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**Washington County District Attorney Bob Hermann
Interviewed by Daniel Ly
May 25, 2005**

Daniel: The following interview was conducted on behalf of the Oregon District Program of Century High School. The interviewee is District Attorney of Washington County Bob Hermann. The interviewer is Daniel Ly. The interview took place May 25, 2005 in the Washington County Justice Department at approximately 10:10 A.M.

D: Mr. Hermann how long have you worked in Hillsboro?

Bob Hermann: Well I've worked her for about 30 years since 1975.

D: When did you graduate?

BH: I actually graduated from law school in 1974 at Wilamette and began to work her shortly after.

D: How long did it take you to graduate?

BH: Well it took me I had to go to undergraduate school for 4 years all at Wilamette, then law school 3 years, so a total of 7 years.

D: What was your major?

BH: I majored in economics and minored in rhetoric, which is another term for speech persuasion.

D: In the 1980s what type of cases did you normally receive?

BH: Well the 1980s, we'd get what we normally get today, we'd get drunk driving cases. We had a lot of those... those were what we mostly tried we'd get uh a fair amount of shoplifting cases. We'd only get a murder case about once a year. Now we get anywhere from 5-16 a year. Our drug problem was mostly marijuana a little bit of heroine or cocaine. We never heard about methamphetamine. Back in, we'd get the usual drunken assaults wild stuff, no gang activity back then, not as much as domestic violence as we see now of course we had a bunch of child abuse cases.

D: How would you differentiate the 1980s versus the 1990s?

BH: The 80's and 90's as we started seeing more people, well of course we'd see more types of crimes more stores, more merchants, more shoplifting cases, more thefts I guess we started seeing more problems with drugs particularly in the mid 80's heroine a problem we began to see a fair amount of and then we started seeing more we definitely started seeing more murder cases. Then we had a stretch in the mid 80's, we had 15 or 16

people charged with murder one time in our jails It was still pretty unusual, but we see a lot of those.

D: Was there any specific trial or case that you remember the most?

BH: Well I've had over 2 dozen murder trials and of course they're all pretty tragic events, I guess some of the more interesting ones were in the mid 90's. um we tried a case where this guy was a serial killer. He killed 4 women in Washington County. There was a woman who worked down here at Tuality Hospital as a midwife. She helped deliver a baby and was on her way home on Cornell, out right where Orenco Station is now, back then it was a field, and this guy, she was a total stranger. We believe she drove alongside her, fired 16 rounds in her car, shot her, and drove off the road. And pulled her from the car and put her in his car, sexually assaulted her and then shot her in the head and um as I said he was also charged with murdering a gal he picked up in Portland, an elderly woman that lived right over here in Hillsboro near by an elementary school and another woman at Cornelius, so, we had two separate trials and 3 different death penalties. He's on Death Row now so he was one of the more interesting people we've seen.

D: Do you think that crimes have become more violent as time has gone on?

BH: Yes, uh, we see more violence. When I was growing up, people get into an argument, they would punch each other in the nose or if somebody insulted somebody, there might be a fistfight, but now we see shootings and knifings, things that we know never saw before things to retaliate for somethings, not just a fight, see see a lot more violence and unfortunately with particularly methamphetamine. We see a lot of people who don't act rationally over things and act really angry over things and use violence (speech blurred)

D: (Supposed question) (How has measure 11 and other measures changed Hillsboro?)

BH: (Speech Blurred) Having been here for as long as I have, I've seen the difference that I believe Measure 11 has made a positive impact for the first thing we saw was that some of the leaders in some of the gangs often times were 23, 24, 25, 26 year olds that were kind of the leaders of gangs with crimes of robberies and crimes of violence with younger kids associated with gangs and initially (speech blurred)

D: (Supposed Question) (Are there any new changes with victims' rights?)

BH: (Speech Blurred) (Victims Rights) Back in the mid 80's you might not be able to sit in the trial and actually see what was going on and in the trial of the accused or someone who was sexually assaulted a rape victim was not allowed to see what happened to them. They would actually be excluded so a law was passed to say that the victims and family members have a right to be in the courtroom during the trial so they can see the process, so they have the confidence in knowing what happened and why it happened in knowing evidence. Then there have been a number of other rights where victims have the right of the prosecutor on violent crimes needs to consult with the victim in knowing what they want before somebody is released in prison I told you about the guy that got out in 8 years for murder. Back then, the judge didn't know it, I didn't know it and the victim's

family didn't know it cause it was done in closed doors and now victims have a right to be notified about when somebody might be paroled or released there are bunch of rights that are really important for our citizens victim wise.

D: What's the current crime focus?

BH: Well I think currently the gang problem has increased a little bit in Hillsboro, we've had a couple of cases and drunk driving has always been a focus. It's one of those things that have just have always been here. I think right now we really are focused on domestic violence, trying to deal very carefully we have had a lot of training, the police have investigated those cases. We've had advocates and advocates took police departments the Hillsboro police department has someone who will go, a woman is in a situation where she needs advice or help, there will be an advocate that will give her advice if there are kids who are involved who see the violence or are around the violence we try to get them some counseling or help so they can deal with it so there's kind of everybody who's involved knows that if you're around violence, there is a greater likelihood that you might be violent yourself as you grow up so and so there is a big emphasis on those cases. We try to stop the cycle and get the offender holding responsible, maybe get him into counseling, if it's a big offense, we get them into jail or prison, but if it's not a serious injury, he doesn't have a record, we try to intercede and put a stop to it so it doesn't go on anymore. Another big problem we have is methamphetamine. It's a drug that has created significant problems in our community, but methamphetamine I had a murder case not too long ago. A Forest Grove High School student who entered a home over on Cornelius, he had been using meth, not sure how much, the homeowner he attacked, the homeowner that was asleep... For no reason at all, got into quite a fight with him, killed the homeowner, tried to kill the 5 year old boy in the home, and then stole the DVD's and stuff. Sold it for \$20 and methamphetamine was a part of that and then we see, we see a lot of people. It's a very addictive drug. We see a lot of people who are stealing, committing burglaries, committing robberies that support meth habits as well as meth labs, so we're really trying to crack down on the production and methamphetamine (speech blurred)

D: (Supposed Question) (Does Washington County have an overcrowding of jails problem)

BH: (Speech Blurred) And in March, 15 babies were born in Washington County that had meth in there system, the mothers had been using methamphetamine shortly after birth, which of course can cause physical and mental complications for the children so, so it's become a big impact on crime and it involves a lot of our crimes, number wise, we prosecuted around 600 cases of people using meth just for people possessing it, not using it, so its in the thousands of cases that we see that are related to methamphetamine

D: Are a majority of these cases specific, or are they wide for color/ethnicity?

DM: yeah, it's same here

MP: Exactly—original gangsters that were California up here or that their parents were--- they were more or less violent in California-----

UT: How has measure 11 affected on gangs?

MP: We're actually seeing such malevolent factor, a lot of more of the original gangsters going in and coming out and they have to serve their time, for one it's monitoring their serving for a certain amount of time and for two they're going to prison for it for shooting somebody or something like that. So it comes back out as a status, coming out as a theme---

DM: They go to prison and they learn how to do better. They learn different ways to a crime, we've see videos of them training on how they could take down a police, or training on ways to avoid handguns and they practice it, they got nothing else to do for a crime. It's like going to college you know

MP: and that's a very criminal thing to do

DM: that's what happens, is they come out and no one want more any of that community crimes---

MP: either that or they study upon on how it happened---

DM: they have access to---a lot of them have the rest of the time to study up upon the law---

UT: What type of people joined gangs in 1980? How was the type of people in gangs change over the last 25 years?

MP: Well gangs were originally developed back in Mexico to protect themselves from the banderols or bandits within the Mexican area up here and trying to keep themselves from American culture. Kind of like a gathering. You look back at the Irish, where they come from, overseas and they kind of band together because they were a subculture and so that's kind of how it work again in Hillsboro. So you're looking back at the 1980s, you're looking at a lot of people with low income, from low income places. And the types of people change over the past 25 years, like we stated, it's pop culture. I was watching a video, a data where this guy, his family lives in Westfield (?) and his family were totally rich and awesome and all sort of stuff like that---And he went to prison for 25 years for killing somebody. I mean he had the education, he could have gone anywhere, but he found the family support he needed in a gang. That's what some of the kids feel. You get the full time dads and full time moms out there working and they have no family structure and so they go out there and look for this and they see that they get respect and they see the respect within the gangs, and how it all works out and they think that's for me. So they wanted to be, but what they don't understand is "oh geez, the leaders of the gangs are using me" because hey these kids are under 15 years old and they