in 1974,..and it was J. R. Parten's position. He said he knew these birds. He knew the way they thought, that they hadn't quit at all. They were defeated, but they were coming back. They had their men in Washington. Every Southern senator and congressmen supports these boondoggles because this is where they get a lot of their campaign resources.

Smallwood: President Carter found that out when he tried to cut them off.

Faulk: Yes, that's right. My God Almighty, I found it out when I had gone up and testified before the House committee and the Senate committee that these men were bought and paid for, and you just by God could talk yourself hoarse to them, and they would sit there and look at you bored and pretend that they were asking meaningful questions. They had not the slightest interest; they had their minds made up. This was a racket that they were running in Congress.

Smallwood: Now you testified before the congressional committee on this issue?

Faulk: Yes.

Smallwood: Would you give me some information about that?

Faulk: Well, let me develop that because, sure enough, two years later,..I think that it was in 1975 or 1976 that the Trinity River Authority announced that it was going to

conduct a series of hearings to get the public's input so they could inform Congress of what the public thought. Well, my position was, "Well, you've had a vote down here. Send them the results of the vote, and they'll get the message from the people down here." The Trinity River Authority took the position of, "No, it was just extreme environmentalists," because this term had been started being used very much as the term "communist sympathizer" and "pinko" was used to destroy and distort debate in the 1950's. It was being used to distort the Trinity River Authority's true intentions.

So they announced that they were going to hold this series of hearings, and Randy and I went down to the first one that was held in Huntsville, Texas. You had to register ahead of time to get to speak, although it was supposed to be a public hearing and you apparently were supposed to have the public stand up and do it. J. R. Parten had pointed out to me: "You'll see that it is a set-up deal. They have a way. They've learned from John Connally and Lyndon a few things on how to run a meeting that is supposed to be a public meeting, and that is by keeping the opposition from saying anything. Their purpose is to take a record of this and say, 'Well, we had twenty-six people speaking, and only one spoke against this; and twenty-six people got up and begged, and

here's their testimony. They begged for the Trinity River Authority to come in.'" So we go down to Huntsville, and we register to speak at the county courthouse, and it's a jam-packed crowd. The gentleman running it was head of the TRA at that time.

Smallwood: David Brune.

Faulk: David Brune was the master craftsman. He was the paid employee. It wasn't Brune. It was Jackson, Mr. Jackson, from down in Anahuac. They had their speakers, and Mr. Jackson announced, in a very intimidating way, I thought, for a man who was supposed to conduct a public meeting to encourage the public to voice an opinion, "We think that anybody that gets up and speaks off the subject here, we're going to have to sit you down. We're here taking our time, and here's Mr. So-and-So from Dallas..." The guy runs a bunch of supermarkets up there. I forget his name, one of the powers in Dallas. "Mr. So-and-So, a banker, and Mr. So-and-So are taking their time for the public interest, not receiving a penny for this. They're doing this for the public's interest. Get a real open hearing on it. We want the speeches to be limited, and the chair is the one who is going to decide who speaks and who doesn't. I have this list of people that are registered to speak, and I am going to call on Mr. So-and-So, mayor of Huntsville,"

And the mayor of Huntsville gets up and says, "Well, we welcome you, and we're honored that you have come here to hear our pleas. This is a great cause. One of my neighbors, a man that I respect very dearly, had told me about the great losses he's suffered on his land." The banker gets up and makes the same speech. The first dozen speakers spoke on this term.

Some lady was registered that they didn't recognize, and she got up. She was a schoolteacher from Harris County, but she was a native of Huntsville. She wanted to put her two bits in against it. I think she belonged to the Sierra Club. You had to tell what organizations you belonged to, as though that were pertinent.

The chairman suddenly turned very hostile and said, "Well, down in Houston you've got the Houston ship channel, haven't you? You don't object to that, do you?" He really intimidated her into silence because obviously the crowd was all on one side there. They'd cheer and they'd applaud loudly for each one of those folks.

The representative from that county got up and made a stirring speech on what the legislature wanted to do and what great benefits this would mean to the people, how many of his constituents had come to him and plead, "Please bring that in. Stop the floods that devastate our land down here in the Trinity bottoms."

A woman got up and said, "Oh, I've had ticks on me two weeks after I had to go down and get my cattle all out, and I just did save them," It was all very moving,

There was a question over whether Randy and I would even be asked to speak. But they got down to the shank of the evening...I think that Ned Fritz from Dallas was there. Of course, he was the arch-fiend. They loathed and despised him, but they had to let him speak. He got up and made a very technical, very positive statement on what this would do, and harm it would do. Then they got around and called on me. They didn't know what my position was. They all knew who I was because I was on "Hee Haw" at that time (chuckle). That's in great vogue; that's a show that's watched by everyone down there.

So I got up and lit into them. Well, I did it in a very friendly way. I said, "Mr. Chairman, I understand that you have just taken this young lady to task because of the Houston ship channel. Have you smelled it lately? Are you using that as an example of what we can look forward to down here?" He said, "No, no, my God, I would never want anything like that to happen down here!" (Laughter) I said, "Well, I just didn't understand the thrust of your attack on this good lady who made a

very positive statement, I thought. I'd like to ask you boys,..two years ago, we had an election down here, and I understand in a democratic society such as ours, the way you ascertain the wishes of people is to let them go to the polls and vote. They went to the polls and voted, and so you have your answer.

What has changed in your plan here?" The meeting had opened with a thirty-minute discourse by David Brune on the great advantage and what it would be and the handling around of literature. I said, "Would you ask Mr. Brune to point out where you have changed that plan from two years ago?"

They bumbled and stumbled around and began to realize that they had let the enemy camp come in. I said, "'Pea Vine' Jeffreys tells me up there that if God had wanted Trinity River to be a straight line running from Dallas to the Gulf of Mexico, he would have run it that direction, but it now meanders beautifully and wonderfully, and a whole world of water life has adjusted to that. You're telling me that it's within your power to undo God's work here on earth? Don't you have any respect for those that come after us, that they might enjoy this great wonderland of nature and the esthetic beauties of it more than they would a concrete sluice running down our land with barges

pumping up and down?" This is when the audience began to kind of giggle at me. I proceeded along these lines, and the damned audience switched. I said, "Who will benefit from this?" So one of the gentlemen from Dallas...you'd know the name. It's a very prominent name,

Smallwood: Carpenter?

Faulk: Not Carpenter. He was a wheeler and dealer and a windmill fixer, but he wasn't there that night. This man has the Tom Thumb grocery stores up there. It's a prominent name. He's a little chunky, banker-looking fellow. He said, "Well, Mr. Faulk, are you acquainted with the facts? Our people need food. The production of food is very important, and these floods wash away a great deal of our farmland each year."

And I said, "Are you talking socialism to me now? Do you mean that the people of this country must be taxed so that individuals can make a profit? Are you trying to talk socialism? Is this the position you're taking?" If I had called him illegitimate, I couldn't have made him more outraged (chuckle). He just turned purple in the face. He said, "Absolutely not!"

I said, "Well, the people's taxes has to pay for this. I'm quite sure that you Dallas brethern that make a great deal of money, that's not going to make a

lot of difference to these people in Crockett or here in Huntsville. They're going to be paying through their noses for this boondoggle. That's what we call it when you use tax money to create projects for personal gain. I think that it's a terrible thing." I went on, and they all laughed. But so the chairman was a very smart guy: "I'm not going to try to follow that act, I don't want to follow that act, He put on a real act up there, didn't he?"

But Randy had gotten inspired, and Randy got up and laid the juice to them because he was acquainted with all of the details of the projects, the technological details: "You know that every summer the Trinity River falls to where you couldn't use it as a barge canal. So what you propose to do is to pump the water out of a lake, flush it down the river in this pipeline. How much is that pipeline going to cost? Have you figured that into the cost that you are trying to tell these people about?" He had all of the details down, and it devastated them. You see, they had already scheduled this series of hearings up and down the Trinity River bottoms. They had announced that the public was invited to each one,

So Randy said, "Now wait! I'm speaking here now, but I'm a landowner in Houston County, and I understand

you're going to hold one next month up in Crockett County. This won't bar me from speaking up there, will it?" "No, no, sir, the landowners are who we want the voice from,"

Well, the next month, we went up to Crockett, and they shut us out, wouldn't let us make a speech. They had their regular setup. We sat there and sat there. Brune came around and said, "What the hell has happened to you, Johnny? You're one of my favorite people, and you're one of the funniest guys in the country, and, by God, you're with this bunch of crackpot environmentalists!" And the banker from here, a fellow named Dean, from the bank here, was just outraged by it all. But they shut us out,

They made all their speeches and presented it as a great cause and then called a recess at ten o'clock at night. All these are farm people over there in Crockett, and everybody left. Then they said, "Well, after the recess, you can have your put-in." I think maybe two people out of all the people there that they didn't know had gotten up. I remember a black man had gotten up and said, "I think that it is wonderful because we need this heah place, and I think that it is so good that you nice white gentlemen have come to bring us this great thing that we needs." And they thanked him effusively.

I spoke to him afterwards, I said, "Well, what are going to be the benefits?" "I wouldn't know, suh. Mr. So-and-So just ask me to come and speak. He's such a good friend of mine, you know, that I told him that I would come and speak." He didn't have any idea. But this went on the record, you see, as a pro-canal speech,

Randy and I drove home just absolutely infuriated, outraged by it. We realized that they were out-thinking us. They were setting up these things, and this would be the record presented in Congress to justify it. So we got home, and they had one scheduled for Madison County. We decided to get ourselves organized. We got Joe Penelli, who's here now, and you ought to talk to him, too. I didn't have time to do the organization work, but I took a big ad in the paper, got a big ad in the paper. We made ol' J. R. Parten,..he doesn't like to have his name on anything because he is a very low profile gentleman. We made him chairman of the damn thing,

Smallwood: Who is Joe Penelli?

Faulk: Joe Penelli is a University of Texas man, a friend of Randy's, that came down to work the summer before with Randy on the ranch out here, the 7-J Ranch.

Smallwood: He does what at the University of Texas?

- Faulk: Well, he had been a student at the University of Texas, very active in Ralph Yarborough's campaign. He had driven Ralph Yarborough all over Texas. He's politically very intelligent, very shrewd, so Randy said, "Let's get Joe to organize this. Let him go around to see all the people and get money from them."
- Smallwood: What did he do? I guess what I am asking you is, what is his profession now?
- Faulk: Randy has taken an old home here, that was an old hotel here, and he has refurbished it completely. It's over here in Madisonville.
- Smallwood: He lives in Madisonville? And he's sort of a hotel operator,
- Faulk: Yes. Joe did the legwork and organizing and going around to get money from each one of them. But I wrote the ad, saying, "They're back and they're up to the same old tricks. We ran them out the front door, and they've slipped around to the back door." It was a mean ad: "The TRA is Back."
- Smallwood: You say that J. R. Parten...
- Faulk: I think that we headed it up, "Warning! They're back again! The same crowd that we beat has come after your tax money! They're trying to pull the same stunt again! They're coming to Madisonville, and all the public's invited!"

But this time we really got organized. We got some good, earthy ranchers around here, like Jeff Farris and others. I think that I've got a tape... they recorded it for me because I had to go to Nashville and do "Hee Haw," and so I wasn't able to be at the meeting. But my wife went, and on...the meeting just started, and Joe Penelli was there to floor manage it, as it were. Instead of them having this free ride that they had had with Brune doing a thirty-minute pitch and selling everybody on it, and creating an atmosphere at the meeting that anybody that opposed it obviously ate children and molested small girls on the way home from school, and this kind of thing...instead of that, we said, "Now we're going to..."this man opened the meeting. Mr. Jackson down there opened the meeting. Joe Penelli was on his feet and said, "Sir, this is a public meeting in Madisonville, and you're our guests here. We want to make it very clear that after Mr. Brune makes his presentation, we have a thirty-minute presentation to make, too." I forget the minister from S.M.U., the Perkins school.

Smallwood:

Jim White.

Faulk:

Jim White, who isn't no great shakes as a public speaker but is a well-informed mind and a quite dedicated mind on this matter. He studied all the economics of it. "And

we have Mr. White here," Well, that was kind of like saying, "We have an agent of the Soviet Union here. We want to preach a little communist doctrine to you guys," But they had to submit, and they had to agree.

So this meeting came out quite the opposite, and, incidentally, was the last meeting they held because they took a terrible shellacking. Ol' Jeff Farris got up. See, I called the TRA the longest-running crap game, floating crap game, in Texas (chuckle). This had caught on: "These guys are really coming to con you," And you can get a lot of anger out of people.

The supporters of the TRA around here, big land-owners like Mr. Samuels, had made a lot of money because they paid him for flood lands down there near Cleveland where the Trinity River had backed up. These guys were all very interested, and the banking interests was very supportive. But they kept their mouths shut that night because it was quite obvious that the current temperature was running against them. It was a very effective meeting from our point of view because it pretty much exposed their game. Joe Penelli wasn't hesitant at all to say, "We know what you're up to! You're trying to shut out the real public voice!"

Following that, they had a hearing. It was

announced that they were going to hold a hearing-- the House of Representatives was going to hold a hearing up in Washington on this flood control, I think they called it, water projects and so on. Randy and Don Gardner from down here in the Trinity bottoms near Shepherd, Texas, helluva nice guy, very well-informed on this,,he was very strong on environmental matters, too. They went up to Washington to testify. We asked for our time and everything.

We went into the meeting, in the hearing room, and groups from all over the United States were there protesting it, mostly environmentalist groups, Ned Fritz spoke, and I spoke, I said, "You birds are always howling about taxes and that sort of thing, people being taxed, No wonder you get a name for wasting money. That's the biggest waste in the world. People have voted down there against it. The people don't want it, and nobody that thinks it through very much wants it, but a private group of men." Randy testified,

Our congressman, Wilson, ol' "Whats His Name" Wilson from over here in Lufkin,,we'd been to see him before and asked him to stand up and testify for us, He got up and testified against us. He had promised us ...well, he didn't make a promise. That's

an unfair statement to make.

Smallwood: He left you with the impression,...

Faulk: Yes, that we had impressed him very much because we had an open and shut case on these birds. But he'd had his instructions, and he plays by instructions. He's never had an original thought of his own in his life, that I've been able to discover.

They were coming up with a new scheme. Their first move--and nothing could stop this--was to build a great reservoir here at Palestine, Texas. They had all the people there worked up with glory about what a wonderful thing this would be for them, and that this would furnish the water that they could pump up there. They were going on with this scheme, but it first was going to be the great reservoir that would save so much farmland.

Smallwood: Is this the Tennessee Colony Dam?

Faulk: Tennessee Colony Dam. Well, Randy had done research on it and discovered that the acreage of rich farmland and that it would inundate exceeded the acreage it was supposed to protect down the river by several hundred thousand acres (chuckle). This kind of nonsense was constantly thrown back in their face. But they went ahead and voted it--an appropriation for a feasibility study, further feasibility study.

Then there came a hearing before the Senate committee, I wrote to Senator Stennis, who was chairman of it, and said, "I represent a group of citizens in Texas that are very interested in this legislation, that want to have a hearing." Senator Stennis wrote me back and said, "You're assigned a time between 10:30 and 11:00 o'clock, and you have five minutes to present your views before this committee. So I go flying up there to Washington; J, R, and I split the cost. I go as a representative of Texans for Equitable Tax Policies.

I get in there, and Ned Fritz...they're having this long hearing, and Senator Stennis is sitting up there running it. A dozen groups were in there, and it was a pretty boring thing because obviously Stennis has got that government tit clamped in his teeth and ain't about to turn it loose. He sits listening and occasionally asks a question.

Then he got around to the Texas group. Ned Fritz and two other fellows that I didn't know, myself, moved forward to testify. Senator Stennis said, "Well, you gentlemen decide which one of you is going to be the spokesman now because I'll give you five minutes. Ned Fritz seized on that and started in. I said, "Just a minute, Senator. These men don't represent me, and

and I don't represent them, I've come up here to give testimony, and I've got it written out here, and you've got a copy there, and I intend to do it." The newspapermen and press were there, you see, Senator Stennis exercised his prerogative as a United States Senator: "Sir, are you sitting there trying to tell me how to conduct a hearing? I'm the one that makes decisions on that." He started to get up, and I said, "Just a minute, Senator. I have your signature over a letter here inviting me up here. I've flown halfway across the United States to give testimony here, and I intend to do it,"

Well, he went into a real rage then and walked out. I just sat there, and all the room exploded because this was the first thing, in terms of action, that had happened, but I knew that I had him over a barrel. Not only that, but I owed J. R. an obligation of at least getting a lick in, and not coming back saying, "Well, they wouldn't let me talk." I have a great respect and great affection for J. R. Parten and his caring so much for this society. Not only that, but then I was determined to make my speech.

So Stennis comes back in, all smiles. He said, "Yes, I've just read your statement here. It's a very fine statement from a very fine group of citizens,

it sounds like to me. You go ahead and give it."
 I said, "Well, I didn't mean to get off on the wrong foot, Senator. I'm sorry that I offended you, but here's my statement." So I let fly with it. Well, this made headlines in the Houston papers and the Dallas papers: FAULK AND STEMNIS CROSS SWORDS AT HEARING. Otherwise, it would have never been mentioned (chuckle).

Smallwood: He did you a favor.

Faulk: Yes, and he realized he was doing me a favor. He's a very shrewd and very able politician, most of whose points of view I do not share. Nevertheless, I respect him as a damned able man, as far as conducting his political career is concerned.

So I let fly with it, and as I say, it got coverage. The TRA quieted down, but J. R. Parten said, "Just temporarily! They'll be back! Don't worry!"

Smallwood: You don't think that the Trinity project is a dead issue then?

Faulk: No, because there's too much money involved in this. You see, I'm under no delusion about this. I've been involved in too many scrapes with gentlemen who have a real interest, who have a real monetary interest, and a real gain to be made. They are usually very

intelligent men that realize when they've been defeated in a skirmish or when somebody has out-skirmished them a bit. They have no fear of me. Hell, they know I have no resources, no monetary resources, that my time is limited. I'm a very minor irritation; that's all I ever been to them. I wasn't nearly as effective as, say, Ned Fritz was because I never did that much research.

Smallwood: You mentioned Ned. What is your evaluation of him as a spokesman for the environmentalists?

Faulk: I find him one of those phenomenons in our American society that we've always had, thank heavens. They've always been with us since the earliest colonial days in America--men who cared so deeply about issues that they would literally dedicate all of their energies and their intelligence, and he has considerable of both, far more than I have in both areas--to saving and preserving those great blessings that have been spread across this earth, particularly the Texas section of the earth. He's abrasive at times.

Smallwood: Some people have said that because of that he sometimes is counter-productive to some causes. Would you agree with them?

Faulk: No, I would not agree with that. I wouldn't agree with it because of this reason: that's part of his

whole personality. Without Ned Fritz, I don't know what the anti-TRA people would do. He's been tireless in his efforts to organize; he's given time; and he's a very intelligent man. I would have him less abrasive, but, hell, I'd have myself six-foot-three if I could. I'd be a handsome movie actor. The facts are that I'm who I am; the facts are that he is who he is. I've been abrasive at times when it did negate my positive influence in situations, so I'm very charitable toward others that make the same mistake.