

Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Preface

by Donald A. Ritchie

"I see politics as struggle and strife," Howard Shuman explained, echoing the view of Edward Corwin that the Constitution was "an invitation to struggle" between Congress and the presidency over foreign policy. For Shuman, the same sense of struggle pervaded all areas of Senate activity during his twenty-seven years on Capitol Hill. As legislative and administrative assistant to Senator [Paul Douglas](#) during the 1950s and '60s, Shuman helped carry the banner for civil rights, fought against oil and gas interests, and promoted the many other liberal issues on Senator Douglas' agenda. During the 1970s he continued the struggle while administrative assistant to Senator [William Proxmire](#), in support of "Truth in Lending" laws and in opposition to the SST. In that same vein, as a specialist in economic issues, through his associations with the Senate Appropriations, Banking, and Finance committees and Joint Economic Committee, he came to see the Congressional role in the federal budget less as a "process" and more like "a barroom brawl."

Shuman's appreciation of political struggle took shape in the Senate of the 1950s, when [Lyndon Johnson](#) prevailed as Majority Leader, [Richard Russell](#) led the powerful Southern Democratic bloc, and [Robert Kerr](#) dominated the Finance Committee. Against these giants, Paul Douglas rallied liberal forces, and during their battles, Howard Shuman served as Douglas' "strong right arm." "He was always on the side of the angels," Senator Douglas testified, "despising sham and pretense."

Although initially defeated, Douglas' allies steadily overcame the filibuster to enact the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965. Shuman labeled this protracted persistence a Seven-Year Principle: "It took seven years from the time you got a good idea and introduced it as legislation, until it passed. I saw that in the Civil Rights fights from '57 to '64. It took seven years for the Truth in Lending bill to finally make it. It took six, almost seven years for the Depressed Areas bill to make it. It took us that long to save the Indiana Dunes.... Most of the major legislation I worked on, that was new, forward looking, which started out heavily opposed and without a mandate, after seven years of convincing, of publicity, of talking, of arguing, of hearings, finally made it.... It took that much time, and that much effort, and that much struggle to come off. 'Struggle' is the word."

Howard Shuman came to the United States Senate from an educational background that reached from Illinois to Oxford. Born February 23, 1924 in Atwood, Illinois, he attended the University of Illinois before joining the U.S.

Navy during the Second World War. After training at the University of Michigan and Harvard University, he was sent to Pearl Harbor. After the war he returned to the University of Illinois to receive his bachelor's degree. From 1949 to 1952 he attended Oxford University, where he became only the third American elected president of the Oxford Union. While teaching in the economics department at the University of Illinois, he accepted an offer to join the staff of Senator Paul Douglas. He served as legislative assistant from 1955 until 1960, as administrative assistant from 1961 to 1966, and as executive director of the Douglas Commission on Urban Problems, from 1966 to 1968. In 1969, Shuman returned to the Senate staff as administrative assistant to Senator William Proxmire, a post he held until his retirement from the Senate in 1982.

In later years, Shuman has taught courses on Congress at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and at the National War College in Washington. He has written numerous articles about Congress, and is the author of *Politics and the Budget: The Struggle between the President and the Congress*. "It was his long experience with the federal budget here in the Senate which produced this remarkable book so full of insight and intuitive understanding," commented Senator William Proxmire. In this oral history he describes those experiences, and draws upon them to explain the workings of the United States Senate from the 1950s through the 1980s. Howard Shuman died in Alexandria, Virginia, on November 18, 2008.

About the Interviewer: Donald A. Ritchie is associate historian of the Senate Historical Office. A graduate of C.C.N.Y., he received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Maryland. He has published articles on American political history and oral history, including "Oral History in the Federal Government," which appeared in the *Journal of American History*. His books include *James M. Landis: Dean of the Regulators* (Harvard Press, 1980), *The U.S. Constitution* (Chelsea House, 1989), *History of a Free Nation* (Glencoe, 1991), and *Press Gallery: Congress and the Washington Correspondents* (Harvard, 1991). He also edits the *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Historical Series)* (Government Printing Office). A former president of both the Oral History Association and Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR), he received OHMAR's Forrest C. Pogue Award for distinguished contributions to the field of oral history.

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Interview #1: From Illinois to Oxford

(July 22, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Ritchie: I'd like to begin by asking you about your early years in Atwood, Illinois. I understand that you've just been back there, and I wondered if you could start by telling me what kind of town it was?

Shuman: Well, I was born in Atwood, where my father taught high school. He taught agriculture. And my mother taught English and music. But I lived there only the first year and a half of my life and I have no personal memories of Atwood at all. My father had to teach five years after graduating from the University before he could become a county agent or a farm advisor. We moved to Pekin for a year where my father and mother sang in the Presbyterian Church choir with [Everett Dirksen](#), and then to Jerseyville, Illinois, which is near St. Louis, and I lived there until I was about five. Then we moved to Whiteside County, to a town called Morrison, which is in the northwest corner of the state, where I've just been back to my forty-fifth high school reunion. That is the county where [Reagan](#) was born. It is also Lincoln Country for he fought there in the Black Hawk War. It is also Grant Country for he came from nearby Galena which was once known as the Sodom and Gomorrah of the West. When you drive

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through, all the Interstate Route signs read: "Visit Ronald Reagan's birthplace." He lived below the river. The Rock River, which the Indians -- mainly the Sacs, Foxes, and Winnebagoes -- called the Sinnissippi, cuts through the county. It comes down from Beloit, Wisconsin and flows through Rockford and Dixon and Sterling and into the Mississippi at Rock Island. Above the Rock River is the good land of the county, and below the Rock River is the sandy soil. The Germans lived on the north side, and the Irish lived where Reagan came from, in Tampico, to the south of the river. My father represented the University of Illinois and took the University's research to the farmers directly. We lived in the county seat. So Morrison, Illinois, is my home, not Atwood.

My father was heavily involved in creating all kinds of farmer's cooperatives and organizing the farmers. He played a big role in trying to keep the farmers from going under in the Depression.

One of my earliest memories is going to a farm sale where the local farmers would prevent anyone from buying out a good farmer who was going bankrupt.

The farmers would bid a dollar and dare anyone else to bid more, and no one did. Then they'd give the farm back to him. But they wouldn't do that for a lazy farmer. It was a very lively and active time. He often took us -- my brother, who was a year younger, and me -- with him, before we were

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in school and then during the summers, out to vaccinate pigs and to do post-mortems on chickens with coccidiosis and to kill chinch bugs. I remember in the early days, 1930 and '31, when he tried to get the farmers to vaccinate their cattle for tuberculosis, he was actually chased off farms from time to time. And the reason was that the best cows, the biggest milk producers, were the ones who got tuberculosis because their energy went to producing milk not fighting the disease. So to go in to destroy the cows with tuberculosis made the farmers angry because that took their best producers.

There was something called the Liberty Lobby, a very right-wing group, which greatly opposed what my father was doing. I was an Eagle scout, and I memorized the Gettysburg Address and said it on Memorial Day at the celebration at the local cemetery -- one or two Civil War veterans still took part. The rumor went around that my father was there and waved me down from the platform and wouldn't let me salute the flag. Well, I'd saluted the flag every Monday night for years at boy scout meetings. And my father didn't happen to be there that day, because there was some crisis among some farmers, chinch bugs or something like that. So the rumor was absolutely untrue, but it was deliberately spread by those who opposed trying to organize the farmers in cooperatives and to help them overcome the worst effects of the Depression.

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I have other early memories of the town. We lived near the railroad, (Chicago, Northwestern, Union Pacific) where at least a hundred trains a day came through, and they were filled with -- we called them -- "bums." They weren't bums. They were the unemployed going West, searching for work. Dozens of them would come by and stop at our house. My mother would feed them. But she required them to do some work. She always had a few things for them to do. They could tell where to go to get a meal, because there were coded signs on the trees or elsewhere. I have some very vivid memories of those early days.

My family was very lively. We were interested in political affairs. We were friends with people like our Presbyterian minister and the newspaper reporter and one of the doctors, and we talked and argued about politics, religion, and public affairs. I used to follow the elections. It was a very Republican place. No Democrat had ever been elected to any office when I was there. Since then it has happened. But I remember in 1936 when there were big torchlight parades for Alfred Landon.

He came through and talked from the back of a train. Many houses in town had a Landon picture in the window, or a Landon sticker. I was certain that Landon was going to win that election. Of course, he didn't. Later I had a friend Ed Kelly who worked with Senator [Paul Douglas](#) and who was from an Irish ward in Chicago. I told Ed about this. He said, "Well the same thing happened to me in

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1928. Everybody in our neighborhood had Al Smith's picture in the front window." He said, "I was certain Al Smith was going to win." So I think what one thinks is going to happen politically may very well come about from the perspective of where one lives.

There was a lot of activity in the town. There was a lot of musical talent. The most famous person from the area was Robert Milliken, who was then America's greatest physicist and won the Nobel prize for physics in 1923. I went to one of the local grade schools and the high school, did all the things that one usually does: played football, played basketball, ran on the track team, played tennis, and played the captain of the Pinafore and the major general in the Pirates of Penzance. I was president of the freshman class and the student body and co-captain of the football team. It was a small high school. I was a big fish in a very, very small pond. In fact, I played quarterback on the football team because I was the only one who knew all the signals, which is not a great recommendation. My senior year we lost every game, although we had been winners the year before.

Ritchie: You've just been back there. How did it compare?

Shuman: Well, one's memory plays tricks. My memory had been that everything was physically bigger. The houses I had lived in seemed bigger than they were this summer. An interesting thing about the seventy-seven people in my class is that twenty

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percent are now dead, and all the wild people are dead. The kids who were difficult disciplinary cases are dead and most of them died from accidents. The first seven who died were men; now the women are dying. The men have been dying of heart attacks; the women are dying of cancer. Almost everybody in my class is now retired, most taking Social Security. They've moved in off the farm to the town. When I was back there ten years ago, any number of them had had children in the Vietnam war; one or two of them had children killed or wounded. This last week when I was there, two or three people mentioned that they had grandchildren who were in the Persian Gulf, and they were concerned about the reflagging of the ships as a result.

I have never put the town down. I am very proud of Morrison. It's a beautiful place. I went out from Chicago one time with an English friend of mine I had brought back for a visit in July 1950. We drove out from Chicago early in the morning, a hundred and thirty miles. The corn was very, very green and shoulder high, and the oats had turned golden. The land in northern Illinois is rolling, like southern Wisconsin, not flat like central Illinois. In fact, under the Northwest Ordinance, that part of the state north of a line drawn from the southernmost tip of Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River was a part of what is now Wisconsin. As we drove out early in the morning and saw this beautiful green corn and the golden oats it occurred to me what a beautiful part of the world it was. I had not realized that growing up there. There are some more beautiful places, the Grand Canyon for example, but in its own way this rural area is equally grand.

Ritchie: You mentioned that your parents were politically active, what was their politics?

Shuman: They weren't party political, but they were active on issues. My mother was head of the League of Women Voters one year. My father organized the cooperatives, and his job was to carry out the farm programs of the New Deal. He was interested in conservation, got farmers to plow around the hill instead of up and down, showed them how to build terraces. Later, starting in 1953, he spent ten years in the villages of India doing the same thing, and two years in Afghanistan after that. We joked that when my mother married my father she promised to follow him to the ends of the earth, and when they arrived in India and Afghanistan she said "Here we are." So there was always a lively discussion in our house about politics, about issues, about what was going on. We listened to Roosevelt's "fireside chats." My father was an interventionist before World War II, one of the few people in the area who was not an isolationist. The *Chicago Tribune* had a tremendous effect, politically, there.

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Then, in addition, my father came from a big family. There were eight living children, all of whom had gone to college. My grandfather wanted to go to college and was not able to, but he sent eight children to college. He was determined to do it, and did it. I had an uncle, Milton McLean, who was president of Lincoln College in Illinois and taught at McAlister, Ohio State, and Southern Illinois University. I had another uncle who was a Presbyterian minister. They were all interested in social issues. A close knit group, we had all kinds of family reunions and visits. So we were constantly talking issues, arguing about things. It was lively in that sense.

Ritchie: You mentioned that it was a Republican town. Were your parents Republican?

Shuman: No, my father was neutral, at least he never publicly professed any party politics, because he was out working with the public. My mother, however, was a pretty partisan Democrat. Her father, who had been the city clerk of a very small town in Illinois, ran as a Democrat. And she had a brother who had lost his home in the thirties. He had bought a house, and that was the period when one had to put down a lot of money and pay it off in a few years. The depression hit him, and he lost it. Her youngest brother had to quit college in the thirties and found it very difficult to get a permanent job in the depression. Consequently out of background and what had happened to them, we

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were pretty strongly in favor of what Roosevelt did. So my mother was really more party-oriented than my father.

Ritchie: You mentioned the depression going on around you, but it sounds like to some degree your family was insulated from it.

Shuman: My father, I suppose, had the second or third highest salary of anybody in town. There were people with more wealth, but I think he made perhaps eight thousand dollars a year during the late depression years, which was a lot of money in those days. My parents built a house in 1939, under the FHA, which was then not for poor people; the FHA built for the upper-middle-class. So, no, I was insulated. We never had any important personal money problems. But one saw many people who did, even in what was a relatively well-to-do area of the country. I remember some kids coming barefoot to school for part of the year, so one was aware of their need.

Ritchie: Did you have a chance to travel much when you were a child, or did you stay mostly in Illinois?

Shuman: Well, I certainly traveled a lot around the state. I guess until I was a junior in high school I didn't travel much beyond. I went to places like Iowa City, Madison, St. Louis, Minneapolis and Cleveland. Between my junior and senior year in high school in 1941 I hitchhiked to California to find a

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summer job and to live with my uncle in San Diego. My father thought: well, let him do it, he'll get discouraged and come back. I started on a Sunday morning, got to Boone, Iowa, by late afternoon, and I caught a ride from Boone, Iowa, to Oakland, California, and arrived in Oakland Tuesday noon, and then spent two days hitchhiking down to San Diego and spent the summer there. I hitchhiked back by way of the southern route. I was a bell-boy in a hotel, the Churchill Hotel

in San Diego, and I carried bags for a jewelry salesman, and I earned good money that summer on tips.

Then I came back and the war began, December 7, 1941. I was a senior in high school and I was just turning eighteen. Since I had enough credits to enter the university, I quit high school in the middle of my senior year to go to the university. I was determined to do that. I was very unhappy in high school, my last year or two, because I had almost no one who was interested in the same issues and subjects I was. I was interested in public policies and I was reading progressive papers that my uncle sent me. I don't think you would call him a Socialist, but he was reading all kinds of literature that he would send to me, and I got very interested. And we had a local Presbyterian minister who gave me a variety of books. I think one of the books was entitled *Men and Women of Conviction*, it told stories of social workers, Jane Addams, and a man by the name of Thomas Mott Osborne, who

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reformed the Auburn Prison in New York. I was interested in that but I had very few people to talk with. Most of my friends were a year or two or three older than I was. So when I went to the university, I was very happy. I was excited and stimulated by the intellectual atmosphere.

Ritchie: You mentioned it was an uncle who was sending you the material. Was that the college professor uncle?

Shuman: No, it was the preacher uncle. He was a pacifist, so he was sending me pacifist literature as well, but I didn't agree with that. But I didn't dismiss it out of hand. I thought a lot about it. I read the literature. I considered joining the ambulance corps. I went to the meetings of the Fellowship of Reconciliation at the University. But I made a clear and positive determination that I was not a pacifist. I think that was a good thing to do and it made me more confident in my view than if I had not considered it thoroughly. I have not changed my mind over 40 years.

Ritchie: But it was mostly on social reform issues.

Shuman: Yes, it was.

Ritchie: When you got to the university, did you have any idea what you wanted to do?

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Shuman: Yes, I wanted to study economics, and I was interested in political economy.

Ritchie: So you knew from the very beginning.

Shuman: Yes, I knew what I was interested in. But I wasn't involved in the political scene. That happened when I got back from the war. I decided after I got back from the war that I had to get involved in politics in one form or another. I made a list of "what can I do to do something about the problems of the world." That was a bit naive, perhaps. I made lists of things to do like joining the American Veterans Committee, running for precinct committeeman, and so on, and I did them.

Ritchie: Before that, you said you were in the university for a year.

Shuman: I was at the University of Illinois for a year and a half, from February '42 until July of '43. The Navy took me then.

Ritchie: You were drafted?

Shuman: Well, I wasn't drafted, no. The Draft Board was after me, so I joined the Army, but with an option to transfer to the Navy V-12 program when I was called up, and I did that. I was lucky, because I couldn't see very well, and I waited until the tenth and last day to take the physical. I'm nearsighted, and I

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couldn't really see well enough to qualify for V-12 and officer's training. But I wanted to join the Navy and take part in the war. There was a corpsman there who made an anti-Semitic remark. I jumped on him. I told him that was wrong, he shouldn't do it, and I ticked him off. The doctor heard me, and I think the doctor was Jewish. I'm not sure, but I'm pretty certain he was. So he said to me after I'd flunked the eye exam: "Well, you've probably been studying too hard, seeing too many movies, and not getting enough sleep. Why don't you go in that room there where it's dark and stay fifteen minutes, and we'll do it again." When I came out I couldn't see any better. But he did things like asking: "What is it that the English have in the afternoon, late?" I said "T." He said, "What do you do when you urinate?" And I said, "P." "Well, he said, "you pass. They'll catch you later if you can't see." I had made a decision at this stage in my life to challenge any one who made an anti-Semitic or anti-black or racial slur, rather than to let it pass, which was the easy thing to do. And on the whole I have done that for more than forty years.

So I got in, and when I was called up in July, I first went to DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, but they didn't have the right courses for me, and I was

transferred to Ann Arbor, Michigan. But by that time I had memorized the eye chart, which had eleven letters across and the same number vertically, and I

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knew all of them, and I knew them every way, forwards, backwards, up and down. In fact, I still remember the first line. It was OHCDLFNTCOC--O Henry Could Don Leave For New Trier Come Out Come. I had a sentence like that to remind me of every line. I had to take the eye exam three times, and every time I memorized the chart, and finally I was commissioned. Meanwhile I was at the University of Michigan for twelve months. I got sixty hours of credits, two years in a year, and then was sent to Great Lakes for a few weeks, and then to the Harvard Business School, which was the Midshipman's School for the Navy Supply Corps, where I was commissioned in 1944.

Ritchie: Why the University of Michigan?

Shuman: Only a few places in the Midwest had a V-12 program. The University of Michigan was one, Notre Dame another, Purdue a third and DePauw was another. Michigan had a great football team that year, because they got all the Wisconsin players, and they kept the Michigan players, and a man by the name of Bill Daily from Minnesota, who was an all-American half-back was sent there. Elroy "Crazy Legs" Hirsh was there, and I was the student manager of the football team that year, '43. So I knew them pretty well. Fritz Creisler, an imperious fellow, was the coach and Biggie Munn and Bennie Osterbahn, who were very friendly, were assistants. I was too small to play, but as student manager I got

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out of a certain amount of calisthenics and drill, and I got to go on the trips to the away games.

I want to tell you about going home one time from Great Lakes. I got a ride on the Union Pacific Streamliner, which did not stop in Morrison, but stopped at Clinton, Iowa, fifteen miles west. One had to have a reservation, and I got a seat on that train because I was in uniform. I was given the conductor's seat, which was the first seat of the first passenger coach. The conductor was there and we had a conversation. He was a cousin or an uncle of the druggist in Morrison, Harry Donichy. He asked me what I was going to do, and I said, "I'm going to Clinton and then hitchhike back fifteen miles." The Streamline train had never stopped in Morrison except when there was an accident. It went through at about 90 miles per hour. This was early on a Saturday night, and in those days the farmers all came to town, parked their cars on the main street and talked. The railroad was just half a block away.

The conductor decided to stop the train and let me off. Everybody in town thought there had been a wreck. They all streamed down to the depot and I got off. And there I was, a Navy apprentice seaman with a duffle bag over my shoulder. Now, the sequel to the story is that like every small town, certain people more or less run the town. The Smiths owned the bank. The Potters ran the lumberyard. One Potter was married to a Smith

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daughter and another had a son in the leading local law firm. He was a lieutenant commander in the Navy, served in the Pacific on a carrier, and was a very brave fellow who saw a lot of action. But in any case, his mother couldn't understand why the train had stopped to let me off when I was an apprentice seaman, but her son a lieutenant commander had to go to Clinton and drive back!

Ritchie: But it tells a lot about the social structure of the town!

Shuman: It could have been the Lynns' "Middletown." There was a social structure.

Ritchie: More obvious, perhaps, than in larger places.

Shuman: Yes, they used to say the Rotary Club owned the town, the Lions Club ran the town, and the Kiwanians had all the fun. There was a very real social structure in the town. My family had one-foot-in and one-foot-out of the Establishment.

Ritchie: Was your father a federal or a state agent?

Shuman: Well, in those days, he was paid three ways. He was paid by the University of Illinois, but funds were provided by the Department of Agriculture as well, and then some funds were raised locally. So he had three bosses. He worked for the Extension Service of the University of Illinois.

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Ritchie: But it gave him some independence.

Shuman: Yes, he did have a lot of independence of action, certainly.

Ritchie: What did you do in the Navy after you finished your training?

Shuman: Well, I was sent to Pearl Harbor on a World War I destroyer, the *U.S.S. Stringham*. I remember seeing Admiral [Chester] Nimitz at Makalapa almost every day while I was waiting for orders. I asked for a ship, and instead

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they assigned me to the 14th Naval District, to the Naval Ammunition Depot, which had three stations there. I was stationed at two of them: West Lock and Waikele Gulch. We provided the ammunition for the Pacific fleet. I served there for about a year and a half. I was an ensign. I was twenty years old when I was commissioned. My twenty-first birthday occurred just as I arrived. I was probably the greenest ensign who every existed. I had an all black outfit. I was first stationed at Waikele Gulch, in the boondocks, where we stored torpedo warheads back into the sides of a deep gulch, which was at the confluence of Kipapa and Waikakalua Gulches. I ran the galley, paid the men, and provided the supplies.

My senior storekeeper was a man H. Franklin Brown, who was thirty-five years of age, who had graduated from the University of

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Michigan law school. I had been pulled out of Michigan by the Navy and sent off to Harvard, and when I was commissioned I still didn't have a degree, although I had enough credits for it. Here I was, this twenty-one year old ensign who was the officer, and here was this thirty-five year old black enlisted man with a Michigan law degree who was my senior staff fellow, who was terrific. It always struck me that that was an unjust situation.

Among other things I taught remedial courses. About twenty percent at least of my men couldn't read or write. Some signed their names "x." We were visited by the NAACP from time to time. Walter White, who was then head of the NAACP, came out with a group to see how things were going. It was a racially segregated place, except in my galley, where I fed the men. I segregated people by Marines and Navy. When a white Navy working party came to our base to get ammunition, they ate with the black Navy. We had a Marine guard unit, which was white. We would often get working parties of black Marines, and the white and black Marines ate together. So we segregated by service rather than by color, and it worked. So far as I know, we never had a problem, at least in my galley.

We did have a problem another time on the base. When I was at Harvard there was one black officer. On Oahu he was stationed perhaps two miles from where I was. Supply officers traded supplies from time to time. One would run out of something, and

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go to the guy next door to get it. He was at my base one day at the noon hour, so I invited him to lunch at the officer's mess. We only had about twelve officers aboard. Our executive officer was from Waco, Texas, who I must say was a prejudiced fellow. But I brought this black officer in and we had lunch, mind you this was 1945, and our executive officer swallowed three times and treated him

properly. But a rumor got around the base that the executive officer had refused to eat with the black officer. We almost had a riot as a result. And we didn't have a riot because of my 35-year-old storekeeper, H. Franklin Brown. I told him what the truth was. The men thought that the lieutenant commander had done wrong, but in fact he hadn't. And we avoided a riot on the base as a result of H. Franklin Brown's intervention with the men. So there was tension from time to time. We had all white officers. The Marines were white. My chief petty officer in the galley was a white, and the post office was run by a white chief petty officer. But the bulk of the men were black.

Ritchie: I was going to ask you why you felt it necessary to keep the Navy and the Marines apart. Was it because the Marines were mostly white?

Shuman: No. The men always wanted to eat by service. The services were quite separate in the galley. The Marine guard unit was a very proud unit, and they ate in one part of the galley, and the Navy ate in another. But the few white Navy ate

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with the black Navy and the black Marine working parties ate with our white Marine guard unit.

Ritchie: I guess this was the first time you'd encountered any large group of black people.

Shuman: Not exactly. When I first went to the University of Illinois in 1942 three or four of us had a black student woman friend, and we took her to one of the campus restaurants and ordered ice cream sodas. We whites all got proper sodas and she got a glass with about a half scoop of ice cream in it. And we were absolutely outraged. We tried to open the campus restaurants. We got no help from the University administration. We failed in that. Then we tried to open up the downtown movie houses, which were segregated. They had a balcony or back area for blacks. And we failed in that because the local black minister, who was the key to this, didn't believe that his people should go to movies. So he was unwilling to help desegregate the movie houses!

Then I had an experience with Paul Robeson. Paul Robeson came through to sing at what we called "Star Course," a half dozen or so concerts a year by famous artists. A woman, Margaret Robins, a sophomore or junior, whose parents were friends of my family, was in charge of escorting Paul Robeson to the concert before and afterwards, and she invited me along. So the two of us

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escorted him. We picked Robeson up at his hotel, and he sang -- he sang "Old Man River" among other pieces and wowed everybody. Afterwards we took him to dinner. He had been an All-American college football player, and he told us his coach told him if he sang as well as he played football he would be a great man. We took him to a restaurant in downtown Champaign but had to go into the alley and take him in the back door where he was served in the back room, which was offensive to me. So there were a number of times when I was involved in trying to desegregate institutions. That was before I was in the Pacific. I was also involved in the issues afterwards. [Truman](#) set up the Civil Rights Commission and published their report, after the war, 1947. When I went home for Christmas, I took copies of the Civil Rights Commission report, and I distributed them in Morrison, Illinois, which led to all kinds of charges that I was a Commie or a radical. But it was a great report. So one of the things I did for Senator Douglas, of course, was to do much of the floor staff work for the Civil Rights bills. I was intensely involved in it because I believed in it.

Ritchie: Some of which coming from your experiences in the war?

Shuman: Certainly from the war, and from my family. My family taught us that all people were children of God and shouldn't be discriminated against.

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Ritchie: Did you spend the whole war in Hawaii?

Shuman: Well, I spent a year and a half in the Navy before I went out there, and then another year and a half in Hawaii. Yes, that's where I was. And I was very unhappy about not getting a ship. Now, I look back on it, and I was probably lucky not to have been killed, especially as one ship I had been on as a passenger, the *U.S.S. Stringham*, was attacked by kamikazes at Okinawa. West Loch, where I was also stationed, was the scene of the second or unknown Pearl Harbor disaster in May of 1944 before the Saipan invasion. Six ships were sunk and there were more than 500 casualties as a result of an ammunition explosion. I've just finished an article about it for the Institute of Naval Proceedings.

Ritchie: And in '46 you were discharged?

Shuman: I was discharged in the summer of '46 and I went back to the University of Illinois and to summer school. I took nine hours, reestablished my credentials, and graduated that summer. I ended up only a semester behind where I would have been if I had gone through the normal university sequence, because of all those credits at Michigan and Harvard. I got thirty-six hours for the Midshipman school at Harvard and sixty hours at Michigan. Then I got a Master's degree at Illinois in 1948 and then I went back to Michigan in the summer of '49, before I went

to Oxford. I had left Michigan in 1944 needing only six hours for the undergraduate degree, and I did nine hours the summer of 1949 and got a second undergraduate degree, the B.B.A.

Ritchie: Had you mapped out your future at that stage? Did you know what you wanted to do?

Shuman: By that time I was very interested in politics. I got interested in party politics in '48 when [Adlai] Stevenson and Douglas ran for governor and for senator. I was asked to head the "Downstate for Douglas" committee by Charlie Davis who was the chief clerk of the House Ways and Means Committee. Actually we didn't do very much -- but what was wanted of us was to show some downstate interest in the Douglas candidacy. Colonel Jack Arvey from Chicago wanted us to do this. So I organized a bunch of people, and we all wrote to Arvey, telling him that we were people who supported Douglas, that we would work for him, and would contribute to his campaign. We got publicity about this as a way of showing support for Douglas downstate. But as a matter of fact, this was unneeded. It was window-dressing. I didn't know it at the time, but I know now that it was window-dressing, because the issue had been decided. Douglas had been selected by Arvey and the party.

Then I followed Adlai Stevenson around the state, and I heard him speak a dozen times. He was not a very good speaker in '48. In fact, he was a lousy speaker. This may come as a surprise for in 1952 at home and abroad he was the preeminent speaker of our time. Let me illustrate the point. We had a large meeting for him in Urbana, and mostly university people came. Here was this man, running for governor, reform governor because we had a crooked governor, the Green administration. And Stevenson had been to the U.N., not as the ambassador but as second or third, and everyone who came wanted to hear him speak about issues. We had lunch at the Urbana-Lincoln hotel, and he spoke for about twenty minutes and he cracked all the jokes he used in 1952 when he ran for president, but he didn't have the timing down, and the speech really didn't go down very well. As a result, people left disappointed. Then we went twenty miles away to a county seat, Monticello, Illinois, which is the county seat of Piatt county, where I was born. We had a meeting in the Methodist Church basement. We pulled in the old guys off the courthouse square to come to the meeting to swell the crowd. Stevenson was dressed in a pin striped suit. He was a little overweight. He wore a vest. He wore a key chain, with academic keys dangling from it. And he spoke for an hour to that group on the meaning of Western civilization. And he bombed. He bombed both places. If he had given the Monticello speech to the faculty at

Urbana and cracked the jokes in Monticello, he would have been a great hit in both

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places. But he seemed perverse; he seemed to be unwilling to talk to either group in a way they wanted to hear him speak. I saw a lot of him.

We organized a group of university Democrats. We were precinct committeemen in the county. We sponsored and succeeded in electing Charles R. (Jim) Simpson to the state legislature. Jim was blind but graduated from the University Law School with the highest grades in 25 years. He was selected the best freshman legislator by the press. Later he was a fellow at Harvard, rose to the top of the Internal Revenue Service, and with the help of Sheldon Cohen the Commissioner and Senator Douglas, was appointed a tax court judge by President [Johnson](#).

Committeemen were supposed to cast the number of votes at the organizing meeting for the party after the 1948 primary according to how many Democratic votes there were in their precincts. Our group of about a dozen precinct committeemen represented more than a majority of the Democratic primary votes in the county and we were determined to organize the county committee and to defeat the existing county chairman, Leo Pfeiffer, who was an old-line politician. Leo fractured the English language. He looked like a politician. He was overweight. He smoked a cigar. We were determined to defeat him. And I really learned my first political lesson as a result. We went to the meeting with the votes. What happened was that Leo appointed, after the primary, a precinct

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committeeman in every precinct where there wasn't one. Then he determined that each precinct committeeman could cast one vote, instead of voting the number of Democratic votes in the precinct. Then he allowed only one vote per precinct to overrule our objections. As a result, he won, and we lost. He tricked us, and he stayed on for many years.

Ritchie: It was a good object lesson in the political process!

Shuman: It was. Anyway, I worked hard locally in Mr. Douglas' campaign, Citizens for Douglas. But then I went off to Oxford for three years and didn't go to work for him until after the 1954 election.

Ritchie: How was it that you went to Oxford?

Shuman: I went to Oxford for a variety of reasons, but basically an Oxford Union debating team came to the University in 1947. Tony Benn, then a moderate

but who is now a radical, left-wing Labor member of Parliament, Sir Edward Boyle, who later became a Conservative Minister of Education and resigned over Suez, and Kenneth Harris, who is the biographer of [Clement] Attlee, and who interviews the Queen on the BBC, made up the debating team, and I debated with them. They were very, very good. They were superior to anything I had seen or heard. I determined that I had to go to the fountainhead to find the source

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of their excellence, so I spent a year getting in. The summer of '48 I went to London and Oxford. Tony Benn wrote a letter of recommendation for me to New College. The warden of the college had asked him to keep his eye out for Americans he might recommend. He did that for me. I applied. A New College don interviewed me on a bench at All Souls College, which is a college with no students and all professors where, because of the wine cellar, it is said that the best brains in Britain are preserved in alcohol. New College accepted me, not for that year but for the following year. By this time, I had a Master's degree and I was determined to go.

Ritchie: You had been debating in the United States?

Shuman: I didn't debate very much, but I was interested in it, and I was the assistant debate coach to Professor Richard Murphy, who was my great friend and from whom I received great insights. Most of the people I learned from were people I learned from through personal relations, not necessarily in the classroom. And Dick and his wife Theresa were two of those people. There was a woman, Marie Hochmuth, who was in the Speech Department and who wrote history around speech-making of famous historical figures. She was president of the professional association. Those three people had a great influence on me and stimulated all kinds of academic interests.

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I had an economics professor by the name of Don Kemmerer, who was a very conservative fellow, but I had him in my first economics course. He taught economic history. I was excited by his classroom and his teaching, and I did a paper for him, in my freshman year, on the great Chicago Pullman strike of June, July 1894, which pitted Eugene Victor Debs and Governor Altgeld of Illinois against [Grover Cleveland](#). Cleveland sent in the troops to break the Pullman strike needlessly. The violence occurred after the troops came in to protect the railroad from the union. Of course, Governor John Peter Altgeld was Illinois' greatest governor -- even counting [Frank] Lowden, or Stevenson. He pardoned the Haymarket rioters and took on Cleveland in the strike. There is a great poem about him, "Eagle Forgotten" by Vachel Lindsay. Just after he had been defeated, in part because of his stand on the Haymarket rioters, Altgeld was asked not to

sign a bill for the utilities but to let it become law without his signature. He was told that there was money in a lock box in Chicago. He was given the key. He went to Chicago, opened the box, saw that the cash was there, came back, and vetoed the bill. If you read the book *Eagle Forgotten* by Harry Barnard, you'll read about that. Altgeld was a great governor, and he was responsible for getting money for the University of Illinois. He thought that the University of Chicago, with the Rockefeller funds, would be a very conservative place, and he wanted the people's university to grow to offset this conservative place. Well, what happened ironically

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was that, until after Hutchins left, Chicago was the radical university and the University of Illinois was the conservative place. But Altgeld really built up the University, and the law building was named Altgeld Hall after him.

Anyway, I was stimulated by the course and once one gets into one issue, one gets into others. So economics, and economic history, and political history were the things that I was most interested in. Don Kemmerer also put me on to William S. White's *Autobiography* which was an exciting book mainly about the progressive or [Teddy Roosevelt](#) wing of the Republican Party, and that stimulated my interest in politics and economic history. I got to the place when I was more interested, as a graduate student, in going to the political rallies than I was in going to the library. So in the end it was a good thing that I didn't stay and teach and that I went into active political work.

Ritchie: Tell me about Oxford when you got there. It must have been quite a change of place and atmosphere.

Shuman: Well, Oxford is a place where the students teach themselves. I was there in what I call the "Golden Age." The students were back from the war. Instead of arriving or coming up, as the English say, at seventeen or eighteen, they were my age, twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five. I was twenty-five when I matriculated. Most of my friends there, many of whom have

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since become quite famous, even to the degree of running the country, were my age. They had been in the war. Oxford is based on self-education. It was in the tutorial system, where a student spends an hour a week with the tutor, who assigns him a subject matter, and he writes an essay, and reads the essay to the tutor, where the great teaching took place. As President [James Garfield](#) pointed out, a university is a student and a professor (Mark Hopkins) sitting together on a log. There are no courses or credits or routine exams. There are three terms a year. A student stays for three years. The student writes nine exam papers at the

end of the three years. Each term the student prepares for one of the exam papers. If he does history he would have six assigned papers and probably three that he could choose to write on.

He would go around to a tutor who was an expert in one of the nine fields. He never graded him. It was like going to a piano teacher to prepare for a recital, where somebody else did the grading. The purpose of the tutor was to help the student pass the final exams. If a lecture was given that would help, he went to the lecture. If it didn't, he didn't go. Most students went to lectures their first year, maybe their second year, but their third year they spent most of the time getting ready for the exams. Then they took the exams and were graded by people independent of the tutors. The exam grader didn't know whose

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paper it was, and the student graduated with a first, second, third, or fourth class honors degree. A student needed a first class honors degree from Oxford or Cambridge to get to the Foreign Office. That was true then but not now. And to teach in a university in England he had to have a first class degree. Not a Ph.D., but a first class honors degree at Oxford. That was the entry to teaching, to become a don. If he got a good second, just missed the first, he might stay around and do a graduate degree to prove to them that he really had the stuff. That was the system.

Oxford was exciting. Those were the three best years of my life. But I spent most of my time in the political clubs and in the Oxford Union. I met, in a very personal way, most of the leading political figures in the country, and a good many of the literary figures as well, but mostly the political figures, who would come up to Oxford, a) to the political clubs, and b) to the Union, to speak. Every week there was a meeting of the Labor, the Conservative, and the Liberal clubs. Some member of Parliament, usually a cabinet member, or from the shadow cabinet, came up to talk. As I was an American, and in the Union, and in the clubs, the officers of the clubs often invited me to the dinner with the cabinet person the evening he or she came to speak, and then around to the student digs afterwards to talk to them. So I really got to see at close range people like Hugh Gaitskell and Dick Crossman and Bob Boothby and Randolph Churchill and R.A.B.

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Butler, and Dr. Edith Summerskill, and Michael Foot and Lady Meagan Lloyd George and Lady Violet Bonham Carter, almost all the major figures in the county, with the exception of Winston Churchill, who refused to come up. He would not speak at Oxford because of the "King and Country" debate in 1933. I had a marvelous time.

Many of the students since then, people I knew very well, have become famous. Shirley Williams has since been a member of Parliament and helped establish the Social Democratic Party. She's one of the "Gang of Four." So is Bill Rogers. Tony Benn had gone down before I came up but he has held several cabinet offices. Sir Edward Boyle, who later resigned over Suez, had also gone down. But Robin Day, who is now the Walter Cronkite of the BBC was one of my two best friends. Peter Blaker, who is now Sir Peter Blaker, who was the Minister of State for Defense under [Margaret] Thatcher in her first term, is now a Privy Councilor and knighted. Jeremy Thorpe, who became the leader of the Liberal Party, was president of the Union when I was secretary. There is just a long, long list of people. There is John Gilbert who was Minister of Transport and who was Minister of State for Defense, who is now the Vice Chairman of the Defense Committee in Parliament. There is Sir William Rees-Mogg, who was editor of the *London Times*. All these people were there. They were and are my friends. I defeated for president of the Union a fellow who was

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the leader of the House of Commons, Norman St. John Stevas. There was Gerald Kaufman, now a Labour Shadow Cabinet member, and Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Attorney General, and Michael Heseltine the former Minister of Defense. The Labor Government had come in, and there were all kinds of changes going on in the country. I was there for two elections.

Ritchie: It sounds like many of the people you were associated with were people who became involved in the Labor and Liberal party. Did you find that was the crowd you felt more comfortable with?

Shuman: No, not necessarily. I thought that the first Labor government was a pretty moderate government by present standards. They were strong on NATO. They were strong against Russian aggression. They were progressive at home and their post-war leaders had taken a pretty firm stand against both fascism and the Russians. So I felt pretty comfortable with them. I have trouble now accepting the policies of the far radical left of the Labor party. I think they've made it almost impossible for the Labor party to come back until they change their views, at least in the area of defense. They're unilateralists, and I'm not a unilateralist. You know, Ernest Bevin grabbed the offer of the Marshall Plan and ran with it. Bevin, the Labor Foreign Minister was one of the key figures in establishing NATO. The Labor Party was a very different party then. But I thought that what one

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would call the moderate wing of the Labor party and the progressive wing of the Tory party were relatively close together. There wasn't all that much difference. A number of my friends who were Liberals, and some of them who were Labor,

when I was at Oxford, have since become Tory MPs. Others became Social Democrats.

Ritchie: There was a lot of social action going on then; that was a period of nationalization and new welfare programs.

Shuman: Well, I never thought much of nationalization. What I thought was important about what the Labor party was trying to do was to promote greater equality in the country. Because of the class structure there were wide differences among classes. The saving grace in this country has probably been the urge to egalitarianism, the ability of people to climb the social ladder, and the division of power in the federal government. The saving grace in England is not that. The saving grace there has been their political institutions, their judicial system, the rule of law, and parliamentary government, although I do not favor a unitary system for this country. But social equality is not one of their strong points. The promotion of greater social equality by the Labor party struck me as important, not nationalization, although I was not offended by nationalizing the railroads. Every government in Europe, mostly conservative, nationalized the railroads. In this country, for all practical purposes, the

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railroads were heavily subsidized. The U.S. Government gave them the land they built on, and the land every other square going to the West Coast on either side of the railroad. So there's very little difference.

I don't see much wrong with the utilities either being owned or regulated, because they are a natural monopoly. There was a special case for the coal mines in the U.K. because they were not going to survive under private ownership. But when it came to nationalizing steel, or operating industries, I thought that was a mistake. And I don't think that has very much to do with equality at all. In fact, what they did in many cases was to substitute a state monopoly for a private monopoly. And that did not necessarily bring any greater equality or egalitarianism. It did not change the social structure, and it did not open up the industry in most cases to people's grievances in any major way either, although sometimes it made a difference, as in the mines. So that part of it I wasn't much taken with. But I was taken with the urge to try to right some of the social class wrongs and to abolish poverty.

Ritchie: You did a major study while you were there.

Shuman: I did a study on wages in the British engineering industry, which is really a combination of our shipbuilding, steel and auto industries. I traveled all over the country. I had a

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Rotary Foundation fellowship, so I could go into a city and go to the Rotary Club, and get introductions to the heads of industry. Then through my tutor I had access to the unions. And because I was an American, both sides were quite open with me. That was a great experience.

Ritchie: What did you feel that you learned the most from that study?

Shuman: One thing that I was really struck by: I would go into cities like Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, or Coventry, the auto industry towns, and I would go to the homes occasionally of union leaders, men who were uneducated in any formal sense. Their homes would be lined with books. These men were self-taught and well read. One couldn't believe the volumes of books that were seen on the shelves of the local union leaders. It was a remarkable thing. They were extraordinarily knowledgeable. That I think was the most striking thing I saw during that study.

Ritchie: It must have been an interesting experience to be an outsider, and to be allowed to get into a society that was so fragmented.

Shuman: Yes. I could go into any class of society because of my accent and be accepted, which was a marvelous thing. And I had this entree through the Rotary Clubs too. I also followed the elections of '50. Attlee came to Banbury in 1950. Banbury is

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north of Oxford, about fifteen miles, the town made famous by the nursery rhyme "Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross," and Attlee came to speak there, and I went up to hear him, because I wanted to see the Prime Minister. His wife drove him up there in their little car. No secret service, no crowds of people surrounding him, protecting him, no public relations people, no staff. The Prime Minister just drove up with his wife. He spoke in the town hall, which was crowded. A great many of my undergraduate friends were candidates in those elections; I suppose a dozen or more students. They were candidates for seats where they had no chance to win, but they got their feet wet doing this and later got seats they could win.

Oxford had a big town hall. The four political parties who were running candidates for Parliament, the Liberals, Labor, Conservatives and the Communists, flipped a coin to see which party would get the town hall for their rally on the eve of election. For four nights preceding the election, each party got the town hall. And the Communists won, so the Communists got the favored evening at the town hall, the eve of the election. Students went along to heckle and to fill the hall, and they sang "Lloyd George Knew My Father," to the tune of

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"Onward Christian Soldiers." I don't know whether you know it, but one just keeps repeating the words "Lloyd George knew my father, father knew Lloyd George."

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Jeremy Thorpe, who was the best stump speaker of my era -- not the most intellectual speaker, but the best stump speaker with a crowd -- was speaking one night. He wasn't the Liberal candidate, but he introduced the Liberal candidate. And there was a woman in the middle of the hall, an old woman, and she was toothless. She kept yelling during Jeremy's speech. Finally he said to her: "Lady, if you'd open your mouth any wider we could see your socks." Everybody cheered. In that same election, Aneurin Bevan was confronted by a shrill-voiced heckling woman. He called her a virago, in the sense of a vixen or shrewish woman. He replied by saying that the three worst things in life were half cooked meat, a faithless friend, and a cackling woman. It was interesting to watch the cut and thrust, and listen to the repartee that went on during that election.

Ritchie: Tell me about the Oxford Union. It is remarkable that a Yank became president of the Union, but it also sounds to me that English debating was very different from anything you would have done if you had debated in the United States, much rowdier and no-holds-barred.

Shuman: Yes. Well, first of all in the United States one debates in a closed room with a judge. There is no audience, which is ridiculous. The Oxford Union is modeled on the British House of Commons, and people sit across from each other. When I was there, there was a debate every Thursday night of term, so

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there were eight debates a term. At four of those debates at least, outside guests would be brought in. I joined immediately and became a life member. It was then a debating society and a men's club. There was a hall, which held seven or eight hundred people, with balcony seats for visitors. There were also two very good libraries. There was a bar and dining room, and a reading room with most of the newspapers in the country. One could get almost any newspaper or journal there. So students joined it as a place to use the library, to read the papers, to have lunch, as well as to go to the debates.

I joined the first week I was there. Peter Blaker, who was at New College, came around and asked me to join. He was then Tony Benn's great good friend, because his grandfather and Tony's father had been in Parliament together. I started off speaking. In the beginning, you get to speak late at night and to give a three minute speech. Then if you do reasonably well, you are invited to give a five minute speech. Then if you do well you are invited to give a paper speech, which

means that you are listed as one of the six or eight major speakers for the evening, and dress up in black tie. Ahead of time you are assigned one of the speeches on the paper. You also climb the hierarchical ladder, from the library committee to the standing committee to officer. So I spoke, and I was recognized and asked to give a five minute speech. Then I gave a speech on the paper. Then I stood for the

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library committee and won. Then I jumped over the standing committee, and ran for secretary and, surprisingly, I won, largely because I stood out. There was something distinctive about the American accent.

I was in on some good debates. The Union debated things like "This House Prefers Its Back to the Engine." There was a debate on the British press, I've forgotten the specific motion now, but I called the British press the "Bubonic boil on the body of Britain," -- which it is. It is and was terrible. They have the best and the worst press in the world. So I was elected secretary. Then automatically I got to speak in the political debates. Then I was elected librarian, which was next to the top. Then I stood for president, and I was defeated twice. Once by Ivan Yates, who was killed in an auto accident. And then by Peter Blaker, who was one of my two best friends. Then I finally won, against Oleg Kerensky, who was the grandson of the Russian [Alexander] Kerensky who was the first post-revolution prime minister, and Pat Hutber, who was the most radical non-Communist left person in the university, and president of the Labor Club, and Norman St. John Stevas, who had come over from Cambridge and was later leader of the House of Commons under Margaret Thatcher. When he came to Oxford as president of the Cambridge Union, we invited him to speak, and he got early paper speeches without having to work for them. And all of a sudden he was

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standing for president. He was Conservative. The Union had a proportional representation system of voting. I debated those other three twice. I spoke on the paper at the first debate of the year, during which Attlee spoke and then the presidential debate, when the former prime minister of France, Monsieur Paul Reynaud, spoke.

The balloting for president was held the day after the presidential debate. At that time, there was no canvassing. You could not go around and ask people to vote for you. That was a disqualification. I won because I was most people's second choice. Pat Hutber thought he was going to win. He was the Labor Club president, and he led on the first ballot but without a majority, and Kerensky was fourth. So they transferred Kerensky's second place votes to the others, and I got more of them than the others and I won on the second ballot by twelve votes, got

a majority of the votes and was declared president. Hutber was very angry. I met him later in the private offices of the Union where there was a fireplace and where the officers gathered. He was so angry about being defeated, he was so disappointed because he was certain he was going to win, that he took most of the glassware and china and threw it into the fireplace, broke it into pieces. He threw a fit. He later became a very, very right-wing columnist in one of the London papers -- I think the Financial Times. He became probably the most right-wing major columnist in the

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country. His career was very typical of people who are one extreme and then shift to the other.

I invited Dr. Edith Summerskill to speak in my first debate as President. She had been Minister of Education. It was a stormy night. It was in the spring and just as she was congratulating me on being elected president there was a great clap of thunder from outside the hall. She turned and said, "Ah, you sir have been acclaimed by the highest authority."

Ritchie: That had to be very unusual, to have a woman speak at the Union.

Shuman: It was. I deliberately invited her to speak. It was a time when the Union did not allow women members. I also invited another woman, an undergraduate, to speak, Caroline Carter, who was a very radical, left-wing person. This was the time of McCarthy in the States. I determined a) to invite a woman, and b) to invite a radical woman just to disprove the stereotype that all Americans were Joe McCarthyites. So I invited her quite deliberately.

But anyway, Dr. Edith now out of office, was debating Nigel Birch, who was then a junior conservative minister. I invited him to speak. She spoke too long, much too long, and when Birch got up to speak, he said something to the effect that "Dr. Edith in the early part of her speech, *which was a very long time ago now*,

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made the following points." Very clever. One of the undergraduate paper speakers introduced them. Dr. Edith was crusading against boxing, and the student said "How delighted we are tonight to have with us Dr. Edith Summerskill and Mr. Nigel Birch. In this corner, at a hundred and thirty pounds, we have Dr. Edith Summerskill, a light heavyweight. And in that corner, at a hundred and eighty-five pounds, Mr. Nigel Birch, a rather heavy lightweight." It was that kind of clever spoofing that went on.

Ritchie: Many of the examples you've given have involved humor. Would you say that effective use of humor was important in that setting?

Shuman: Oh, yes, wit, not broad humor.

Ritchie: In some cases even more than the argument itself?

Shuman: Sometimes. One had to have some wit in the speech. But there were people who were very dull and very dry speakers, who did reasonably well on grounds that they were so dull that people thought there must be a lot of heavy thought in what they said. I've never, ever thought that people who were dull and dry were necessarily good speakers. But people would say about them, "Well, I know he was a little dull, but it was a very thoughtful speech." It wasn't thoughtful at all. It was just dull. But yes, there was a lot of witticism and paradoxes and

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good clean fun. When interrupted, it was a battle between the speaker and the audience. For the audience it was like going to a bull fight. The purpose was to get the speaker. If they got the speaker, he lost out. People like Michael Summerskill, Dr. Edith's son, who was on the ladder to become president of the Union, and he was giving a paper speech and he gave a bad speech. He was interrupted and he didn't have a reply, and it finished him. So every time one spoke, and if interested in getting on, it was not only doing well, but it was surviving the barbs that was important. It was like walking a tightrope. If you fell off you were dead. So you had to survive. When interrupted one could say, "I want to thank the member for his question. Surely there is some point to it," or "The member has made a Euclidian point. It has a position but no magnitude," or as Robin Day once said to a persistent interrupter, "Honorable members may tell jokes but not explain them." We concocted all kinds of stuff to win points.

Ritchie: In advance?

Shuman: Yes. When I debated Norman St. John Stevas for the presidency, I worked something out with Jeremy Thorpe to provoke an interruption from Norman. Stevas' middle name St. John in England was pronounced "Sinjun," to rhyme with "Injun." So I referred to him instead of "Sinjun" as "Mr. Norman Saint John (pronounced the American way), Stev-as." Well, he'd been called

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that in America and other places many times, so he had an answer. He was then the treasurer, and he came down from his chair and interrupted me. I was then the ex-librarian. "Well," he said, "the Pope may canonize me, but the ex-librarian,

never," to the delight of the crowd. He also was a prominent Catholic so there was a double entendre. I knew that he would have an answer, and I had to have a reply that would fit anything that he said. So the reply was like this. It was exactly like this. I said, "He objects to the way I pronounced his name, but at Cambridge he was called Norman, Saint John, Stev-as, and after all, that's where he made his name." Everybody cheered, but it was absolutely contrived. P> I knew Walter Mondale quite well, and I tried to help him in the campaign three years ago, but I couldn't get by his gate keepers. I was concerned after the first debate, when Reagan did so poorly and when his age was such an issue. It occurred to me that he would have some kind of a remark about his age, kidding himself, self-deprecating and so on, and that Mondale had better have a reply to that that would fit anything Reagan said. I tried to get through to his staff about it, and couldn't. But sure enough, Reagan did it, and I think won back the election in a very real sense. If Mondale had had some quick retort, it might have been different. His staff obviously didn't prepare him and they should have.

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Ritchie: It's ironic, considering that Mondale had pinned Gary Hart with his "Where's the beef" quip, and Hart had no response.

Shuman: Right, correct.

Ritchie: I wanted to ask you to compare American and British politics by their debating styles. Would you say that British politics follows the debating style of the Oxford Union? A lot of heckling of speeches, even in the Parliament, and requiring people to be quick on their feet?

Shuman: Oh, yes, certainly.

Ritchie: And that the American system does not necessary encourage this.

Shuman: Well, that's not quite true. The British system is that system throughout, but I when I worked in the Senate there were some people I thought were as good as any British parliamentary speaker. [Hubert Humphrey](#) was one, [Bob Kerr](#) was another. My old boss, [Paul Douglas](#), was a third. Probably [\[Everett\] Dirksen](#) was another. [\[Eugene\] Milliken](#) of Colorado was another. There were a handful of speakers in the Senate who could have done as well as anybody, and better than many, in the Parliament. But only a handful. Most senators read their speeches. I once heard Hubert Humphrey on the Senate floor. He

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was supporting foreign aid. Somebody got up and said something like, "What's England got that we haven't got?" And quick as a flash, he said, "Westminster Abbey." He was quick on his feet and would have done well in Parliament.

Ritchie: But Humphrey and [Wayne Morse](#) were often mocked by people for being long-winded.

Shuman: Well, they were long-winded -- articulate is a better word -- but Humphrey, especially was very witty.

Ritchie: But is there as much credit for being a good debater in the Senate? It seems as if there are more dull speakers than witty speakers.

Shuman: Yes, there are many dull speakers. No, I don't think a senator gets enough credit in the Senate for being able to debate. I have a proposal which I've made on and off for a long time about what the Senate should do to improve debate. I think now that television has come to the Senate that what should happen is that [\[Robert\] Byrd](#) and [\[Robert\] Dole](#) should schedule about once a month a major debate on a major issue, on the president's budget when it comes down, on the economic report when it comes, on Irangate, or tax reform, or whatever. There are enough issues that recur throughout the year that there could be a major debate once a month. The majority party would propose something like "The Senate has no confidence in Ronald Reagan's budget," or "The

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Senate rejects Ronald Reagan's budget." Byrd could lead off, speak for fifteen minutes. Dole could answer. He could propose a substitute amendment: "The Senate has great confidence in Mr. Reagan's budget." Then the two leading budget committee members could speak for ten minutes, and the Finance committee chairman and ranking member, and the Appropriations committee chairman and ranking member, each of them for maybe ten minutes. Then anyone else who wanted to speak could do so for five minutes. The rules should require that they speak germanely, on the subject. About five o'clock or six o'clock, or even later, if necessary, the two people who proposed the motions should wind up with ten minute summary speeches. Then vote. If a Republican Senate rejected a Republican President's budget, that would be news.

Televisе that! It would educate the country. It would be a sequential debate in the Senate, and it would do a lot a) to educate the people, and b) to improve debating in the Senate. That is what I think ought to be done on a regular basis. But when I watch the Senate on television, all I see is senators talking about procedures, about house-keeping matters, trying to get a unanimous consent agreement. Who will speak next; who wants twenty minutes; arguing over the administrative functions of the Senate which ought to be decided off stage, not there on the floor.

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I think the Senate needs to reform that aspect. They could reform it quite easily. That's the Shuman plan, not the

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Robert Schumann plan but the Howard Shuman plan. I think the Senate could have a monthly substantive debate of this kind and that would greatly improve both public education and Senate debate.

Ritchie: Television doesn't seem to have changed the institution yet.

Shuman: Not much.

Ritchie: But if you introduce a new medium there's generally some adjustment. It may take a few years before people realize its potential.

Shuman: But back to your question. I think if one goes to Parliament, much of the time one sees a form of theatre. Debate, is a form of theatre, very interesting, with its interruptions, with its arguments, with the wit, and so on.

Ritchie: Is it a productive theatre? Or is it a diversionary theatre?

Shuman: I think it's listened to a lot. It has great effect on the country. The BBC, both television and radio, has a regular program, "Today in Parliament." People can listen to the live debate on radio. Most newspapers carry a column, "Today in Parliament," where they give, pretty much verbatim, the arguments on the major issues, so that the speaking in Parliament has a

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great effect on public opinion. Even the House of Lords, which has no power to speak of, nonetheless has great power in influencing public opinion. That is not true of debate in the Senate or the House. As far as I can see it's almost entirely ignored. I'd like to see something happen along the British lines here.

As far as the political system is concerned, I prefer our system, because of the nature of congressional committees, the division of powers, and the investigative powers of Congress. A British committee has almost no power even to command the papers of a department or a ministry, but we do here. So the Parliament, as opposed to the Cabinet and the Ministries has little power. It's a rubber stamp, especially if the government has a big majority. Backbenchers have very little to say. They seldom pass their own bills. So in many ways Parliament is superfluous. But not in its debating aspects. They're superior to us in the debating aspects, inferior to us, I think, in many of the other institutional aspects.

Ritchie: Have you kept your contacts with the people you met at Oxford?

Shuman: Oh, yes. I see most of them regularly. Every year I lead a group of students from the National War College to England, and I see many of them. We're talked to by Sir Peter

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Blaker, by Sir Robin Day, by Michael Heseltine, who was the minister of defense, by Bill Rogers in the Social Democratic party, by Sir Patrick Mayhew, who's the Attorney General and by Tony Benn. Many of my old friends talk to my students about various aspects of Parliament and public policy. One of my friends, Sir Ronald Waterhouse, who is a high court judge, gives us lunch at the Middle Temple every year after we see the criminal trials at the Old Bailey. I think it's important for the military students that I teach not only to see the military side of the country, which we do through visiting the select committee on defense, visiting ex-ministers of defense, like Heseltine, and Sir Peter Blaker, and John Gilbert, all of whom I knew at Oxford, and all of whom were former ministers or junior ministers of defense. The students need to see the country not only from the defense end but as the Mother of Parliaments, as the home of the rule of law, and as the place where free speech started. So I get Sir Robin Day and a newspaper and old Oxford friend of mine, Godfrey Smith, who writes a column for the Sunday Times to speak to them about those institutions. And I get academics like Lord Asa Briggs, the Provost of Worcester College, and Lord Alan Bullock, the former Vice Chancellor of Oxford, to speak to them on social history or U.S.-British relationships since World War II. So it isn't just the military institutions we visit, although there is a preponderance of that.

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Yes, I keep in touch with them. I go back most years, and for thirty-five years most of them who come here usually stay with us. My wife Betty, calls our house London West. Especially when the exchange rates were bad, they stayed with us. Now that they're a little older and a little wealthier they generally do not stay with us. But some of them still do. Keith Kyle and John Gilbert still stay with us when they're here. So, yes, I see them. I know that group of people as lifelong friends better than any other group of lifelong friends I have.

Ritchie: It must have been difficult to come back from Oxford to Illinois.

Shuman: No, that's not true. I came back to Illinois. I have a great warm spot in my heart for Illinois. You've got to remember, Illinois produced Paul Douglas, and Adlai Stevenson, and [Abraham Lincoln](#), and [U.S. Grant](#) and Jane Addams, and John Peter Altgeld, and Carl Sandburg, and [Ronald Reagan](#). It's no slouch of a place. In the small town I grew up in there were all kinds of people who were

extraordinarily able. One had to search them out, but they were there. So, no, I make no apologies at all. In fact, I would say, as I mentioned earlier, some of my great teachers were at Illinois. Some of the faculty went on to Harvard to teach. One of them was the biographer of [Roosevelt](#).

Ritchie: Biographer of Roosevelt. Frank Freidel?

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Shuman: Frank Freidel. He was in the history department. Illinois had a great history department. J.G. Randall was there and his wife. [Arthur] Bestor was there. A man who later went to the University of Minnesota, whose book on the history of political thought I have here, was there, Mulford Q. Sibley. The social historian, Fred Shannon was there. Clarence Berdahl was in political science, and Fred Bell and Hod Gray were in economics. His daughter-in-law, Hannah, is now Chancellor of the University of Chicago and she and her husband were at Oxford when I was there. So there were really able people around.

Ritchie: I was thinking in terms of the old song, "How'ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm, after they've seen Patee." In the sense that a lot of Americans, after they've been in Europe, have difficulty in coming back to the old surroundings.

Shuman: Yes. Well, when I was at Oxford, there were a certain number of Americans who went native: carried rolled umbrellas, wore bowler hats, got a British accent. Pretty fake, I thought. I made a point of staying the Yank from the Middle West, even put it on a bit at times. I was not ashamed of it.

Ritchie: Which was one of the reasons why you were noticed, perhaps.

Shuman: Yes, I think so. I had very little to do with the Americans there. Some were my friends. My best American friend

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was [John Brademas](#), who became a member of Congress from Indiana, Democratic whip, and now the distinguished President of New York University. And there was Jim Billington, now the Librarian of Congress and an expert on the Soviet Union. Tom Hughes, the head of the Carnegie Endowment, dates from my Oxford days. John Brademas and I would talk by the hour about American politics. But I didn't spend my time with the Americans, or with the American Club, or at Rhodes House, as some Americans did. Some of them I think overdid it. I tried to take advantage of the English society while I was there, their politics, their political clubs, and so on. I made a deliberate attempt to do that. I didn't shun the Americans, but I just didn't make a point of going into all the American

societies. One could have done that and not found out anything about Britain and its institutions.

Ritchie: There was a story about them dressing you up in a flannel shirt and a woodsman's cap.

Shuman: Yes. Robin Day promoted that. He suggested it. Robin was the producer. He was the ablest person I knew in Oxford. The debate was in the Union and the debate was on "What is the state of the British public schools today?" In the middle of a speech by another man -- Nicolas Dromgoole -- which Robin had arranged, the speaker raised his voice and asked the question "What is the state of the public school boy today?" And at that stage, dressed in a wild-appearing multi-colored lumber jacket and

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a red baseball cap, I was pushed through the door by Robin and I walked into the chamber just as the speaker was saying "What is the state of the British public school boy today?" Jim Schlesinger, who later became the U.S. Secretary of Defense, CIA Director, and Secretary of Energy was there that night. He comes over to the National War College every year, and he reminds me of that event every year. His memory of me was seeing me come into the hall in that lumber jacket. It made a hit. Made my name, I guess. Then I gave a speech, in which I claimed to be the original public school boy from the public schools of East Whistlestop, Illinois. I enjoyed that. That was fun. But Robin really produced most of it. He produced the speeches for both Dromgoole and for me.

Ritchie: So there was a certain amount of stage managing.

Shuman: There certainly was.

Ritchie: Which was a critical element.

Shuman: Yes. Robin was pushing me to do well in the Union. He would come around to all of his friends and help us with our speeches. Even when he went down and became a barrister in London he would send telegrams, or call us, or come up when we had an important speech, to help us with it ahead of time. It was self-education. The speech teacher didn't do this. Your closest friends did it.

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Ritchie: Which is the Oxford tradition.

Shuman: Yes, the tradition of self-education, right.

Ritchie: I think it might be a good idea to stop at this point, so we can start up the next time with your coming back to the United States and going to Washington. But this has really been a very interesting session for me.

Shuman: Well, there was a lot that happened that I haven't talked about.

Ritchie: Is there something in this period that you think is particularly important that we didn't cover?

Shuman: Well, you might ask me how I got with Mr. Douglas, which grew out of the fact that I worked for him in the '48 election. I did that business in '48, as head of the downstate committee. I worked in his campaign. Then I went to England, so I didn't go with him to Washington, or he didn't ask me to go in his first term in '49. While I was at Oxford he read about me in the *Manchester Guardian* to which he subscribed. They reported some debates in the Union, and when I became president, and when at Jeremy Thorpe's request I was one of the main speakers at the Liberal party conference. Mr. Douglas read about me in the British papers, recognized my name, and remembered that I had been part of his local campaign in 1948.

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When I came back, I taught at Illinois, but I was unhappy. I really wanted to do more in politics. I worked again in Douglas' '54 campaign as the faculty advisor to the Young Democrats, and I campaigned for him in Champaign County. And whenever he came through I would help swell the crowd. After the campaign he was looking for a legislative assistant, a number two person in his office, because the then number-two man Bob Wallace, was moving to the Banking Committee as its staff director. Mr. Douglas came through Champaign, and he was with a fellow who was on the Journalism faculty, and he offered him the job, but he didn't want it because he wanted to stay in teaching. But he suggested me, and Mr. Douglas remembered me.

Well, this was in November. My wife was about six months, seven months pregnant with our first child. I was really being starved to death. I made \$4500. I had been looking around for a job the previous summer. I'd gone to the various journal magazines, to *Time* magazine and *Newsweek* and so on -- I was *Time* magazine's stringer when I was at Oxford, so I had a certain number of contacts there. I was interviewed by the *Washington Post*, by WTOP, and a few others and was offered a job by the *Post*. But I decided to take the Foreign Service exam. I took the exam and passed it, the last four day exam they gave, and I was about ready to go into the Foreign Service. I passed it and I was in the 99th percentile, out of the several thousand people who

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took it. But I was in Washington that summer. Betty and I sublet Robin Day's apartment in Georgetown. He was then working for the British Information Service here. And I didn't have the nerve to go up to the Hill and ask Mr. Douglas for a job. I was just afraid to do it.

After the election, he held "thank-the-voters" meetings around the state, which is one of the reasons he survived politically: with six years to go he came around and thanked people. There was a luncheon at the Moose Club in Champaign, and I got somebody to take my one o'clock class, and my wife and I went to the Moose Lodge to hear Mr. Douglas thank the voters. He never ate at these lunches. He would go up and down the aisle shaking hands with people, greeting everybody. He came to me, and he greeted me like a long-lost friend. He remembered me. He poured it on. Of course, I was flattered. Then about three o'clock I was home, and I got a call from the journalist friend who said "Mr. Douglas would like to see you in Danville," which was forty miles away. He said, "I think he's going to offer you a job." My wife was at a faculty tea and I couldn't reach her. I didn't have any money in my wallet. The car had only an eighth of a tank of gas. I drove to Danville. I left her a note saying: "I'm going to Danville to be interviewed by Mr. Douglas. If he offers me a job I'm going to take it."

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I got over there. He was then ill. He drank milk in Southern Illinois that hadn't been pasteurized and got undulant fever. He didn't know what his illness was then, but he would rest between meetings. He was up in the hotel room with a blanket over him and talked to me about the job. He then asked everybody else to leave, and then he asked me -- he took me to the woodshed -- if there was anything in my background that might be harmful, especially if I had belonged to the Communist party. I said, no. I said I had belonged to the ADA [Americans for Democratic Action], and he laughed. He said, "Oh, I've done much worse than that!" So he hired me. Called me about a week later and offered me \$6500. I was so pleased, a fifty percent increase in salary. Well, I didn't have any cash. I had to borrow enough money from the local county chairman to fill my car with gas, and drove back. Then I resigned at the end of the semester and came down to Washington.

But I got the job because I'd worked in his campaigns, which was very important. He always remembered people who came out and heard him or worked for him. He was a believer in that form of patronage. People would come in for a job and he'd say "Well, what have you done? Have you ever done anything in politics?" "Oh, no, I'm neutral. I've never done anything." And they expected one to think well of them. Well, I didn't think well of them at all. I mean, where were they when we needed them? And he

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also felt strongly that while intellectuals got rewards in politics because of their belief in issues that to be successful in politics there had to be rewards for people who didn't have an intellectual view. So he believed in patronage in the sense that one rewarded party workers who were qualified. He didn't want to give a job to anyone who wasn't qualified, but it didn't bother him to reward party people who were qualified.

This was ironic, because the organizational Democrats put him up for the Senate because they were afraid that as the former independent alderman in Chicago he wouldn't recognize the party in the state, and they therefore wanted Stevenson for governor and Douglas for senator, so they could get Douglas out of the way. The fact is that Stevenson was really not only non-party, but he played to the other side to a considerable degree. He ignored the party, and I think it's fair to say that if Mr. Douglas had been governor he would have gotten along much better with the party than Stevenson did. I'm sure he wouldn't have let them steal the Capitol dome, but he would have been more understanding of their patronage problems than Stevenson was.

End Interview #1

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Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Interview #2: The Senate in the 1950s

(July 29, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Ritchie: You said that when you were a child your father took you to see Franklin Roosevelt.

Shuman: In the early '30s, probably before 1935, my father took me to Chicago to see Franklin Roosevelt. He spoke to the convention of the American Farm Bureau Federation, one of the three groups for whom my father worked. Roosevelt came out to speak to them, at the depth of the Depression. I have two very vivid memories of that occasion. One was watching Roosevelt go by in his car at very close range at the stockyards in Chicago, and the second was seeing him in braces and on crutches, come in on the arm of one or two people. I saw him standing in his braces, which one never saw in pictures. It's illustrative of the interest that my father and my mother took in issues that were vital at the time that he would take me to Chicago to see the President (See [Appendix](#)).

I have a couple of other things that I wanted to mention concerning my father. He was a natural teacher, and he had great enthusiasm. He could take complex issues and simplify them (which was also the case with Mr. [Douglas](#)). Let me tell you of one thing he did, to illustrate that, when he first tried to get farmers in

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the county we lived in, Whiteside County, to use the new fertilizers in the late '30s. He was the first one in the hundred and two counties in the state to have a soil lab, where farmer's soil was tested and then my father advised them what fertilizer to put on their soil in terms of potash and phosphorous and nitrogen. There was a road leading into town, to the county seat, and there was a hill along the side of the road. A farmer by the name of Schroeder lived there. What my father did was to take the new fertilizers and spell out the farmer's name along the side of the hill: SCHROEDER. And after a rain and in a matter of ten days or two weeks, that had grown two or three times as high as the rest of the pasture, and was much, much greener. It was so green that it seemed almost a deep black. Farmers had to drive into the county seat on this road, and they would see the name. Then they'd come into the soil lab and sign up. He did all kinds of things like that. He did the same thing in India. He spent ten years in the villages of India, teaching farmers there by the methods he used to teach the farmers in Illinois. Even though Whiteside did not have the richest soil in the state, or in the

Midwest, for several years the county had the highest average of corn yield in the country.

That reminds me of one other thing: when he was teaching high school agriculture at Atwood, he had a group of farm boys who were not from very literate or prosperous families, but

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he inspired them enough that that class of students, in the agriculture course, produced a yield on their experimental plots of a hundred bushels of corn to the acre. This would have been in 1924, '25, when that was unknown. But he did it, and the students got all kinds of praise and recognition as a result. I use that to illustrate his ability, a) to teach, and b) to inspire people.

There are two or three other things I wanted to mention. I want to mention Alan Bullock, who was the dean of my college at Oxford, and who wrote *Hitler, A Study in Tyranny*. Later he was the Founding Master of St. Catherine's College, Vice Chancellor of Oxford, and now Lord Bullock. In my second year at New College, Oxford, I moved out of the college and into a college house, where he lived with his family. I lived in the front. Of course, I stayed up at Oxford during part of the vacations. Those who lived in England went home during the six weeks vacation, but I couldn't very well fly back to the states, so I stayed around for at least a part of the time. When he was writing that classic book, he came to see me one evening to talk. He talked about two things: one was whether or not we would have declared war on Hitler if Hitler had not declared war on us. The Japanese attacked us, but Hitler then declared war. If that hadn't happened, probably we would have fought the Pacific first and it would have been a very different kind of World War II. I told him I thought we would

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have declared war, because of the tripartite alliance among the Japanese, Italians, and the Germans.

The second thing he told me was that all kinds of books were coming out then on World War II history. The generals were writing their books, from Guderian on the German side to Montgomery, and Eisenhower, and Patton and all the rest. He gave me a long list of books, which for the most part I read. Not only did I read them, but I read Churchill's volumes not only on World War II but also on the First World War, which are in many ways as interesting if not more so than his Second World War volumes. Then what I did during my vacations was to visit many of the battle sites in Western Europe, where the war had been fought. So while I'm here at the National War College teaching Congress and the Presidency, in some respects I have more knowledge of history of at least World War II and

since then, in terms of warfare, than most of the students and some of the faculty. But anyway, it whetted my interest and it's been a lifelong interest since then.

In the summer of '48 I went over to get into Oxford, and that wasn't the only thing I did. I spent three months in Europe. I flew to Glasgow first of all, which was really in a terrible condition. I thought I was back in a nineteenth century industrial town. It was so dark and gloomy and grimy. Part of the reason for that was that at that time people still burned soft coal in their fireplaces, and the coal and the soot permeated the

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city. Then I went to Tonnypandy and Trealaw, in the Rhondda Valley in Wales, which was the heart of the mining area. I spent about a week there, which I found fascinating. Then I spent several days at the Olympics in London. Then, I went over to the World Council of Churches first meeting in Amsterdam, where Robert Taft's brother, Charlie Taft, was the most prominent American there. Tony Benn's mother, who was a Congregational layman, was part of the British delegation. There was a great ditty at the time: the three theologians who were most prominent were Dodd of Britain, Barth of Switzerland, and Niebuhr of the U.S. There was a little ditty that "Thou shalt love the Lord thy Dodd, with all thy Barth, and thy Niebuhr as thyself."

After that, I got into Western Germany. One couldn't go in then without a permit, and they were not easy to get. A tourist couldn't get one. I did get a permit at the Hague which allowed me to go from Amsterdam down to Switzerland, but I had some friends in Bonn and Bad Godesberg, and in Frankfort-on-Main. Once I got in, there wasn't much they could do to get me out until I wanted to leave, so even though I only had a three day pass I visited Reimscheid, and Solingen and Cologne in the Ruhr, which were then leveled. And Frankfort-on-Main was leveled, even two years after the war. In that period the Berlin airlift was going on, and I could hear the planes from Weisbaden go over, almost every minute of the day and night. I was struck then how

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relatively little concerned the West Germans seemed to be that the Russians would attack, as compared with the anxiety at home about whether they would attack. People comment now about how the Europeans and the NATO allies are lackadaisical and really don't care as much as we do about the Russian threat. I'm not certain that's true, but the outward emotions about it were then the same as they are now. They didn't seem to be as concerned as some of us were.

Ritchie: Why do you think that is?

Shuman: I would say it's living near the threat for such a long time. But it was true then. I was struck by it. And then I went down through Switzerland and down to Rome, and then back to Paris. I spent two or three weeks in Rome, and I spent more than a month that summer in Paris. I had friends in the American Friends Service Committee, who were doing things like rebuilding bridges and bicycle paths. I did more than visit Oxford in the summer of '48. I also wrote an article every week for the local paper in Morrison. The editor said, "I want you to tell us what's happened to that Marshall Aid money." Of course, one never saw it, because on the whole it was used for balance of payments purposes, which then allowed the country to do things it otherwise couldn't do.

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I have one anecdote which I want to tell about Oxford. When I was elected president of the Union, it happened at the time that an American, who was either the Regis Professor of Jurisprudence, or the Chichele Professor of Jurisprudence, a man by the name of Arthur Lehman Goodhart, became the first American to head an Oxford college, University College. There is a dispute about which was the first Oxford college, but University goes back to the mid-thirteenth century, and he was the first American ever to head an Oxford college. He was a very distinguished man, a cousin of [Herbert Lehman](#), governor of New York and later senator. But anyway, Walter Lippmann made a trip to Europe every spring, and Lippmann almost always came to Oxford. In 1952 he came to Oxford and stayed with the Goodharts at University College, and Goodhart had a small luncheon for several Americans, and invited me. I was the only student there. One of the people who came was a man by the name of J. Barton Leach, who was a law professor at Harvard, and whose expertise was in real property. He was an advisor to the Pentagon on their property dealings. Well, Barton Leach was a big, tall fellow, and he was Mr. Rotary Club, hail-fellow-well-met, almost--what's the Sinclair Lewis character?

Ritchie: Babbitt?

Shuman: Babbitt. He was almost a Babbitt, but very intelligent otherwise. Knew it all, pushy fellow. I always thought that he probably came because the Harvard faculty wanted

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him to leave for a year -- as happened to many visiting professors. About a third of the visiting professors were people that one knew their faculty was just glad to get rid of for a year. He was that kind. Anyway, we arrived at University College together. Mrs. Goodhart met us. She was English. Goodhart was on the honors list, but as an American he couldn't accept it, but she was Lady Goodhart and he was Professor Goodhart. We walked through the corridors of the whole side of

University College together with Lady Goodhart and we went back to the library, where Lippmann was. I had never met him or seen him before. He was a very tiny man. I don't suppose he was more than five feet two, and had very small hands. I was amazed, because all I had seen of him was the picture of his head and shoulders in the papers.

We walked in and Lady Goodhart introduced us to Lippmann. She first introduced J. Barton Leach, and Leach slapped him on the back and said, "How are ya, Walter," or "Nice to see ya, Walter." And Lippmann really put him down. He said, "Well, I don't think we've ever met." Then she introduced me, and here I was the undergraduate, and here was the Harvard professor. She introduced me, and Lippmann said, "Oh, Sir Pierson Dixon at the United Nations told me about you," putting down Leach. Well, what had happened was that my friend at Oxford, Peter Blaker, married Sir Pierson Dixon's daughter Jennifer and had been to New York to court her shortly after I was elected president of the Union.

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He had preceded me as president, and had in fact defeated me for president. But apparently they had talked about my election, because my picture was in *Time* magazine. But Lippmann deliberately put down Leach with, "Sir Pierson Dixon told me about you."

Ritchie: You mentioned going to the House of Commons.

Shuman: The one thing I was unable to do when I was in England was to hear Churchill speak. I went to the House of Commons many times, and I did hear him answer questions, but I never heard him make a full-blown Churchillian speech. During the early part of 1952, Churchill and [Anthony] Eden came to the states. I think it was over Korea, that was after we had pushed to the Yalu, and there was some kind of an incident that brought them to the states, the question of using the atom bomb or some issue that created a great stir. They flew over to the states and talked with Truman and came back and there was to be a two-day foreign policy debate, at which Churchill originally was to lead off, and Eden was to give the final speech.

The father of Alasdair Morrison, a friend of mine at Oxford, was the Speaker of the House of Commons, "Shakes" Morrison. Alasdair got me a ticket for the two days of debate to the Distinguished Strangers gallery in the House of Commons, so I had a terrific seat. The first day I had tea in Morrison's private

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lodgings. The Speaker lives in the House of Commons. But anyway, instead of Churchill leading off, Eden led off the debate, gave the opening twenty minute

speech. Dick Crossman, who was a Labor back bencher who often came to Oxford and who invited me to dinner that night at the House of Commons, interrupted Eden and almost devoured Eden on a couple of points. I had gone down to hear Churchill, but I never got to hear him, because that night the King died. There was a month of mourning, and the debate was cancelled. So I never in my entire time there got to hear him make a proper Churchillian speech, although I did hear almost every other major political figure in the country.

Ritchie: You mentioned that Churchill refused to come to Oxford. Was he invited on various occasions?

Shuman: Yes, he certainly was. You see, in 1933, the Oxford Union passed a motion that "In no circumstances will this house fight for King and Country." Now, that isn't quite as bad as it sounds, but Hitler took it to mean that the British were decadent, and the youth wouldn't fight, and it encouraged him, or at least Churchill thought it encouraged him. The phrase "King and Country" though has a jingoistic connotation, so while one might fight in defense of the country, some weren't going to fight for this jingoistic thing of "King and Country." That was part of the meaning. A man by the name of C.E.M. Joad, who was a philosopher, led it off, and the motion was passed. A week later

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Churchill sent his son Randolph to Oxford to move that the minutes of the meeting be expunged from the record. The Union refused to pass Randolph's motion by a large margin and later Randolph was thrown into the Isis River, which is the upper reaches of the Thames. Well, for these reasons, Winston Churchill refused to speak in the Union and at the political clubs. He thought Oxford was decadent. A similar situation existed with Churchill in his relations with R.A.B. Butler, who probably should have been selected as prime minister when Churchill left and Eden was picked instead. But Butler had been on the wrong side of events in the '30s. Because he supported Chamberlain and Munich, Churchill was determined that no one who made that misjudgment should succeed him as leader and prime minister of his own party. The former is the reason why Churchill didn't come to Oxford.

We had a great debate when I was at Oxford, when Randolph Churchill came back to debate C.E.M. Joad. Joad was a moral philosopher who broadcast for the BBC, but he'd been caught riding in a first-class railway carriage on a third-class ticket, and the BBC thought this was a bit much for their moral philosopher, and fired him. We had a debate. The motion was "This House regrets the influence exercised by the United States of America as the dominant power among democratic nations." Robin Day, as president, staged it. He assigned me to Churchill. It was alleged we were leading Britain around by the nose. Joad spoke

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first, and he was a snarling, nasty little fellow, and people were so incensed at what he said that they moved from his side of the house to our side of the house. His line was that American culture "infects, corrupts, and pollutes." Randolph had imbibed too much and he was about three sheets to the wind. At one stage when he spoke he gestured with his left arm in such a sweeping motion that he actually hit one of the students behind him on the face. Then a man by the name of William Rees-Mogg, who later became editor of the *London Times* and was the leading conservative, who was sitting next to us, kept telling Randolph: "Don't mention railway carriages." But Churchill finally said that Joad was a "third-class Socrates," which was a personal attack, and everyone was so incensed at this they got up and moved back to Joad's side. My memory is that Joad's side won the debate, largely because of Randolph, but it was a repeat of the '33 occasion.

Ritchie: You had mentioned that they sit facing each other.

Shuman: Yes, just as in the House of Commons.

Ritchie: And people actually change sides according to their sympathies with the speakers?

Shuman: Yes, that's right, they can. They don't often do it. You sit on the side that you expect to vote for, generally, although sometimes the place is so crowded you just take a seat where you can get it. The students vote by teller as they leave.

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They go through the "aye" or "nay" door and are counted by the tellers.

Ritchie: There's something especially physical about that: walking over to your side and taking your position with the rest.

Shuman: Yes, that is very important, and it is one of the reasons that the two party system has survived in England. The early Parliament met in the Church of St. James, which you pass through as you walk into the present Parliament. It was then a Catholic Church, and became an Anglican Church under Henry VIII, and people sat across from each other. They were two sword lengths apart so they couldn't cut off each other's heads when they got angry. To vote with the other side, a member physically had to walk across the floor. This has had a great influence on politics, and I think the fact that in this country we have semicircular seating has helped cause the umbrella nature of our parties. The semi-circular chamber is taken from the French. Everybody says our institutions came from England. They didn't. Many of them came from the French.

I noticed when I worked in the Senate that the Democrats who were closer to the Republicans than others generally sat in the middle. I could almost see them move over to the other side when there was a debate, and then move back, so they could by osmosis join the other side, without the same kind of public criticism

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that goes with walking across the floor. As Churchill himself said in his memoirs, he'd done that twice, so he knew something about it. He built the new House of Commons in the same fashion. He was determined it shouldn't be semicircular, after it was bombed in World War II, and he determined that the number of seats should be smaller than the total number of members, so that on most occasions it seemed to be fuller than it was, and on great occasions it was so full that people had to stand. This creates an atmosphere of marvelous tension and excitement, which we really don't have in the same way. It is the result of the architecture. Architecture affects politics in a very meaningful way.

Ritchie: Also in the Senate, people don't address each other.

Shuman: They address the chair. Well, they do that in Parliament as well. They say, "Mr. Speaker," and refer to "The Right Honorable Member from Such and Such." So they never say "you."

Ritchie: I thought we should talk about your working for Senator [\[Paul\] Douglas](#) in the 1950s. We ended last week talking about his offering you the position. I wondered if you could tell me about Douglas' qualities, and what it was that attracted you to him. I noticed, by the way, that he was a political economist. Did you know about him before he got into politics?



Senator Paul H. Douglas
USIA Photo
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Shuman: Yes, I certainly did know about him before he got into the Senate. I didn't know him personally until the '48 election. The first time I met him, I think was in the summer or fall of '47, before he was the candidate. I went up to Chicago and the University and visited him in his office when it was thought he would be a candidate. I also heard him speak at the University of Illinois before he became the candidate. I also saw him at the American Economics Association's annual meeting in Chicago in December, 1947, just as he heard that the Democrats had slated him. He was quite famous in Illinois, because he was one of fifty members, as a Chicago alderman, of the city council, and he consistently took on the organization. I heard him say that the best training he had ever had to deal with [Lyndon Johnson](#) was the fact that he had been a minority of one with the organization people in Chicago. It was a great stroke when Colonel Arvey put up [Adlai] Stevenson and Douglas for governor and senator, and a lot of us were really excited about it. That really got me involved in party politics, to support those two people. They were two extraordinarily able people.

Douglas and Stevenson had some minor fallings out over that '48 campaign. Stevenson on the whole would not mention Mr. Douglas in his speeches, except before labor groups which were partisan, or before large Democratic groups. Mr. Douglas made a point of backing the ticket no matter where he spoke, to the

Rotary Clubs or wherever. Stevenson was unwilling to do that. The second thing Stevenson did was he out-waited Mr. Douglas. At joint rallies, Stevenson would always come late and would arrive in the middle of Mr. Douglas' speech, and he'd walk down the center aisle and everybody'd get up and cheer. He put himself in the limelight. There was one occasion when Mr. Douglas absolutely refused to speak till Stevenson got there. They waited I guess an hour for him. But Mr. Douglas wasn't having that ploy any more.

A third thing which divided them, which again was a part of Stevenson's lack of partisanship, was in the campaign of 1950, when Stevenson was governor and Scott Lucas, who was then the majority leader of the Senate, was up for reelection. Mr. Douglas was campaigning for Lucas. He had a jeep and a loud speaker and he'd go street corner to street corner all over the state. Douglas started the modern street-corner handshaking, go to the shopping centers, go to where the people are form of campaigning, as opposed to having a rally where the people come to you. People didn't go to political meetings anymore. One had to go to meet them. Douglas was speaking in Bloomington, which was Stevenson's hometown, either at Illinois State Normal University, as it was called then, or Wesleyan University. He was on the street corner campaigning for Lucas, and for Stevenson's legislature, the lower house of which was Democratic, and he spotted a limousine down the street, and saw that Stevenson and Lucas were sitting there in the

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governor's limousine, while Douglas was speaking from his jeep. That night Douglas was in Springfield with Stevenson and he urged him, very strongly, to get out and campaign. Douglas said that if he didn't he would lose his legislature and Lucas would go down the drain. Now, the politicians had made a big mistake. In '48, the pros had put Stevenson and Douglas up, thinking they would be defeated, and they won. Because they'd won, the pros thought they could put anybody on the ticket again and win automatically. In '50 the Chicago organization put a man up for Cook County sheriff, Tubby Gilbert, who had a very bad reputation and essentially helped bring down the whole ticket. A big mistake. But Mr. Douglas was urging Stevenson to go all out, and Stevenson said to him that he'd been elected with a lot of Republican votes and he didn't intend to do anything to alienate them. Mr. Douglas was infuriated by that.

He was also unhappy with him on one other issue. The WPA during the Depression had built all kinds of marvelous things around the country, which people are now finally recognizing. The WPA restored New Salem, Illinois, [Lincoln](#)'s home. And because people had made such terrible jokes about the WPA and had made nasty statements about people who were involved in the WPA, Mr. Douglas wanted to see that the WPA got some recognition for the good things it did, like Lincoln's hometown. So he urged Stevenson to put a sign up saying New Salem was built by the WPA,

and Stevenson refused to do so again on grounds that it might offend his North Shore Republican friends.

There was one other incident in the '52 election, when Stevenson became the Democratic candidate. Mr. Douglas had gone to him earlier to say that people had proposed that Mr. Douglas run for president, and he didn't want to do it, and in fact he turned it down for a variety of reasons, which we can go into if you want to. But he'd gone to Stevenson and said "People will try to play us off against each other, and we must be very careful about this." He said, "I'm being pressed by all kinds of people, [\[Estes\] Kefauver](#) and others, to support them." But he said, "I don't want to support somebody outside the state if you are going to be a candidate. You don't need to announce now, but if there's any possibility that you'll be a candidate, please tell me so I don't support somebody outside the state." And Stevenson told him that there was absolutely no way that he would be a candidate and that he was uninterested. He was a reluctant dragon. Later Mr. Douglas found out that at the very time that this had happened, Stevenson had his emissaries going to see the Catholic Cardinal in Chicago to ask his position about a divorced man on the ticket. So in fact he had plans at that stage.

Then there was an issue about the delegates to the convention in 1952. The Democratic party then gave extra delegates -- if the party had the governor or if it had a senator. Generally

speaking, the governor got twelve and Douglas got twelve. Well, those 24 delegates were largely selected by Stevenson without putting key Douglas people on the list, even though there had been a promise of that. Only a few got on, and Stevenson had agreed with Douglas about this. So there were a number of frictions between Stevenson and Douglas, which in a sense was too bad, although Mr. Douglas very loyally supported him in both the '52 and the '56 Presidential campaigns. In fact I don't think Douglas ever publicly said any of these things about Stevenson, but I knew about them, and I knew that Douglas was offended to some degree about them.

Ritchie: You said that Douglas had reasons why he didn't want to be president.

Shuman: Yes, several reasons. He was called up to New York by what was then the Eastern Establishment, which didn't pick the presidential candidates of both parties, but the presidential candidates of both parties had to pass muster with the City Bank, [Henry] Luce, and others. They had a veto over both party candidates. I guess you'd call it the Eastern Foreign Policy Establishment. Mr. Douglas was called to New York, where I understand Luce was there, the head of

City Bank was there, one of the Rockefellers, and so on. And they offered him a million bucks as a campaign chest, if he would be willing to be a candidate. This I think was in '51, a year before the

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convention. Well, he did not want to be president, and he had several reasons. Number one: in the twenties and thirties he'd belonged to some organizations which later turned out to be pro-Communist. Now, he had gone to Russia in the twenties and had come back as a very determined opponent of Stalin and the Russian system. He couldn't have been more opposed to it. In almost all of these organizations he either fought to get rid of them and was successful in doing so, or resigned and got out if he failed. He'd been kicked in the shins by them many times over policy issues. So his record was extraordinarily good. There's no question about him being a vigorous anti-Communist who had fought in the trenches. Other people hadn't had that experience. But nonetheless he'd been a member of a lot of these groups. So that was one reason. He thought that in the atmosphere of Joe McCarthy this would be a very difficult thing to defend.

Secondly, he'd had a divorce at a time when no divorced man had been elected president. And the divorce issues plagued Stevenson in 1952 and 1956 as it did not in 1980 when Reagan ran.

Third, he didn't think that he was emotionally suited for the job, which I don't think was true. Mr. Douglas had problems sleeping. I don't think he slept very much many nights. He read late, and he'd get up early. But he felt that he would worry too

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much about the issues. Now, I think he was wrong about that, because I saw both with Mr. Douglas and Senator [Proxmire](#) that they were quite capable of handling the big issues. It wasn't difficult for them to decide how to vote on NATO or any of the major issues. The Marshall Plan, the budget, public works and so on, were easy issues to decide. They would fret and be upset more by some personal event or some family difficulty than any of the great issues. I think for people who have been in public life for a long time, this is true. The big issues are relatively easy to decide. I don't think he really would have fretted that much, emotionally, about them. But he was afraid that he would, and thought that he was temperamentally unsuited for the job.

For these reasons he didn't want to be president, and he was quite content to be a senator. This was the fulfillment of his ambitions, really and truly it was. This also made it easier for him to be tough on issues that a presidential candidate couldn't be as tough on for fear of offending the west or the south or some

interest group. But for all these reasons he didn't want to be president. When the group in New York asked him the question: who was his boyhood hero?, he said his boyhood hero was Eugene Victor Debs, Debs was the Socialist candidate for president several times! Mr. Douglas did this deliberately, as a pixyish thing, to get them off his back. But his candidacy went down the drain when

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he told Henry Luce and a Rockefeller that his boyhood hero was Eugene Victor Debs.

Ritchie: From what I've read about him, I get the feeling that if his boyhood hero was Eugene Victor Debs, he would tell them even if he wanted to be president. He didn't seem like the type who held things back for public relations reasons.

Shuman: I don't think he advertised it. The *Chicago Tribune* for years and years would start their articles, their news articles: "Senator Paul H. Douglas, Democrat of Illinois, who supported a Socialist candidate for president, said today. . . ." They would do that. What happened, in 1932 Mr. Douglas could not go for Hoover, because of his economic policies. He refused to act at the depth of the Depression. Roosevelt in the '32 campaign came out for a balanced budget also at the depth of the Depression, which Mr. Douglas with his belief in counter-cyclical fiscal policies -- and this was before [John Maynard] Keynes' book came out in 1936 -- was opposed to. That would have been a disastrous policy. He therefore voted for Norman Thomas, and I think supported him publicly. He wrote a book advocating a new party, which his enemies delighted quoting from for more than 30 years. But he never, ever joined the Socialist party, and was not a Socialist, because he did not agree with the pledge that one had to take that the state should own the means of production. He was for the diffusion of economic power into smaller and

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smaller units, rather than substituting state ownership for private monopoly. He believed in breaking up monopolies, in anti-trust, and the diffusion of economic power, and the diffusion of political power. But he couldn't join the Socialist party, because he opposed putting the ownership of the means of production in the hands of the state.

Ritchie: He strikes me as a man who knew his own mind.

Shuman: Yes, he did.

Ritchie: Wasn't a follower, but set his own course.

Shuman: He did, but he was nonetheless a very good politician. People think of him as a professor, but he was an extraordinarily good politician, partly because he liked people, and he reacted to them. He enjoyed that. He enjoyed the Irish mafia. He enjoyed the Eastern European ethnic groups. He enjoyed the political types. He appreciated their role. There was a poem about the professional soldier that he quoted, in the ward meetings that I went to in Chicago. I was in virtually every ward in Chicago, and there were times on Sunday mornings in the wards on the Near North Side and along the Chicago River where I felt my life was endangered by some of the people who were there. He would quote this poem to them, praising them and raising up the journeyman political worker. It went like this:

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The day and the hour the heavens were falling,
The day when earth's foundations fled,
Followed their mercenary calling,
Took their wages and are dead.

Their shoulders held the sky suspended,
They stood and earth's foundations stay.
What God abandoned, they defended,
And saved the sum of things for pay.

He felt that whereas the intellectuals could work in politics because they were involved in issues, and believed in the things they were doing, a party organization based on reward was necessary if the party were to attract a lot of ordinary people to do the foot work, and I think he was right about that. He was really more in favor of patronage, postmasters and the rest, than Stevenson was. If he'd been governor, I think he would have worked better with the organization than Stevenson did, even though he was put up for senator because the organization was afraid that if he were governor he'd act like he did in the Chicago city council and oppose the organization.

Ritchie: What type of person was he to work for?

Shuman: One got caught up in his causes, so in many respects I worked harder in the years I worked for him than I have ever had to work before or since. He was a man who attracted great loyalty from his staff. We all loved him, deeply. We took a ride on his magic carpet. He was really a father-figure to us. He was very kind, very generous. I only can think of maybe

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once in twelve years when I was in any way reprimanded by him. He just didn't do that.

He was a Quaker and he had this routine of silence for thirty minutes or so in the morning, very early, thinking about what had gone right the day before, the good things he'd done, and the bad things he'd done. One day he had a tumultuous hearing with George Humphrey. Humphrey was then Secretary of the Treasury, and was a very boorish man. He was a self-made man, self-educated, who thought he knew everything and knew very little. He knew nothing about economics to speak of. But he had testified before the Joint Economic Committee, and Mr. Douglas had really trimmed him. George Humphrey was the strong man of the Eisenhower administration, and Mr. Douglas absolutely devastated him. I'm told that Humphrey went back to his office and pouted for three hours, wouldn't see anybody after this contentious interrogation of him over the economic basis for the budget estimates. Mr. Douglas just absolutely tore him apart. But Mr. Douglas came back that day, after that hearing and said to me, very informally, "I hate George Humphrey. I hate the Republicans." I didn't pay any attention to it. It was the kind of thing one would say when very angry. The next morning he came in and he called me into his office and he said to me, very seriously, "You know, yesterday I said I hate the Republicans and I hate George Humphrey." He said, "I must apologize for that. I withdraw that. I take it back."

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He said, "I've been thinking about that. I must not have hate in my heart." He genuinely got down on his knees to think about the way he lived his personal life. I thought this retraction was incredible.

Then I have another anecdote about the time that Chairman of the Federal Reserve William McChesney Martin came to see him. Mr. Douglas wouldn't tell a white lie. Before he would allow Jane Enger, his secretary, to say he wasn't in the office to someone he didn't want to talk to on the phone, he would step out into the hall. Just absolutely honest. But William McChesney Martin came up and they had had some differences over Federal Reserve Board policy. William McChesney Martin came up to say to him that he had heard that Mr. Douglas had criticized some of the things he'd done. He knew Mr. Douglas hadn't said that, but he just wanted to hear it from him. And Mr. Douglas turned to him and said, "Well, I don't remember saying those things, but since I've thought them many times, I probably said them." McChesney Martin, who was sort of a Woodrow Wilson type, with a high fixed white collar and very prissy, just turned and left. He didn't know what to do. But Mr. Douglas couldn't tell him a white lie.

I have one other anecdote on this subject. Shortly after he was elected, a candidate for a federal judgeship came to see him. The man professed to be a

champion of Mr. Douglas' run for office but the Senator knew that he had in fact contributed to his

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opponent C. Wayland (Curley) Brooks. He had played both sides of the fence. Mr. Douglas confronted him with that fact. The man got ill and went into the bathroom and threw up. But he was a highly qualified man and Mr. Douglas did not use senatorial courtesy to stop him. He became one of the finest judges in the country.

One other thing, there were times on Thursday night when he would go out to the state absolutely worn out and say, "Do I have to do this again? I never have any time with my family." And he'd come back refreshed on Monday morning. I used to be amazed at this. How was it that he left so tired and came back so refreshed? I really found out why that was after I campaigned with him a lot. First of all, going out to speak to groups -- and he would speak and shake hands all around -- is really easier than life in the Senate because he got what I call "home run questions." The issues he knew about and worked on and had hearings about, were the ones people asked him about, and it was very simple to answer them. People don't realize that most questions politicians get on the stump are easy, shoulder high, home run balls. Secondly, he genuinely enjoyed people, as I've said. Thirdly, the people he talked to when he campaigned were the people who look upon politics as their hobby. Just as some people bowl, some people play bridge, some people play tennis, so there are people who are political junkies. These are the people

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who come to the political meetings. They live and eat politics. That's their hobby. And they're very knowledgable. You don't need to take a poll to find out how you're standing at all; they'll tell you. This interaction between the senator and his constituents, and particularly the political junkies, refreshed him. A lot of people over the years have said to me: "Wouldn't it be better if we had a system like Britain where the member doesn't have to go back to the constituency regularly?" I've always been offended by that, because it seemed to me that Mr. Douglas got so much from that. And the same with Bill Proxmire. They came back knowing what public opinion was. They came back refreshed. They came back better able to do their job by this business of seeing a wide variety of groups and interests, at least every other week if not every week.

Ritchie: But it had to be physically straining.

Shuman: Extraordinarily so. I remember in the '66 campaign, I was in Illinois from July 4th, and along about September there was a weekend -- well, a Sunday

-- I had free, the only Sunday I didn't work for all those months. I drove down to see my parents, who lived in Champaign, 140 miles south of Chicago. I'd been working around the clock, producing at least a speech a day, and a press release a day, and other things as well, campaigning, going to the ward meetings and the suburban county rallies. I got about ten miles south of Chicago and I couldn't

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keep my eyes open. I pulled over to the side of the road and slept a bit. Then I got up after ten minutes and went on, and it happened to me again. I went on, and it happened again. What I didn't realize was that I was exhausted. When I had a day when I wasn't responsible for anything, all I did was sleep. I couldn't keep awake. And that's the way a campaign is. It's exhausting. I don't know whether I could physically go through a campaign where I worked as hard as I did in those campaigns. And of course it is much more difficult for the candidate.

Ritchie: You had mentioned last week that when you first went down to interview with Douglas he was ill; and I've heard that Lyndon Johnson once described him as lying on a couch writhing in pain. Did he have a lot of physical illness then?

Shuman: I saw that reference, and it is incorrect that Mr. Douglas would writhe in pain. But Johnson was making fun of him, as he often did. I've heard from a variety of people that he did that in meetings with [Rayburn](#), where late in the afternoon they and others had drinks. Dick Bolling has told me that he was in meetings with Johnson and Rayburn where Johnson deliberately put Mr. Douglas down and tried to cut him off at the knees.

Ritchie: Douglas?

Shuman: Yes. And one of the things he would say was "There he is, writhing on his couch." His method was sarcasm and

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ridicule. Mr. Douglas was ill from the unpasteurized milk he drank in southern Illinois in the 1954 campaign. I went to work for him in January of 1955 and there was something very wrong with him. He couldn't figure out what it was, and he would wake up in the morning feeling strong, but by the noon hour he was exhausted and he had to take a nap. It was finally diagnosed as undulant fever. Drugs were prescribed and over a period of months he got rid of it. But during that period one of the things I did was to go to him at times when it was necessary for him to go to the Senate floor, and say: "Mr. Douglas, you've just got to go to the floor," when he really physically was unable to do so. He would get up from his couch. He didn't cuss or use bad language, but he was extraordinarily irritated by

this, and he would go over to the floor and take part in the debate. Invariably he'd come back and thank me profusely for having gotten him up when he didn't want to. But, yes, there was a year or so there when he was ill from undulant fever, and actually one could see the undulating nature of his illness, the twitching of his legs, which sleep repaired. Even a short nap repaired it. He did make a practice of taking a short nap after lunch, for years. He often talked to people while he was lying on his couch. He did have undulant fever when I went to meet him in Danville, but he didn't know what it was. But Johnson's references weren't sympathetic. They were sarcastic and aimed at ridicule.

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Ritchie: When you got to Washington in January 1955, what were your responsibilities?

Shuman: Well, I was the legislative assistant, the number two man in the office, at a time when there were really only three professional staff people. The administrative assistant in our office did not administer very much at all. Later when I was administrative assistant I didn't administer, I was a super-legislative person. A man by the name of Frank McCulloch had that job. He was an extraordinarily able fellow, went to the NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] as its chairman, and taught law at the University of Virginia after he left the NLRB. He was an absolutely amazing, saintly fellow like Mr. Douglas. Frank had been deeply involved in the issues that Mr. Douglas had been involved in in the thirties. He was his long-time friend. It was an example of what I think an AA has to be.

The one thing an AA has to be is a personal confidant of the senator. The senator must trust him. There aren't many people he can trust. Everyone is after him to do this or that. Even his staff is constantly pushing for their priorities to take first place. Two things that I did as an administrative assistant were a) I did my best to rise above my personal interests and tried not to get him to do things that I wanted him to do, my priorities, or my personal agenda and b) I always felt confident enough to tell both Douglas and Proxmire when I thought they were making a

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mistake. I thought that my first duty was to be able to go to them without fear that they'd fire me, and I felt secure enough in both cases that I could go to them and say, look, I think you're making a mistake on this, and say to them things that everybody else was afraid to tell them. This is one of the reasons why I'm critical of both [John] Poindexter and [Oliver] North, because I think they failed to do their duty to their president, their boss. To inform him was their first duty.

I was the legislative person, and for the first six years I worked in the Senate, until 1961, I was on the Senate floor every day. The Senate has changed very greatly since the time I was there, I think mostly for the better. When I came there in early 1955, Alaska and Hawaii were not yet states. The only two senators who were there then who are there now are [John Stennis](#) and [\[Strom\] Thurmond](#). And Thurmond left and came back. So I really had a longer time in the Senate as a staff person than all but one or two senators. [Richard Nixon](#) was vice president, and presided over the Senate. [Lyndon Johnson](#) was majority leader. [\[William\] Knowland](#) was minority leader. Georgia's [Walter George](#) was the [president pro tem](#) of the Senate, and there were people like [Estes Kefauver](#), [Harry Byrd](#), [Wayne Morse](#), [Jim Murray](#), [Joe O'Mahoney](#), Mr. Douglas, and [Gene Millikin](#) who were powers in the Senate and famous in the nation. But [John Kennedy](#), and [Everett Dirksen](#), and [Bob Kerr](#), and [Sam Ervin](#) were unknown, minor figures.

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They were really junior, backbench, unknown people when I first came. That's hard to realize now, but they were.

[Dick Russell](#), who was the most powerful senator, certainly after Walter George left anyway, was still a junior senator. Dirksen had just begun to make his name as an orator, and he served as the chief defender of [Joe McCarthy](#), during the censure debate which took place during the summer of 1954, which my wife Betty attended when we were here during that summer. She spent a lot of time in the Senate gallery. People forget that Dirksen was the defender of Joe McCarthy, and was his chief counsel. And I heard Dick Russell say on the floor, either during the '56 or '57 Civil Rights debate, or over the filibuster rule in that period, that "The Nigra" -- as he pronounced Negro -- "has his heel on the white man's neck." That was a very injudicious statement, and one which was expunged from the *[Congressional] Record*. But I heard him say that, and I've always thought that it was ironic that the two Senate office buildings -- and it tells one something about the Senate -- the two office buildings were named for the chief defender of segregation, because Russell believed in segregation in a way that some of the Southerners did not; and Dirksen, the chief defender of Joe McCarthy. They named the third building after [Phil Hart](#), who was an absolutely saintly fellow, and I knew him very well. Mr. Douglas used to comment that Phil Hart proved that a saint could actually get elected to the Senate. But there was a three

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hundred percent overrun on the cost of the building, which was very unfair to him!

This business of changing the *Record* was true then, and one of my jobs was routinely correcting the transcription after the debate. I spent a lot of time on it,

because Mr. Douglas was determined that the *Record* reflect accurately what he said. As an academic and a student of history he felt it had a great importance. That was the time when the head person in the Office of Senate Official [Reporters of Debate](#) was. . . .

Ritchie: James Murphy?

Shuman: Yes, Mr. Murphy was from a family who had done that for several generations. Mr. Murphy was terrific. I mean, no senator ever made an ungrammatical statement. No senator ever misquoted Shakespeare. Mr. Murphy saw to it, and he was absolutely loyal. The public has no concept or idea of the loyalty of that kind of staff, and Mr. Murphy personified how they worked in the Senate. But I used to spend a lot of time in that office making certain that the *Record* was accurate, and occasionally changing it. Mr. Douglas always reviewed it. The rule was a senator could change the *Record* provided he did not reflect adversely on another senator, or if he'd said no in debate to a question he'd been asked, he couldn't turn around and say yes, because that would change the nature of it. But apart

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from that, he could do anything he wanted to the *Record*. [Dick Neuberger](#) put it well. He was a senator from Oregon and both he and his wife were my friends. He was a newspaper man and an extraordinarily able senator who died an untimely death from cancer. Dick Neuberger used to say, "You know, the Senate is the only place in the world where you can say, 'Gee, I wish I had said that,' and then say it."

Along those lines, I also heard Bob Kerr, in a very famous debate, say that Eisenhower had no brains. [Homer Capehart](#) of Indiana objected to it, and Kerr then changed the *Record* to read that Eisenhower had no "fiscal" brains. When Capehart saw that, he got angry and took on Kerr. Now, Kerr could outmatch almost anyone in debate, except Mr. Douglas, although I once saw Dick Neuberger really stand up to him and push him down. Kerr was objecting because Neuberger was talking about some military base in Oklahoma, and Kerr used the business of saying "Have you ever been there?" When Neuberger said no, he said, "Well, then you have no right to enter into this." Neuberger responded in an extraordinarily tough manner, saying, "Well, if you had to be everywhere on every issue that he voted on, and know it personally, then you, Senator Kerr, couldn't vote on ninety percent of the issues." Neuberger stood his ground. Almost everyone else was afraid to. But Capehart did take him on on the Eisenhower remark. Capehart was not a very good debater. He was

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a very short, fat fellow. Foxy bright but not intellectually bright. When Capehart took him on, Kerr called him a "tub of rancid butter," which was objected to. That came out in print as a "rancid tub of ignorance," but I heard him say a "tub of rancid butter," I swear I heard Kerr say that.

I want to make a point about Joe McCarthy. I once ran into Joe McCarthy on the Senate floor. It was about 1956, after he was censured. He was in a pitiful state. At noon I was on the Republican side. I very seldom went over there -- Mr. Douglas wouldn't sit on that side even temporarily, as some Democratic senators did. But for some reason I was standing in front of the Republican cloakroom at noon, after the Senate had come in, and there was a phone call for McCarthy, and he thought I was connected to the Republican cloakroom and asked me about it. Well, I confronted him at noon: his eyes were red and white, mostly red; he had deep stubble on his face; and he absolutely reeked of bourbon, absolutely reeked. He didn't give any appearance of being drunk, but he reeked of the stuff. And I said to myself, this guy isn't going to last very long if he does this at noon. And he died a year or so later, tied down in a hospital. Proxmire succeeded him.

I want to say something about McCarthy's technique, the way he smeared people. I take this from the London *Economist* thirty-five years ago; I think I'm repeating it precisely. It indicates

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how one can use guilt by association. The *Economist* applied it to Churchill, and it went like this --

"Mr. Churchill is a member of the House of Commons, one of whose members, Mr. Kone Zilliacus, is a member of the Communist party. This Churchill is also a member of the Church of England, one of whose leading prelates, the Dean of Canterbury, is a known fellow traveler. This Churchill, during World War II, joined an organization called 'The Big Three.' Not only that, he attended all of its meetings. One of its members was a known Communist, Mr. Joseph Stalin." That was the method McCarthy used.

In the 1940s, in Illinois, there was something called the "little McCarthy bills," the Broyles bills, which demanded a loyalty oath from teachers. The University of Illinois had an attorney -- I think he was paid a fee rather than employed by the University -- who was the leading proponent of the Broyles bills, and I debated him once on the local radio station. This was before television. I mention this because I'm proud of the fact that I was active against the McCarthy people, publicly, at the time. Anyway, I set him up. I had a marvelous quote from Lincoln. It came from his speech in the House in 1848, saying when he opposed the Mexican war, that the people had a right to revolution. If their government was unfair to them, they had a right to revolt. Specifically Lincoln said that "Any people anywhere, . . . have the right to rise up and shake off the existing

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government, and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable, a most sacred right -- a right which, we hope and believe, is to liberate the world." So I said to this fellow, who was a proponent, and who was going all over the state making speeches in favor of the Broyles bills, "Suppose a teacher said -- and I quoted Abraham Lincoln -- that she believed that it was the inherent right of the people to revolt." Could she be fired under this bill? "Oh," he said, "absolutely, no question about it." I then said, "Well, you know, that was what Abraham Lincoln said in 1848." And he said something about, "Well, this wouldn't apply to Lincoln." But I had made the point and really got him, I thought.

I met my wife going down to the state legislature to lobby against the Broyles bills in 1953. A group of us went down, and she drove the car. We had a lot in common. And I heard the present senator from Illinois, [\[Alan\] Dixon](#), who was then a member of the Illinois House. Dixon, who was from the East St. Louis area, was fiercely debating, was taking on as a civil libertarian lawyer, as a proponent of the First Amendment and a defender of the right of the teachers, the supporters of the Broyles bills. So I've always had a warm spot in my heart, going back these 35 years, for Alan Dixon. I think Alan is thought of as an honest pro, and he is, but he was a very strong civil libertarian when I first saw him, and he still is.

Ritchie: You came to the Senate after McCarthy was censured.

Shuman: After he'd been censured, but I was in Washington during the debate on censure in the summer of 1954.

Ritchie: How did the rest of the Senate treat him after he was censured? Did it affect his relations with other members?

Shuman: It did, very much. They, like the press, abandoned him. They didn't shun him directly, but they almost shunned him. There I must tell you a story which is important. Mr. Douglas was very loyal to the Marine Corps. He fought in World War II, virtually lost his left arm, and was wounded twice. He joined the Marines at age 50. He had this great loyalty to the Marine Corps. He had the American flag and the Marine Corps flag behind his desk. The Marine Corps flag is red, and one of the things that some of his opponents used against him was that he flew the red Communist flag behind his desk. It shows you the depth of the ridiculousness of the times. But there were times when he helped save the Marine Corps: one when Truman wanted to do away with it; two, he sponsored the bill to make sure that they have a minimum of four divisions, permanently; and three to make the Commandant of the Marine Corps a member of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff. Those are among the things he did. I can't remember precisely the years. I wasn't there on all of these issues, but I know about all of them because he told me about them many times.

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It was at the height of McCarthy's power. I think it was just shortly after Mr. Douglas had cosponsored the [\[Ralph\] Flanders](#) resolution. I think there were nine senators who sponsored the Flanders resolution against McCarthy, which was the first major thing that was done against him. Anyway, it was a question of saving the Marine Corps. Joe McCarthy had been a Marine, "Tail-Gunner Joe." He lied about a foot wound and his combat experience. He had injured his foot in a ceremony when he crossed the equator, not in combat. But he came back and ran as "Tail-Gunner Joe." He was the key to a group of Republican votes in the Senate: his own, [\[William\] Jenner](#), a few others of his coterie including the Senator from Idaho, [Welker](#). Those votes were desperately needed if Mr. Douglas was to succeed in his efforts for the Marine Corps. McCarthy let it be known to Mr. Douglas, through indirect means, and I don't know precisely what they were but, I think members of the press were the messengers, that in order to get his votes, Mr. Douglas would have to go over to the Republican side of the floor, sit next to him, in view of the press gallery, and ask him, in front of God and everybody, for his votes for the Marine Corps. Mr. Douglas thought about that long and hard, but his beloved Marines won out, and he did it, and he got the votes, and he saved the Marine Corps, which is the reason you see a plaque on my wall. Later I was involved in some of these issues when the Marines were under political fire again. The Commandant of the Marine Corps,

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General P.X. Kelley, a year ago in a ceremony at the National War College made me an honorary Marine. Although I don't deserve it, I am very proud of it, and I certainly remember the times when I was involved with the senator to help keep the Marine Corps alive.

Ritchie: Was McCarthy in any way influential after his censure?

Shuman: Absolutely not. He was like a skunk coming into the room. People fled. He didn't understand that. People have told me that before he was censured he would go to the floor of the Senate and smear people, suggest that they were disloyal, and call them traitors and all the rest, and then meet them on the elevator and slap them on the back and say how are you, thinking that they would not be offended, that it was all just part of the game. He never really quite got the message, but he was finished when I knew him.

I want to tell about one other incident, but then I'd like to talk more about the nature of the Senate. When I came to work there, [Alben Barkley](#) had just been reelected to the Senate. He had been vice president; he had been majority leader; he had been a leading figure on the Finance Committee. He had been senator from Kentucky. After he was vice president he spent two years as a private citizen and then ran again for the Senate. He sat on

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the very back row, the last seat on the back row. He was the most junior senator in the place, and his office was right next door to the room I was in. My room was carved out of a hallway and there was a locked doorway to his office in my room and I could hear him from time to time in his personal office. He was a very distinguished fellow and a very revered figure in the Senate. Barkley went down to Virginia to give a speech to a college graduation after he'd come back to the Senate, and he was mentioning that he had been vice president, had sat in the presiding officer's chair, had been majority leader at the number one desk, and now he sat in the last seat, in the last row, the most junior senator of them all. To explain this, and how happy he was to be back, he said, "I would rather be a doorkeeper"--paraphrasing the Bible--"in the house of the Lord, than to sit in the seats of the mighty." At that moment he collapsed and died. It was a dramatic way to die. Hollywood could not have improved on it. I can think of only one other way to die that might be more interesting!

The reason I mention this is that certain senators -- my senator was one -- never really wanted to move up. A senator moved over closer to the middle and moved up closer to the front with seniority. Everytime there was a vacancy the floor staff would go around and offer the next senior member the desk of the person who had died or been defeated. Mr. Douglas made a point of staying in

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the middle and on the next to the back row. He eschewed joining the club and preferred the back benches. Jack Kennedy sat right behind him. [Hubert Humphrey](#) on the other hand, moved to the front and to the middle. I dearly liked, loved, cherished, and thought the world of Hubert Humphrey. He probably made fewer compromises for a man who got as far as he did than anyone else. But in the period '56, '57, he moved into the club as his seating changes exemplified. When we were involved in the Civil Rights debates, which is a very major part of what I worked on in those days, Humphrey was the go-between with the Civil Rights forces and Johnson. The Civil Rights groups would meet, discuss, decide, and send Hubert as their envoy to Johnson. Invariably Hubert would come back having lost his trousers. Johnson had his number. For some reason, although no one else could pick him apart, Johnson could have his way with him.

I noticed during this period, and I pointed it out to Bob Caro, who is writing his second book on Johnson's Senate career. I got the seating arrangements from Congress to Congress to Congress, and showed Caro how Hubert kept moving up front and closer to the middle. As he moved up and got closer to the middle, I could see that his relationships to the Senate establishment changed. Originally, he was farther out of the establishment than anyone else, especially when he took on Harry Byrd at the very beginning of his career. But as time went on,

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Hubert really got into the establishment, and he made every effort to. It was reflected in his voting record.

There was the book by William S. White, *The Citadel*, which in my view canonized everything that was bad about the Senate. According to him, the Dixiecrats were marvelous. He said that the Senate was the South's revenge for Gettysburg, which it was. They had all the key positions. White thought the [filibuster](#) rule was great, and he thought seniority was marvelous. We called it the "Senility Rule." Everything that people criticize about the Senate he favored. He was the one who really established that there was an "Inner Club." But what he said was that the way senators got into the Inner Club was by personality. It was the good guys, the hail-fellows-well-met, and those who got along by diplomatic language and gentlemanliness with the powers that be, who got into the club. That was absolutely false, because a senator like [Herbert Lehman](#), who was the most gentlemanly senator in the world, who never said an angry word to anyone, couldn't possibly get into the club. a) he was from New York; b) he was Jewish; and c) he had a progressive voting record. And it was the voting record that got one into the club. The "club" treated him as a pariah.

If senators didn't join the coalition that existed at that time among Southerners, Westerners, and trans-Mississippi Republicans, to protect segregation, to protect oil and gas, to

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protect public works, to protect cotton, and tobacco, and wheat, and to give the water projects to the Western states, if they didn't join that coalition, they didn't get into the club. The quid-pro-quo was that the Southerners with their lock on the committees and on the money, in return for support for the filibuster, parceled out their goodies to the trans-Mississippi Republicans and to the Western senators. That's how senators got into the club. They didn't get there because they were nice fellows like Herbert Lehman. They got there because they voted and worked for segregation when the chips were down. They didn't have to vote against the final passage of a Civil Rights bill, but they had to vote with the

South on the procedural issues that prevented any Civil Rights bill from ever coming to a vote.

In those days, '57, '59, the Steering Committee, which the South dominated, [Russell](#) dominated, waited until after the vote on the filibuster rule before they assigned committee seats. And among the senators elected in '58 -- if you look at who got the good committees and who didn't -- those who voted with the south on the filibuster rule got the good assignments. [Bob Byrd](#) went to the Appropriations Committee as a freshman, as did [Gale McGee](#). [Cannon](#) went to Armed Services. [Gene McCarthy](#), who had a different angle, went to the Finance Committee as a Junior senator, and he did that because he essentially sold out on gas and oil. He gave [Bob Kerr](#) his proxy on oil and gas issues. This was the way it was done;

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it had nothing to do with personality, pleasantness, or gentlemanliness. That's a bunch of hogwash! It had to do with issues.

Ritchie: You mentioned that you sat on the floor every day. When you started the job, what did Douglas say to you? Did he say I want you to look after these interests, or did he leave it to you to decide what to follow?

Shuman: He pretty much left it to me. I just figured my legislative job was a legislative job and I was there on the floor. What I did is I went through every bill. Mondays they called the calendar. An awful lot of bad legislation sneaks through on the calendar, and Mr. Douglas was the watchdog over the Treasury. So one of my jobs was to read those bills and to sniff out the pork. I did a couple of things early on. One was a small bill to renew the interstate oil compact. The interstate oil compact was run by the Texas Railway Commission. It was an umbrella for the oil producers to get together and in the name of conservation to limit production and to establish a higher price for oil than it would otherwise have been. But under the Constitution to have a compact among states for conservation Congress had to approve.

I was so naive, so unknowing about political forces that it didn't occur to me that this was a powerful group of people. I just looked at that and said, "That isn't right." I knew what

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the Texas Railway Commission was: it was a monopoly. It was a government-enforced monopoly. So I went to the staff director of the Interior Committee, Stewart French, who was a public interest staff man, and told him what I thought about this, that it was a bad idea. He said, "Yes, but you don't do that around

here." But I talked to Mr. Douglas and he got up on the floor and objected to that bill on the routine call of the calendar. Everybody shuddered. Here we were taking on the most powerful economic interest in the country, oil and gas. I didn't know what I had gotten him into. But Johnson was very sensitive to it, and as a matter of fact we got it modified. Johnson did not want to make a big issue of it. Before we allowed it to go through we got an amendment that the Justice Department's Antitrust Division would make an annual report with respect to the competitiveness or lack of competitiveness as a result of the oil compact, and it passed without amendment. Johnson, rather than fight it, agreed to it, even though he was Leader and active for oil. Well, I was told afterwards that that was just a dumb thing to do, that nobody else would have had the nerve, and ten years later I probably wouldn't have dared to have done it. I did it out of ignorance of the power of the political forces which ran the Senate. And we were successful. That is what is called a fortuitous event.

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A couple of other things happened then. You know, "In God We Trust" has not always been on the currency. Somewhere along in 1956 or '57, there was a proposal to put "In God We Trust" on the bills, which came to the Banking Committee, which had Jurisdiction. Well, this was at a time when Mr. Douglas was fighting the filibuster rule. He led the fight against the oil and gas bill to free natural gas from price regulation. He took on the Senate establishment on civil rights and the filibuster. He fought the public works bills, when more often than not he was the single senator who opposed the bill. One time [Dennis Chavez](#) was in charge of the Public Works bill, and Mr. Douglas opposed it. Chavez stood up and said, "I can't understand why the senator from Illinois is opposed to this bill. "Why," he said, "there's something in it for everybody!" And, of course, there was.

But on the currency bill, I said to Mr. Douglas, "You know, there's the establishment clause in the First Amendment to the Constitution, and it seems to me that it might really be against the establishment clause to put 'In God We Trust' on the bills." Even though I'd grown up in a family with a lot of Presbyterian ministers, it seemed to me that that was an offense against the Bill of Rights. Perhaps it was because I was a Presbyterian and the Scots, historically, objected to an established Church of England. And it was Christ who threw the money lenders out of the

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temple, so it seemed to me not only against the separation of church and state but sacrilegious to put "In God We Trust" on the money. It involved what belonged to Caesar and what belonged to God. He looked at me, and he said, I've been doing all these things, taking on the Inner Club, taking on the filibuster, taking on oil

and gas, and now you want me to vote against God!" So there was a limit to how much he could do, and he wasn't prepared to do that.

The second dumb thing I recommended to him was an economic issue. As an economic person I was in favor of vigorously enforcing the antitrust laws, and baseball, explicitly, and other sports, implicitly, had an exemption from the antitrust laws. So I went to him one day and said, "You really ought to do something to take away the antitrust exemption from sports." I think there was a bill up. Well, Chicago had the Cubs and the White Sox, and I think they then had not only the Bears but what are now the St. Louis Cardinals football team. In any case St. Louis and the Cardinals baseball team was also in his political orbit, because of Southern Illinois. And there was the Black Hawk hockey team, and I think St. Louis had a good hockey team as well. Again, he said, "Well, I can do a lot of things, but I have more professional sports teams in Illinois than any state of the union, and here you want me to vote against them!" There was a limit to what even he as the most independent senator and a believer in

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antitrust could do. He knew the limits of his power, and his influence, and what he could do and what he couldn't do. I learned a lot from those two incidents as to how far I could carry out my idealism, or my civil liberty and Bill of Rights views, or my pure economic views in terms of practical politics. It taught me that his agenda and not mine was important.

Ritchie: Would you spend your days sitting in those big leather couches at the back of the chamber?

Shuman: Not that much. I most often had a small chair next to Mr. Douglas, a small black chair which one of the pages would bring in. One of the rules was that I could not sit in a senator's chair, which I never did. One time Mr. Douglas was speaking. He didn't have the use of his left hand because of the wound he took at Okinawa. He would roam the floor when he spoke. He needed a memo I had with a bunch of figures on it, and I think he was holding something in his right hand. So I got up from my chair, went over to where he was standing, and stood next to him and held the paper in front of him so he could see the figures and read it. [\[George\] Smathers](#) from Florida was in the chair, and he said: "Does the gentleman standing next to the Senator from Illinois wish to be recognized?" I was mortified! I knew I couldn't sit down on a senator's chair, so I sat down on the riser until I could sneak back to my chair. But I looked, and the next day that was struck from the *Record* as well.

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Ritchie: Could you give me some idea of what the atmosphere was in the chamber? I get the feeling that things were much quieter then.

Shuman: I think in some ways there was more decorum, and far fewer staff people. There were seldom more than five or six staff people on the floor at the time, usually dealing with a particular issue. I got to know people like Ted Sorenson and John F. Kennedy because we were in a couple of battles together. We fought a Constitutional Amendment to change the electoral college, not by providing that the winner of the popular vote would be elected but that each congressional district would have an electoral vote at a time when they were gerrymandered.

There were eight or ten senators who were then running for president, as we got closer to 1960, and quite a few more who were secretly hoping that the lightning would strike. Nixon was in the chair. Kennedy sat in the back row. Johnson the majority leader was running for president and later announced. [Stuart Symington](#) of Missouri had announced. Hubert Humphrey was running hard. [Scoop Jackson](#) was waiting in the wings, hoping that he might be vice president. And [Margaret Chase Smith](#) had announced as a woman candidate. Of course when a senator addressed the chair, it was "Mr. President." And the word was that when a Junior senator on the back row stood up to get recognition by

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addressing the chair as "Mr. President," at least a dozen people turned around and said, "Who, me?"

One of the apocryphal stories of the time about Nixon, after Eisenhower's heart attack in September of 1955, was that the two of them were standing at the base of the Washington Monument, with its stairs to the summit. Nixon was the vice president, one heart beat away from the presidency. Nixon said to Eisenhower: "I'll beat you to the top."

I used to say in 1960, that the worst thing that could happen to the country was either for Nixon or for Johnson to become president. The reason I said that -- and I remember saying it many times -- was it was quite clear to people who knew them, who had seen them at close hand, that both of them had flawed characters. It wasn't a surprise, it was known. Personally, I think Johnson was a better president than he was a majority leader, which is a position that very few people hold. But in the Senate he was beholden to Dick Russell. He couldn't go to the bathroom without Dick Russell agreeing to it. Johnson was a powerful leader, but he was the agent of the Dixiecrats. When he became president he was essentially freed from that and acted in a much more national way. Even though he made big mistakes in Vietnam, especially about Tonkin Gulf, I always thought he was a better president than he was a majority leader. Perhaps that was because I was not so close to him when he was President. George Reedy, Johnson's press

secretary, in his book *The Twilight of the Presidency*, said in an obvious reference to Johnson, that the Presidency was like a French Impressionist painting. One had to stand a long way back from it to appreciate it.

One result of working in the Senate is that the Constitution becomes a living, breathing document. Why if the Senate goes out on Thursday night does it have to come in again on Monday? Or if the House goes out on Friday it can come in on Tuesday. Why can't the House adjourn from Thursday to Tuesday? Well, you know the provision, that no house can adjourn for more than three days without the consent of the other. But that's something you learn because you work there. I had to read the Constitution at times to find out things that affected my work. Why is it that the Senate and the House can authorize five year money for planes, tanks, guns, and ammunnition when the Constitution says that the Congress can only appropriate money for two years to raise and support the army? When is the electoral vote counted? Is it counted by the old Congress or the new one? Is it a Constitutional provision or not? Think what a difference it could have made in 1960, or again when [John] Anderson was running against [Ronald] Reagan and [Jimmy] Carter, or in 1968, if the elections had been thrown into the House, whether the old House or the new one would elect, because each state then has one vote. It would make a very important difference as to who voted. Well, the answer is that

the time of the vote is established by statute. And quite properly the new House and the new Senate act on that issue, reflecting the will of the most recent election. These are things that come up in the course of life working in the Senate.

Who presides over the Supreme Court when the Chief Justice is presiding over the Senate in an impeachment trial? That was a question when we thought Nixon would be impeached. Senator Proxmire came to me and asked me, "Do I have to be on the Senate floor during all this impeachment business, every minute?" I said, "Well, there's nothing in the rules about it," but I told him, "I think you'd better be, because people will say that you're a Juror, and if you aren't there you won't hear the evidence." So for practical purposes he would have to be there.

Who defends a senator when he's sued for libel for an act connected with his official life? That was an issue I got into when Proxmire was sued by Hutchinson. And what's the meaning of the combined provisions in the immunity clause, the speech or debate clause, and the provision that each house shall punish its own members? There's a connection between the two that one learns because one has to live with them. I spent about twenty percent of my time over a five year period dealing with those constitutional questions.

But I think the most important thing about the Senate, which one must work there to understand, is the provision in Article I that the Senate shall be composed of two senators from each state. It's the only provision which cannot be changed, because Article V, the amending article, says that no state without its consent shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate. Now, there are those who say it can be changed by two amendments. One could amend Article V first, and then base the Senate on population. But for all practical purposes it's riveted into the Constitution and it can't be struck out. To understand the Senate one has to understand this. The smallest seventeen states, with thirty-four senators, or one-third plus one, have only seven percent of the population. The largest seventeen states with thirty-four senators, which again is one-third plus one, have seventy percent of the population. It's a ratio of ten to one. This dominates Senate affairs and Senate procedures in a way that unless one works there one really doesn't know about.

Theoretically, the senators from those seventeen small states, thirty-four of them, one-third plus one, could keep the Senate from overriding a veto, from ratifying a treaty, from impeaching the president, from expelling a member, and could defeat a Constitutional amendment. I mean, members representing only seven percent of the population could do those things because of the two-thirds vote with respect to them. It's very important,

especially if you work with a senator from a big state. I remember a time when we had thirty-eight votes to change the filibuster rule. Those thirty-eight votes represented about sixty-five percent of the population. Yet we didn't win. The opponents would say, "You don't know how to count!" Well, it was a rigged vote. The Senate is the only remaining legally, Constitutionally gerrymandered legislative body in the country. But Bobby Baker used to go around saying, "You guys don't know how to count." Well, we knew how to count, but we were working with a stacked deck.

I remember there were times when Mr. Douglas would look over at [\[George Molly Malone\]](#), who was a senator from Nevada, who would speak for hours, and hours, and hours on tariff matters, who was the biggest bore in the Senate and probably the dumbest senator. Mr. Douglas would look at him after a vote on some issue such as Civil Rights, or the filibuster, or oil and gas, and say, "My God, when I was alderman for the fifth ward in Chicago I represented more people than he has in the whole state of Nevada." That wasn't quite true, but it made the point.

Anyway, if one wants to understand the Senate, and the coalition in the Senate in that period, one has to understand this. And I think that Johnson failed in his campaign for nomination in 1960 because he did not understand this point about national politics. He thought that national politics were the

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same as Senate politics. He tried to get the nomination by calling himself a Westerner and combining the southern and mountain states to give him the nomination. That is the way he dominated the Senate. But in the presidential election that coalition wouldn't work. Johnson was unsuccessful in 1960 for three reasons: number one is that he didn't really realize that senators didn't have much influence politically in their states, that in most states a politician has to live in the state and be on the spot, in order to dominate its politics. It may not have been true in Texas, but it certainly was true in most of the mountain states, and was certainly true in the big states. Second, that coalition just didn't have the votes to nominate. And third, [Stuart Udall](#) actually took the mountain states away from him in any case, which was why he became Secretary of the Interior under Kennedy. But Johnson really didn't understand. He knew Senate politics instinctively, but he didn't understand national politics, and he wasn't really attuned to national issues because of his focus on the Senate.

One of the most frustrating things in the Senate, for people like Mr. Douglas and Senator Proxmire, was that as national Democrats they campaigned on certain issues. Oil and gas was one. Wisconsin was the place where the Supreme Court case on regulating natural gas, the Phillips case, came from. Senators would campaign on this issue, and then go to the Senate and find

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that the party was dominated, in its leadership and its committee chairmen, by people who were fundamentally opposed to the things the party stood for nationally. And on the gas bill fight in '56, in which I was deeply involved, Kerr and other oil state senators, the second senator from Texas, [Price Daniel](#), actually stood at the Democratic majority leader's desk managing the bill, against what was the overwhelming interests of the party.

One of the things that Mr. Douglas objected to and a major reason for his estrangement from Johnson in the Senate was that while he did not object to Johnson as a senator from Texas voting for gas and oil, he didn't think Johnson should make that position the national party position. It was political suicide for Johnson to vote against gas and oil and as a politician Mr. Douglas understood that, didn't have any question about it. In fact, on some of the Civil Rights issues Mr. Douglas went to people like [\[Frank\] Graham](#) of North Carolina and said, "Look, you don't have to vote with us. You're committing suicide if you do. Don't

vote with us." So he understood senators' ties to their states. But what he objected to was that Johnson used his position as majority leader to impose a local Texas position as the national position of the Democratic party.

One of the things I always admired [Bill Knowland](#) for, when he was Republican leader, was his view on this issue. Later there was a Douglas-Knowland axis in the '57 Civil Rights bill.

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Knowland was a very conservative but absolutely straight-arrow type. But when Knowland spoke against Eisenhower's policies, when Knowland was minority leader, I noticed that he would always leave the minority leader's desk and go to the back row aisle seat to make his speech. I always admired him for not pretending to be the spokesman for his party, when he took a position that was counter to his president and his party. But that was never done by Johnson, Kerr, or the Southerners. They were so powerful, they ran the place. You can see that I feel strongly about this, but one had to work under it, had to feel the bruising things that came from the way the Dixiecrats wielded power in the Senate. Indeed it was revenge for Gettysburg.

Johnson never understood about six people, of whom Mr. Douglas was one. Herbert Lehman was another. [Bill Langer](#) was another. And there were three or four others. Johnson had almost everybody's number. He knew their weaknesses, whether it was women or drink, or whether they wanted a certain bill, a committee assignment or whether they wanted more office space. He knew what almost everybody wanted. He never understood what Mr. Douglas wanted. He was at a loss. There was no way Johnson could get to him. The reason was very simple: what Mr. Douglas wanted was for Johnson to carry out the policies of the National Democratic party. Not in exact detail because he was quite willing to compromise, but he thought it was important that the

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leader do that. That's all he wanted, and Johnson couldn't understand this. He could understand people who wanted more room, or who liked to drink too much, or do other things, but he never really understood what Mr. Douglas wanted.

Harry McPherson, who was one of Johnson's floor men when he was in the Senate and a speech-writer at the White House and who, along with Bill Moyers, was a most constructive influence in the White House, was asked what Johnson was looking for in Vietnam. Harry's answer was "A deal." But I don't think Johnson was on Ho Chi Minh's wave length or that he understood that he could never get the kind of political deal he was famous for in the Senate.

I think the reason Johnson never understood Mr. Douglas was it never occurred to him that a senator would stand up for his principles. I think Johnson did have some. I think Johnson was genuinely moved by the Depression. He never was against poor people, he was for poor people. But of course he never let that stand in his way to help the well-to-do and the powerful, either. But at least he had a certain visceral reaction in favor of the poor. I don't think he was in any way anti-Semitic or viscerally anti-black, in the way that Dick Russell was. In fact, Dick Russell and some of the Southerners used to make references to Herbert Lehman's Jewishness. There was an anti-Semitic overtone to it.

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One of the things that used to gall me was to hear some of the conservative Western state senators, especially alleged rugged individualist Utah senators -- Mr. Douglas called them the "tin-cup states," because they couldn't last a day without massive federal support for water projects especially, for wool subsidies, for wheat subsidies, lead and zinc, all the minerals, for the national lands and forests, for a variety of issues -- stand up and complain about the power and influence of the federal government. Mr. Douglas used to quote what the English journalist Labouchere, who had a French name but was an English Journalist and a member of Parliament, used to say about Prime Minister Gladstone, who was a self-righteous fellow. He said, "I don't mind Mr. Gladstone having all the aces up his sleeve. What I object to is his insistence that the good Lord put them there."

The fact was that the small states a) were over represented, and b) as a result they got massive federal subsidies, which were paid for through taxation of people in the larger states. Yet at the same time their senators were self-righteous, not even understanding that they were the major recipients of the federal largess.

I want to talk at some time in detail about the Civil Rights fights of '56 and '57.

Ritchie: I thought we would do that the next time.

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Shuman: Fine. But I do want to say one thing, because it fits in here. There was a senator by the name of [\[Thomas\] Hennings](#) from Missouri, an extraordinarily able, brilliant constitutional scholar, who was chairman of the subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee which handled civil rights. Hennings was in charge of the Civil Rights bills, and Hennings had a very, very serious drinking problem. This was known to the leadership. What happened routinely was that just as the bills would come up, Hennings would disappear, and we would wait on him, and nothing would happen. The reason that Mr. Douglas took the leadership for the '56 and '57 Civil Rights bills was that Hennings wasn't there. It was an unreported scandal, and it was a tragedy, because Hennings was so able and deserved better

from life. But every time there was pressure on Hennings he succumbed and would go on one of his binges. So Mr. Douglas inherited these bills. This led to a difficult situation. The Southerners would pick on anyone's alleged weaknesses, to ridicule, make fun of him, so the "professor" angle came in. They referred to him as "the professor," as opposed to the practical politician. It was a lawyer's ploy. But also they made quite a point that he wasn't the subcommittee chairman and wasn't even on the Judiciary Committee, and here he was leading the fight. Well, the reason he did it was because nobody else would do it, and because Hennings wasn't there to carry it out.

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Time after time, Mr. Douglas stepped back -- even pushed him -- especially on the filibuster rule, to allow [Clint Anderson](#) of New Mexico, to take on the fight, which Clint Anderson did. It was always the Anderson amendment on the filibuster rule. Anderson had ties to the CIO and the United Auto Workers, I'm not quite certain why. He had been a journalist who for health reasons had moved to New Mexico and exposed the Teapot Dome scandal. But he also was Secretary of Agriculture under Truman. The reason he was opposed to the filibuster didn't have anything to do with Civil Rights. What happened was that when he was Secretary of Agriculture Senator [Elmer] Thomas of Oklahoma -- there were two Thomases, of Utah and Oklahoma, it was the Oklahoma senator -- tried to force upon Clint Anderson as under secretary, or assistant secretary, or legal counsel, I don't know in particular who it was, a man who had a bad reputation. Anderson refused to take him, and as a result, Thomas used the filibuster either against the agriculture appropriations or against the Department's legislation. So Clint Anderson came to the anti-filibuster position not from Civil Rights but from what had happened to him as Secretary. So he was always pushed to the front, because he was part of the Inner Club, and a man Mr. Douglas used to say he never quite understood where he was coming from. But we did know why he was there on the filibuster and why he was so involved in it, although almost no one else knew, and it enhanced our position to have him lead on the issue.

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I want to say one more thing about Johnson. I think that a great deal of the opposition to Johnson over Vietnam was a personal one, and I will be very specific. When Johnson was majority leader he was all powerful, except with people like Douglas, Proxmire, and Lehman. Most people gave in to him. [Frank Church](#)'s man, Tom Dine, told me that for a matter of about six months after Church had voted against something that Johnson was in favor of or had refused to go along with him, that Johnson shunned him, very much in the way that shunning takes place in Pennsylvania among the Amish sects. Johnson wouldn't speak to him. Church couldn't get anything done, couldn't get his bills, couldn't

get his projects, couldn't get his postmasters. Finally, Church went to him and said, "Okay, you win, that's it." He capitulated. It was unconditional surrender.

[Vance Hartke](#), was another opponent of Johnson on Vietnam. Johnson called Hartke, who'd been mayor of an Indiana town, a two-bit mayor from a two-bit town. Hartke never forgave him.

[Gene McCarthy](#), and this is a more elaborate tale, in 1960 was Johnson's favorite for vice president on a Johnson ticket. I doubt that Johnson ever promised it to him, but he certainly waived it or dangled it in front of him, because if Johnson defeated Kennedy, defeated this Irish Catholic Northern liberal, certainly he had to put a Catholic on the ticket, and a Northern liberal Catholic, and McCarthy was the obvious one. So Johnson

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dangled the vice presidency in front of McCarthy. McCarthy used to go around the Senate saying, "I'm more Catholic than Kennedy, and more liberal than Humphrey." He said it a lot. When the convention came in 1960, the best speech of the Democratic convention was made by Gene McCarthy, but it was made not for Johnson, who he was for, but for Adlai Stevenson. And it was done in an effort to split the Northern forces which would support Kennedy. Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt was for Stevenson against Kennedy, partly because of Kennedy's position on Joe McCarthy and his father's connections. Her famous line was Kennedy needed more courage and less profile. She was a great advocate of Stevenson, who could have split the Northern vote and possibly let Johnson in.

So Gene McCarthy made without question the best speech of the convention, for a candidate he did not really favor. Then when Johnson had a chance in 1964, to select a vice president, whom did he pick? [Hubert Humphrey](#), from Minnesota, McCarthy's own state. There is always friction between two senators from the same party from the same state. Hubert leaned over backwards not to antagonize McCarthy, but McCarthy was in some ways quite bitter about Hubert.

I liked McCarthy personally, and he was always very kind to me. I hesitate to say anything unkind about him because he has been so personally generous to me. He spoke to me. He called me by name. A lot of senators didn't know a staff person, but he

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did, so I always liked him. In the 1968 campaign, when McCarthy ran for president and didn't defeat Johnson in New Hampshire but did so well that Johnson pulled out before the Wisconsin primary, McCarthy pointed out how Johnson had proposed him as the vice presidential candidate, and that Johnson

couldn't be trusted on Vietnam any more than he could be trusted on these personal things. So it was a very personal as well as a policy matter.

These senators got out from under Johnson's thumb when he moved from the Senate, to become vice president and president. They weren't free from him when he was majority leader. I think that a certain amount of the opposition to Johnson and the war came from their personal association with him in the Senate. I used to think that the same was true of [\[J. William\] Fulbright](#), but I checked this out with Carl Marcy, and Fulbright really didn't have a falling out with Johnson until after Tonkin Gulf and until after Fulbright had in fact turned against the war. So that was a different story. But Johnson gave him the treatment then. But in many, many cases, opposition to Vietnam while sincerely held, also had a personal element to it that very few people realized, which stemmed from Johnson's use of raw power in the Senate.

Johnson in the Senate was a benevolent dictator. Under [\[Mike\] Mansfield](#) it was anarchy. Under Johnson it was like a Greek tragedy. Nothing went on in the Senate that hadn't happened

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off the floor before hand. All the votes were there, nothing new. There is one point that I should make about how Mansfield became whip. It was a result of the gas bill in 1956. There are two points about the gas bill that I want to make, because I was very much involved in it. Frank McCulloch did much of the staff work for it, wrote most of the speeches and organized the groups who opposed the gas bill, but I was on the floor and was involved in the parliamentary part of it and the speeches as well. The key to getting the gas bill passed was to get the liberal mountain state senators to vote for it. The key to the liberal mountain state senators was [Jim Murray](#) of Montana. He was from the great tradition of the Montana senators. There were several.

Ritchie: There was Tom Walsh.

Shuman: Yes, especially Walsh; Murray was in that tradition. And there was [Burt Wheeler](#) on domestic issues. Of course they had been strong for trade unions, and been against the mining companies. Well, Jim Murray was in his dotage. He was not quite senile but close to it. He had his good days and his bad days, and he had lost his grip on things. But the key to the mountain states was Murray, and the key to Murray was Mansfield. Mansfield went with Johnson on the gas bill. It was the [Monroney-Fulbright](#) bill then. It was no longer the [Kerr](#) bill. The oil and gas forces got stung with Kerr out in front, so they picked two of the nicest people in the Senate, particularly [\[Mike\] Monroney](#), to

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lead this fight. But Mansfield persuaded Murray, and with Murray the oil and gas forces got most of the mountain state votes, and they won on the final vote -- although they lost ultimately. When the senator from Kentucky, who'd been the whip, was defeated in '56--

Ritchie: [Earle Clements](#)--

Shuman: Clements, a new Whip was needed. Johnson did not have a caucus or vote. He called and said, "I'm proposing Mansfield, do you object to him?" Well, neither Mr. Douglas nor anyone else could object to Mansfield, because he was a liberal and he was liberal on most issues even though he had voted against us on gas and oil. But he was picked in part as a reward for his gas vote, and in part because Johnson did not want a Whip who would in any way compete with him as a strong personality for the loyalty of the party. So there was this odd couple arrangement. I always thought the Senate atmosphere was better under Mansfield, even though it was anarchy, because it was so much more pleasant under him, much, much more pleasant than under Johnson.

Now, on the second part of the gas bill of '56, it was one of the issues I had a role in. We were working to get the votes, and the mountain state senators were important, and the New England state senators were important, because they didn't have any gas wells so they were free to vote for the consumer. [Leverett]

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[Saltonstall](#) was pretty much the key to the Republicans. He was a very nice fellow. Mr. Douglas talked to him, and I was sitting next to him on the floor at the time, and urged him to vote with us, solicited his vote, and the New England group, against the gas bill. Sa ltonstall came back a few days later and said, "Well, I've been back to the state, I've been talking about this, I've been wrestling with my conscience, but, Paul, I'm going to vote for the gas bill." He walked away, and Mr. Douglas said, "That man always wrestles with his conscience and his conscience always loses." That line may have originated with Oscar Wilde or George Bernard Shaw. But those two groups, New England and the mountain states were critical.

We met every day in Mr. Douglas' office, during the gas bill fight, with the organizations who were with us. Then the local public utilities, the consumer gas interests were with us, because they would have had to pay an enormous increase in price from the producers. The UAW and the AFL-CIO, and other consumer groups who were not all that powerful but who were important were with us. One of the people representing the UAW was a fellow from Texas, who was also extraordinarily close to Johnson. We knew he was a spy -- figuratively -- in our midst, but there was very little we could do about it, because he had been sent by [Walter] Reuther to represent the UAW. But we knew that everything we said got back to Johnson, almost directly.

One morning, I found out that the senator from South Dakota, [\[Francis\] Case](#), whom we'd always put in the other group, counted him as a pro-gas bill vote, had been overheard at breakfast at the Carroll Arms Hotel telling whoever he was eating with that he was still undecided on the gas bill. I couldn't believe it. I've forgotten now who told me, but it was somebody who was with our group who had eaten next to him, and he came and told me. So I told Mr. Douglas, and that morning at our meeting with our colleagues and with our public interest groups, that point was made, and we tried to decide who could reach Case and see if we couldn't convince him, reaching back into his state and all the rest to vote with us. Well, our spy was there, and within twenty-four hours Case was visited by a California oil man and offered two thousand dollars as a campaign contribution. Then Case in a very short time came to the Senate floor. Mr. Douglas was there. I was there. Fulbright was there. Monroney was there. Not too many other people were there. But I remember the scene. Case came to the floor and made a speech about how a bribe of two thousand dollars had been offered to him to vote for the gas bill.

Well, I cannot prove it to you, but I swear that there was a direct link between what happened at our conference and our spy going to Johnson and the Johnson forces going to Keck -- the oil and gas man from California -- and Keck going to Case. Fulbright

was furious at Case. They all got up and denounced Case, who was the mildest, most conservative man. He was an honest fellow, but he was a very minor figure in the Senate. They just absolutely denounced him. Then the Senate leadership set up a committee under [\[Walter\] George](#) to investigate the two thousand dollar contribution. They put Case in the dock. He was the villain, not the oil and gas companies, but Case. Mr. Douglas went up to the hearing and sat with Case when he testified about it, and Mr. Douglas would go over and stand by him when he spoke on the Senate floor, just to show that somebody had enough guts to stand up with him. But the Senate hierarchy turned it into an investigation of Case rather than an investigation of the attempted bribe. Eisenhower vetoed that bill because of the Case bribe. I've always felt that I had a role in what happened.

Later, the Texas UAW fellow, whose name I will give you, but not for the record, was a lobbyist on the Hill for the combined AFL-CIO. I know this first hand. Andy Biemiller, who was the legislative head of the AFL-CIO, and President George Meany, had asked him to get an appointment with Lyndon Johnson for them. Our lobbyist friend was very close to Johnson. He wanted to be the intervenor. He didn't want Biemiller and Meany to go to Johnson directly. He wanted to be

the man to intervene with Johnson and then, to get back to Meany and Biemiller. He viewed himself as

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the power broker. So he told Meany and Biemiller that Johnson was not available at the time they wanted to see him. They were up on the Hill for some other reason, and they were free and decided to go over to Johnson's office. When they got there, they cooled their heels outside Johnson's office for about fifteen minutes. Finally, at the moment they had asked for the appointment, their lobbyist walked out of Johnson's office. He was canned on the spot. Anyway, he was our double agent, and we knew this, but there was nothing we could do about it. We could not keep him out of our conferences. But while his salary was paid for by the contributions of the working men and women, the consumers of the country, his loyalties were to Johnson and the Texas gas and oil interests in the country.

Perhaps along these same lines, one of the problems we had in the Civil Rights fights was we ended up not being able to meet because of [Wayne Morse](#). Morse insisted on coming to the inner sanctum meetings and being in on the decisions, fair enough, but Morse leaked regularly and routinely to Drew Pearson. Pearson would praise Morse and Morse would give Pearson all kinds of information. So we'd have Civil Rights meetings and if anyone would suggest "Well, maybe we could modify part 3," or "Here's a way we could get a change in the voting rights provisions so that we might pick up another ten votes," the next morning that would appear in Drew Pearson's column, with Morse as the hero who stood

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up and said, "I'll never ever compromise on this great issue for the country," and a fellow like the Michigan senator, the former trade union fellow, an Irishman--

b>*Ritchie*: [Pat McNamara](#).

Shuman: McNamara was a marvelous senator, much brighter and abler than people gave him credit for -- McNamara ended up being unwilling to come to our meetings because he would appear as a person who was throwing in the towel and selling out, which he wasn't. He was a fine senator. So the group couldn't meet. We had to work it by phone from then on, because of Morse. And then Morse of course turned on us, in order to get the Hells Canyon Dam, and denounced our group publicly. Morse, who was born in Wisconsin in the same county where old [Bob LaFollette](#) came from, saw himself as the reincarnation of LaFollette. He was selfrighteous. He was a loner. He made a significant contribution to the Senate. He had guts. He had an amazing and ordered, and sequential mind. He was right about Tonkin Gulf. But there was a flaw in his

character which led him to denounce [Dick Neuberger](#) and the noble group of civil rights senators, and to be incapable of working with almost any group for a common cause.

Ritchie: Well, the whole Civil Rights issue is so big, I think we ought to save it for the next time.

End Interview #2

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Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Interview #3: Paul Douglas and Civil Rights

(August 13, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Ritchie: I'd like to spend today talking about the 1950s, particularly the Civil Rights legislation. You came to the Senate in 1955, and Senator [Douglas](#) by then had been involved with Civil Rights and filibuster rules changes. When you got there, and Civil Rights legislation came up, did he ever sit down and tell you what his goals were, and what his objectives were in terms of Civil Rights legislation?

Shuman: Well, we never sat down in that sense, when he said, "Howard, I want to tell you what I'm trying to do." But because I was with him so much of the time I certainly got a very good idea of what he was up to. It was done by osmosis.

First of all, his views on Civil Rights had a historical basis. He knew the Constitution, which of course allowed slavery to continue, and which counted blacks as three-fifths of a person, although they couldn't vote, and the politics before the Civil War. He used to talk a lot about the ineptness of the presidencies before the Civil War and their relations to Civil Rights. Specifically he mentioned [Franklin Pierce](#), who was a graduate of Bowdoin College from which both Mr. Douglas and my elder daughter graduated, and [James Buchanan](#). He referred to them

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as dough faces, defined as northern men with southern principles. He said, rightly, that they nearly brought the country to ruin. He often spoke of the Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court which ruled that a former slave even in a free state was not a person but property. He talked a lot about the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments, passed right after the Civil War. And then he often centered on the Hayes-Tilden presidential election, where Tilden the Democrat was denied the presidency by -- well, it was a steal. There was an absolutely abominable deal made in which the electoral votes of several states, I think four of them, were challenged, particularly Florida, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Oregon and in the end all of the 19 challenged votes went to Hayes, most of which should have gone to Tilden. Hayes won by one electoral vote. But the deal was that the occupation of the South would end, that the Civil Rights acts and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments would not be enforced, and segregation would continue. William S. White, who wrote *The Citadel*, a book about the Senate, made the point that the Senate is the South's revenge for Gettysburg, but that revenge really began after the election of 1876, with this

deal. Originally I think there were seven Democrats and seven Republicans on the commission to decide the disputed votes, plus a neutral Justice of the Supreme Court, David Davis of Illinois. Davis resigned and was sent to the Senate and a Justice who was a Republican, was appointed. So the votes were eight to seven for Hayes. But the

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deal was that in return for no enforcement of the Civil Rights bills and the 14th and 15th amendments, an end to the occupation, the return of the South to Congress, and to essentially do in the blacks, the Republicans were given the Presidency. In addition the senator talked a great deal about the history of the [filibuster](#) rule.

Mr. Douglas' purpose in all of this was to do two things: one was to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment, the Voting Rights amendment; and the second purpose was to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment, which was really in some ways more critical as it applied to more rights, such as desegregating hotels, motels, public parks, buses, trains, etc., than voting rights. It reads that no state may discriminate on the basis of race, creed or color because it is not allowed to deny to any person "the equal protection of the laws." That, of course, brings in any business or group or agency who are accredited by the state, or who are certified by the state, including the schools.

The enforcement of these rights, denied since 1876, was clearly his aim. I think his sense of the history of what had happened to blacks was a very, very important background or motivation or stimulus to what he was trying to do. So, yes, we talked about it a lot. And in those early days I met and worked with people like Clarence Mitchell, who was the lobbyist for the N.A.A.C.P., and Roy Wilkins, the president. I can't

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remember whether I told you about the dinner with Roy Wilkins on Pennsylvania Avenue. One night in '56, when we were trying to get the Civil Rights bill passed, a small group of us had a room in the bowels of the Senate wing of the Capitol, a small room, because there was a lot of action going on on the floor, and we met there and went back and forth to the floor and to the gallery. The Senate adjourned one evening at a reasonable time, at six-thirty or seven o'clock, and we decided to go down Pennsylvania Avenue to have dinner. Roy Wilkins was with us, and I think Joe Rauh was with us, and Frank McCulloch, and myself. We walked four or five blocks. There were then restaurants across from the Archives. We finally found a restaurant, but the only reason Roy Wilkins was able to go to that restaurant was because he was with three whites. That was Washington. My students now don't realize the degree to which segregation was still invoked in

the fifties and the sixties. In that period Roy Wilkins risked his life when he flew into a segregated airport in Mississippi. It was incredible to me that in the 1970s some young blacks called him an "Uncle Tom" because he believed that under the law, legally and constitutionally, blacks could achieve their rights. Some of them had no sense of history and knew nothing of the courage he showed. I once told him that he made it possible for the younger generation to be irresponsible.

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Ritchie: Coming from the Midwest, what was it like to move into a segregated city? Did you feel it when you got to Washington in the 1950s?

Shuman: Yes. The junior high school that my children went to was the first school in Virginia to be desegregated, a momentous event, and I never will forget the morning when that happened. The police were ringing the entire small junior high school. Even in Virginia they then enforced the Constitution. So, yes, it was apparent, but as I mentioned earlier I had been involved in Civil Rights issues, particularly at the university, and when I was in the Navy the group of men I had were all black. So it wasn't something entirely new to me.

Ritchie: But it certainly must have brought home how big the issue, that it was right here in the capital.

Shuman: Yes, it certainly was an issue in the capital of the United States. Washington was then a very lazy Southern town. History might very well have been different if the capital had stayed in New York or Philadelphia.

Ritchie: In 1956, Eisenhower in his state of the union message proposed a Civil Rights bill -- his first Civil Rights proposal. What was your role, and Senator Douglas' role in that '56 bill.

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Shuman: Well, I was his legislative man. Frank McCulloch was his administrative assistant, and Frank McCulloch worked with the organizations, and I did the floor work. Particularly my job, rising out of the incidents in '56, was to detail the parliamentary procedures for the senator and for the bipartisan Civil Rights group of senators both in 1956 and 1957. I watched the floor, I wrote a lot of speeches, but basically I was the person to find out from the parliamentarian what we could do, and to learn the rules of the Senate backwards and forwards.

We had a very difficult experience in 1956. The House passed a Civil Rights bill which was very similar to the '57 bill as it started out, and which had in it key provisions which ended up finally in the 1964 bill, especially what was called Part

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3, which enforced the Fourteenth Amendment. That bill came over from the House, and it was a pretty good bill. The later voting rights bills were much better because in those early days the bills treated voting rights on an individual basis, so that if an individual was not allowed to vote, he could go to court. He could get an injunction from the court, which told the polling official to let him vote. It had two weaknesses. What could have happened, and did happen under that provision, which ultimately passed in '57, was that by the time an injunction was issued and the court procedures occurred, the election was over. So there was very little justice. Second, it put the burden on individual

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blacks in the South, who were poor and penniless, to take these legal steps at each incident. That was a very, very poor answer to the almost complete lack of voting rights in the South. The voting rights provisions in that bill provided very little justice. The bill did include the Civil Rights Commission, and it did include Part 3, but Part 3 was deleted in the Senate in 1957.

In any case, that bill passed the House in 1956. Senator Douglas went over to the House floor to accompany it to the Senate, so that it wouldn't be sent to the Judiciary Committee. He got there just after the bill passed the House, and then he came back to the Senate. When he got back to the Senate, the bill had arrived almost as fast as the speed of light and had been referred, after a first and second reading, by unanimous consent, to the Judiciary Committee, which was the graveyard for Civil Rights. [Jim Eastland](#)'s committee got the bill. It was the committee which had bottled up a Civil Rights bill there for almost two years, which didn't meet often, where there was a filibuster in committee when it did meet, where members didn't appear for a quorum, and where the committee adjourned at twelve noon when the Senate came in. Nothing happened! Mr. Douglas was tricked in this instance. [Lister Hill](#), his good friend from Alabama, was in the chair, and told him afterwards, smiling like a Cheshire cat, that he'd just followed the rules of the Senate.

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Then Mr. Douglas attempted to discharge the committee of the bill. Well, to discharge the committee, there were a series of steps. A petition for discharge had to be filed in the Senate at the morning hour. It had to lay over a day. Then it could be motioned up. A filibuster could apply to the motion to proceed to its consideration. Then if it was motioned up, another filibuster could apply to voting on whether to discharge the committee. If that was successful all that happened was that the bill went to the calendar. Then the bill had to be motioned up, a filibuster had to be broken and the Senate had to break another filibuster before there could be a vote on the bill. It was an impossible situation. But to do any one of these steps it had to be done on a new legislative day, and a new

legislative day came only after an adjournment. If the Senate recessed, there was no morning hour, no new legislative day, and none of these steps could take place. So what Johnson did was to recess the Senate, day after day, so that the 26th of July was the legislative day of the 13th of July.

Finally, out of desperation, Mr. Douglas moved to adjourn the Senate, instead of to recess it. [Johnson](#) made a great to-do about this, on the grounds that this was a prerogative of the leader, and it generally was. Johnson, after recessing for two weeks, denounced Mr. Douglas for trying to take over the leadership. It was the stock argument of blaming the other guy for your own

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faults. And a vote came. The vote was, I think, seventy-six to six against the senator. He was crushed. The six votes came from a curious bunch of people: [\[George\] Bender](#) of Ohio, the Republican who was of questionable reputation; [Bill Langer](#) of North Dakota, who had I think been indicted by his political enemies but never sent to jail after he was governor, who was a Robin Hood, who took from the rich and gave to the poor, he didn't make any money himself; there was [Herbert Lehman](#), who was a saintly fellow; there was [Hennings](#), a Democratic senator who was an alcoholic, and who should have been leading the fight but who never came to the floor at the crucial moments; [Irving Ives](#) of New York; and Mr. Douglas. Those six. The only six votes. [Hubert Humphrey](#) did not vote with us. Hubert was in Lyndon's pocket, on that vote.

Mr. Douglas went out to the bank of elevators, which then were operated by patronage students from Georgetown. Senators punched the button three times in order to call the operator and to tell the operator that a senator rather than the general public was present. Mr. Douglas said to me, after this crushing defeat, "Punch that button three times. Let's pretend I'm a senator." There was a lot of pathos in it. He went back to his office, and in his memoirs he said -- I can't quote this precisely -- but he said that he cried for the first time in many years over his feeling of inadequacy for not being capable of pulling it off. Well, then he

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and others decided that after the '56 election they would make another try at changing the filibuster rule in '57. They did. The United Auto Workers were very important to us in this. [Clinton Anderson](#) of New Mexico was picked to move the motion, on the grounds that the Constitution allows the Senate and the House to determine its own rules, that the rules didn't automatically carry over from session to session. One third of the Senate was newly elected.

Johnson opposed us at every step. He had opposed the attempt in '53, and he opposed it in '57. He made critical motions to table, and so forth. He absolutely

denied us every real opportunity to win. The appointment of new senators to committees was put off until after the vote, and when new senators came to see Johnson and Bobby Baker about what committee positions they would have, they were told to please go down the hall to see [Dick Russell](#), who was the power in the Senate. And Dick Russell would ask them what their position was on the filibuster rule, and make very pointed questions about that. The Steering Committee did not decide committee assignments until after the filibuster fight was over, and the people who voted with the Southerners got the gravy and the good positions: the people who voted with us got the District of Columbia Committee and the Rules Committee.

Ritchie: What do you think was Johnson's motivation at this stage?

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Shuman: It was very simple: Johnson was tied, lock, stock, and barrel, to the Southerners, and the Southerners controlled the Senate. They elected him [Leader](#) and they were his source of power. They had ten of the sixteen chairmen of the standing committees. They packed the Steering Committee, I think nine of twelve on the Steering Committee were theirs, and the other two or three were sycophants from the fiefdoms, the very small etates like Rhode Island and Delaware and Nevada, so they had almost complete control of the machinery. One cannot now (1987) check the official record and find out who were the members of the Democratic Steering Committee, the Committee on Committees, thirty years ago. It was a behind the scenes, semi-formal group, controlled by Dick Russell and the Dixiecrats, with Johnson as its chief executive officer (CEO) and Bobby Baker as the key operator.

They controlled the Senate by the coalition among the Southerners and the Democrats in the Mountain States, and the trans-Mississippi Republicans -- North and South Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska and so on. The deal was very simple, as I detailed earlier.

But the key was that the Mountain State senators voted with the South on the procedural motions having to do with Civil Rights. If a Civil Rights bill got to final passage, the westerners were free to vote for it, but they stuck with the South on the filibuster, and they stuck with the South on knocking out Part

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3 of the Civil Rights bill, Fourteenth Amendment provisions, and on putting a Jury trial amendment on the voting rights provisions, which nullified them, because at that time the Southern juries were all white. There was no way some white registrar who was held in contempt of court could go to jail. If the judge said I'm not going to take away this contempt until you register this black man,

he could have a jury trial with an all white jury. It was absolutely rigged. Those were the issues on which the Westerners -- most of them, not all of them -- voted with the South. The quid pro quo was as I've pointed out. And the Republicans from the trans-Mississippi middle west, right-wing Republicans from agricultural states with very few blacks, voted with them. The coalition had fifty-five votes for almost anything.

Ritchie: I was wondering also about its relation to national politics. The Democratic party had such a heavy base in the South which it presumably didn't want to write off.

Shuman: Yes, and one of the reasons that Johnson didn't want to bring up the Civil Rights bill in '56 was that the convention was coming along. People didn't want to break up the party and lose the South at that time. So there were great pressures then. But when Eisenhower sent up a bill in '57, really the same bill, and the Republicans pushed it, then the Democrats felt they had to go for it as well. So we got back a certain amount of support.

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But Johnson was with the South because his basis of power was Dick Russell, who controlled the Senate. Johnson wasn't in control of the Senate, Russell was. Johnson essentially could not do anything that Dick Russell and his group fundamentally disagreed with. He was incapable of doing that. He never did it. He could give us a small token housing bill, because [John Sparkman](#) from Alabama was in charge of housing, a few things like that, but he couldn't pass a good Civil Rights bill or change the filibuster rule. Not only couldn't he do it, but he went all out against us, against the Civil Rights group.

Ritchie: In 1956, when the Southern Democrats signed a declaration of protest against *Brown v. Board of Education*, all the Southern senators signed it. Fulbright signed it. But Johnson didn't sign.

Shuman: No, Johnson didn't sign it. He got out of signing it on the grounds he was the Leader and a Westerner. Johnson was not personally a segregationist. Dick Russell was. Dick Russell believed in it viscerally. Some of the other senators [Thurmond](#), [Holland](#), [McClellan](#) -- believed in it as well. One senator, whose name is [Russell Long](#), advised Mr. Douglas -- I don't know whether he did it just because he was talkative, or whether he did it because he believed in it -- but he advised Mr. Douglas that the critically important thing on voting rights was to send registrars into the South. He told him that was the way it had to be done. Long

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said he would deny it if Douglas ever said he told him that. Mr. Douglas has got it in his memoirs, but he doesn't give Russell Long's name. But I don't see any reason now not to say who it was. It was Russell Long, who came from the populist tradition of his father, [Huey Long](#).

Ritchie: Do you think there were other Southern senators who felt locked into it because of the politics of their states?

Shuman: Yes, definitely. I think of Lister Hill and John Sparkman, among others. There were a few. [Strom] Thurmond was unbending. Spessard Holland from Florida was a real racist. Curiously enough, I never felt Eastland really cared very much about it. This was just the politics of his state. That was the way he approached it. He was a cynic. I don't think he was too offended when Civil Rights laws were passed. He started working for black votes, so did Thurmond. When Senator Douglas, with Herbert Lehman, voted against Eastland for chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Eastland in a pleasant and jovial mood came over to Mr. Douglas' desk to thank him on grounds it would help Eastland politically in Mississippi. I think he would have given Douglas three judges to get him to vote "no". Of course he didn't.

One thing I wanted to make a point about: [Nixon](#) in 1957 ruled in our favor on changing the rules, but he left it up to

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the Senate to decide. Now, it was very important as to what subsequent vote there was on that ruling. If we could get a vote on the ruling itself, then half the Democrats would vote to uphold Nixon, and most of the Republicans, because they would be voting to uphold their Republican vice president. If the issue came on some other issue, such as tabling, and the Republicans didn't have to vote on the substance of what the vice president had done, then we were going to lose a lot of the Republicans. In '57, when Anderson made his motion and got a ruling, before we could move to vote on it, Johnson stepped in and used the unwritten rule that the chair recognized the majority or minority leader over any other senator, even if he wasn't the first to be on his feet to ask for recognition. Nixon told us ahead of time that if Johnson wanted recognition he'd have to give it to him. And Johnson did, and he moved to table the ruling rather than to vote on its substance up or down. This let a lot of the Republicans off the hook, and many voted with Johnson to table our motion.

But we got thirty-eight votes for it. And it had been predicted that we'd get only eighteen or twenty. The fact that the thirty-eight who voted with us represented about sixty-five percent of the population of the country, scared the South and Russell. It so frightened them that they didn't really dare filibuster the 1957 bill. Their choice then was not whether they were going to filibuster the bill, but what the content of the

bill would be. They essentially won that fight, by knocking out Part 3, the Fourteenth Amendment enforcement provision, and by putting the jury trial amendment on the voting rights provisions. Then we got into a parliamentary quandary and a no-win situation where when Part 3 was up we couldn't modify it. We couldn't weaken or modify it, in order to save it because if a senator voted for an amendment which weakened it he was voting for something less than what was in the bill, and the Civil Rights senators were unable or unwilling to do that. But we figured that after Part 3 was knocked out we could come back with a modified provision and then people would be free to vote for it because they would be voting for something far better than nothing.

Just before that was proposed near the end of the time the bill was being debated while there was huge commotion on the floor and while nobody was listening, Johnson moved a third reading of the bill. A third reading of the bill cuts off all further amendments. He did that in a -- I want to use the word -- "sneaky" way; certainly there was no notice of it. He did it without people being warned. He did it surreptitiously, and he cut off any further ability to propose even a watered-down version of Part 3. Dick Russell then at the end of the debate said the watered down bill was one of the great victories of his life, as he had virtually killed the substance of the bill. Mr. Douglas said, using the old [Lincoln](#) phrase, that that '57 bill as it passed the

Senate was like soup made from the shadow of a crow which had starved to death. That is essentially correct, except the House did come back and strengthened the provisions to some small degree, and the Civil Rights Commission did survive. Johnson then took credit, after having opposed us, vehemently, at every step of the way, for the first Civil Rights bill in some eighty-five years to have passed the Senate. But he was essentially against us. He was unbelievable!

Ritchie: Technically the bill really didn't give you much of what you had looked for.

Shuman: No, it did not. It gave a little, but not much.

Ritchie: It had major weaknesses, and legally Russell could claim it as a victory. But symbolically a Civil Rights bill was passed. Don't you think that passing even just a weak bill was an important step in the chain?

Shuman: Well, that issue came up on what to do on final passage. [Wayne Morse](#) got up and denounced all the liberals who voted for the bill on final passage, on

the grounds that they were voting for nothing, and that he was the only true Civil Righter. Well, actually he sold out on us for Hells Canyon, in the middle of the fight. There was a question of using [rule 14](#) to put the House passed Civil Rights bill on the calendar. We learned from the '56 experience to watch for that bill coming over from the

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House, and there was a rule little known that a House-passed bill could by the motion of one senator go to the calendar and not to a committee. In researching it I found out that it had been done dozens of times. It was supposed to be done on a bill where the Senate had a companion bill on the calendar or about ready to come out of a committee and to go on the calendar of bills. But in fact, that rule had been used at the end of the sessions time and time and time again when there was no Senate bill at all, so that a House-passed bill at the last minute that everybody wanted to pass could go to the Senate calendar and not to a committee, by the objection of one senator. This discovery was, in retrospect, the major personal contribution I made to the Civil Rights fight.

We devised a strategem to do that on the bill, rather than to send it to Eastland's committee again, because the Judiciary Committee had killed its predecessors by filibuster in committee. The Civil Rights group agreed to the strategy, and there were sixteen Democrats who signed a petition saying they would go for it in combination with the Republicans, jointly. The group was called the "[Douglas-Knowland](#) Axis." Knowland, who never got any credit for the Civil Rights bills, was the key person, and was extraordinarily loyal. I give him great credit because his word was very, very good. He was a very conservative fellow but a very upright, honest fellow. He deserves credit that he's never received. Johnson, who tried to kill it, got undeserved credit

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for the 1957 Civil Rights bill and Knowland, who supported it faithfully, got no credit at all. He may get his reward in heaven, but that's the only place he'll get it. I used to think well of him, at times when he was against Eisenhower on a particular issue he would leave his seat at the front desk, the minority leader's seat, and move to the back of the room on issues where he differed with the administration, to speak from that podium instead of representing the administration. I had a lot of grudging admiration for Knowland, even though I didn't agree with him on almost anything. He would be a good companion in a foxhole.

But in any case, Morse was one of the signers of that petition. The next day, when the issue was on the floor and a vote was imminent, he got up, without telling anyone ahead of time, and denounced our group for trying to put it on the

calendar. He said it was wrong, that good procedure was as important as good substance. As the rules allowed it and as the Southerners had done it many times, we were not about to disarm ourselves unilaterally. I think he would have been forgiven if he had come to the group and said "I honestly think I've made a mistake to support this and would like to get out." But he didn't, he went to the floor and denounced his allies. But the *quid pro quo* was that the Southerners allowed the Hells Canyon bill to come out. In the midst of the Civil Rights debate, the

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Hells Canyon dam was brought up in the Senate and passed and with the votes of Southerners who had opposed it before. But Morse forgot to do one thing. The deal didn't include passage by the House, and the bill died in the House, so he didn't get his bill. Meanwhile he denounced everybody else.

Furthermore, the Civil Rights groups that year could not hold any meeting, because Morse had to be invited. Then he would leak to Drew Pearson what had gone on, and if any senator so much as suggested that he was willing to modify, to back-down, to take three-quarters of a loaf, he would see his name in Drew Pearson's column the next day charging this man had sold out, but that Morse had stood there furiously behind the scenes standing up for Civil Rights. So the senators had to decide whether they were going to vote for the bill or not, and Morse voted against it and denounced everybody else. But the others voted for it, just on the grounds you mentioned, that even though it was puny, it was symbolic and should be voted for. When the House improved it there was no lingering doubt as to what to do.

Ritchie: How do you explain a person like Wayne Morse?

Shuman: Wayne Morse was incapable of working with anyone. He was never happier than when he was the independent party of one. When he was a Republican, he couldn't get along with the Republicans. When he was Democrat, he couldn't get along with the

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Democrats. But as an independent party of one, he was happy. And of course he denounced his Oregon colleague [Dick Neuberger](#) on extraordinarily spurious grounds.

I want to make another point about Civil Rights: in 1960, as a result of that Russell Long conversation, Mr. Douglas and [Jacob Javits](#) put forward the voting rights bill of 1960, which would have sent registrars into the South to register blacks in those states where I think fifty percent of them otherwise eligible were

not allowed to vote. When that bill was brought up in the Senate, Johnson as majority leader, and Dirksen as minority leader, moved to table it, jointly. And they killed it, dead. Five years later, and I think it was five years to the day, Johnson as president sent that bill to the Senate, and Dirksen sponsored it! They slapped themselves on the back and beat their breasts about what great Civil Righters they were. Well, I think Johnson had had a change of heart. As I said earlier, I don't think he ever was a segregationist as such. But he used the statement, when the '64 bill passed, about his black maid, who when she drove to Texas didn't have any place to sleep or eat. But she was his black maid in '57, and in '57 given the politics of the Senate he didn't worry about his black maid driving back to Texas not being able to sleep in Holiday Inn motels or to eat in segregated white restaurants.

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It was very hard for me to forgive him for his opposition in 1956 and 1957. The thing that's most difficult to forgive him about was that he was so two-faced about it. He never admitted that he had worked so hard to beat us. He not only worked hard to beat us in terms of the votes, but he was very nasty personally about it.

Ritchie: In what ways?

Shuman: Well, [Dick Bolling](#) told us about this. He was [Rayburn](#)'s right-hand man in the House and later became chairman of the Rules Committee, and might have been Speaker if he'd been less offensive personally to some people. He was intelligent and didn't suffer fools easily. But Dick Bolling used to have drinks with Rayburn and Johnson at 5:30, or 6 o'clock at night at the famous Board of Education, and he reported back to us the terrible denunciations that Johnson was making about Mr. Douglas and others.

Ritchie: How were Douglas and Johnson face to face? How did Johnson treat him?

Shuman: They were civil to each other. But Johnson was scornful, and he would get people to call him "the professor" and poke fun at him, and especially to generate articles by William S. White, who commanded the front page of the *New York Times*, and others, to charge that Douglas was "ineffective." Johnson's

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efforts reminded me of the old *Chicago Tribune* cartoons which portrayed the fellow with the dunce cap standing in the corner. Johnson was also very difficult in terms of what committees Mr. Douglas got, kept him off the Finance Committee for seven years. The Senator got little of the minor goodies other

people got. Of course, Mr. Douglas didn't want them. Johnson never could understand what Douglas wanted. Johnson had everybody's number -- women, wine, rooms, bills, patronage, whatever -- he never understood Mr. Douglas because the only thing Mr. Douglas wanted Johnson to do was to carry out the party's program. Johnson could not understand why somebody would stand for principle. The same thing happened later with Johnson's relations with Ho Chi Minh. Harry McPherson, who is a classy fellow and a Johnson Senate floor man and a presidential speech writer, told me what Johnson wanted in Viet Nam was a "deal." Johnson never understood why Ho wouldn't deal. Douglas and Ho were at absolutely opposite ends of the communist/anti-communist spectrum. But Johnson really never understood people who stood for principle and wouldn't "deal."

Ritchie: What about Hubert Humphrey in this period? Did he play the mediator role with Johnson?

Shuman: Hubert Humphrey was the go-between between the Civil Rights senators and Johnson. You could see him trying to establish a role as mediator when he didn't vote with us when we

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got six votes in '56; when he urged in '55 not to put forward a filibuster rule, to see if Johnson could work it out. In '57 we kept sending him back to meet with Johnson on Part 3 and issues like the jury trial amendment. All I can tell you is that every time Hubert came back he had lost. Johnson seemed to have his number. Hubert would be all geared up to go and make the arguments and would be very optimistic about what he would get, and every time he came back with his trousers off, figuratively. And you can see how Hubert moved up in the hierarchy. Hubert would move closer to the middle and closer to the front. He ended up being almost captured by the establishment, and I use the word "almost."

Ritchie: How would you evaluate the two strategies: in a sense Mr. Douglas was taking the establishment on head-first, fighting them and not giving an inch; Humphrey was being more conciliatory, trying to be on the inside, still favored Civil Rights but was trying to play along and go along. In the long run do you think that either one was more successful than the other? Or did they both lose by taking the stance that they did?

Shuman: Well, I don't think either of them lost, although I think Mr. Douglas' ultimate electoral defeat was in part due to his strong stand on Civil Rights and his introduction of the Open Housing Bill in '66. That helped defeat him, because of the riots in Chicago, and because [\[Charles\] Percy](#) switched. Percy at the

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time Mr. Douglas introduced that bill in the spring of '66 said that he was all for it. By the time the election came around, he backed off. There were marches by the Bevel group into the white suburbs of Cook County. Percy then said he was still for open housing but only in apartments and buildings where there were more than six units or the equivalent. That would have meant no desegregated housing in most of the suburbs, which were largely Republican, so Percy shifted on the issue and it cost Mr. Douglas the election. When Percy did this Mr. Douglas said he wouldn't call Percy a racist, but that he was blowing kisses to the racists.

Then there was also an interesting thing -- we never really understood it -- but Martin Luther King's lieutenant in Chicago, the Reverend Mr. James Bevel, said in that election, when Mr. Douglas was standing up for open housing, that "We are going to march until every white man in the suburbs votes Republican." He really helped to defeat Mr. Douglas in a very determined way, which we never really understood because no senator had supported the Civil Rights movement with the intensity of Mr. Douglas. There was a suspicion that Rockefeller money had come into the state in a fairly major way because of Percy's connection with Rockefeller, but that remained unproven. I'm not certain about it, but it was said. Percy had two sets of literature, one for the white suburbs and another for the black wards. In order to woo the black vote

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Percy made major cash contributions to black churches in East St. Louis during the campaign.

But I want to go back, I don't think Hubert got anything for our group from Johnson. We used to have a saying about Johnson: we gave him an orchard and he gave us an apple. That is precisely what Hubert got from him in the Senate on this issue. He may have gotten some personal things out of it, and perhaps what he did was the reason he was ultimately selected as vice president. But there were no goodies or compromises that came our way as a result of Hubert's willingness to compromise. On the other hand, I don't think Civil Rights laws would have passed when they did if Mr. Douglas hadn't made the kind of fights he made. In fact, I will go so far as to say -- because I thought it then and I still think it now -- that the riots which started in '65 in Watts, '66 in Chicago, '67, and '68, and all over the country when King died -- that if the Civil Rights acts had been passed in '57, with the full Part 3, that the country would have avoided the kinds of rioting that went on later. I think it would have been avoided because the blacks in '57 were still passive. One could hardly comprehend why they hadn't revolted long ago, but they hadn't. But by the time '67 came around, and justice had been postponed even longer than it should have been, I think that that situation changed. So I think the country suffered from that, and I think it tells us a lot about the kinds of problems we've had in urban

areas -- crime, rioting, on and on -- that have happened. That's my view, but I think it's true.

And also, the people who bring about change never get the credit. You see that all the time in the Senate. The person who is out there battling to begin with never gets credit. The person who gets the credit is the fifty-first person who decides to come aboard, the marginal vote that shifts at the last moment. They take everybody else for granted. But I think Mr. Douglas felt that his leadership of the Civil Rights fight was the greatest thing that he did in the Senate. And it brought a profound change in the nature of the country -- for the better -- even with some of the things that have happened since. So while he may have been defeated for reelection in 1966, his determined efforts forced the Senate and the country to face up to the moral issue. He may have lost in the short run, but he had a profound effect on the course of history. I consider it the greatest public moment of my life to have been -- as he called me -- his strong right arm in this prolonged battle for fundamental justice. Johnson and others fought him because he forced them to face up to an issue they wanted to sweep under the rug. Certainly for Mr. Douglas, and in a lesser sense for me as his lieutenant, in retrospect this fight gave a sense of purpose to our lives in a way no other events or issues have superseded.

Ritchie: What was [John Kennedy](#)'s role as a senator in this? Was he someone you could count on?

Shuman: Well, John Kennedy had a very minor role in the Senate. He was virtually unknown in the country. When I first came to the Senate in '55 he was ill and wasn't there. The word was that he was dying, that he wouldn't recover from the operation he'd had on his back, during which time he wrote *Profiles in Courage*. So he was an extraordinarily minor figure. I remember only two or three things he did that stand out. One was his speech on North Africa -- Algeria, I think -- which was extraordinarily good. I listened to that speech because I was on the floor, and I thought, "My God, this is really great stuff." It was super. He managed the [Landrum-Griffin](#) bill in 1960, just before he went to campaign. Archie Cox was his staff man. He handled in an extraordinarily able way some of the most difficult and technical issues on labor law that one could possibly imagine, and he got great kudos in the Senate for that.



Following debate on the Landrum-Griffin Labor Act, c. 1959
Left to Right: Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), Congressman Phillip Landrum (D-GA),
Congressman Robert Griffin (R-MI), Congressman Graham Barden (D-NC), Senator John F.
Kennedy (D-MA), and, seated, Senator Pat McNamara (D-MI).
UPI Photo

The third thing that I remember was when he and Mr. Douglas led the fight to stop a Constitutional Amendment to change the electoral college. There were provisions proposed which were ridiculous. The resolution proposed an electoral college which would vote by proportional representation, which would have given the one-party states the great benefit, rather than the two-party states. It would have given the small states the benefit.

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There was attached to it a provision -- these were constitutional amendments -- which also would have given electoral votes by congressional districts, the [Mundt-Coudert](#) amendment. We beat the amendment by showing that the combination of proportional electors and the Mundt-Coudert provisions would have thrown almost every presidential election in modern history into the House of Representatives. Karl Mundt, for whom it was named, was one of the two senators from South Dakota. He had the district in South Dakota which represented the rural minority part of the state in terms of people, and the other district represented the overwhelming majority of the state; his district would have had one electoral vote, the same as the other. So that was a ridiculous thing. Kennedy worked very closely with us on that.

When Mr. Douglas chaired the Railroad Retirement Subcommittee of the Labor Committee he hired Ted Sorenson. That was the Junior subcommittee. Douglas went on to become chairman of the Labor Subcommittee of the Labor Committee, and Kennedy inherited the Railroad Retirement Subcommittee, and

Mr. Douglas recommended Ted Sorenson to him as his staff, and then Kennedy took him into his personal office. So during that electoral fight, Ted Sorenson and I were the staff people who did the staff work for Kennedy and Douglas. It was a great fight; and we won it, overwhelmingly, and stopped them. So there were those three things I remember where

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Kennedy was a force in the Senate. He was not part of the establishment, which in my view was in his favor.

He voted for Part 3, as I remember, but I think he voted for the jury trial amendment. I know Mr. Douglas was very disappointed in his vote in '57, and when Kennedy asked Mr. Douglas to come to Massachusetts in '58 to help him in his reelection because Kennedy was very anxious to win big in '58 so that he could run for the presidency, Mr. Douglas pondered what to do. Mr. Douglas went up and spoke for him, but he had qualms about it because of Kennedy's lack of vigor, I would say, during the Civil Rights fight of '57. Of course, when he was president he waited but finally he did put in a bill which Johnson got passed, in part because of Kennedy's death. But I think that that bill would have passed in any case. The tax bill and the Civil Rights bill were almost ready to be passed when Kennedy was murdered, and I think they would have been passed in '64.

But he wasn't a big figure in the Senate. Of course he was very junior. One of the things Mr. Douglas used to say after Kennedy was president, and he came across as a sparkling, able, marvelous fellow who lifted up the country, he said: "I wonder how many other geniuses there are in the Senate that we don't know about?"

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Ritchie: Is there something about the Senate that creates that kind of personality?

Shuman: Yes, for the junior senators. That was still a time when junior senators were seen and not heard very much. Kennedy sat on the very back row. Mr. Douglas sat in the next row in front of him. I got to know Kennedy in a small way. I didn't know him intimately, but there were those times we worked together and later he or his staff called on me for help.

Ritchie: I also wanted to ask you about outside support for Civil Rights. You mentioned when Roy Wilkins of the NAACP came in. What was the lobbying effort, and to whom did you go to for support?

Shuman: In '56 and '57 there was a relatively small group of senators. It was the Coalition on Civil Rights, which was really funded by the Auto Workers, and which included in it the NAACP. King's organization was involved but he was always out in the country more than lobbying. I don't think I ever saw him come to lobby in the Senate. He was out organizing people elsewhere. The Jewish groups were involved in it. The Protestant and Catholic churches were involved in it. But in '56 and '57 their power was token. Take the churches and synagogues for example. Yes their leadership would come in and say that the moral thing to do was to pass the Civil Rights bill, but they had no push behind

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their view. When '63 and '64 came, the churches and synagogues were organized. Their rank and file supported Civil Rights, and that made the difference. So the Coalition on Civil Rights was the group, and the key figures in lobbying Congress were Joe Rauh and Clarence Mitchell. They were extraordinarily able fellows. They were the pioneers.

Ritchie: In trying to round up votes?

Shuman: Yes, and in writing the briefs.

Ritchie: Outside of the Northeastern liberals, where did you have your support? Who were the senators you were trying to get into this coalition?

Shuman: There were all kinds of people outside the Northeast, some surprising. I've talked about the Southern, Western, trans-Mississippi Republican Coalition, but some people left the coalition to support Civil Rights. There was a marvelous senator from Colorado who was almost always with us, a one-term Democratic senator.

Ritchie: [John Carroll](#)?

Shuman: Yes, John Carroll, exactly. And there were people like Wild [Bill Langer](#), who was a populist from North Dakota. Everybody said no one could predict what he would do, but actually one could predict precisely what he would do. He would be for

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almost any domestic social issue, and against any foreign policy issue that was internationalist in nature. The Western seaboard state senators from Washington, Oregon and California supported Civil Rights because they came from liberal, progressive, states. The mountain states, as I have said, had almost no blacks, so the senators there could quite easily support Civil Rights without

offending their constituents to any great degree and break with the coalition without endangering their reelection. And then there were any number of other people. Some of the key Republicans were for Civil Rights, who weren't necessarily representing the interests one way or the other of their states, but just out of conscience. So yes, there were all kinds of good, strong people from a variety of places who supported Civil Rights.

Ritchie: How would you evaluate the role of the Eisenhower administration in Civil Rights?

Shuman: Tepid. What was said at the time? The bland leading the bland. Two things happened: the Administration sent up the Civil Rights bill in '57, and then Russell jumped on it because he found that the Part 3 provisions were written in such a way that nobody knew the full implications. Part 3, to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment, by indirection referred back to a group of Civil Rights bills in 1873 which had never been enforced. When Russell found this out, and came to the Senate, and exposed it, it was a great victory for him, because the Justice Department so

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shrouded what that bill was intended to do in general language that nobody knew what was in it. In fact, Mr. Douglas was surprised. He had read that provision and didn't quite understand why it was there. He determined after finding out why it was there to back it, because it was right, but even he who had sponsored the bill didn't know why it was in the bill. This was done by the lawyers at the Justice Department, I Judge, to slip something over and not to make the bill too contentious. Then Eisenhower held a press conference and said even he didn't know what was in the bill, and he backed off. That essentially killed us. The Justice Department lawyers should have come at it directly. They out smarted themselves.

On the Civil Rights issue I wouldn't have wanted to be in a foxhole with Eisenhower. On some other issues, yes, but not on that issue. He didn't really believe in it very strongly. It was a political thing with the White House. They felt they couldn't continue to lose all the Negro votes, and they had Republican senators like Javits and [\[Clifford\] Case](#) who were strong supporters. [\[Thomas\] Kuchel](#) of California was one of our strongest supporters. He was a great fellow to be in battle with, as was Knowland, when he decided to be with us. [Dirksen](#) from Illinois never was for Civil Rights when the going was tough.

Ritchie: What about Eisenhower's Justice Department? Did they lobby for the bill?

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Shuman: We didn't see them. They worked through the Republican senators. People like Clifford Case would talk to [Herbert] Browned, who was then Attorney General, or [William] Rogers, who held the post later. But we didn't work directly with them.

Ritchie: One other question I have is with parliamentary procedures. You were going into a real thicket of parliamentary battle. How helpful was the Senate parliamentarian and the staff of the Senate?

Shuman: The Senate parliamentarian then was Charlie Watkins. Charlie Watkins I think came from Arkansas, and Charlie Watkins was like almost all the employees of the Senate itself, an agent of the Southern group. I mean, he bristled when you asked about something. But Doc Riddick was his assistant, and Doc was even handed. If you would ask him the right question he'd give you the answer. On the whole I talked with Doc Riddick. I know him still and I like him very much, but I never felt that he was out there championing our cause or anything like that. But he was very even-handed in the way he treated us. I spent hours with Doc Riddick.

Ritchie: That's interesting. I asked him how he could deal with both sides on an issue, and he said he only answered the questions they asked him.

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Shuman: Well, that's essentially correct. But he would answer them, and he would answer them correctly. Then also, Nixon was in the chair as vice president, so through Nixon's office Civil Rights senators got a lot of information from the parliamentarians, because they were darn well not going to turn down the inquiries of the presiding officer of the Senate on some procedural issue. That was done through Clifford Case's staff, but I did most of the work overall, as on rule 14, and on all of the procedures on discharging a committee. I did that so that Mr. Douglas could present clearly to the Civil Rights senators the options they had. It was quite clear that discharging the committee was an option that was going to murder them.

Ritchie: How would you evaluate Nixon's role in all of this? Was he playing it square?

Shuman: Pretty square on Civil Rights. He kept his cards very close to the chest. But he was getting ready to be a candidate for president. So he was more interested in national politics than Senate politics. As the vice president he was aloof to a considerable degree from the Senate. But his ruling on rule 22 was pretty good except he didn't go far enough. He had the choice of making the ruling and applying it, but he deliberately left the ultimate decision to the Senate itself, which Johnson tabled. So he was just one step short of really going all the way with our group. But it was better than nothing. Because of his

outrageous campaigns against Jerry Voorhees and [Helen Douglas](#), there was no one I detested more at the time than Nixon. For whatever motives he had, I reluctantly give him credit on this issue at that time.

Ritchie: It seems that everyone was moving so cautiously. It was an inch by inch process, and other than your small group no one really wanted to be dramatically out in front on the issue.

Shuman: Well, you see, that was one of the problems we faced. The support for our side was wide but thin. It lacked intensity. And the Southerners intensity, with less than twenty strong supporters, was so great that they could defeat the eighty in the Senate who might more or less be for it. That was a big, big problem. And it was important to the Southerners politically. It didn't make a fundamental difference for most other senators except on a personal basis. The South conquered the Senate on this issue the way Cortez conquered Mexico. A small band of armed and determined people over came the diffused power of those many times more numerous.

Ritchie: The 1960 Civil Rights bill wasn't as significant, although in some respects I suspect people remember that one more just because it got so much publicity.

Shuman: You mean '64?

Ritchie: No, I mean the 1960 bill when Johnson did the round-the-clock sessions to break the filibuster, and they had people sleeping on cots. It got a lot of publicity.

Shuman: The voting rights bill was the bill I remember from 1960.

Ritchie: Well, maybe I'm giving it the generic title of Civil Rights bill. But that was a different tactic. That was when Johnson took more of a confrontational tactic.

Shuman: Well, the big confrontation that I remember was '56 and '57; Sixty as I remember it was over pretty fast, but that's a question of fact which we can look up. That was twenty-seven years ago!

Ritchie: I was just thinking that in '57 as you mentioned, the South was nervous about their position and didn't hold a prolonged filibuster.

Shuman: No, they did not filibuster, although the threat of a filibuster helped get the bill watered down.

Ritchie: But they did in 1960, and that was when the Senate stayed in session around the clock.

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Shuman: We also stayed round the clock in previous times, too. I slept on a cot in the Senate Office Building many times. I read the book *Kon Tiki* during one of those periods!

Ritchie: The real question I was getting at was how effective is that tactic, of trying to stop a filibuster by keeping the Senate in consistently. Right now, Senator [Byrd](#) doesn't like to do that, but some people think it's necessary to break a filibuster.

Shuman: That plays into the hands of the filibusterers. It is not a good way to break a filibuster, and the reason is very simple. Twenty senators who are willing to filibuster, determined to stop a bill by a filibuster, can defeat the rest. Even as few as twelve can do it, but let's say twenty, which is about what the Southerners had. One man goes to the floor, the ten committee staffs they chaired write the speeches. In the period I was involved the Southerners finally made germane speeches. They read long Civil Rights cases, so they were germane. But the staff would write four to six hour speeches for each of them. One senator would go to the floor and give a speech, and he would have with him another senator, a team of two. The other senator would spell him, by asking long questions from time to time, and also guard the floor, to make certain that nobody else got the floor, and to give the speaker a chance to go out and go to the men's room while the second senator was asking a long, involved

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question. I've seen it happen. The senator would come back from the men's room and say, "I'm glad you asked that question." The two would go on for whatever time it took to finish the speech, and if the other side wasn't guarding the floor, they would stop and pause for four or five minutes at a time.

Then, at the end of the speech, there would be a call for a quorum. Generally speaking, a quorum doesn't show up immediately, so after fifteen minutes there was no quorum, which meant that they could delay even longer. Then to delay further they would ask for a live quorum. Then before anything could happen, fifty-one senators had to show up. Well, except for the two Southerners on the floor, their eighteen allies did not show up to help make a quorum, as did a few of their secret allies. They hid out. The people who were determined on Civil Rights

would come and answer their name, and the middle group, well, maybe they'd come and maybe they wouldn't. It was extraordinarily difficult to get fifty-one senators to answer a live quorum call. So two senators could combine a six-hour speech, and at least an hour, maybe two hours, getting a quorum. They could use up eight hours that way; to carry that out they needed only six senators a day to speak.

So a senator who was filibustering didn't have to show up except every third day and didn't have to speak except every sixth day. The people who were trying to break the filibuster had to be around, fifty-one of them, at all times, to answer the quorum

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calls. They slept there, and had to get up and answer their names at four o'clock in the morning, or at six o'clock in the morning, after being up all night. The effect of it was to wear out the people who were trying to break the filibuster, rather than to wear out the people who were filibustering. Very simple. I mean, that was a device to help the Southerners, generally speaking. And that happened in part because of their intensity of purpose, and because of the rules of the Senate.

Ritchie: And that was Johnson's tactic in 1960.

Shuman: Well, whenever they used it, or perhaps more important, when they threatened to use it, as in '56, and '57, and '60. I will have to look up the specific dates on the filibusters, but Johnson certainly backed those who used it or threatened it, and that did not help us. It helped the other side.

Ritchie: What's your opinion in general about the filibuster rule, and the fact that senators can filibuster? Removed from Civil Rights, do you think that it's a legitimate and useful tool, or do you think that it's been a detriment to the Senate?

Shuman: I think in the Senate or in any parliamentary body there should be debate, long enough to essentially do two things: to examine major questions thoroughly so as to arouse public opinion and public attention. Then after that has been done, the

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Senate or the body should have the right to vote, and a majority -- perhaps a Constitutional majority, fifty-one -- should have the right to prevail. Now, in the time I'm speaking of, in the fifties, what happened in the Senate was that there was lots of debate, long and prolonged talk, whose purpose was designed to

prevent a vote. That was the purpose of the filibuster. It wasn't to educate the public, it was to prevent a vote on Civil Rights. I define filibuster not as long talk, but talk designed to prevent a vote.

After the Civil Rights bills were passed, the Senate went to the other extreme under Byrd. I think that's wrong. Under Byrd, there's no debate and lots of votes. So what happens now is that a cloture petition is laid down the minute anybody starts to debate a contentious issue. Once the cloture petition is laid down and the vote on it isn't going to come for forty-eight hours, everybody leaves. Nobody listens to the debate. Then forty-eight hours later, without having had any kind of debate, the Senate votes. The Senate votes and votes and votes. Now the situation is no debate and lots of votes, which is the opposite of the old days. What I think should happen is that there should be a system to provide for both. We used to say in the fifties that perhaps three weeks of debate would be sufficient. We proposed a two-step solution. Until the debate had gone on for two or three weeks it should take sixty-seven, or at least sixty votes to break a

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filibuster. But after the third week, a Constitutional majority of fifty-one ought to be able to shut off debate, because by then there had been sufficient debate that the majority should prevail.

That's what I believe in. I would not want to see a cloture rule in the Senate that could be invoked immediately, whereby fifty-one senators could stop debate. The Senate does have such a rule in the tabling motion. There is a negative form of majority cloture. A majority can kill a bill without debate, but cannot pass a bill after prolonged debate. It used to really get me when the Southerners would get up and move to table, as on our petition to change the rules, and do so in the name of unlimited debate, freedom of the filibuster, and all the rest, and they would then cut off debate without a moment's debate by the negative cloture of tabling, which is a non-debatable motion. So I believe in both full and free debate, and in the right of the majority ultimately to act.

That was the condition in the Senate in its early days. The idea that one hears, everytime the filibuster rule comes up, that the founding fathers were for the filibuster, is historically inaccurate. That is hogwash. I don't know whether you're familiar with that fact or not. In the early Senate, *Jefferson's Manual* was the rules of the Senate. *Jefferson's Manual*, which I have here, provided for a couple of things. First of all, the ruling of the chair was without appeal. It was final. This was

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true when Jefferson was in the chair as vice president. So there was no appeal from the decision of the chair. Secondly, and I think I will now read from my volume in order to be precise, under *Jefferson's Manual* there was a rule 17, which provides that in the Senate of the United States the president's decision is without appeal.

But it also provides the following: "No one is to speak impertinently, or beside the question, superfluously, or tediously." Now imagine what would happen to the Senate today if senators could not speak tediously or superfluously. I mean, the Senate would come to a screeching halt.

But the combination of a tedious speech being out of order, or a superfluous speech being out of order, or speaking beside the question out of order, with the right of the vice president to rule it out of order with no appeal, meant that there couldn't be a filibuster. No way! And there was no filibuster.

Then in addition to that, there was a rule 34, which provided for the previous question motion, which is what we now have in *Robert's Rules of Order*, which goes back to the British parliament, which is a means by which a simple majority could cut off debate. That was used four times in the early Senate. Twice it ended debate by majority vote. Irving Brant, who was a very famous historian and [Madison](#) biographer, an extraordinarily able

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fellow, worked with us on this. He and I worked together on this bit of history. I wrote a speech for the senator to publicize those four cases. The speech detailed the cases, the four times the previous question motion had been used, and twice by majority vote the Senate cut off a filibuster, cut off debate, in the early Senate, before 1806. Brant did the work on these factual issues. This was unknown until then. Dick Russell got up and said, "Well, that's the rule from the House of Commons. That rule is not a rule to stop debate, but merely to postpone it."

Well, what we did was to provide a complete induction, citing every example before drawing a conclusion. I think it was something that had never been done before, except in Lincoln's Cooper Union speech in New York, where he debated the issue whether the founding fathers were for or against slavery. He examined the views of the founding fathers, one by one and proved that every one of them had been against slavery, either from their speeches or by what they did. That was an example of complete induction as Lincoln took every possible example and showed logically that the founding fathers were personally opposed to slavery.

We did the same thing on this question. The previous question rule came in in the House of Commons in 1604, so Brant went to the predecessor of *Hansard* and we collected every time the previous question motion had been moved in the House of Commons from 1604 to 1789, the period before the Senate started, and the

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period before *Jefferson's Manual*, from which Jefferson got the motion. We found that depending upon how the question was put affected the outcome. If it were put in the negative, "I move that the question be not now put," then what happened on the vote, whether it passed in the the negative or the affirmative, affected what it did. Or if it was put in the affirmative, and the yeas prevailed as against the nays, different things could happen, either postponement or the end of the debate.

The effect was that in some cases it was postponed, but in other cases it cut off debate. We found that in about two-thirds of almost a thousand cases in the British parliament from 1604 to 1789 the motion had the effect to cut off debate. Its overwhelming effect had been to cut off debate. My memory is that we found that the closer to 1789, the more often the motion was used to cut off debate. So we went back with that information and disproved Dick Russell, although he never acknowledged that. And I am showing you here a *Senate Manual* where *Jefferson's Manual* appears. In those days, *Jefferson's Manual* was a part of the Senate's rules. It was said to be a part of the Senate rules, and after that debate took place, *Jefferson's Manual* was stricken, without anybody's knowledge or motion that I'm aware of, from the *Rules and Manual of the United States Senate*. So shortly after we made this point, *Jefferson's Manual* was no longer a part of the rules. And if one looks at the later copies of the Rules of the

Senate in the *Senate Manual*, which I have here, they do not include *Jefferson's Manual*. It was no longer part of the rules.

Ritchie: It's in the *House Rules Manual* now, but not in the *Senate Manual*. So they dropped that out without any . . .

Shuman: With no by-your-leave. It was mysterious. I noticed it when I got the new manual and wondered how it had happened. But I'm making a basic point: the filibuster was the child of segregation. It was first used just before the Civil War, when there was the Westward movement. New states were coming in. This broke up the roughly equal political power of the North and the South as the country moved Westward and new states were admitted. *Jefferson's Manual* I think went out in about 1816, it was no longer the rules of the Senate. The Senate wrote new rules, and no mention was made of [cloture](#). But the early rules provided that debate could be limited by a majority, and it happened on two of the four occasions it was tried. The filibuster started much later.

Ritchie: Tell me, having spent a lot of time studying the rules, and having watched someone like Richard Russell, who really knew them. What about the

rest of the senators, how well did they really know the rules, and how well were they able to think on their feet?

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Shuman: Well, of course, generally a senator doesn't have to know the rules, because the parliamentarian is there to tell the senator the rules, and the Senate essentially functions by unanimous consent. If the rules are invoked, the Senate cannot function, basically. The Senate can only function by unanimous consent. Everyone has to more or less agree. One of the devices used to teach senators the rules was to put them in the chair when they were freshmen senators. And until recently, all freshmen senators were put in the chair. Now it's a party position. That came about, I think, in the early days of Bob Byrd, when one of the Republicans recognized his party people as opposed to the Democrats when he was in the chair although he represented the minority. Historically the chair went back and forth and recognized one Democrat and one Republican. And then somebody didn't do it.

Ritchie: It was [Jesse Helms](#).

Shuman: Was it? And Byrd got angry, and put only Democrats in the chair, because the majority party has the right to run the show. Then when the Republicans came in they did the same thing. I don't know what prevails today.

Ritchie: Just the majority party presides.

Shuman: But in those days, that was the way in which the freshmen senators of both parties learned the rules. The most

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Junior senators presided over the Senate, and on the whole they still do. So yes, a lot of them learned the rules pretty quickly. But seldom does a senator get into a situation where he or she has to know the rules in great detail. It's only when the leadership or some individual senator is enforcing them.

Ritchie: But you don't think it's a detriment for senators not to learn the rules that well?

Shuman: Yes, I think it's a detriment. I think senators should know the rules. There are only forty rules. Of course, there are all kinds of things that are tacked on. I think the ethics requirements are now either a part of or an addenda to the rules.

Ritchie: The Southern senators, or at least many of the senior ones, had reputations of being masters of the rules. I suppose part of that was from seniority.

Shuman: Well, the Southerners wrote the rules to provide for the filibuster and to keep a Civil Rights bill from getting through. And they also had a way around their own restrictions through the rule of germaneness. Are you aware of the germaneness rule? The Southerners wanted to make certain that no Civil Rights bill could be passed, and that it could be filibustered. So there was and is no rule of germaneness on a legislative bill. But they also wanted to make certain that some must" bills, which had to

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go through, like the appropriation bills, could not be used to tack on a Civil Rights bill. So they said that no amendment to an Appropriations bill could be allowed unless it was germane. Now that isn't really true. If the House puts a legislative amendment on an appropriations bill, it is both an appropriations bill and a legislative bill. Other amendments can be added.

But the Southerners provided another feature, namely that a committee could vote to add a non-germane and unauthorized amendment to an appropriation bill, so that in the last parts of the year, if they needed to get their dams through, or their new air base, or whatever, the authorization could be added to the appropriation bill by a vote of the committee. Thirteen members, a majority of the Appropriations Committee could add any amendment they wanted to, germane or not germane. Then, in addition to that, if a senator were to put a non-germane amendment on the bill, such as Jesse Helms does on abortion to an HEW appropriations bill, ordinarily he needs to suspend the rules and get a two-thirds vote. But if such an amendment is put up and a senator asks the chair to rule on its germaneness, before it is ruled out of order, then the senator can get a vote on germaneness, and if fifty-one members vote that it is germane, even though it is not germane, it is germane and it can be voted on.

So Jesse Helms has put non-germane abortion amendments on the HEW appropriation bills, asked for a germaneness ruling,

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gotten a vote on it, while saying to everyone of his colleagues: "Look, this is the abortion vote of the year. There are people up there in the gallery watching you to see how you vote on this procedural motion, whether it's germane or not." So everybody votes, or not everybody, a majority votes that it is germane, even though it clearly is not germane. And then [\[Lowell\] Weicker](#) and a few others decide "Well, this bill can't go through." So they filibuster the HEW bill and there

is then no HEW bill. That's one of the things that has happened in recent times. That goes back to the Southern writing of the rules so that they could get their pork through and at the same time protect themselves against a Civil Rights bill. It took me a long time to figure it out. I was around the Senate for eight or ten years before I understood what in the hell they were doing on the germaneness issue. It really wasn't until I worked for [Proxmire](#), and he was on the Appropriations Committee, that I learned the inner secrets of the germaneness provisions.

Ritchie: The Appropriations Committee is the committee that everyone aspires to, but I suspect that most citizens don't recognize its significance and its power.

Shuman: It used to be the most powerful committee in the Senate. I now think that because the Budget Committee has usurped power from the Appropriations Committee, probably the Finance Committee is the most powerful committee and that Appropriations

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has taken a back seat. That shift of power happened at the time of the Budget Act of '74, when the Finance Committee fought the Budget Act, decided they weren't going to give up their powers. Since then they've often thumbed their nose at the Budget committees when they've been instructed to raise taxes. The Appropriations Committee under [John] McClellan did not take on the Budget Committee partly because McClellan was just about ready to die and he didn't have the energy. So the Appropriations Committee acquiesced in the Budget Act, while the Finance Committee did not. And if there is anything that history teaches, as one looks back over the committee system from the beginning is that power shifts back and forth among committees. In the beginning there were no standing committees. The Senate had *ad hoc* committees appointed to draft bills after the House or Senate had determined the basic substance. They were really drafting or style committees. They would listen to the debate and go draft the bill, and then bring it back. That still happens in the House of Commons in the British Parliament. That's exactly how the House of Commons functions from time to time.

The powers of individual committees have ebbed and waned. For much of the history of the Senate, the authorizing committees also appropriated the money. A lot of people advocate that now, but I'm against it. I think there would be no limit on spending if the Armed Services Committee or the Labor Committee, or Health

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Committee, could appropriate what they authorize, because they always authorize much more than will be appropriated. The committees are loaded with

the advocates of the programs they vote on. So that's a silly proposal which is made by a lot of intelligent people. Further, until the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921, the authorizing and appropriations committees were often the same, as I have said. Soon the jealousy of the Appropriations Committee for the Budget Committee will lead to a loss of power of the latter. The alarm of the Armed Services Committee that the Budget Committee is reaching into their bailiwick, even though the Budget Committee pretends not to tell them what weapons systems to fund, in effect they do. This poaching by the Budget Committee will also result in the Budget committee getting its wings clipped in the relatively near future. So the power will shift back and forth again. As a historian you must be very pleased that I'm talking about the the role of history in the Senate.

Ritchie: The cycles of history. One other question I wanted to ask about Senator Douglas and the filibuster issue: having fought so consistently to reduce the powers of the filibuster, did he feel constrained against filibustering himself?

Shuman: No, he did not, and he had a very good rule about it, because we saved the "one man one vote" decision of the Supreme Court from Dirksen overturning it, by filibustering it. His position was that he was not for unilateral disarmament,

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either with the Russians or in the Senate. And it was a form of warfare in the Senate. Although Mr. Douglas was wounded twice in the Pacific, he used to say that civic courage was often a higher order than battlefield courage. "In the Pacific," he would say, "the Japanese were after my body. Here in the Senate people are after my soul." He believed that as long as the filibuster was the rule of the Senate, he had every right to use it, as did every other senator. When his proposal for three weeks of debate, after which a majority vote could end debate was adopted, then he would abide by the rule. But he was not going to have one set of rules for his side and another set for the other side, essentially out of self restraint. And I think that's fundamentally correct. He didn't filibuster a lot, but he was involved in some, yes. And I helped him.

Ritchie: It has been interesting that filibusters more recently have been by liberal senators, I suppose because there have been conservative majorities.

Shuman: Yes. This is true because this has been a very conservative administration trying to push through very conservative legislation. But I still think full and free debate followed by passage by a majority, is the answer.

Ritchie: It's certainly what distinguishes the Senate from the House, with the House having such tight rules on debate.

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Shuman: Yes, but as we've talked about earlier, I think debate in the Senate is nothing like it ought to be. The quality is nothing like it should be or could be, unfortunately.

Ritchie: Someone said recently they're not sure if there's anyone left in the Senate who could give a speech for six to eight hours.

Shuman: You asked me about Wayne Morse being too talkative. But I did want to say in his defense that Wayne Morse, and Jack Javits as well, could get up, without a note and give a sequential speech of forty minutes or an hour, or two hours, and it would sound like a legal brief. They had ordered minds and could give a long sequential speech. They were extraordinarily good, even though people might say they were a bit long-winded. But their speeches were very substantive, and they did flow precisely. It was an amazing ability. Mr. Douglas could do that. He could give an hour-long sequential and ordered speech, I've heard him do it many times, without a note. And he complained to me in his older age that he now had to have notes when he spoke, and it bothered him. God, I couldn't make a formal speech, not an important one, without notes in any case!

End Interview #3

Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Interview #4: The "Good Old Days" Were Not

(August 19, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Ritchie: You said you'd like to begin with the concept of the "good old days" in the Senate.

Shuman: Well, there's a lot of talk now about the "good old days" in the Senate or Congress, when it was said a President could deal with [Rayburn](#), and [Johnson](#), and a few committee people, strike a deal and allegedly watch the leaders deliver. First of all I don't think it was true to a very great degree. Senators who were in the Senate then paid a very heavy price for the "good old days," in the sense that the Senate was run by a small hierarchy composed of the bipartisan coalition I've talked about, but principally by the committee chairmen, who were very powerful. Of course, the junior members were to be seen and not heard. The idea that the president could talk to Johnson, and he in turn could talk to Russell and deliver, in general was not true. They could only deliver on things the Southerners agreed to. They couldn't deliver a Civil Rights bill. They couldn't or wouldn't deliver a tax bill, if a tax increase or decrease were needed to dampen down or stimulate the economy. They could deliver only in the small area of relatively conservative policy with which they agreed. That's as far as it went.

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The "good old days" also were when neither Rayburn nor Johnson could control Judge [Howard Smith](#), chairman of the Rules Committee, who at the end of the session went back to his farm in Virginia and took with him all the bills that he didn't want passed. He just put them in his pocket.

The "good old days" were days when bills were marked up in secret executive sessions. The "good old days" were when Bobby Baker ran free like a loose gun on a wooden deck, when the Truth in Lending bill, my old boss [Douglas'](#) bill, which [Proxmire](#) finally got passed, was bottled up for seven years in a subcommittee of the Banking Committee, because the chairman of that committee, [\[A. Willis\] Robertson](#) was an agent of the banks. He went to work for them when he left the Senate as did his staff director. The "good old days" were when the power-oriented senators held sway over the issue-oriented senators.

The "good old days" were the days when the press did not report the drunks, or the crooks, or the womanizers. [Gary Hart](#) would have had a field day if the "good old days" still existed! The "good old days" were when the press which covered

the Senate, principally the *New York Times* man, William White, and the *Washington Post* reporters, and the wire service reporters were in fact a part of the Senate establishment. [Jack] Bell was head of the A.P. in the Senate gallery. I remember one evening he came out of the press gallery as I was going in, and he said, in a loud

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voice, announcing it: "We have adjourned. We are coming in at noon tomorrow." He was just as much a part of the Club as any Southern senator. The "good old days" were when the Dixiecrats held 10 of the 16 Standing Committee chairmanships, including all but one of the big ones, and whose sycophants ruled almost all of the others.

There was a period of about a year when everybody knew that Bobby Baker had been fiddling with campaign funds, and it was unreported. It finally got reported by accident when a lawsuit was filed. One of the things I look back on with some pride is the fact that for a year before Bobby Baker was fired, he wouldn't speak to me. He wouldn't speak to me because of Jim McCartney of the *Chicago Daily News*, now of the Knight-Ridder chain, and my friend for over thirty years. McCartney did stories then that were not quite front-page stories but wonderful, interesting stories which everyone else missed. He was the one who broke the story about Mrs. Kennedy's new house in the Virginia countryside. And he did stories on Bobby Baker before anyone else did. He heard Bobby Baker, the secretary to the majority, say one summer, speaking to a group of interns, that he had ten senators' votes in his pocket at anytime. And Jim also wrote an article about the Senate establishment, the Club, and he put Baker in the Club as the hundred and first senator, as he called him, but he left [Mansfield](#) out, which made Mansfield very unhappy. Mansfield

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ticked off McCartney at that time, but later apologized to him. Bobby, it was said, also had power because his wife was the secretary for the Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee which kept dosiers not only on alleged security risks but on senators and their families as well. The staff director was a man named Sourwine. But in any case, McCartney wrote the stories about Bobby, and Bobby had seen me having lunch with Jim McCartney in the Family Dining Room [in the Capitol] and thought that I had put him up to it. Well, I hadn't. I wish I had, but I hadn't.

There was a time that year, this would have been after '62 and before '64, when we were meeting in Majority Leader Mansfield's office with [John Sparkman](#), Mansfield, and Douglas, who were handling a major housing bill. I was there as a

staff person, and Bobby was there, just the five of us, and for more than an hour Bobby wouldn't speak to me because he thought I was McCartney's source.

Well, in the end he went to jail because of an incident that happened in the Finance Committee. Mr. Douglas for years had proposed that the stock savings and loans be taxed at a higher rate than the mutuals, on the grounds that the stocks were out to make money, but the mutuals shared their profits with their members. Mr. Douglas pushed this, but without any success. One day I got a call from Grover Ensley, who had been the staff

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director of the Joint Economic Committee and now worked for the mutual savings banks in New York. About noon he called me from New York and said, "Great! Congratulations! Douglas had a great success in the Finance Committee today. The stocks are going to be taxed more than the mutuals." I said, "Grover, there must be some mistake. Mr. Douglas wasn't at the meeting today."

It turned out that [\[Robert\] Kerr](#) had put the amendment through and had voted a number of proxies for it. In the next two or three weeks, almost every stock savings and loan in the country came down to Washington to try to do something about that. This was at a time when Bobby Baker and Kerr were in charge of the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee. After Johnson had gone to the White House there was a vacuum into which Kerr and Bobby stepped. They literally shook down the savings and loans for campaign contributions during that two or three week period, and then Kerr withdrew his amendment. That is what in the state legislatures is called a "fetcher" amendment: a member says he's going to do something that's going to hurt a group's interest and then he gets them to pay through the nose for it not happening.

Bobby had turned over something like eighty thousand dollars to Kerr, and the cash was found in Kerr's lockbox after he died, suddenly, I think on New Year's day of 1963. He died just as there appeared on the newsstand a copy of the *Saturday Evening Post* with Kerr's picture on the cover. It referred to him as "the

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king of the Senate." Mr. Douglas coined the phrase and first called Kerr the king of the Senate. At the very instant that it appeared -- here was this all-powerful person who had stepped into the vacuum that Johnson left -- Kerr died of a sudden heart attack, sitting on the edge of his hospital bed. When Bobby went to trial, his defense was that it was Kerr's money, that he had given it to Kerr, and that he Bobby, hadn't kept it. He said he gave it all to Kerr. Some used to think he gave ten percent to Kerr and kept ninety, but Bobby claimed he gave it all to Kerr. And the judge's charge to the jury was that if you do think that Bobby passed all

the money along to Kerr, then Bobby is technically innocent. Personally I thought he was "technically" innocent. I think he was morally guilty but probably technically innocent. But the prosecution said: what would this millionaire Kerr want with the money? The question I would have put is: how do they think Kerr got all his money in the first place? He had the biggest Sunday School class in Oklahoma. He didn't smoke and he didn't drink, but as he said, "I never approved of a deal I wasn't in on." He was a modern buccaneer.

That was the Senate in the "good old days." I was called to the Senate floor one time just after the Senate Campaign Committee delivered to Mr. Douglas, in a white envelope, sealed, five thousand dollars in cash as his part of their campaign contribution. I think it was for 1960. He called me over to the

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Senate, gave it to me unopened. Mr. Douglas was ashen. I went back to the office and I got our office boy, who was then a high school student, and he and I walked together over to the bank on east Pennsylvania Avenue, where I converted the cash into a cashier's check, and sent it off to our campaign to be recorded. But if someone had hit me over the head going down the steps in the Old Senate Office Building, with five thousand bucks, people would have been very suspicious of what I was up to. That is the way things worked in the "good old days." I converted that money into something I could see, feel, or touch immediately. I made it accountable.

So there are lots of good things about the present day, when senators can actually go to the floor, offer an amendment, and have some hope that if it has some merit it can actually be passed. That was not true in the "good old days." Johnson had to give his approval before the 55 votes of the coalition would vote for your amendment. Committee assignments were handed out on a preferential basis, rather than on a fair basis, even with the Johnson rule, which was a good change. So I don't think so much of the "good old days." They have been vastly exaggerated. They are largely a myth.

I heard Henry Kissinger say not too long ago that, when he was Secretary of State in the [Nixon](#) and [Ford](#) administrations, the "good old days" still existed in the sense that he could go up and

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talk to three or four people and get his foreign policy position accepted. That's rubbish. In the period from '69 until '76 that did not occur in the Senate for Kissinger or anybody else. That was a period when the "good old days" did not exist at all. Those were the days when turmoil ruled.

There is one other point I want to make. In 1958 there was a recession and Mr. Douglas was a strong advocate of a quick tax cut, I think he proposed a tax cut of about six billion to stimulate the economy and to help end the recession. Eisenhower didn't want to do it. If he had done it, and conditions had improved, the Senate might very well not have gone Democratic to the degree it did in 1958, when I think sixteen new Democratic senators came in, four from the two new states and twelve from former Republican seats. But Eisenhower resisted the tax cut. Johnson was talking to Mr. Douglas then, and Douglas had convinced him that it should be done. But Johnson told Douglas, when I was with them on the Senate floor, that Rayburn had gone down to the White House and that Eisenhower said no, that he thought it would be wrong to cut taxes, and that Rayburn had stood there and saluted Eisenhower as commander-in-chief and said: yes sir, we won't have a tax cut. It was one thing to treat the president as commander-in-chief on a matter of foreign policy, or military policy, national security policy, but quite another to do that on a domestic political and economic issue. But according to Johnson

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Rayburn did that, and even Johnson couldn't change the fact that Rayburn had done it. I've since been told by Rayburn's biographer that this may not have been true. It may have been Johnson's way of letting Douglas down easily.

I think there have been a lot of changes for the better in the Senate. And there are three principal ones, which I think changed the nature of the Senate. The first major change was the decline of the South and the death or retirement of the Southern barons or poohbahs. That occurred through the middle and late sixties and into the early seventies. Most of the Dixiecrats died or left. They were replaced by relatively conservative Democrats, but in most cases the Dixiecrats were replaced by national Democrats from the South. A man like [\[Lawton\] Chiles](#), who is relatively conservative, is certainly not a Dixiecrat such as [Spessard Holland](#), whom he replaced. So the decline of the South was a major change in the Senate. The South's grip on the committees and on the Steering Committee and the appointments to positions ended.

The second change was the rise in power of the class of '58 Northern Democrats, whose influence lasted really until 1980. They became either chairmen or ranking members of the committees. They brought a tremendous change in the nature of the Senate, and made it possible for Johnson as President to get his Great Society program through. It is ironic that those who gave Johnson his

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great legislative victories as President were those who had been scorned by Johnson and his power base when he was [Leader](#) in the Senate.

The third change was in the nature of the Republicans. When I first came to work in the Senate there were, with some notable exceptions, basically two kinds of Republicans. There were the time-servers or there were the wild men. The wild men were [McCarthy](#), [\[William\] Jenner](#), and the man from Idaho.

Ritchie: [Herman Welker](#).

Shuman: Welker died of a brain tumor. I saw him go nuts on the floor one day. He absolutely went wild. He would make John McEnroe look angelic. With notable exceptions such as [Bob Taft](#), many of the Republican senators were nonentities, and there was a reason for that. An able conservative in that period became president of a bank, head of General Motors, or chairman of a large corporation, and in turn hired his politicians. So most of the Republicans in the Senate were hired politicians. The exceptions were a few patricians from New England. Very few of the Republicans would argue substance or policy. They wouldn't debate. They just sat there. The senator from Iowa, [Tom Martin](#), was a beautiful example of an absolute nonentity. But there were lots of them. Now, that changed dramatically -- starting in 1956 with [Javits](#) of New York -- a whole group of Republicans came in

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who had standing in their own right. The two Oregon senators [\[Robert\] Packwood](#) and [\[Mark\] Hatfield](#), and [\[Edward\] Brooke](#) of Massachusetts. [\[Richard\] Lugar](#) is an example of that, as is the leader of the Republicans, [\[Robert\] Dole](#). There are a large number of Republicans who have great ability and personality who got there on their own hook and were and are not time servers. That was a decisive change in the Senate. The election of 1980, when a whole group of Republicans won whom no one expected to win, and therefore not much care had been taken in their selection as candidates, almost brought the cycle full circle again. But many of these were defeated six years later at the end of their first term.

Those were the fundamental changes, as well as the changes people talk about, such as the open meetings of the Senate committees, the rise of subcommittee government, greater freedom for freshmen, greater diffusion of power throughout the Senate in the committees, and so forth. It got to the stage that when my old boss, Proxmire, became chairman of the Banking Committee, there wasn't much power left in the chairmanship. He was really first among equals. The only way he could function was to convince a majority of the members of the committee to vote with him. He had to round up the votes. They were not automatic. He could not rule autocratically as did many predecessor committee chairman in the Senate.

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I think, contrary to what people say, that on the whole it is now a better place. I don't think it's as interesting a place. I don't think the figures loom as large as Johnson, and Kerr, and Douglas, and [Morse](#). Maybe I think that because of age. Perhaps twenty years from now people will say, "Gee, there was Bob Dole back there, what a big figure he was. And think of what a big figure [Bob Byrd](#) was as the leader!" I don't quite think that will be the case, so I'm not making that point, but I am saying that the general level of intelligence is now probably higher. The general level of education is higher. I think that on the whole senators are now more ethical. There are fewer crooks. There are fewer drunks. Very few of them smoke. They are healthier. In a wide variety of ways, even with the PACs and the big money that are now involved in campaigns, as a group they probably operate on a higher ethical plane than when I first came there. End of speech!

Ritchie: To go back, you brought up Bobby Baker, and I did have some questions I wanted to ask you about him. He was the Democratic Secretary for much of the period that you were on the floor.

Shuman: All the period, from '55 until '62 or '63, whenever it was that he lost his job, after Mansfield became leader.

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Ritchie: Were there times that you felt you could work with him, or was it always an adversarial relationship?

Shuman: No, Bobby was never with us. Bobby would use information that he got from us against us. He did have ten senators in his pocket. He constantly claimed that our side couldn't count. I made the point about how the Senate is gerrymandered and how the smallest seventeen states with thirty-four senators represent only seven percent of the population. It's a rigged deck, and Bobby took advantage of that. It was true that on almost any vote, Johnson had ten extra senators in his pocket, and he and Bobby would beat us and say, "You can't count." But we could count. We were just playing with a stacked deck. No, he was not with us.

Ritchie: Was he primarily Johnson's tool?

Shuman: My theory of it is that yes, he was Johnson's agent, but that while Johnson was leader he kept Bobby under wraps. Bobby was on a short leash. It was only after Johnson left the Senate that Bobby became creative in the ways that finally put him in jail. I don't think that Bobby dared to be a crook while Johnson was there. He might have done some unethical things, but I don't think he did crooked things while Johnson was there. To give Johnson credit -- which I haven't done very much -- I must say that on the whole Johnson's presidency is one in which

relatively few people went sour. He had a very honest administration. I think it was true that Bobby went sour after Johnson left the Senate, when Bobby and Kerr got together in the vacuum that was created by Johnson's leaving.

Ritchie: Do you think Kerr corrupted him?

Shuman: Well, they probably corrupted each other. I'll put it that way. Bobby had too much power. He thought he was omnipotent.

Ritchie: Also Bobby Baker was involved in Democratic campaign funding. You mentioned that one point the envelope arrived with five thousand dollars.

Shuman: I don't know who gave it to Mr. Douglas. It may have been Bobby. I'm not sure who gave it to him. But Bobby and Kerr ran the Senate Campaign Committee.

Ritchie: I was wondering if that kind of money was tied to a person's support for the establishment in the Senate?

Shuman: Well, it was and it wasn't. In the case of Mr. Douglas it was not. He was not a member of the Club. In 1960 the election in Illinois was for a senator from the biggest state in which a senator was up, eleven million people. He got five thousand dollars from the Campaign Committee most of which he had raised on his own from people who gave to the

campaign committee at his request. So he got from the Campaign Committee an amount which he had raised from his supporters. What we didn't understand was why the Senate Campaign Committee gave it in cash. On the other hand, [\[Allen Frear\]](#) from Delaware, one of the smallest states in the Union, who was also up, I think got four or five times as much. In that sense, the friends of the Club were rewarded. But Mr. Douglas got the minimum amount promised to every Democratic Senator running that year.

I'd like to tell here about how the Senate hierarchy kept him off the Finance Committee for seven years. Mr. Douglas was on the Labor Committee and had tried to get on the Finance Committee for any number of years and was always unsuccessful. He was probably the most qualified of any senator to go on that committee. He had helped write the original social security law. He was an expert on unemployment compensation and welfare. As President of the American Economic Association he was an expert on revenue and taxes. He had organized a large group of American economists against the Smoot-Hawley tariff bill and

wrote books on tariffs, all subjects over which the Finance Committee had jurisdiction. But he was an opponent of tax loopholes. When he first went to the Senate in '49, he had the same seniority as Bob Kerr, who was elected the same year. Kerr went to the Finance Committee as a freshman. There was an opening, and they then put on Frear of

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Delaware. The Finance Committee almost always, historically, has had one senator from Delaware. Delaware is to corporations what Florida is to the aged. Most corporate headquarters are in Delaware, and there are all kinds of offices in Wilmington where there is nothing but the name of the corporation on a one-room office, as its national headquarters. But anyway, there is always one senator from Delaware on that committee, and for a long time both [\[John\] Williams](#) and Frear from Delaware were on the committee. But Frear, who had the same seniority as Mr. Douglas, went on the committee.

When the next opening came, [\[Russell\] Long](#) and [\[George\] Smathers](#) went on; I'm not certain who went on first. Long did have seniority over Mr. Douglas. Smathers was two years Mr. Douglas' junior. But those two went on the committee. Then an opening came, and Mr. Douglas applied again. The establishment wanted to keep him off because of his position on oil and gas. At that time there wasn't a single member of the Finance Committee who was not a supporter of the oil depletion allowance. It was required. They couldn't find anyone who had more seniority to keep him off at that stage so what happened was that Lyndon Johnson as leader took the spot, because it was a rule that the leader could have any committee he wanted. So Johnson went to the committee to keep Douglas off. Then there was a vacancy, but [Alben Barkley](#) had come back to the Senate. Barkley had been Vice

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President, Majority Leader, and a former member of the committee. You remember he resigned in the '40s I think.

Ritchie: 1948, to become Vice President.

Shuman: No, no, earlier when he resigned as Majority Leader when Roosevelt vetoed a tax bill that Barkley had gotten through.

Ritchie: Oh, yes, in 1944.

Shuman: Roosevelt vetoed the bill, and Barkley resigned from the Majority Leadership in protest. But Barkley was now in the Senate. He came back in the '54 election. Mr. Douglas was asked to step aside, and he agreed to step aside for

Barkley. Then there was another vacancy, and Douglas was in line again. The rule was that the first person who had applied got the position, so a lot of people applied for the committee they ultimately wanted the day they came to the Senate, so they could say: "I've had my application in for six years." Douglas' request had been in for several years. Anyway, another vacancy occurred, and the Steering Committee and the oil and gas interests tried to keep Douglas off, and they were successful again. Their ploy was to put up [Clint Anderson](#) from New Mexico, who was a very good senator, but who because of New Mexico interests was an oil and gas senator. They couldn't think of any reason why he should go on ahead of Mr. Douglas. The two had equal seniority, and Douglas

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had applied earlier, but the reason they gave was that Anderson's name began with A and Douglas began with D, so that in this equal seniority situation Anderson got first choice, even though Douglas had applied many times before.

Then Barkley died, and finally Mr. Douglas got on the committee. Kerr was sitting number two, Douglas was the last, lowest one on the Democratic side. It points up the fact that in the "good old days," while seniority was said to exist, like George Orwell's pigs, some senators were more senior than others. In the case of the Finance Committee, the Democratic hierarchy kept a senator off if there was any chance at all that he would be in favor of the depletion allowance. Later [Albert Gore, Sr.](#), of Tennessee, an absolutely public interest senator, got a seat, and the two of them and John Williams of Delaware fought many battles together.

Ritchie: One of the things that's always claimed for Johnson, one of the reforms that he instituted, was to give freshmen senators a chance to get on first-rank committees, rather than put them automatically on the District of Columbia committee. Could that also be interpreted as a way of giving him and his supporters more control over who got on the committees? In other words, if you took it away from strictly seniority assignment, you could keep a liberal troublemaker off of the Finance Committee and put a junior senator on in his place.

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Shuman: Well, you could and you couldn't. The Johnson rule was that there were classes of committees. Foreign Relations, Appropriations, Finance, Armed Services, and Judiciary, I think were the big five. No senator could go to one of those committees as a second committee, if the senator were already on one of those committees. But also Johnson had a grandfather rule: those who were there stayed. So the rule started off with a great many senior senators who were on say Armed Services and Appropriations, or Finance and Appropriations, and they got

to stay. They didn't get kicked off. But when there was an opening, a junior senator got to go on one of those big five committees, in preference to a senior senator who was already on one of them. That was the Johnson rule, and on the whole it was a pretty good rule. But I don't think it operated in the way you mentioned. Of course, one could always manipulate it. In 1959, some people like [\[Gale\] McGee](#) of Wyoming and Bob Byrd went to Appropriations as freshmen. That was unheard of until then. But they had voted right on the filibuster rule.

Ritchie: It just struck me that what got some people onto a committee, also worked to keep some people off of a committee.

Shuman: Certainly. It's still true. The Interior Committee was controlled by the West. Their issues were handled by it, so they had a monopoly on that committee. The Armed Services Committee on the whole was composed of people who had

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lots of military installations in their states. During World War II, I used to think the reason there were so many bases in the South was so that people could be trained in the winter and wouldn't have to train in the snow. But the war was fought in northern Europe, such as the battle of the Bulge where it was freezing cold, and it finally dawned on me the reason the bases were in the South was because of seniority and the position of the Southerners in the hierarchy.

Ritchie: I've also heard it said that the Labor committee was a corral for liberals.

Shuman: Yes, The Labor committee was packed with liberals. That was their committee. They were given that committee. Mr. Douglas had moved up to the second spot on that committee. He was behind [Lister Hill](#). Hill never would chair the Labor subcommittee of the Labor Committee. He didn't want to have anything to do with Taft-Hartley and the unions because of the conservative forces in his state. He did the health side of the committee. And Hill was a good example of what I call the double whammy. He was a) in charge of the authorizing legislation for health issues and established the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and b) he was chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee that funded them. He stuffed money into the National Institutes of Health. They had more money than they could use, and no one dared vote against cancer or heart attacks, so Hill was in a

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pretty powerful position. He was of course named for Lord Lister, not of Listerine fame, but of antiseptic fame. He was a very decent senator. Hill and [John] Sparkman, I think, were the two most progressives of the Southern senators.

Ritchie: A couple of times you've mentioned the 1958 election, when a great number of new Democrats came into the Senate. How did that change the Senate?

Shuman: It changed it very much. The Southern hierarchy was very unhappy. What they wanted was just enough Democrats so they could be chairmen of the committees, but not so many that they would vote to put through programs that the Southerners were opposed to. Of course, it took time for the 1958 group to work its way up, which it finally did. But it did change the Senate. The 1958 class had enough seniority in '64 that it provided the margins by which Johnson put through the Great Society, and by which the Civil Rights bills were passed. The 1958 election was very, very important.

Ritchie: I assume they also gave an immediate boost to the liberal faction, that they added a lot more numbers to the liberal ranks.

Shuman: Certainly, the nature of the Senate changed because of their election. With their votes the liberals had a majority and could out-vote the Dixiecrat -- conservative

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Republican coalition which had ruled since 1938. But as I say, it did take time. Because these were still the days when people didn't speak too early, too often. Perhaps I could illustrate the way people got ahead by [\[Edmund\] Muskie's](#) example. I remember Muskie was very quiet for a long time in the Senate. I think he was on the Government Operations Committee. But in any case he finally managed a relatively minor bill from his committee about which he had great expertise. This was cited many times as the model of how a freshman senator should get ahead. He shouldn't speak at all on any issue other than an issue over which he had jurisdiction, where he had become the expert, where he had handled the bill. And Muskie managed it in a very able fashion.

Ritchie: Do you still think that's the way it should be done?

Shuman: No. Although Muskie managed it well, I don't think that's the way it should be done. What that system does is to say that some senators are less equal than others. My view is that if a person is elected to the Senate, that person should have equal rights with every other senator. Otherwise his or her people are short changed. Just because a senator has been there three terms should not give that senator more rights than any other senator. Why should a senior senator have two or three times more influence than the freshman senator has? It's an absolutely unjustifiable

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position. A new senator has a right and a duty to speak up for the people he or she represents from the day the senator is sworn in.

Seniority is useful to prevent all kinds of internecine fights, so that things are predictable, but no more. What I once suggested was that seniority be kept, but that chairmen keep their jobs for only one Congress. They could work themselves up the ladder by seniority, spend two years as chairman, and then either go back to the bottom or go to another committee, so that seniority would be kept but there wouldn't be the situation in which a senator got to the chairmanship when he was eighty and in his dotage, as [\[Theodore\] Green](#) was, for example, and be unable to function. The one thing wrong with my proposal, I think, was that it would give too much control to the staff. The staff would stay on, and the staff would probably run the committees, rather than the senators. And I don't believe in that at all. The staff is not elected and should not have that much power. But on the other hand, I thought it was a constructive suggestion. I think I proposed it in an article in *The New Republic*, in the mid-fifties. I'm not certain I would still stick with it. I think the present situation, in which the party caucuses can now oust an arbitrary or aging or incompetent chairman, is a better solution.



Senator Theodore Green (D-RI), far right, confers with Senators Richard B. Russell (D-GA) and Senator John Foster Dulles (R-NY).
Senate Historical Office Photo

Ritchie: Around the time of that 1958 election, a number of new liberal senators, like Proxmire, and [Joseph Clark](#), started

attacking Johnson on his control of the party caucus, and his dictatorial powers as [Majority Leader](#). I've never read too much about Douglas' role in all of that. Was he in the background, and did he prefer Clark and Proxmire to take the lead, or were they all independent actions?

Shuman: Well, Proxmire came to the Senate in '57, after [Joseph] McCarthy's death. It was about this time of the year, in August. He was unhappy with the way Johnson ran the Senate. He had come from the Wisconsin legislature where there were regular caucuses. They had votes in the caucus. What the caucus decided to do was what got done. Johnson, of course, never held a meeting of the Democratic caucus, except at the beginning of each session, and that was perfunctory. Proxmire watched this in '58 and '59, and I think it was on Washington's birthday in '59, a year and a half after he came, that he decided to speak out against this system. He talked to Mr. Douglas about it. Mr. Douglas suggested that he make his speech in Wisconsin, not on the Senate floor, that he would be better served to do it that way. He could get publicity, he could say what he wanted to, but Douglas advised him not to speak on the floor. Proxmire was determined to speak on the floor, and he picked Washington's birthday to do it.

On Washington's birthday some senator reads Washington's Farewell Address, and it was said on that day that it was not only Washington's Farewell Address, but Proxmire's Farewell Address.

Johnson made certain that no one came to hear the speech. He sent the message to clear the floor. He would sometimes provide a crowd for a senator, such as for [Price Daniel](#) of Texas, who made the opening speech for the gas bill in '56. Johnson had the chamber full of his lackies. They all came like schoolboys to hear Price Daniel speak. But when Proxmire made that speech, Johnson cleared the chamber. Mr. Douglas, having suggested that Proxmire not make it in the Senate, nonetheless came to the floor and sat by him. Douglas thought that even though he had made that suggestion that he nonetheless should stand by Proxmire in his decision to speak. And in the end it turned out to be a pretty good thing. People who didn't dare say a word themselves quietly and silently came up and congratulated Proxmire.

So Mr. Douglas was involved, yes. And he did some other things. After the Class of '58 got their appointments to committees, Mr. Douglas made a really major speech which showed in some detail on the Senate floor how the rewards went to those who had supported the filibuster rule and the Southerners, and how those who didn't support them were not given good committee seats. He said that this could not have happened by accident. And of course we knew that freshmen

senators would come in, go to see the [Secretary of the Senate](#) or Bobby Baker, and would ask, "What about my committee assignments?" And Bobby would say to them, "I think you should go over and have a talk with Dick Russell." And the

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new senator would follow that advice because Dick Russell really commanded the Steering Committee, the committee on committees. Russell would say to them, "Well, senator, what committee are you interested in?" The new senator would tell him, and then Russell would say, "What is your position on the filibuster fight which is coming up?" He would probably not say you must vote with us to get the committee assignment you prefer, but that was inferred. At least I don't think Russell said it. I've never heard anybody say that he directly said to a new senator, vote with us or you don't get your choice. But it was very clear what a new senator had to do.

Ritchie: I've always thought it was curious that Johnson avoided holding party conferences. He seemed to be in such control of the party, and he seemed to have the votes, so why not give them a chance to stand up and spout off, and let off some steam? Why keep it so suppressed? Did you have any feeling like that?

Shuman: Well, Johnson wasn't a very good speaker. He never persuaded people very much by getting up and making a speech either on the floor or in the caucus or anywhere else. He was a cloakroom operator. So it may well have been that he much preferred the cloakroom operations and the one-on-one ability to play people off, because he had more knowledge than anyone else, about where every person stood. I never plumbed the inner recesses of

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his mind on that issue, but I think basically that's the reason. It was his modus operandi. He loved the cloakroom and the telephone.

Ritchie: And there was the famous Johnson Treatment, when he would latch onto somebody and convince them.

Shuman: Yes, the best pictures of which, taken by [George Tames](#), are his giving the treatment to Theodore Francis Green, which appears in [Roger] Davidson and [Walter] Oleszek's marvelous book on the Congress [*Congress and Its Members* (Washington, 1985)].

Ritchie: Yes, I know those pictures, they're very impressive. Green is being manipulated, physically, by Johnson.

Shuman: Well, you wrote up the business about Theodore Francis Green being pushed out as head of the Foreign Relations Committee. Does your article also tell about how Theodore Francis Green came back to the committee even after he was out of the Senate, as chairman emeritus? What difficulty they had trying to keep him away because he insisted on coming back! There was another story about Theodore Francis. He was a millionaire and very tight-fisted with his money. Apparently he never carried any money to speak of. In the days when he was a senator, in the Senate dining room, there was always cornbread on the table, and there was cream for the coffee. I'm told on very good authority

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that Theodore Francis would come in in the morning for breakfast and ask for a bowl, put the cornbread in the bowl, pour the cream over the cornbread, and eat it for his breakfast, free.

Ritchie: There did seem to be a lot of Senate types, both senators and staff, who lived their whole lives in the Senate, from breakfast to dinner, and you wondered if they lived anywhere else.

Shuman: [Richard Russell](#) was another whose life was the Senate. Rayburn's life, of course, was the House. Theodore Francis was another. I can't think of many others, but those three were certainly two of them. I should add [Robert Byrd](#).

Ritchie: Progressing chronologically, in 1960 Douglas was up for reelection. That was the first election he ran in after you joined his staff. What was your role in that reelection campaign?

Shuman: I was in the state of Illinois from the week before Labor Day until the week after the election. I campaigned with the senator. We had a station wagon, which I think was provided by the United Auto Workers. They leased it to the campaign, and then took it back afterwards. A Chicago policeman by the name of Joe Tierney, an Irishman, and a Chicago detective, was the driver of the station wagon and the bodyguard. Joe was no intellectual, but he was very clever, very sharp. I rode in the back seat, and I did at least one press release a day and often a major speech as

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we traveled downstate. And Mr. Douglas would make the release good by reading from it from a street corner so that the papers could say that he said this in Galesburg today.

The way of campaigning in Illinois was interesting. We started out from Chicago and went downstate for the month of September. Downstate is any place outside

Chicago. We would start on Labor Day. Mr. Douglas would march in two or three parades. As a method of campaigning, we always wanted him to ride in the station wagon, because his name was on the side. Believe it or not, if he walked in the parade, even though famous in the state, a lot of people didn't recognize who he was. Proxmire got around this by wearing a signboard with his name on the front and the back when he marched in parades. But we tried to get Mr. Douglas to ride in the station wagon so that people would know who he was. There were times when he marched in parades and I rode in the front seat of the car with Tierney, and people would think I was the senator, because they really didn't know what the senator looked like.

We started the official campaign in towns and cities like Elgin and Aurora, just outside of Chicago. Then we went off to Rockford. We would stay about three days, and during that time Mr. Douglas would campaign at the factory gates in the early morning. He would campaign downtown Main Street at lunch, with our sound system, speaking while the rest of us passed out

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literature. Then there would be an evening rally. This was followed by a televised interview. During the day his wife, Emily, would go out to satellite counties and meet with women's groups, and he would also make forays out into the surrounding terrain. So we essentially spent three days in Rockford as the hub of our activities, and then we moved on to Rock Island, Moline, the Tri-cities, and then moved downstate to Galesburg, Peoria, and Springfield. We spent only part of a day in Galesburg, and couple of days in Peoria, and a couple of days in Springfield following the same formula. Then we moved down to Southern Illinois.

Now, south of Springfield is where the glaciers stopped. The glaciers came down and receded leaving Southern Illinois two characteristics: first, as the glaciers receded they left very deep, black dirt, so that from Springfield north is now very rich and fertile land, and from Springfield south, or south of what is called the Taylorville moraine, it is very poor. The poor area is Democratic. We would move into Southern Illinois, East St. Louis, which was more Democratic than Chicago, plus the small towns in the southern third of the state. So we campaigned downstate to our strength: the large industrial cities plus Southern Illinois. During the six years before that, the senator would visit almost every county in the state every year, but during the campaign he played to his strength. The second characteristic was that

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Southern Illinois was settled by the migration from Virginia and Kentucky, the Daniel Boone migration. They were Democrats. Northern Illinois had been

settled by New Englanders and New Yorkers who had migrated directly west, and who were very Republican.

When we left Southern Illinois, we'd work our way up through Champaign, and Danville, and Bloomington, and so on. These were very Republican areas. The senator would hold street corner rallies, and court house rallies, and he would tell the faithful but lonely Democrats who came out to those rallies not to be discouraged. It wasn't their fault that they were in the minority in this area, he would say, they were fighting the glaciers. He described how the glaciers came down and left the deep, rich mud, and he would say that this rich, deep mud left by the glaciers made the very fertile soil, and the fertile soil made the very prosperous farmers, and very prosperous farmers were conservatives, and conservatives were Republican. So these lonely Democrats should take heart. They were really fighting against the glaciers who were the cause of their difficulties. He had a lot of fun with that.

I think you told me how the great American historian, Frederick Jackson Turner, had prepared three maps which when placed on top of each other showed contiguous areas. The southward glacier movement, the New England migration, and the

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Republican areas were identical. And the Daniel Boone or Kentucky migration, the poor land south of the glaciers, and the Democratic areas of the country were identical.

Then we moved into Chicago and the Cook County suburbs and townships in the last month of the campaign. Mr. Douglas would then go to every ward, fifty of them in the city, and to the ward meetings. He held meetings in most of the ethnic group areas. He went to the Greeks, and the Lithuanians, and the Latvians, and the Polish, and the Germans who were on the North Side, and into the black areas of the city, into the Negro churches, which were the natural political headquarters in the black community. He did this very extensively, and then from time to time in the last month of the campaign he might make a foray to Springfield, fly down and back for an evening rally. We had a rule, however, that one just didn't pick up and go to a rally all of a sudden. Any number of times a call would come in from somebody downstate saying, "We're having a big rally here tomorrow evening, thousands of people are going to be here. You must come. It's going to be a great place for you to meet people and have them see you." Then the senator would go, but sure enough almost no one turned up. There was no way, generally speaking, that a crowd of thousands of Democrats would come out in that way. We had a rule. We didn't go unless it had been planned for and we were sure that it would come off because county chairmen almost always exaggerated the

crowd. But the basic thing was the senator went to where the people were. So the business of going to factory gates, to shopping centers, and where the people were, was the modern way one campaigned.

In downstate Illinois, the Bible belt, Mr. Douglas took on the religious issue, which was [Kennedy](#)'s nemesis. He gave speech after speech about it but he did so from an historical perspective and quoted numerous Papal encyclicals. Between speeches our Irish driver, Joe Tierney would say to him, "Paul, those speeches aren't going over."

The Senator changed his speech and repeated time and again the story of Kennedy's PT boat being rammed by a Japanese destroyer in the Pacific. He mentioned how Kennedy rescued one of his crew, how he swam up to the man, gave him his life jacket, put the buckle in his teeth, and swam several miles to a nearby island, and saved the man's life. The punch line was "And when Kennedy swam up to that man and gave him his life jacket, put the buckle in his teeth, and saved his life he didn't ask him, 'What is your religion?'" That worked.

Two things happened. Once the Senator said in front of a courthouse crowd that the Japanese destroyer shot Kennedy's PT boat down from out of the air. The second thing was that near the end of the campaign, after he'd used the story for weeks,

we met the man Kennedy saved. He was an Irishman and a Catholic. No wonder Kennedy didn't ask him his religion. We laughed until our sides ached when we met him.

The Chicago organization under [Richard] Daley would not let Kennedy into Chicago to campaign until the Friday night before election, which was very stupid, I thought. The idea behind it was that the precinct committeemen within the city, and the ward committeemen, should be out canvassing their precincts, finding out where the votes were, making certain that people were registered, making certain that they were going to vote, and that they were going to vote for the ticket. That was their fundamental job. Daley believed if Kennedy came into the city before that job was finished it would merely divert the campaign resources from that fundamental job into producing a crowd for Kennedy. So Daley wouldn't let him come in. I guess he couldn't have kept Kennedy out, but if the mayor said don't come in, the candidate was stupid to do so.

I remained on the Senate payroll in 1960, and Mr. Douglas without question was one of the most ethical senators in the Senate. No one at that time ever made any

criticism of a senator's staff taking part in the campaign. That's now changed. When I worked with Proxmire, one year I went out to campaign, and I took annual leave. I paid for myself. But earlier that wasn't true.

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There was never any criticism. It was quite well known. Now there is such a large staff that an incumbent would have a great advantage over his opponent if he used his staff for campaigning. Except for that fact, I don't really see very much wrong with it. The reason is that the things one does in the Senate on national issues every day of every year are just as political as campaigning, if not more so. I don't see the distinction myself. But in those days, one was not criticized for campaigning, and I did it in 1960 and 1966. In 1976 I took no part at all in Proxmire's campaign. I got a call from a Wisconsin reporter who was trying to find some exception to our position. I told him we had stopped our newsletters, no staff went to the State, the Senator raised no money, etc. Finally, the reporter finding no way to criticize us said to me, "How come you're talking to me (on Senate time) about this?" I replied, "Because you called me." Here we were being about as perfect as one could be and the reporter was nit picking about it.

In the Illinois campaigns in 1960, 1964, and 1966 I worked seven days a week. I worked very hard. Sometimes those of us campaigning didn't know which county we were in, what town we were in, or what day it was. We were absolutely groggy and hardly able to keep on our feet!

Ritchie: What was the relationship between Douglas' senatorial campaign that year and Kennedy's presidential campaign?

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Shuman: It was very close. Mr. Douglas did virtually nothing but campaign for Kennedy in 1960. He hardly campaigned for himself. His speeches were in support of Kennedy. He did that throughout the state. We traveled with Kennedy to some considerable degree.

Because Daley didn't want him to come into Chicago, Kennedy campaigned in what one would call "exurbia." He was out in the counties surrounding Cook County, DuPage, Kane, Lake and Will and the cities of Joliet, Aurora, Lake Forest, Wheaton, and Elgin. These of course were the biggest Republican areas of the state. But we took great pleasure in campaigning with him in those areas. I remember one incident when the senator was in Joliet, a steel town and a very Republican town. It was an organized Republican town, and had questionable elements. Joliet was not known for its high ethical standards. It is Robert Novak's home town. When we got into that town, Mr. Douglas was campaigning on Main Street, with his sound system, in mid-afternoon. I was with him when the local

police arrested him for disturbing the peace. Of course, I immediately got on the phone to the wire services and told them about it. It was absolutely unheard of. I thought it was a big political mistake by the Republicans, and we made a major incident out of it. Kennedy was due to come to Joliet in a week or so. Mr. Douglas was determined to come back to Joliet and introduce Kennedy the night there was a big parade and court house rally for

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Kennedy. Douglas did that, and he had a lot of fun reminding the Joliet city fathers of their actions only a few days before.

I was misled in that election by the overt public support for Kennedy and the size of his crowds. Even in those Republican exurbia towns, the crowds were phenomenal. I didn't really understand what had happened until after the election. The Catholics were so proud of the fact that there was a Catholic candidate that all the parochial schools let their kids out, high school students and grade school students, when Kennedy was coming through. We called them the "jumpers," teenage girls who would jump up and down and scream. The intensity of their support was misleading. I thought Kennedy would win Illinois by a hundred thousand votes. We all anticipated such a vote, so we were amazed when he won by only about ten thousand. Of course, [Nixon](#) and the Republicans claimed that the vote was stolen in Illinois. That's absolutely not true, and there is not a scintilla of evidence that it was. They claimed ahead of time that the election would be stolen, all kinds of stuff in the papers that the Democrats were going to steal a hundred thousand votes in Illinois. Then when Kennedy won by about six thousand after the initial count, it was charged that a hundred thousand votes had been stolen. The person primarily making the charge was the Republican candidate for Cook County attorney, Benjamin Adamowski, whom the Cook County Democrats very much wanted to beat and did beat. Their campaign was as much

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against him as it was for Kennedy and the rest of the ticket. But Adamowski made that charge ahead of time, and when he lost he continued the charge. Then the Republicans brought out their National Committee people, who without any evidence merely mouthed the charge, and the Republican papers, the *Tribune*, and *Chicago Daily News*, and the *Chicago Sun-Times*, which was a Republican paper although people didn't know it, did likewise. A later generation of the family that owned it originally, became Republicans.

Ritchie: The Fields?

Shuman: Yes, the Marshall Field family. Marshall Field the third (or the fourth or whatever) was a Republican, although his grandfather had been a very strong Democrat when he started the paper. The *Sun-Times* played it up. Well, there was a recount in the city of Chicago, and the recount gave Nixon a net gain of 312 votes out of a total of 1,718,000 in Chicago. The voting there was by machine, machines that were very hard to tamper with. Then the Republicans asked that the recount go to the Cook County suburbs, which were controlled by the Republicans and which were paper ballot precincts. People voted by pencil on a long paper ballot, where one could do more to change the ballots than in voting machine precincts. What happened was that in those Cook County townships, Kennedy picked up about twenty five hundred votes. At that stage the Republicans dropped the call for a

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recount. They had planned to recount the rest of the state, but when Kennedy picked up twenty eight hundred votes or so and got to a majority of 8,858 instead of six thousand, the Republicans threw in the towel.

Two men from the political science department at the University of Chicago did a study of the charges made in that election. One of the members was C. Herman Pritchett, who now teaches at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He's an emeritus professor. He was then the president of the American Political Science Association. Herman Pritchett and the other political scientist, Herman Finer, found there was absolutely no evidence of fraud. There were two main charges: one, there was an area in Chicago which at the time registration closed, thirty days before the election, was an urban renewal area in which the homes of the registered voters were bulldozed before the election. People had to move out. In that precinct, the registered voters came back and voted. The cry was raised that they were "ghost voters" who padded the rolls, but their votes were shown to be quite legal and quite correct. There was one other incident when the boxes of ballots in one precinct went to the wrong warehouse. There were boxes of good ballots and spoiled ballots, and after the election the boxes with the good ballots were put in the warehouse for the bad ballots and the boxes with the bad ballots were put with the good ballots. In one precinct they were mixed

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up, and a great to-do was made about that, but the boxes were found and counted, and the count was correct. So that charge fell through. Those were the only substantive issues ever raised. All smoke. No fire.

In the end, the board that certified the election, made up of four Republicans, including the governor, and one Democrat, certified without question Kennedy's victory. But even today one keeps hearing that the election was stolen in Illinois.

Nixon on television about four years ago claimed this, and then he, in pure Nixonian style, rose above it and said, "Well, the reason I didn't challenge the election was I didn't want to upset our friends and allies abroad." But let me tell you, if there had been any evidence to challenge that election, he and his friends would certainly have done so. But they had no evidence. It's a myth that that election was stolen. I wrote an article about it entitled "Horse Feathers, Mr. Nixon" which was published in the *Washington Post* Outlook section.

What I did see in that election was something that happened in Louisiana in the 1986 senatorial election. There was a group of essentially suburban, upper-middle class, Junior Chamber of Commerce types in Illinois in 1960. On election day in 1960, I visited, with Mr. Douglas, thirty or forty precincts, voting places, on the South Side of Chicago, which were mostly black voting precincts. Outside these precinct voting places were

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upper-middle class suburban whites dressed in business suits, white shirts, and snap-brimmed hats, whose purpose there was to intimidate the black voters. They looked like FBI agents. We saw them all over the city. You will remember, I think, that Justice [William] Rhenquist was charged with and was among those who took part in such events in Phoenix. That same concept was dusted off in the election in Louisiana in 1986, when [\[John\] Breaux](#) was the candidate. There it backfired on the Republicans because it was an attempt to intimidate black voters.

The cry, which had big overtones of racism, was made that the election was stolen in 1960. The unwritten charge was that it was stolen in the black precincts of Chicago. Well, I was in those precincts, and they looked like precincts I've seen in white neighborhoods all over Illinois. There was no difference. People came in one by one, quite slowly, quite orderly, checked their names off, all done quite properly. So the charge that the election was stolen is falacious. It's not true. It's a myth. But it's a myth that is perpetuated. If 80% of the blacks on the South side of Chicago voted Democratic, it was alleged the election was stolen. But if 90% of the whites in Kenilworth voted Republican, they were just voting as good citizens.

Ritchie: How do you account for the fact that Douglas won by 400,000 votes and Kennedy only by 10,000 in Illinois that year?

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Shuman: Well, there's no question that the religious issue was the key reason for that. Of course, Nixon started out being better known. We were in a little town in very deep Southern Illinois, by the name of Murphysboro, at the time of the first debate. We watched that debate on the second floor of the courthouse of that

county. The next day, the crowds we got, when Mr. Douglas was campaigning, tripled, quadrupled. I mean, all of a sudden, out of the woodwork came all kinds of people who hadn't shown up during the weeks before the first debate. Before that first debate, Democrats really didn't think they had very much chance. Kennedy was unknown. People thought Nixon would win. But after that first debate, the whole scene changed.

But a crucial event affecting the election had to do, I think, with the Puerto Rican Catholic bishops. First of all, most of the American bishops were against Kennedy, essentially because a) they were pretty conservative people, but b) some of them remembered 1928 and didn't want to go through another election with a Catholic candidate where all the ridiculous old issues of whether the Pope would tunnel under the English Channel and so on were brought to the surface again. They preferred that Kennedy not be the candidate. Some of them went out of their way to hurt him. The New York Cardinal was a Nixon cheerleader. There was a statement issued by some Catholic bishops I think in Puerto Rico, only ten days or a week before the election, raising

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all the kind of issues that the Bible-Belt Protestants had stereotyped the Catholics for doing or being. And this statement hurt Kennedy very, very much. In addition, there was a very concerted effort by the Republicans at the last minute in the Bible-Belt, an anti-Catholic campaign, to beat Kennedy. So I think that the religious issue was the difference. I'm sure it was the difference.

Mr. Douglas had a good candidate running against him. He used to say that at each succeeding election the candidate against him was a better and a stronger candidate. The candidate who ran, Samuel Witwer, was a Chicago lawyer, and a relatively progressive type. He wasn't a jerk or a boob. He was well-heeled, and a very presentable candidate. But what happened that year was that the Kennedy-Nixon election was on, the senatorial election was on, and there was also a big governor's race in the state. So it was very difficult for Witwer to become known. He just couldn't get off the ground. Nobody had heard his name. So that accounts too for the extent of the Douglas victory as compared with the Kennedy victory.

I don't think Kennedy would have won Illinois without Mr. Douglas' intense support, county by county, city by city, ward by ward. A lot of people got credit, most of it deserved such as [Johnson](#) helping with Texas and the South, and the superb campaign staff of Kennedy. But I think Mr. Douglas never got the credit he

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deserved for bringing in Illinois. In the months I was with him he devoted more than half the substance of his speeches to boosting Kennedy for President.

Ritchie: Before we get away from Illinois politics, I wanted to ask also about Douglas' relations with Richard Daley. How did they get along, and what did Douglas think about Daley?

Shuman: Well, they got along pretty well, except that in 1954, when Douglas was running for his second term in the Senate, there was a movement by the Daley forces to defeat him in the primary, to keep him from running. I've forgotten exactly why that was true, but finally Mr. Douglas stood up to them, and he was nominated and won overwhelmingly. Then in the next year, there was a battle for mayor. The son of a University of Chicago, long-time personal, professorial friend, Bob Merriam was the Republican candidate. He switched parties. He later went to the Bureau of the Budget under Eisenhower. But what happened was that Mr. Douglas endorsed Daley in the Democratic primary and made statements on his behalf, but he begged off in the general election on grounds that it would be very difficult for him to actively oppose this family friend. What he did was to tell Daley that he would not object to Daley using the statements Douglas made in favor of Daley in the primary during the general election, that he wouldn't complain about that, because those statements were for Daley but not against

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Merriam. Anyway, Douglas sat out the election, and that created some friction between Douglas and Daley. But in time they made up.

Daley treated Mr. Douglas very, very well. He never asked him to do an improper thing, in all the time I worked with Mr. Douglas. Daley supported Mr. Douglas quite strongly in the '60 election, and supported him in the '66 election -- although in the '66 election I think Daley's advice was not very good. It was like the advice on Kennedy not coming into the city. Daley was parochial. He was the product of an Irish ghetto but a very effective mayor. His view of both state and national elections was limited. Daley didn't want Mr. Douglas to debate Percy, and Mr. Douglas wanted to debate Percy in the worst way. But the general theory is that the incumbent doesn't debate. Well, in this case it would have been better for Mr. Douglas to have debated Percy. I think he would have bettered Percy in any debate. It would have been to Douglas' advantage. But Daley kept advising no. Then, after Percy's daughter was murdered -- and up until that time we were even or a little ahead of Percy in the polls -- the polls took a terrific nosedive. The reason was very simple. Percy had been put up by the Republicans in order to get rid of him. They didn't like Percy very much. He had run for governor two years before. The rumors were that he did not thank his workers in 1964, which I don't think were

true, but people believed that about him. It was believable that he didn't thank his workers.

There is another story about him which may also be apochryphal which illustrates this. It was said that he set up an editorial interview with a very strong Republican paper in Central Illinois during the '66 campaign. Percy came through, and had in tow a *Life* magazine photographer who was with him for the day. The editorial staff of the paper had been waiting to have a meeting with Percy, and he was to spend a couple of hours with them. Percy came in, got a picture taken by the *Life* photographer, and then left. It was said the newspaper editors were livid. Percy had offended all kinds of potential supporters in this fashion many times. These stories about him were believed. So Percy was not very well liked, and he was thought to be a very cold person. But the murder of his daughter changed that overnight. He became human, and there was great sympathy for him.

We had been campaigning in East St. Louis. [Humphrey](#) had been in there to help. I flew back to Chicago on a Saturday while Mr. Douglas stayed in East St. Louis. I was out quite late Saturday night, until one or two in the morning, and at six o'clock on Sunday morning, it might even have been earlier than six o'clock, I was awakened by a long-distance call. It was Mr. Douglas calling from East St. Louis. He said to me, "You know that Percy's daughter has been murdered." I said, "No, I didn't

know that at all." He went on about it. I said, "Senator, you had better check to make certain that's true." He said "What do you think of this statement I'm going to make." I said, "You'd better check that out. Have you checked with the wire services?" He said, "Yes, I've checked with the wire services; we've checked everywhere. This is true. This has happened. And here's the statement." He read it to me.

I've always been proud that I objected to that statement. I was half-asleep, but I was quick enough on my feet to object to it. Because what he said in the statement, after giving commiserations, was that he, Douglas, was going to stop campaigning until Percy started to campaign again. I said, "Senator don't say that. Percy may be so devastated by this he will never campaign again, never start again, and then you're tied to your promise that you won't start campaigning until he begins." I said, "Just say that you're going to stop campaigning," which he did. He took my advice. What happened was that we had a press secretary who was traveling with us, and he had given the proposed statement to the *Chicago*

Tribune before it had been cleared. The *Tribune* then made a great to-do about how Douglas had changed his mind on this, so we got a minor blackeye about it.

That evening, our inner-campaign group of about twelve or fifteen people met with Mr. Douglas in a hotel suite at O'Hare Airport. He was determined that in no way were we to take

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advantage of the death of Percy's daughter, and ordered us not to take advantage of it, not to start any rumors, not to be a part of giving statements, or suggestions, or answering queries about what had happened. We were absolutely to stay out of it, which we did, and he did. And to this day no one knows who did it, why it happened, who the murderer was. It remains a mystery. But it was the end of our campaign, and we all knew it. We would meet every day and say, "What can we do today to win the election?" But to no avail. Mr. Douglas knew more about the murder than any one of us did. At first the Cook county police were involved. But after a day or so they were removed, and the Kenilworth police, who were little more than domestic servants of the relatively few people with large estates who lived in Kenilworth, were put in charge. That ended the investigation. Mr. Douglas knew more about the early investigation than he ever told us. I regret that in the decade that followed I never pressed him for the facts. Mr. Douglas was bitter about Percy's campaign tactics in the final stages of the campaign because in large part he felt his own conduct about the murder had not been reciprocated by Percy. On the Saturday before the election Percy smeared Mr. Douglas by charging us with smearing him, probably the oldest trick in political campaigning. He made some speeches to Jewish synagogues complaining about the education bill which allowed chemistry and physics textbooks to be given to students in parochial schools but not to the schools themselves in order to meet the religious

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establishment clause of the Constitution. It was a delicate matter which had been worked out very carefully and we were very proud of the solution. When Percy denounced it we criticized him. The *Chicago Tribune* reporter verified his statements.

In his Saturday before election press conference he charged us with smearing him by calling him anti-Catholic, which we had not done and which we went to considerable lengths to avoid doing. I wrote the statement and I know what we said.

Then Percy said he was sending his charges by telegram to the Fair Campaign Committee in Washington. We sent Abner Mikva to Washington Sunday night to

rebut the charges. But Abner found on Monday that Percy had not sent such charges to them and by the time we rebutted this it was Tuesday morning, election day, and it was too late. This was the second time in the campaign he smeared us by yelling smear.

Percy in general said what he thought the immediate audience would most like to hear. The result was that he had been on both sides of many issues from time to time because he forgot the press would report to a wider audience what he had to say.

There was another thing that happened in that campaign, and it has to do with polls. There are people who say that the results of polls make no difference, that polls do not influence results. The result of the *Chicago Sun-Times* poll made a terrific

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difference in our campaign. The *Sun-Times* poll runs I think, about the last month of the campaign, and the poll historically had been quite accurate. There's now a fellow who was editor of *The New Republic* and then went to *Newsweek*.

Ritchie: Oh, Kondracke.

Shuman: Morton Kondracke was in charge of the poll. I talked to him a lot in this period and complained bitterly to him at the time. What the *Sun-Times* did was to start polling in the most Republican areas in the counties surrounding Cook County. They went out to areas like LaGrange and Aurora, which are two and three to one Republican. And they kept publishing the results, day after day. This was after the murder, and of course we weren't doing as well as we had been doing. To see these results coming out, with Percy ahead two to one, which wasn't the whole picture, because of the places the polls were taken, had the effect of absolutely destroying the enthusiasm of our supporters. My complaints to Morton had no effect. Perhaps he had no control over that but his editors did. I've been on programs with pollsters who say, "The polls really don't change public opinion," but in that case the poll did change things. It hurt us very much to have the early results in the heavily Republican areas of that poll reported. It was a partisan, political effort.

Ritchie: You felt the *Sun-Times* was doing it deliberately?

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Shuman: No question about it. Morton Kondracke didn't do it but his publishers and editors did. It was a major Republican paper. It went all the way for Percy and was his strongest supporter. Yes, because of young Marshall Field. And a lot

of people didn't know it. They still thought it was a Democratic paper, which it was not. The son of the chief political writer for that paper was a key Percy staff member. The *Tribune*, on the other hand, didn't endorse Percy until the very last minute and then in a back-handed manner. They allowed the *Chicago American*, which they owned, to endorse Douglas. There were two instances in that campaign when Percy smeared us by charging that Mr. Douglas had smeared him. Absolutely outrageous! It made us sick to our stomach especially on election night when Percy got up and said what a great man Mr. Douglas was when on the previous Saturday he had smeared him by yelling smear. So there was a certain bitterness about that campaign, after we'd played it so straight, too, with the murder. I can provide additional chapters and verses.

Ritchie: Well, as a result of the 1960 election, not only was Kennedy in the White House, but Johnson was no longer Majority Leader. How did the Senate as a whole change with the new leadership?

Shuman: It changed dramatically. It changed from the benevolent dictatorship of Lyndon Johnson to a form of anarchy under [Mansfield](#). The anarchy was much more pleasant, so it became

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a very, very much more pleasant place to work, and for senators to work in. Senators could actually go to the floor, offer their amendments, and have some reasonable certainty that they could get them passed, if they had merit. It was a fairer Senate. Mansfield also determined that we were no longer going to have round-the-clock sessions to break filibusters, which was correct in my view. So all in all, it was a more decent place.

Kennedy started off his presidency very cautiously because of the narrowness of the election. He put off Civil Rights legislation for the first two years. He did a lot by executive order. He did things like making the housing agency a department and putting [Robert] Weaver in charge. So he did a lot of symbolic things. He supported, with his brother and Nick Katzenbach and others of the Justice Department, the desegregation of schools, all of which was very good. But he didn't propose legislation until late in the second year. I thought that both his Civil Rights legislation, and his domestic program, and his tax program, were on the eve of being passed when he was murdered. Johnson took advantage, correctly, of Kennedy's death, and used the legislation as a memorial to Kennedy. Very ably he did that. I think that most of the legislation would have passed, but not with such large majorities. Some people voted for much of it as a remembrance of Kennedy.

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Ritchie: Do you think there was resentment on the part of senior senators that a backbencher was suddenly President of the United States?

Shuman: Yes, I think that was true of some. Although once he became the candidate, and especially when he became president, there was a lot of "Yes, sir, Mr. President," "You're right, Mr. President." One of the dangers of the presidency is that no one, or very few are able and willing to tell a president the truth. People fawn over a president. [Fulbright](#) didn't fawn over him on the Bay of Pigs, and Fulbright was absolutely correct. But I think a great many people fawned over him and were unwilling to tell him the truth, or didn't give him their best judgment just because he was president. It is true of all presidents.

Ritchie: On the other hand, the senators didn't blink about turning him down on Medicare and some other embarrassing defeats they gave him.

Shuman: Well, that's true, but that's a function of whoever was in the Senate. Even when the Democrats controlled the Senate marginally, it didn't mean that there was a majority of senators in favor of the Democratic program. The party really had to have about sixty Democrats, maybe even more, in order to have a majority for the national Democratic party program. The 1958

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election helped immensely. But the 1964 election brought in enough votes to make the victories decisive.

Ritchie: In that period, Hubert Humphrey became the [Democratic Whip](#). Did he begin to assert some more authority? You've been somewhat ambiguous in your comments about Humphrey.

Shuman: I have been ambiguous, because we've talked almost entirely about Humphrey and the Civil Rights debates in the '50s. Humphrey was torn, because Johnson had his number. I mean, Humphrey almost never failed to vote with us and support us on the crucial issues, but he was not as strong in his negotiating situation as we would have liked. Johnson was obviously dangling the vice presidency before him in this period. But basically, Humphrey was extraordinarily good. He had the quickest combination of tongue and mind of almost anyone I've ever seen or met. He had all kinds of good ideas. He was an originator of the Peace Corps. He certainly was way out ahead of people on arms control and on tax reform. He was out in front on the tax fight, when he and Mr. Douglas were trying to close the loopholes in 1954. People like Joe Pechman, the great tax expert, would brief Humphrey and Douglas on the most technical aspects of the tax code, and Hubert would listen, and within minutes absorb the information, and then give it back, restate it in simple terms, and illustrate it with two or three easy to understand examples. The man had a genius for taking extraordinarily complex issues and

simplifying them, and selling them. He was amazing and he had a warm heart and loved ordinary people. He called them "the folks." Mr. Douglas used to say about him that he made fewer concessions than anyone who had gotten as far. On the understanding that in order to get to be president or vice president one has to make a lot of concessions, Hubert made fewer of them than anyone else. That was true. He was a very decent fellow. One of his great virtues was his lack of vindictiveness. In this respect he was almost saintly. I think that if Humphrey had won in 1968 this would have been a very different and a much better country than it has been.

Ritchie: So you give him good marks as Whip?

Shuman: I certainly do. I give him lots of good marks as the Whip and as a progressive, innovative, effective, senator who combined a quick mind and a quick tongue unlike any other senator I saw in action.



Hubert Humphrey and Everett Dirksen (seated) with Senate colleagues. Standing, left to right: Thomas J. Dodd (D-CT), Thomas H. Kuchel (R-CA), Paul H. Douglas (D-IL), Kenneth B. Keating (R-NY), Clifford Case (R-NJ), Jacob Javits (R-NY), Leverett Saltonstall (R-MA), John Pastore (D-RI), Warren Magnuson (D-WA), Hugh Scott (R-PA), Philip Hart (D-MI), Mike Mansfield (D-MT), and George Aiken (R-VT).

Senate Historical Office Photo

Ritchie: Was Johnson in much evidence at all when he was vice president?

Shuman: No. I saw him two or three times, but he was very humble when he came up to the Senate. I remember one time meeting him as he came in through the Senate door, on the Senate side on the ground level, running into him in front

of the banks of elevators. He seemed to welcome anyone who recognized him. I was

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with a newspaper friend of mine, Bill McGaffin, from the *Chicago Daily News*. Bill had his son with him, and I stopped and introduced McGaffin's son to Johnson the Vice President. Johnson was a different person than I had ever seen him before. He was very contrite, very humble, not very talkative. He seemed like a fish out of water. He was the Uriah Heep Johnson, a very, very different Johnson from the Johnson who commanded the quarterdeck of the Senate when he was leader.

Ritchie: Do you think that incident, when the Democratic caucus objected to his presiding, took some of the wind out of his sails?

Shuman: Yes, certainly. In dozens of ways he found out that as Vice President he didn't have the same influence in the Senate he had had as leader.

I think you asked me last time why I thought Johnson accepted the vice presidency. I think he realized after losing in the convention that the only way he could ever be president was to do so through the vice presidency. I think his key supporters realized that as well. If he stayed in the Senate, it would be eight years probably before he'd have another crack at the Presidency, at which time he'd probably be too old or too ill. His chances of retaining power that long were not all that substantial, so it was either then or never. I think that was the basis on which he

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accepted the vice presidency. And if one looks at the history of the country, roughly, one in four I think, vice presidents have succeeded to the presidency. If I were to make a bet about who would be the next president, I would say that it's [\[George\] Bush](#) against the field. Not that Bush necessarily will be nominated and win the next election, but that between now and the next election he might well succeed to the presidency. The odds of doing that, with a president as old as Reagan is now, must be pretty high. Higher than the chance of Bush or anyone else a) getting the Republican nomination, going through the primaries and so on, and b) actually defeating the Democratic candidate. Bush might do that. Of course, it didn't work for Hubert. It hasn't worked for a sitting President since [Martin Van Buren](#) in 1836. I think Hubert hoped he would be president, either by succession or by winning it in his own right, which he almost did.

Ritchie: It's certainly true, as Senator Douglas found in 1966, that a candidate can't anticipate all the events in an election.

Shuman: No.

Ritchie: That events happen that have no relation to ideology or partisanship or anything else. Life and death issues can affect the outcome.

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Shuman: In the 1966 campaign, John Bartlow Martin, who was a very famous writer, journalist, and who became ambassador to the Dominican Republic under Kennedy, and I were the Douglas speech writers. He was also a speech writer for both Stevenson and Kennedy. After I did a speech we would say, "Give it to John to put the jewelry work on." He wrote a book which I thought should have been the title of our campaign, about his ambassadorship in the Dominican Republic. The title of the book was *Overtaken by Events*, which was the perfect explanation of our defeat.

Ritchie: We seem also to have been overtaken by the tape, which has run out.

End Interview #4

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Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Interview #5: The Kennedy Years

(August 26, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Ritchie: I understand that you believe that there are often personal factors behind legislation.

Shuman: Yes, people often ask where do bills come from? Why do they exist? Where do legislators get their ideas? Of course they come from a variety of points. I used to say that I couldn't think of any legislation that ever really originated in the executive branch, that for the most part things like the Peace Corps, arms control, and so on, were issues that were in legislation in Congress, hadn't gotten very far, when they finally got ripe and were picked by the executive and sent to Congress. That's one way that it happens. I was here at the War College recently when someone said he couldn't think of a single new idea that Congress had ever had, that the executive was always initiating things. I don't agree with that. One's view of this may depend on where one stands. I can think of very little constructive legislation that was not first proposed by a member of the House or Senate.

But I was thinking of a series of bills, some major, some minor, that I was involved in where the origin was a personal incident. I will outline them. The first is the Depressed

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Areas bill. The origin of that was from a personal experience Senator [Douglas](#) had in campaigning in Southern Illinois. Southern Illinois is very poor -- I've told about the glaciers -- it's very poor land. He was in Southern Illinois campaigning, mainly in the '54 election. It was the lack of water that made it difficult for that area to be able to attract industry. The coal veins were running out. These factors led him to get involved and to propose the original Depressed Areas bill. He assigned me the task to get the the first Depressed Areas bill drafted. I did not draft it; a person in the Library of Congress drafted it, but I was responsible for it, and got the senator to make the major judgments about how much money we wanted to put into each of the three funds in the bill. But the origin was the personal experience he had in Southern Illinois.

His support for Food Stamps had a similar origin. When he was in Southern Illinois, he saw people lined up outdoors for surplus food. I think the food was on

a haywagon. He said most of them were hiding their faces and were ashamed that they had to line up to get the handouts. He said that he was standing behind a tree watching them, and suffering with them in the sense of their feelings about how improper and demeaning it was that they would have to do this. So part of his support for Food Stamps was the fact he felt it was unfair to single out the

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poor to get food while standing in line where everybody was watching them. That was demeaning.

Truth in Lending had a similar origin. For years, at the beginning of each Congressional session, I would get together with Mr. Douglas and we would map out what new legislation he thought he should put in for the year. In most years he'd say something about Truth in Lending, but we never got it done. It was one of those things that was superseded by other interests. He had been a proponent of Truth in Lending in the thirties, when he had been an advisor to the Roosevelt White House and had been involved in the Social Security legislation. He was one of the people who helped write the first Social Security bill. He had proposed Truth in Lending then, but he thought that he was let go as an advocate or as an advisor because he pushed Truth in Lending. But he had always had it in the back of his mind. He wanted to do two simple things: one was to require the consumer to be told the real cost of interest, the annual percentage rate; and two to have the consumer told the total finance charges.

Well, in the late fifties I bought a dishwasher from Sears and Roebuck on credit. When I got the first bill, I found that not only was I charged for the dishwasher, but a whole batch of other things had been added on, particularly credit life insurance, which I had not ordered. I was so angry at what they had done that I determined that that year I'd get a Truth in

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Lending bill written. That was the reason, my irritation at that personal experience, the bill got drafted that year.

The Indiana Dunes were saved by Mr. Douglas largely because he had spent the summers there when he was teaching at the University of Chicago. He saw how fabulous that area was and was determined to save it. Also, he went to the Dunes just before he joined the Marine Corps. In order to strengthen his legs, he was a man almost fifty at the time, he ran in the sand at the Dunes so that he could make it through boot camp. But the fact that he had a personal relationship with the Dunes, I think, was the major reason when the Indiana people came to him

and asked him to help, that he agreed to sign on. And of course the Dunes never would have been saved without him.

Another incident was a bill that [Proxmire](#) put in, that I initiated, to provide that when pro football games were sold out, they had to be televised, that there could be no TV blackout. That bill occurred because when I wanted to go to the Redskin games, I could never get tickets to the Redskins. I was peeved that even though the games were sold out, I couldn't see them on the local television. As a result, I drafted the bill. I went for help for that bill to the subcommittee which was chaired by Senator [\[John\] Pastore](#). He had a staff man, Nick Zapple, on the Communications Subcommittee of the Commerce Committee. I got advice from him on it, only to see Pastore steal our bill and

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offer it on the floor as his own amendment on another bill. In fact, it passed. It was Proxmire's bill. Proxmire had proposed it, and [Hubert Humphrey](#) had cosponsored it, and both got up to speak for it knowing that it was going to go through and praised Pastore who presented it as his own. But they were seething underneath that he had stolen their bill, which is improper to do. Nick was the source for that.

Finally, there's a story about the fight over limousines. Mr. Douglas was a Marine, and he was very proud of the Marines. He made the point many times that the thing he most liked about the Marines was that they traveled light. They had a small pack. All tooth and no tail. Unlike the quartermasters and the supply corps who were big elements in the Army and the Navy, his beloved Marines traveled light and lived the simple life, and were organized to fight. One evening, it must have been 6:30 or 7:00 o'clock, we were walking together from the Old Senate Office Building, now the Russell Building, to the Senate. We walked outside, and parked outside on that hot spring night were five or six of the biggest limousines one has ever seen. One after another were parked there, all with their windows rolled up, all with the air conditioning going, all with their motors running to keep the drivers cool. We looked at this and were absolutely appalled. Clearly they were government cars. So he went up to the first one and tapped on the window. The driver rolled down

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the window, and Mr. Douglas asked, "Who's limousine is this?" And the driver said, "It's the Commandant of the Marine Corps'." Mr. Douglas died a thousand deaths when he heard that.

We asked the Bureau of the Budget how many limousines there were in the government, because there was a law on the books that cars could be used for official purposes, but that official purposes did not include being driven to and from home. It was quite proper to drive from the Pentagon to the Capitol to testify, but not to be driven to and from home. We asked that question of the Bureau of the Budget, and Elmer Staats, who later became Comptroller General, did the staff work on it. He and I talked about it a lot, and they came up with a list of about a hundred people who were being driven to and from home. They gave us a list of cars, mostly Cadillacs and big Buicks, and the people who had them, and certified that the person who used them was being driven to and from home. We then put in a bill, the "Limousine Limitation" bill, I believe it was called, to cut the cars, and the practice, back. The bill cut back the total number of people who were given the privilege to about twenty-seven. They were limited to the President, Vice President, members of the Cabinet, who under existing law quite properly got one, and those for the Speaker, the President Pro Tem, and the Majority and Minority Leaders of both houses. That was about it. The rest of the people in the government were supposed to drive their own cars to

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and from home, as every senator did and every House member did. It had always seemed odd to me that the Architect of the Capitol and I think the Capitol Physician had limousines, or cars that were government sponsored, and the bill took those cars away from them.

The bill never got very far. When I came back to work for Senator Proxmire in 1969, after we'd failed on cutting them back in the period from 1960 to '66, I found that the total had grown from about a hundred to about a hundred and fifty. It was an example of losing ground. Then later, with the oil crisis, we tried to pass the bill again. Also Proxmire was chairman of the Independent Agencies Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, and in every one of about twenty agencies we got rid of the limousines by writing restrictive language into the appropriations bill. At the very time HUD put a moratorium on housing under Nixon, I think the year was '72 or '73, during the oil crisis, we took away their limousines on gas economy grounds. In that period, housing programs were frozen or cut. The under secretary and the assistant secretaries and the counsel came up and lobbied day in and day out, not for housing, but to get their limousines back. I always thought it was a great irony that that happened. Ultimately, after I left the Senate, that problem was largely solved, but it was an example where after years of fighting, the number of limousines had grown by fifty percent. It took more

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than twenty years to win that fight. I guarantee that shortly the number of limousines will escalate again.

But I use these examples to show how and why legislation gets started.

Ritchie: When you mentioned the limousines, that brings up the thought that Senator Douglas had a reputation of being a watchdog of the Treasury.

Shuman: Yes, that's true.

Ritchie: Just recently I came across a debate in 1950 where he led a charge in the Senate against free shaves and haircuts for the senators. And there are a lot of issues where he voted to cut the Labor Department's budget and others, because he thought there was waste in their budget. That seems somewhat incongruous when you think of the liberal as a freespender. How did Paul Douglas get to be the H.R. Gross in some respects of the Senate?

Shuman: Well, first of all Douglas is a Scottish name, so he came by it naturally. Secondly, he was from New England, and he used to quote the old New England saying about use it up, wear it out, make it do. He also was an economist who thought that goods and services ought to be used in their most effective and efficient way. He coined the phrase: "A liberal need not be a wastrel." He was one of the first people to take on the public

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works bills and military waste, even though he was a strong supporter of keeping us militarily strong. He took on those things such as haircuts within the Senate itself, where almost no one else was willing to take on the establishment. One of our little forays was an attempt to get the Senate restaurant to charge an appropriate price, because the Senate restaurant was heavily subsidized. He made the point that those who ate there were not poor and many, especially the press, were on expense accounts and could quite properly afford to pay a fair market rate for the food they ate. So, yes, watchdog activities were an important part of what he did. He often said that wasteful spending did not feed, clothe, or house a single needy person, nor improve our defense.

One of his most interesting forays was in 1960, when he went after waste in the Pentagon. The reason he did it was that he had been unsuccessful in getting the Pentagon to make any changes at all to speak of in their procurement procedures. We held hearings and found that ninety percent of the contracts were let not by competitive bidding but with only one or two contractors allowed to bid. There was surplus property given away every year for one or two cents on the dollar, equal to about fifteen or twenty percent of the yearly procurement budget. He

pointed out these conditions, held hearings on them in the Joint Economic Committee, but absolutely nothing happened. So as one of the staff people

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on this issue, I went out to a warehouse at the University of Maryland where they had received surplus property from the military. Ray Ward who worked with Speaker [John McCormack](#) went with me. The individual surplus property items had tied on them the original price tags, the original invoices as to what the items cost, which the military services themselves had put on the items. We got ten or twelve really horrible examples. True enough, they were horrible examples. There was one small light socket which had a price tag of twenty-one dollars and fifty cents on it. We bought it for twenty-five cents.

The senator went to the floor and exhibited the items. I've never seen such a reaction. Half the Pentagon called on the phone to say why didn't you let us know first rather than to do this on your own? They asked if they could come and examine the items. They sent up a team. There must have been twenty-five to thirty people who came into the office and looked at every item in great detail, took down all of the serial numbers, and made thorough descriptions. I was afraid they might find we'd made a mistake on one of them, fearful that if we had made the slightest mistake they would throw this up and then say, "Well, you were wrong as well on all the rest." But we waited, and waited, and waited, and finally they did make a rebuttal. But their rebuttal was ridiculous! One of the items, a fairly common item, some kind of a fan or blower, they said needed special or unique technology,

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and used that as a rebuttal. I was able to show, because there was a patent number on it, that the item had been patented a dozen years before, and that it was a common item which the military had gotten from general stocks.

That was one of his forays, but basically he did that because people need to be able to see things, and touch things, and feel things, and understand simple devices. People do not understand a cost overrun on a weapon system of two billion dollars, but they can understand that the price of twenty-one dollars for a twenty-five cent light socket is wrong.

Ritchie: Doesn't a senator run a risk of making a lot of enemies by attacking perks like haircuts?

Shuman: Yes, he does. Less so now than before. Now, I think it's customary for people to run for the Senate by running against the Senate. But then it was not.

Some people did object to that. I remember when Mr. Douglas exposed those items on the floor, Senator [Russell](#), who was a very strong supporter of the military, and I think then either chairman of the Military Appropriations Subcommittee or chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, decided he wasn't going to make any defense of them at all. It was so excessive he didn't defend them.

Ritchie: It's an interesting side to Douglas' character.

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Shuman: But when I see the new attacks on expensive toilet seats, I am reminded of our efforts more than twenty-five years ago. It's an example of history repeating itself.

Ritchie: It also says something about military procurement practices.

Shuman: Yes, those have not particularly improved.

Ritchie: You talked about the Depressed Areas bill. I noticed that in 1960 when Kennedy was elected, one of the first things he did was to set up a task force on Appalachian depressed areas, and he asked Senator Douglas to chair that task force. I wondered if you had worked with him on that.

Shuman: I did, but by that time the bill was in the Banking Committee, so the bill was more or less taken over by the Banking staff people. But I worked with that task force, met with them, and helped draft the report. We made the bill Senate 1, S.1, because Kennedy had campaigned particularly in West Virginia in favor of the bill. That bill had, I think, passed or almost passed three times in the Congress in the Eisenhower years but either had been vetoed or held up in one house or the other. Kennedy vowed that if he were elected he would make this one of his early priorities, and we did make it S. 1 in the Senate.

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There was an interesting sidelight to that bill. The senator went down to Palm Beach, Florida, to see Kennedy between the time of the election and the time he was sworn in, to talk about the bill. I didn't go on that trip, the Senate Banking Committee staff man, Milton Semer, did. But I remember Mr. Douglas telling me afterwards how Kennedy handled the press. They got down there, went to his house, and the first thing they did was to come out and hold a press conference, before they had talked, so they could honestly answer every question the press asked them with, "No, we didn't discuss that. No we haven't decided this." Then they went back in, discussed the issues, and decided what they'd do, what their

strategy would be. I don't think many people ever knew that that was one way Kennedy functioned at that time. It was the first time I'd ever heard of a person doing it in that manner, but that's what Kennedy did. But since I've learned that Mark Twain would go outside to the porch of his Connecticut mansion so his butler could say he'd stepped out.

When that bill became law, it created a certain amount of turmoil. First of all [Fulbright](#) was adamantly opposed to it on the Banking Committee, and he was chairman of the committee. It strained the relationship between the senator and Fulbright, who had had quite a good relationship until then. Mr. Douglas just couldn't understand why Fulbright was out to kill it. Then after the bill passed, the administrator of the program, Bill Batt, gave

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the very first project to Arkansas and to Fulbright at his request. Mr. Douglas was livid about that.

There were two major issues during passage. One was whether there would be what was called backdoor financing of the bill, because at that time we knew the Appropriations Committee would refuse to appropriate funds directly, so we had loans and backdoor financing as the means of getting the money. The second thing we wanted to do was to create an independent agency to administer it. And we wanted to have both of those issues in the Senate bill, so that when we went to conference with the House, we wouldn't lose both of them. The House had direct financing, so if we were going to win on backdoor financing we would have to trade away the independent agency and put the new agency in the Commerce Department. Therefore, we needed to keep the independent agency provisions in the Senate bill as trading material. Well, Fulbright put up an amendment on the floor to put the administration into Commerce, and he won on it. That greatly reduced our bargaining power in conference. It was a hostile act.

I remember when Mr. Douglas came in one day, just before that vote. I asked him what the administration's position was on it. He said, "Oh, it's a good thing. The administration is neutral on it." He seemed to be pleased that they hadn't come out for putting it in the Commerce Department, because Kennedy had brought in the North Carolinian [Luther Hodges] as Secretary of Commerce,

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who wanted to administer the bill. But we were afraid that as the Chambers of Commerce had been so strongly opposed to it that their influence with the Commerce Department would be a way of effectively killing the program. But Mr. Douglas was pleased. I said, "They've slickered you. You shouldn't be pleased

about that. You're going to lose it. The reason is very simple: all of the Republicans are for putting it in the Commerce Department, and now the Democrats are off the hook. The president hasn't said whether it should be in Commerce or an independent agency, and in that case a certain number of Democrats will leave us on the issue; on the other hand if Kennedy had come out strongly for keeping it as an independent agency, we could win. So by being neutral on it, he really, I think, is doing us in on the issue."

Then we went to conference with the House, and Wright Patman was the House chairman. Essentially, Wright Patman was with us on the bill. What we did in the conference was to trade away twenty or twenty-five items in order to keep the backdoor financing. That made it possible for Patman to say the House won: they gave in on one issue and we gave in on twenty-five. It has occurred to me since then that some of the studies that have been done on how the House and the Senate fare in conference committees by counting the number of issues won by each House are very misleading, because we thought in that instance that one issue

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was worth all the rest of the minor issues. And of course it was. I now call those political scientists "bean counters" and their results are ridiculous.

The second important thing was that we had to pass the conference report in the Senate first. The reason was very simple: once a conference report has passed one house and goes to the other house, the second house can no longer ask that the conference be reconvened. The conference no longer exists. So it has the limited choice of voting it up or down. Well, if the House had gotten the bill first, a motion would have been made to send the bill back to conference on the financing issue, and that motion might very well have passed. But we thought if the House had only the choice of voting the bill up or down, the conference report would win in the House, so it was necessary to get it through the Senate first. I went to the assistant Senate parliamentarian, Murray Zweben, and said that I had read the rules on conference reports, and there was no way one could understand which House acted first. He said, "Very simple, very simple, it depends on who has the papers." The house with the papers votes first. So I captured and commanded the papers. I had them in a manilla envelope under my left arm, while I was sitting there in the conference, behind the senators. At the very last moment, some of the House Republican staff members asked, "Where are the papers?" One of them came up to me and he was almost touching the

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manilla envelope, and asked: "Where are the papers?" I didn't say I don't know, but I gave a facial expression to indicate that I didn't know. I didn't lie, but my body language said I didn't know. And he left. I then left the conference and waited on the Senate floor with the papers for Mr. Douglas to come in. We had arranged that he would get a vote immediately. It is a privileged matter. The conference report passed the Senate, went to the House; they had only one choice, up or down, and they voted to pass it.

That bill taught us two other lessons. One was that to get it through the House we had to expand it greatly. It was originally a bill to help a few pockets of high unemployment around the country, northern Maine, West Virginia, Southern Illinois, Northern Wisconsin and Minnesota. These were pockets of poverty. We wanted to target what limited funds there were -- I think three hundred million dollars was the total amount in loans and grants -- to these areas so that something substantial could be done in each of them. In order to get the bill through, we had to get the votes of the rural members of Congress -- and this was before the one-man-one-vote decision, so that the rural regions had far more Congressmen than their population would justify. So we had to enlarge the bill to include the rural counties that had poverty, all over the country, one by one, in order to get sufficient votes to pass the bill in the House.

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But of course that so diluted the limited funds that not much could be done in the original areas.

The second thing that happened to the law was that as time went on it was turned into a public works program, and in fact went to the Public Works Committee instead of the Banking Committee for jurisdiction. So I think that by the time 1980 came around, when Reagan was trying to do away with the program there was considerable justification, because it had been so corrupted from its original purpose, a) to get it through -- I think we could have survived that -- but b) because it evolved into another public works project. That was a big mistake.

A similar thing happened, but not to the same extent, to the Truth in Lending bill. As I mentioned, Mr. Douglas' idea was that two simple pieces of information would be provided to the consumer, the annual interest rate and the total amount of credit. We wanted to give that information to the consumer so he or she could make an intelligent, informed and valid judgment about the cost of credit. In order to make a good judgment in a competitive economy one has to have information. Well, the opponents of the bill, led by the senator from Utah, who was on the Finance Committee as well as the Banking Committee, raised all kinds of red herrings against the bill: such as that it was impossible to calculate the annual interest rate. . . .

Ritchie: Was that [Wallace Bennett](#)?

Shuman: Yes, Wallace Bennett, who had been the president of the National Association of Manufacturers and an auto dealer, and who in his business life was very dependent on credit. He raised all kinds of specious objections to the bill. In order to meet these objections, we had to accept several amendments. They added pages, and pages, and pages to the bill to explain in detail how to calculate the interest rate, all of which could have been done very simply, and could have been done through regulations by the agency after the bill was passed. Well, when Proxmire finally got the bill through, after Mr. Douglas left the Senate, in '67, I went to the White House for the signing ceremony. Johnson was President. The East Room of the White House was filled with all of the narrow interest opponents Bennett had organized. Johnson was smart in the sense that he gave them credit they didn't deserve, but he never gave enough credit, I thought, to those who fought in the trenches until the bill was passed. Proxmire did not go to that signing even though it was his bill, because he would have missed a Senate vote, and as you know he's now cast something over ten thousand consecutive votes. And it was a vote in which his vote was decisive. He often used that as an example of why it was of first importance in the Senate for a senator to vote, because it was the one thing a senator could do that no one else could do. In this case, he would

have been singled out at a White House ceremony at the expense of losing an issue he believed in in the Senate.

After I came back to the Senate to work for him, I proposed that we ought to simplify the Truth in Lending bill, because the regulations had been written by the Federal Reserve Board and, when you got consumer credit at Sears and Roebuck or elsewhere there was a page of fine print telling you all of the things that you could or couldn't do, which was not our intention. We wanted to keep it simple. This was a time when people were objecting to paperwork, when business was crying out that government was regulating it too onerously, so we thought we should just go back and provide those two simple original goals with a straightforward, simple, one-page bill. He proposed it. The hearings were held. Proxmire was chairman of the committee. And what happened? Almost every group that had originally objected to the bill on grounds of too much paperwork, came in to testify they didn't want the law changed. They opposed simplification. They didn't want the law changed because they had set their computers to do all of the things that were now in the regulations. It was an incredible event to listen

to them testify as they did! But that is a lesson about legislation not found in the textbooks.

Ritchie: I was interested in your comments about the conference committee. I wondered if it was part of the

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strategy to load into a bill some things that you know you will abandon in the conference committee.

Shuman: Yes. Trading material it's called. Deliberate trading material. The best example, I think, of trading material, was the annual tax bill, the "Christmas Tree" tax bill. Now, we used to fight it tooth and nail, both Senator Douglas and Senator Proxmire, and I probably helped save a couple of billion bucks for the taxpayers doing the staff work, and fighting that bill. I can honestly say I more than earned my salary in the Senate over twenty-seven years by savings brought about by killing those loophole amendments. But it was also true that the word was out by the Finance Committee that they would take almost any amendment and throw out most but not all of them in conference. A senator could then say to his constituent, "I got your amendment through the Senate." And they'd say, "Well, it didn't last in conference." He could reply, "I got it through the Senate, that's my jurisdiction, that's where I'm responsible. I did my job. I can't guarantee what the House will do." So a certain amount of that bill was for the relief of senators so they could do something for their constituents without actually doing anything. The problem was that no one knew which bad amendments would remain in the bill. That's why Douglas and Proxmire fought it so hard. In the old days, that bill was called the "Bobtail bill." When [Harry Byrd](#) was chairman of the committee it was called the

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Bobtail bill. The reason for the change in the name was that it originally came up in July, near the end of the session, but then when the sessions started going full scale throughout the year, its name was changed to the Christmas tree bill, a) because of the Christmas season when it usually came before the Senate, and b) because of all the goodies that were hung on the Christmas tree.

Ritchie: What was the origin of the "Bobtail?"

Shuman: I don't know. It had nothing to do with Harry Byrd. I think it came from pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey game, that everybody was there to pin his tail on the donkey. But anyway it was called the Bobtail bill in its original incarnation. At that time, you know, the Senate Finance Committee had no professional tax staff.

I resented that because I had to do the staff work for the Senator for the Finance Committee meetings. And not once in the time Mr. Douglas was on that committee did the Finance Committee staff or the Joint Committee on Taxation staff come to the senator to say that tomorrow tax bills are coming up, here's what's in them, here are the issues. No staff work at all! So I did it for him, from his own office. If there is too much staff now, which there is, there was too little staff then. The second thing I objected to was that the committee, when it held executive sessions, would not allow a Senate staff member, such as myself, into the executive committee meetings. But they did let the

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Treasury staff in. So the Treasury officials, working in another branch, would sit there and say to the senators, "I don't think you should do that, that's not a good idea." I thought it was a bad practice which violated the separation of power between the branches, and that it was improper for the Treasury staff to be in those sessions, except to give information. When Treasury officials met to decide their position on legislation to go to Congress, they didn't ask any Members of Congress or their staff to sit in on their deliberations.

Ritchie: Did the staff of the Finance Committee work exclusively for the chairman in those days?

Shuman: Well, there was no technical staff, no tax staff for the Finance Committee, only an administrative staff. The tax work was done by the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation, and they had some very good staff people. But only three Democrats and two Republicans from the Finance Committee were members of the Joint Committee with the House. The staff of the Joint Committee served those five senators, and almost no one else could get the time of day from them. I think they were Byrd, and [Kerr](#), and [Frear](#), and on the Republican side the senator from Delaware.

Ritchie: Williams.

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Shuman: [John Williams](#), who was an honest, upright, straightforward man. And one other, [Bennett](#). Those five people were the only ones who got staff work done for them. Now that has changed. People talk about the "good old days," well, that's an example of the not so good, good old days. It was yet another way the barons and poohbahs controlled the Senate.

I saw a very interesting thing happen in that committee. Bob Kerr was number two, and Bob Kerr pushed everybody around. He was a buccaneer. Once on oil

depletion, which was of course dear to Kerr's heart, Harry Byrd who generally supported depletion, voted with us against the oil depletion allowance. And I think I know why he did. At the Finance Committee mark-up meetings Byrd would sit at the end of the table in the chairman's seat, Kerr was to his immediate right, Williams was to his immediate left. Well, as the meeting would go on, Kerr would keep moving his chair to the left around the table, so that in end he'd be sitting next to and equal with Byrd at the head of the table. He was such a dominant personality that he took over from Byrd. Kerr was a bully. Byrd was a very polite fellow. He and Mr. Douglas differed fundamentally on their politics, but Byrd, and Williams, and Douglas were straight arrows. They often combined together to stop the effort to steal the Capitol Dome by many of the rest of the committee, especially Kerr. Well, once after Kerr had tried to take over, when depletion was on the floor, Byrd voted against

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the depletion allowance, and I think he did it to send a signal to Kerr that he was getting out of line in the way he performed on the committee with respect to the prerogatives of the chair.

Ritchie: To go back just one minute to the conference committee, before we get off of that, I've always heard that the senators have a disadvantage on a conference committee because House members tend to serve on one committee whereas senators tend to be on several committees, and senators aren't often as prepared on the issues when they go to conference. Did you find that was the case?

Shuman: That was absolutely true. I think I made a point of it in my book. The House almost always wins the conference committee, unless the House wants the Senate to win. There are three reasons for that. Number one is the reason you've given: House members generally are on only one major committee. They come to the committee meetings very well informed about the legislation they're involved in. And furthermore, before the conference committee, the House members usually meet to plan their strategies, their tactics. They stay together. They're very tough in conference. That's the first reason.

The second reason is that senators have many, many things to do. Even a junior senator becomes quite well known, can become famous, gets a lot of press, serves on several committees, and

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during the conference committee meetings senators come and go, while their staff stays there. So the staff may know the issues and the senators not. Well, no

Senate staff person in the absence of his principal can hold out on substance against a member of the House, an elected member, elected by the people, who is well informed and well versed. So the House member, who really is clashing with a Senate staff person much of the time, generally wins out.

The third reason, and I think perhaps the most important reason, has to do with what I mentioned about the fact that Senate members get a lot of publicity, and are well known in the country. The House people have an inferiority complex about the Senate, and they are very unhappy that while they know their stuff and do their work, the senators are getting all the credit and all the publicity. As a result, I think they are determined to win, to show the Senate, and they do win in almost every case. I've noticed that from the first time I ever went to a conference committee.

Ritchie: Does that get written into the equation also? Do staff consider that as they prepare a bill?

Shuman: Yes, it does get into the equation, certainly. Staff people think about that. During mark-ups, trading material is added.

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Ritchie: That you can't count on coming out ahead in the conference committee.

Shuman: No, almost never or not at all. The Senate generally loses. Whatever the statistics are, it's nonetheless true, the Senate generally loses, and especially on appropriations, money bills, where the House feels it has jurisdiction, and especially on tax matters too, the House generally wins. Partly the House wins because their members don't want the senators to get all the credit for getting amendments into the bill, so they throw most of them out. The Senate loses for two reasons: for that reason, and also because on the whole the Senate amendments are bad amendments. **Ritchie:** And the House does have tighter rules on amendments. **Shuman:** It does. A member can offer really no amendments on the floor except for a party substitute. **Ritchie:** One other thing I was interested in were joint committees. You mentioned the Joint Committee on Taxation and also the Joint Economic Committee which Senator Douglas chaired for a while. How well do joint committees work?

Shuman: They work very well, at least the Joint Economic Committee worked very well indeed. That was a good committee.

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And until recent times, until the Budget Act, that committee had a dramatic influence on public policy. Here's a committee that had no legislative function. It had only what Woodrow Wilson called the informing function, which Wilson said was as important as the legislative function, and it is. It could hold hearings. The Depressed Area bill hearings were first held in that committee, and were held around the country. The hearings to promote a tax bill in the beginning of the Korean War was a result of hearings by that committee, urging the Senate and the House to act, and they did. The Congress passed a six billion dollar tax increase at the beginning of the Korean War, early on, quickly, which I think resulted in the inflation rate during the Korean War being so relatively low. This was because Congress acted quickly. It was very, very good public policy. That committee, and Mr. Douglas personally, were responsible for the Treasury-Federal Reserve Accord in 1954, which was the right policy, and when the Treasury was told that the committee was for it and that it could probably have its way on legislation, the Treasury capitulated to the Federal Reserve.

There is one other example I want to make -- there are many of them. In 1960 the Joint Economic Committee held a year-long series of hearings on the economy, on wages, on prices, and on economic growth. Otto Eckstein was brought in by Mr. Douglas to be the staff director. Mr. Douglas called Jacob Viner at

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Princeton and asked him who his ablest post doctoral student was. Viner said Otto Eckstein. We hired him. Afterwards Otto became a full professor of economics at Harvard, made several million dollars with his private firm, was a member of the Council of Economic Advisors, and died an untimely death from cancer. Virtually every major economist in the country testified before the committee. Charlie Shultz did study paper number one. He was an unknown economist when we picked him up and commissioned his study. Walter Heller testified. Jim Tobin from Yale was one of the major participants. He was from Champaign and won the Noble Prize. His brother Roger, and I, were precinct committeemen in Champaign-Urbana in 1948. A man by the name of Warren Smith who later was a member of the President's Council of Economic Advisers was on the staff. I was the chairman's (Mr. Douglas) liaison with the committee.

These hearings became the basis for the economic policies of the country from 1961 to 1965. Jack Kennedy got himself on as a member of the committee just as this study was beginning, and although he was campaigning for the presidency at the time, he regularly and routinely took the committee reports with him on the plane as he traveled. It was I think in part through the committee's function that he got to know Walter Heller's work. I know that Kennedy met Heller first at the airport in Minneapolis, but partly as a result of what Kennedy knew about him from the

committee work he asked him to be the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. I think that what that committee reported and recommended were correct in terms of how to increase the growth rate, how to keep inflation down, and how to get unemployment down. The policies it proposed were carried out faithfully and almost religiously by the Kennedy-Johnson Council and resulted in what must be almost a perfect example of how academic economics can be translated into excellent public policy in the period 1961-1965.

Unemployment fell from about seven percent to three or four percent. The inflation rate I think was never more than one or two percent in any year. Economic growth went up and was sustained after the first year at four percent or higher. It was almost a perfect example of how the economy should run. It was a result, really, of that committee's action and the people who proposed the policies and then were in positions to put them into effect. But the role of Mr. Douglas, a professional economist and former president of the American Economic Association, was crucial. What I'm saying is that I think the Joint Economic Committee, with its informing function, had a great effect on economic policy. Its hearings and its reports got back into the academic community. They were used in the departments of economics, a new generation of economists knew about them, wrote about them, studied them, and they had their effect.

Ritchie: Did it have any advantage in the fact that it was a joint committee?

Shuman: Advantage in what way?

Ritchie: Could it have done the same things as a separate Senate committee and House committee?

Shuman: I think it had more clout as a joint committee, in terms of its views being recognized and carried out by both Houses. Certainly it did. It had a great number of extraordinarily able members in its early years. [Bob Taft](#) was chairman, [Flanders](#) was chairman, Douglas was chairman, [O'Mahoney](#) was chairman, [Wright Patman](#) was chairman, Proxmire was chairman, [Henry Reuss](#) was chairman, [Lee Hamilton](#) has been chairman of the committee. It has spawned a great many extraordinarily able people.



Senators Joseph C. O'Mahoney (D-WY) and Robert A. Taft (R-OH) study
The Economic Report of the President.
Harris & Ewing Photo

Ritchie: [Paul Sarbanes](#) is chairman now.

Shuman: Yes. [Sparkman](#), I think, was chairman at one time. I can't remember whether Fulbright was chairman or not, I think not, but he was a member.

Ritchie: It remains one of the few surviving joint committees. Joint committees as a practice seem to have lost favor with the Congress over the years, but that one is still on the books.

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Shuman: Its time may end soon because the Budget Committee has stolen much of its thunder. I don't think the Budget Committee looks at the economy in the overall way that the Joint Economic Committee did, and doesn't take as broad a view of it, and shouldn't. But it takes enough of the bite to have the Council of Economic Advisors, the Secretary of the Treasury and others come up and testify at the beginning of the year. They testify not only before the Joint Economic Committee but to the budget committees and the Finance Committee and Appropriations Committee and all the rest. This is, I think, excessive duplication. So the committee may be on its way out, although very few institutions started either in the executive or the legislative branch ever die.

Ritchie: One other issue that occupied a lot of your time in that period was international trade. I noticed that Senator Douglas was very active with GATT.

Shuman: The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Ritchie: I understand that you went to Europe on several occasions relating to that.

Shuman: I did. Almost the first speech I wrote for Mr. Douglas was a speech called the history of the tariff. Grover Ensley, who was staff director of the Joint Economic Committee, had brought in a person to staff that committee

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who was assigned to do the speech. He brought the speech over the day before it was to be given. It was a speech that couldn't be used, I was given the task of rewriting the speech, which I did overnight. I had taught economic history, and I had been particularly interested in the tariff, and I had read most of the substantive works such as Taussig's classic work on the tariff. So I wrote the speech. This I think was in favor of the bill to extend the Reciprocal Trade Act either in 1956 or 1957. Mr. Douglas made the opening speech for it.

Later he went to the Finance Committee, and the issue of the European Economic Community, or Common Market was up. We were pushing the Common Market, because of its overall economic and political value in uniting Europe, but it would injure our interests, because with the Common Market there would be a common tariff barrier against the outside world, whereas the members of the Common Market, Germany and France particularly, would now have no tariffs and free trade among them. So the United States, after having made all kinds of concessions through reciprocal trade bills after 1946, was allowing the Europeans to erect a barrier against us that would put us at a disadvantage. During this period, when extension of the trade bill was before the Senate, both in the late fifties and again in the early Kennedy years, I went to Europe with Mr. Douglas

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on a couple of occasions. We did go into these matters very thoroughly, once in 1957 and once in 1961.

I went with Mr. Douglas to meet the Chancellor of the Exchequer in London and Mr. Douglas quoted Cobden and Bright to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on free trade! The British were keeping out our chickens, which was a cause celebre, on health grounds, and they were keeping out our automobiles because they had extraordinarily high tariffs against cars with high horsepower. So in fact our chickens and our cars couldn't get into the British market. We complained about that. We sponsored a lunch for the staff of the *London Economist* to press our points.

We went to West Germany in '61, to meet with a man who later became Chancellor, an economist.

Ritchie: Ludwig Ehrhardt.

Shuman: Ehrhardt was then the Economic Minister, and we met with Ehrhardt. The U.S. could mine coal in West Virginia or Southern Illinois, ship it down the Mississippi from Southern Illinois to New Orleans, or get it out of West Virginia by rail to the east coast, ship it to Europe, ship it up the Rhine, and unload it at the mouth of the West German coal mines cheaper than the coal could be produced there -- even with imported Italian labor, which was cheaper than German labor. We were making this point.

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We got absolutely no help at all from the State Department officials. We could not get from them lists of items of that kind for the countries we were visiting. They took the view that they were really the advocates of the country to which they were posted. Mr. Douglas was essentially a free trader, but we really did ferret out a whole series of examples where through health rules, or quotas, or other than mere tariff provisions Europeans were keeping out our goods.

Ritchie: I read in Senator Douglas' memoirs about how much trouble he had with George Ball and other people in the State Department.

Shuman: Yes, he had a fundamental falling out on issues, not personally, with George Ball. I've forgotten the exact details now, but Mr. Douglas turned out to be absolutely right about it. It was over the British entry to the Common Market and the French resistance to it and Mr. Douglas' effort to extend freer trade to the EFTA (European Free Trade Area) as well as the 6 countries of the Common Market. Ball, as it turned out, wrongly backed the French position.

Ritchie: But Douglas found that the State Department was never on his side.

Shuman: Not at all. They were very difficult. We worked very closely with the pro-trade groups. One of the luxuries of

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being from a big state, which people sometimes forget, is that in a big state like Illinois there are both protectionist and free trade interests. We had a big agriculture interest; we had firms like Caterpillar Tractor who were for freer trade; we had farm machinery manufacturers and so on, most of whom sold a lot of goods abroad. Also we had the Great Lakes and the Chicago port, so there was

political support for freer trade, as well as for protection from the regular sources, the mining interests, the metal interests in Southern Illinois, for example.

Ritchie: And the *Chicago Tribune*.

Shuman: Well, the *Tribune*, yes. But what this meant was that no matter how one voted, someone was helped and someone was hurt. So the senator was pretty free to do what he thought was the best thing, regardless of the pressures on him from a variety of economic interests, because the economic interests really washed out each other. That isn't as true for a small congressional district, where there may be only one economic interest, such as steel, or coal mining, or copper mining, where the member really has no political choice except to vote protectionist. It is a luxury in that sense to represent a big state.

Ritchie: I understand that one of your trips to Europe involved going to Berlin during the Berlin Wall crisis.

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Shuman: In 1961 we did go to Europe, mainly because of the trade bill. We spent a lot of time in the OECD, in Paris, and in Belgium, and in Bonn. We then went into Berlin. We flew into Berlin shortly after the Wall went up. The Wall went up the 13th of August, 1961, and we were in Berlin I believe early in September. We were there with Hubert Humphrey, visiting at the same time in Paris and Brussels and Berlin. We flew over on Eisenhower's Presidential plane, the *Columbine*. We saw Willy Brandt and visited with General [Lucius] Clay many times. We were there for about two weeks, if not longer. I had a fraternity brother from my Illinois college days who was the legal officer in Berlin. Art Price was his name, a Foreign Service Officer. He drove us around, escorted us, and helped us while we were in Berlin.

We did several things: number one, we went into East Berlin several times. There were then only a few places one could go through the Wall. But we went in several times because we had a right to go in. After all, Berlin was under the jurisdiction of the allies who had won the war, which included the Americans, and the British, and the French, and the Russians, but not just the Russians. So we had as much right to be in East Berlin as the winning allies as the Russians did, even though it was their zone. We went in several times. We made a point of it at the urging of General Clay. General Clay was a very brave fellow.

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He was flying by helicopter into small enclaves in East Berlin, enclaves that belonged to the West, and was bringing out people by helicopter, saving their lives, which took a lot of guts.

We once went to meet Willy Brandt at the City Hall. We arrived too early in our car, and they told us, "You are too early, go away." So we drove away and took a walk in the woods nearby. There are all kinds of woods in Berlin, lots of parks. We took a walk in the woods, got back in the car, went around the block, came back again, and this time we were greeted by the mayor's people in their gold chains of office. We spent more than an hour with Brandt. It has often occurred to me since then that in that conference there must have been Brandt's personal secretary, who later, unknown to Brandt, was found to have been an agent of the Russians. I don't think we talked about anything that was particularly secret at the time, but nonetheless it has always played on my mind that Brandt's person was there during that conference. He was not at Clay's house, where we also saw Willy Brandt, but he was at City Hall.

After that meeting, the senator came out to the plaza in front of the City Hall, where there was a crowd of people, ropes were keeping them back. There were several hundred people standing together. I don't know quite why they were there, but they were. Mr. Douglas, who spoke German well, went up to them and sort of instinctively, he started to speak to them giving a

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pep talk about how we were behind them, and how we would stand with them. And they cheered him, really cheered him, much as they cheered Kennedy a year later, when he gave his "I am a Berliner" speech. It was a magic moment. But I thought at the time, no diplomat would ever do a thing like that, but a politician would. In some respects a politician was more useful in places like Berlin than some diplomats would be. One must remember that at this time we knew that at any moment the Russians might attack and take over West Berlin which was an isolated western island a hundred miles inside the Soviet sphere.

Then we came out of Berlin on the Autobahn. The Russians had slowed down the Autobahn. They had a go-slow policy. There was almost no one on the Autobahn. In leaving Berlin, we stopped at the American sentry, and then the British sentry, and then the French sentry, and finally we got to the Russian sentry guardbox. We presented our passports to them, which were official passports, and we were in a State Department car, which could be identified by its license plate. It was a four-door black Ford. No one else was there, but the Russians kept us waiting from thirty to forty minutes before they handed back our passports, even though they did nothing. They pulled up the window, then slammed the window down, and we waited. Finally, they gave us three chits. The next people in line were the

East Germans. Now, we didn't recognize the East Germans. The East Germans had been our enemies. We were

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the conquerors. So we were not going to recognize them as equals. Art Price said, "What I'm going to do is drive by this East German sentry slowly. I'm going to hold the chits out the window. If he takes them, fine. If he doesn't take them, I'm going to drop them on the ground, but we're not stopping for him, we're not recognizing him." That is what we did. The sentry took the chits.

We got to the other end of the Autobahn, after crossing East Germany. I think we drove a hundred, a hundred and ten miles, and there was almost no traffic. When we got to the West German frontier, the cars were backed up for a long, long way. There were two lanes, cars in the left lane, trucks in the right lane. The truck line was shorter, so we got in the truck line. We finally got up to the gate. It was like the railroad guardrails that used to drop over the tracks to stop cars. I was in the back seat, and Art was in the front seat driving. The senator was in the front seat next to him. And Art said, "When that truck ahead of us goes through, we're going to go through after it, before they drop the gate. Now watch the guard," he said to me. "Watch out the back window, and if the guard raises his weapon -- he had an automatic rifle -- we'll stop." Well, the truck went through, we went through, the guard yelled, "Halt! Halt! Halt!" I was looking out the back window, but he didn't raise his weapon, so we went on.

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If he had raised his weapon, we would have stopped, but it would have been an international incident, and just as I called the Associated Press in Joliet, Illinois, when they kicked the senator off the street for campaigning, I was prepared at that moment to call the wire services to let them know what happened. It would have been a serious international incident if the guard had raised his weapon and stopped a diplomatic car and a U.S. Senator in that situation, but he didn't. I remember at the time that while I was nervous, I wasn't fearful, nor were the others. I should have been, because there was a good chance of getting shot, but after having been in Berlin for those two weeks or more, we were determined to carry out our rights. So it was with a sense of "By God, we're not going to let them stop us," or to keep us from exercising the rights of the United States in that area, that was foremost in our thoughts, to the degree that any fear that we might have had was pushed out of our minds.

There was one other item about that trip. When I came back, for a matter of several weeks afterwards, every time I saw a wall I got almost physically ill. I wanted to vomit. It was a physical sensation of being tremendously upset by any

visible wall. It was traumatic. It was a hostile act for the Russians to have pulled, simply cruel. I also came back with the strong feeling and determination that essentially the Russians were bullies. We were in touch then with Ted Sorenson at the White House, who had

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worked for Mr. Douglas, and we were advising him that the White House should take a somewhat stronger stand in Berlin.

I think we would have approved of even knocking down the wall. Whether that would have been helpful, I hesitate to say in hindsight. Probably what would have happened is that the Russians would have moved the wall from the border a hundred yards, or two hundred yards back so that knocking it down might have been ineffective. But I think they expected us to do it, and I think we probably could have gotten by with it, and that it might have stopped them to some degree. On the other hand, it's one thing to advocate it either as a staff member of the Senate or as a senator, but it's quite another thing for the President of the United States who has the safety of the world in his hands, to be sure that that was the right thing to do. We never faulted Kennedy for this, but I had a strong feeling that we might have done a little more. I don't swear by that, it's a judgment.

It was during these visits to Europe that I developed a strong personal interest in the art galleries. We had a very vigorous schedule but Mr. Douglas found time to visit the galleries in London, Paris, Cologne, Brussels, Bruges, Geneva, Bonn, and Berlin. At first I found going with him perfunctory and a requirement of the job. Then I got addicted and going to the galleries has become a major joy of my life for more than a quarter of a century.

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Ritchie: How would you describe Paul Douglas' world view of the United States versus the Soviet Union?

Shuman: He was both a vigorous anti-Communist, and a believer in the Bill of Rights, and the reason he was the former was the experiences he had in the twenties and the thirties. He went to Russia, in 1927 and he met with both Trotsky and Stalin, and he came back absolutely convinced that the Soviet Union was a dictatorship quite equivalent to the Nazis later on. Then Stalin carried out his purges. Mr. Douglas had been an early opponent of the Nazis and of Mussolini, and had urged this country to stand firm, which is the reason he joined the Marine Corps at age fifty. Having advocated resistance to them, he felt it was his duty to act on his words. But he also felt very strongly the same way

about the Russians, and I think he was right. He was quite willing and ready to resist them in most places.

The second experience was being in a group of progressive institutions in the twenties and thirties. Some were taken over by members of the party, but one could not call them Communists, because people would say that was name calling, so they were called the "action faction," or some such name. But he watched as they took over a variety of otherwise good institutions, captured the mimeograph machines and things of that kind. They stayed longer at the meetings than anyone else, outwaited people, and passed a variety of motions (after others left) which peddled the

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Russian line. So out of experience both in the visit to the Soviet Union and in his personal experiences he felt very strongly about them and was prepared to resist them, but by democratic means.

Ritchie: Do you think that explains his strong support for Johnson's Vietnam policy?

Shuman: Yes, it does; there was one other thing about supporting Johnson's policies. I think most people who had the experience of the thirties, as I did growing up then, believed that one of the lessons we thought we'd learned from the 1930s was that it was important to stop aggression at an early stage. That was called at the end of the war "collective security." I think most people believed that if the Western nations, Britain, France and ourselves, had stood up against Hitler, and tried to stop him when he took the Rhineland early on, that World War II might not have happened. Or that if the world had united against Mussolini when he took over Ethiopia that he might have been stopped. So Mr. Douglas came out of the war, certainly as I did, and as most people of our generation did, thinking that collective security and stopping aggression early was the right thing to do. Well, we did that in Korea. I think that motivated Truman in 1950 to resist aggression in Korea, and Mr. Douglas supported that. I supported it; I thought it was the right thing to do. Two years later, many who said what a great thing it was when Truman went

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in, in 1950, called it Truman's war in 1952. But the initial response was favorable, and I think history will say that it was the right thing to do.

Well, Mr. Douglas saw Vietnam in much the same way. Now, the problem was that Vietnam wasn't as clear cut. There was no single act of aggression as there

had been when the Northern Koreans came down into South Korea. There wasn't an act of overt aggression or any one event, as when Hitler took the Rhineland or when he went into Czechoslovakia, to make the aggression clear. So first of all it was less clear as to the nature of the aggression. And second, in Vietnam the problem was that the response to it wasn't collective. Collective security means that a variety of people join together to stop the aggressor, and it wasn't very collective. There was little help, and the French who got out of Dienbienphu didn't come back to help. So it really wasn't collective. It was essentially a U.S. endeavor.

And then I think perhaps it offended in another way, looking back on it. I mean it had been a long time principle of American foreign policy that it would be very wise for us not to land ground forces on the continent of Asia, that in the Pacific our forte was seapower and later air power, but that we shouldn't waste the lives of our people in a war on the continent of Asia where our manpower was outnumbered many times over. Korea was different, because Korea was a peninsula. One could bring to

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bear both seapower and air power as well as ground troops, but in Vietnam it was a very questionable endeavor. For all those reasons, the public support for Vietnam was not great, and it was a mistake. I did not come to think it was a mistake until very late in the game. But as I listen to the military experts now there was no strategy by which it could have been won in the broad sense. Eisenhower knew the limits of our power, and he was right to resist the overtures of Dulles and Nixon and to stay out at the time of Dienbienphu.

I got turned around on Vietnam when fifty percent of the casualties were black Americans. Sons of the upper middle class could go to college and get out of the fighting. In World War II, which I was in, risk at least to begin with was borne by everyone; at least everybody started out equal. As President Kennedy said, life is unfair. Some people got killed and some didn't. But at least in World War II your name was pulled out of a hat to begin with, and the sons of every class in society had to bear roughly an equal burden. It was only by luck or chance that you were in combat or weren't. But Vietnam was very different. The National Guard was not called up. It was made up of people who had been paid for years to be ready to fight in an emergency, and they weren't called up because they were politically powerful and would have objected to it, and so Johnson was unwilling to do it. The reservists were not called up, except in a few instances, but as a

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group they weren't called up to fight even though they'd been paid for years to be ready to fight, and would retire on a pension after they'd been in the reserve for a certain number of years. Only the weak, and the poor, and the people who had no political pull had to go fight that war, with the obvious exception of the professional military who were very brave and who fought extraordinarily well. So I got to the place where I thought that war couldn't be supported. But I personally supported the war for a very long time, as a creature of the thirties, who believed in collective security. I now believe that it was a mistake; in fact, I know it was a mistake. Nixon's invasion of Cambodia and his secret air strikes were additional offenses.

Ritchie: In the sixties there was a great split in the liberal ranks over supporting Vietnam. Did Paul Douglas feel these tensions from his supporters, some of whom were opposed to the war?

Shuman: Certainly. I think he was defeated in 1966 in part because of that. For example, we lost almost the entire liberal Jewish community on the North Side of Chicago. There were groups of rabbis who had been his strong supporters but who came out against him. And even those who supported him, conservatives who supported him on this issue, didn't necessarily vote for him. So he lost heavily. This was at a time when feeling against the war wasn't being expressed very much publicly. Some feeling was

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expressed, but there was also a deep undertow of opposition. In the year before that election, Mr. Douglas used to talk about Vietnam to groups who came to the office. We had a policy which we carried out between Easter and Labor Day, when the tourist crowds would come down to Washington. There were so many people from Illinois that it was impossible for them to see the senator one by one, so most afternoons at about five o'clock, he would hold a session in one of the committee rooms, or in the Senate Caucus Room. As people came in, we'd honestly say, "He's busy at the moment, but if you'd come back at five o'clock he's going to have a meeting and talk to you." There would usually be forty, fifty, sometimes a hundred people, citizens from the state, who came back to talk with him. In the years '65 and '66, he mostly talked about Vietnam, although there were other issues. He told them quite directly that he supported it and why, and he heard their views. Well, it was clear that there was a strong undercurrent of opposition, and even more clear in the campaign of '66.

During this time Marine Corps General Lou Walt, the U.S. Commander in I (eye) Corps in the Northern part of South Vietnam visited our office many times. He had been Mr. Douglas' superior in the Pacific, exposed himself to fire whenever his outfit was under fire, and at one stage had told his commanding general he

was making a terrible military mistake in ordering a frontal attack on high ground held by the Japanese. This took more than

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physical courage. In the end Walt's views prevailed against his superior, and the superior was "sent home", almost the worst thing that can happen to a battlefield commander. For all these reasons Mr. Douglas had great respect for Walt's views and was persuaded that I Corps had a very fine pacification program and that the people in the I Corps were highly supportive of our efforts.

Since then I've heard former Col. Harry G. Summers, Jr., whose book *On Strategy* is the most famous review and critique of Vietnam, say that this was absolutely true, that the Marines in I Corps had in fact won the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese there. But Walt's group of Marines who were so convincing, in part by living in the villages and protecting them from night raids and integrating themselves into the villages, caused the villagers to become even more discontented with the government in Saigon. So these Marines did such a good job that the overall objective of getting a government that satisfied the people was undermined. Walt's personal reports, which I sat in on, and Mr. Douglas' personal respect for both Walt's military and civil courage, were major factors in the Senator's support for the war.

A very interesting thing happened in the 1966 campaign. Mr. Douglas thought it was wrong for him not to say publicly what he thought, that he wasn't going to equivocate or sweep this issue under the rug, and that he was obligated to say where he stood and why. Abner Mikva, who became a member of Congress and is now a

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superb U.S. Appellate Court judge here in Washington, D.C., was one of our strong supporters. Abner went to him, along with someone else, and said, "Look, Paul, we know where you stand on this. We know you believe in it. You've said so publicly many times. There's no doubt about it. But do you really have to raise it every time you make a speech? Because it's really not helping you any." Mr. Douglas became irate about that proposal. He thought it was his duty and said he didn't think he could run under false colors. It was important to him that he said what he thought. If there was ever a man of principle, it was he. But this characteristic was a factor in his defeat. I think without the murder of Percy's daughter, Mr. Douglas might have won. That event, plus Vietnam, plus the beginning of inflation, plus the undercurrent of unhappiness, and his age to some degree -- although I never thought age was a major factor even when many said it

was, but that wasn't the key factor -- were cumulative forces he could not overcome.

Ritchie: During almost the whole period that Douglas was in the Senate, his partner from Illinois was [Everett Dirksen](#). What was the relationship between Douglas and Dirksen?

Shuman: Their relationship was distant, polite, proper. From 1951 until 1961 at least, Dirksen was a minor figure in the Senate. People don't realize how little he was known. Douglas was the major figure both in terms of Illinois and in the country.

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We used to take street corner polls. In fact we regularly polled throughout the state, very informal polls, but we had a variety of places in the state where we hired a student to go out and take polls every three months or so. The simple question was: "What kind of a job do you think Douglas is doing? What kind of a job do you think Dirksen is doing?" without telling the people who voted who was taking the poll. We picked places which were down the middle of the road. That is, we didn't pick all Democratic places or all Republican places. We picked them so that they were reasonably representative. One of them was the main street corner in Vandalia, Illinois. And regularly and routinely Mr. Douglas would do at least twenty points better than Dirksen, through almost all the time that he was in the Senate.

Dirksen became famous, and powerful, and important really in 1961, '62, when Kennedy needed him so badly to support his program, because of the close divisions in the Senate. One of the things that irked us most was that we felt that Kennedy had not done all that he could have done against Dirksen in '62. The Congressman. . . .

Ritchie: Sid Yates.

Shuman: [Sid Yates](#) ran against him. One of the things Kennedy did was to appoint a federal court judge at the time from Chicago on Dirksen's recommendation. We stopped the appointment

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until after the election, but the word got out. Then Kennedy flew Dirksen back to Washington at the time of the Cuban crisis, and the Kennedy people were very tepid in their support of Sid Yates. Dirksen had never won an election by a very big margin. He just barely beat [Scott Lucas](#), and he barely beat Sid Yates. It was

not a big figure, I've forgotten now, 52 to 48 percent, something like that. So Dirksen was unknown and didn't really become famous until around '62.

It's almost an iron law of politics that presidents and governors take their political friends for granted and woo their opponents and adversaries. This was certainly true of Kennedy in 1962 and has recurred during every administration, Republican or Democratic, during the seven presidents I have watched at close range.

Dirksen had a curious background. He had been a very conservative member of the House. Then in 1946 he left the House because he had great trouble with his eyes. It was thought he was going blind. Fortunately, he didn't. While he was out of the House, he supported [Thomas E.] Dewey. This infuriated the *Chicago Tribune*. He was slated, everybody said, to go into Dewey's Cabinet; it was a certain thing having given his support to him. But Dewey did not win in '48 and then Dirksen ran for the Senate in 1950, and it was important for him to get the *Chicago Tribune* recommendation, to get their support in both the primary

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and the general election, and they were very suspicious of him because he had played footsie with Dewey instead of supporting their man Taft. So Dirksen had to prove to the *Tribune* that he was really an all-out supporter of the *Tribune* and their position. I think this accounts to a considerable degree for why he was such a strong supporter of [McCarthy](#), and why he was Joe McCarthy's counsel on the Senate floor in 1954.

The relations between Douglas and Dirksen were proper but distant. It used to bother me somewhat that where I lived, in Champaign, there was a very Republican paper, the *News-Gazette*, and when Mr. Douglas appeared in Champaign-Urbana, the paper would cover him but the story was always on the fourth or fifth page with no banner headline. I remember one time when Dirksen appeared in Farmer City, which was about eighteen or twenty miles away, and his appearance in Farmer City got the headline across the front page of the *News-Gazette*. We were constantly having to battle that kind of thing. There weren't more than a half a dozen papers in the state which supported Mr. Douglas, but almost every paper supported Dirksen and the Republicans.

There is one thing I want to say about the relationship of senators from different parties. Senators from different parties from the same state tend to get along better with each other than senators from the same party, which to the uninitiated may be a curious thing. There's a very good reason for this.

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Senators from the same party vie with each other for support from people in the party. They vie with each other over judges and postmasters. They vie with each other to see who's going to get credit for projects for the state. Their staffs promote the controversy. When I was with Proxmire, I laid down the law that our staff was never to criticize [Gaylord Nelson](#) in any public way. Senator Proxmire went out of his way to praise Senator Nelson, who was a great public interest Senator. His AA, I am sorry to say, did not reciprocate. But, two senators from the same party from the same state are often very much at odds with each other. In fact, it's seldom they like each other very much.

Senators from different parties are in a quite different situation. They never have to run against each other, because they run at different times. So Douglas didn't run against Dirksen or vice versa. Dirksen would go out in the state when Douglas was running, and he'd make one speech saying that he hoped the Republican candidate would win. He usually didn't say anything personal about Mr. Douglas. Mr. Douglas did the same with him. He always campaigned very hard for the Democratic candidate, but he didn't do so by denouncing Dirksen. He might make a few remarks about him, or his voting record or something, but he never got personal. So there was no particular reason, as they didn't share judges, postmasters, patronage, and projects

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why they should be at odds in any personal way, and they weren't. But they certainly weren't close.

Ritchie: But they weren't at each other's throats.

Shuman: No. And we seldom worked with Dirksen on Illinois projects. I can't remember many issues over which we would get together in a way that the Western senators do, even the way the Wisconsin delegation does when the state delegation meets. That was almost unknown in Illinois. The Republicans and the Democrats really had very little to do with each other, even on behalf of state issues.

Ritchie: Is that because the state is so diverse, with so many different groups and issues?

Shuman: I think that is one reason, but not the only reason because of the diversity and size of the state.

Ritchie: The most memorable moment, when Douglas did take on Dirksen was over the one-man-one-vote issue. Could you tell me a little bit about that?

Shuman: I certainly can. I remember it well. The Supreme Court decision came down. It was a correct decision. There was no other remedy. There are people who say that it was an example of judicial activism, that the issue should have been left to the state legislatures. But no legislature was going to reform

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itself, and that was especially true in Illinois. In Illinois it was necessary to amend the state constitution to change the representation in the senate. It was an absolutely gerrymandered body, with no way to get it undone, because the members of the legislature would have to vote themselves out of a job in order to make it right. The state Constitution was essentially unamendable.

So I think that as there was no other remedy, only the courts could bring needed fairness. Therefore the Supreme Court was correct. The situation was impossible. A state like California had one senatorial seat for Los Angeles with several million people, and one state senator for some of the mountain counties, where there were almost no people at all. The economic interest groups could therefore fashion a state senate majority by getting state senators representing maybe ten percent of the people to support them, when the people as a whole were against their views. They could stop any legislation against their interests. And the politically powerful institutions bought up enough senators to have their way. So it had to be changed.

Well, Dirksen -- we had early word of this -- sponsored a bill to undo what the Supreme Court had done, and it got through the Judiciary Committee pretty fast. It came to the floor. Mr. Douglas earlier had done a major study, which was ready to go into print as a book, on the issue of unfair representation. I think it was in '39 or '40. But before he could get it pub-

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lished, the new census came out making all his figures too old to be used, and he just didn't have the time to redo it. His son, John, did a similar study in 1950, and the same thing happened to him. It never got published because of the new census. So he and his son had been involved in this issue for many, many years, and he knew the issue in detail. Connecticut was one of the worst examples. He knew the California situation. One couldn't name a state where he didn't know almost precisely what the distribution was.

So the bill came to the floor, and it was being rushed through. I was there with Mr. Douglas, and the question was what he should do. Well, he got up immediately, because it seemed Dirksen's bill was just going to zip through on a voice vote. Dirksen had prevailed on Mansfield to cosponsor it. There must have

been thirty or forty cosponsors on the bill. It was one of those things where the stage was set, the skids were greased, and it was on its way. No one had thought very much about it. Mr. Douglas got up, and he gave, on the afternoon it came up, a lengthy speech, off the top of his head using the information that he had developed over the years. The question came then, what should he do. At this early stage, Proxmire joined him as his lieutenant, helped guard the floor and relieved Douglas by asking questions. The two were there alone really and I was the staff person. We did that for two or three days. We then tried to

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reach out, and we got a few other brave souls who stood by us. We met with [Andy Biemiller](#) and the AFL-CIO. Biemiller was a former congressman from Wisconsin, legislative director of the AFL-CIO, a public interest citizen, and our strong ally. His initial response was that this issue wasn't big enough, or they had so many other issues they were involved in that they weren't going to support us in any major way. He reluctantly said no, they couldn't support us with their major resources on the issue, which was a blow. But anyway, Mr. Douglas determined that he would continue the fight.

At this time we had about twelve or fourteen votes, not sufficient to stop the bill, because we needed thirty-four votes to defeat [cloture](#) if the Dirksen forces tried to cut off the debate. But Mr. Douglas had told Andy Biemiller, when Andy said no, that nonetheless he was going to fight it on his own the best way he could, even if the AFL-CIO didn't stick with him. Well, Biemiller went back and thought about it, and his conscience got the better of him. The issue was extraordinarily important to the labor movement, for their agenda was defeated time and again by the ability of the corporations, utilities, and anti-union and anti-consumer forces to stop legislation in gerrymandered state legislative bodies. So he came back in a day or two after we'd gotten a dozen or so supporters and said, "We're going to join you. It's very important to do this. We've rethought our

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position, and we'll stick with you." Well, Andy Biemiller got his troops together and started to lobby. I was his Senate point person. Our immediate goal was to get thirty-four votes of senators who would stick with us to beat cloture. I remember, Andy would call me saying, "Well, we got this one." Then he'd call an hour or two later, "We've got somebody else." And we were at this for two or three days while Douglas and Proxmire and their allies were holding the floor. Finally we got thirty-four, which was the magic number, and we were absolutely elated at that.

Then, as time went on, as we organized, as we drew attention to the issue by the [filibuster](#), the press got interested. At the early stage the Dixiecrats were going to vote against us and for cloture. They never had voted for cloture because it was against their alleged principles, but they had told Dirksen, their political ally, they would vote with him on this. And it looked very much as if they were going to cut us off. We finally had the vote. When the Dixiecrats saw we were going to win, they then voted against cloture so they could keep their traditional position clean. And in the end, we got two-thirds and Dirksen got one-third. We beat him two to one.

That was about 1965, because I remember one of the big things in the '66 campaign we used was that issue. When Johnson was Majority Leader, he got William S. White to write a series of articles against our group, using ridicule and satire especially

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against Mr. Douglas, saying he was ineffective, inefficient, and couldn't get anything done. So after rattling off all the things he had done, the major pieces of legislation, such as the Depressed Areas bills, minimum wage, reciprocal trade and housing bills he had passed, Mr. Douglas made a big point about how his opponents were saying Dirksen was effective, as compared to Douglas, but when the vote came, we got the two-thirds and Dirksen got one third. "So I ask you", he would say, "who is the effective senator?" It was a major point in our campaign.

This became an issue years later in the Bork nomination for the Supreme Court. Bork contended this was a political issue -- what is called the "political question doctrine" -- and that the Court should not have intervened. But on this issue there was no remedy, no possible political resolution of the issue, and I believe in such circumstances the Court can and should intervene. I didn't wait until Bork's nomination to arrive at this conclusion. It grew out of "experience" which justice Holmes rightly said was the life of the law.

Ritchie: What was your own assessment of Dirksen's effectiveness?

Shuman: Dirksen's forte was that he was born to be a funeral orator. The thing he liked to do most was to speak at what I would call ceremonial occasions. I am reminded of the man

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who spoke for two hours before Lincoln at Gettysburg, Edward Everett. I think Dirksen was the Edward Everett of his day. He was mellifluous. He loved to speak on ceremonial and funeral occasions, and he was very good at it. He was very

funny, and he had a command of vocabulary that was unusual. He was still the basso profundo of the Pekin Presbyterian choir. But in the 1960s he didn't produce the important votes. He followed public opinion and the strong incoming tides.

Did I mention to you the time I was at the White House with Kennedy and Dirksen? This was just a week or two before Kennedy was killed. Mr. Douglas was in Illinois. I got a call about seven o'clock in the morning from the White House saying Governor Kerner of Illinois and a trade delegation going to Europe were visiting the White House that morning and that Dirksen was coming down to be there with the president and the group, and Douglas needed representation. Would I please come? They told me to get there. So I got there. There were about fifty people who were going on a trip to Europe to get more markets for Illinois. We met outside the Oval Office near the Rose Garden. The governor made a big to-do about this group of "businessmen and financiers." Dirksen got up and made a quite eloquent, lengthy, wordy speech about them, using big words.

Then President Kennedy got up to reply. The first thing he said was how pleased he was to have this group of Illinois

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businessmen and financiers here today. And he said, tongue in cheek, he found it very difficult to distinguish between the financiers on the one hand and the businessmen on the other. Then he made a pointed reference. They were going to Europe to increase exports and to help the balance of payments problem, so Kennedy pointed out that they might well spend quite a few American dollars in Europe, which might have an adverse affect on the balance of payments, but that that was all right, because there was no way one could stop these "peripatetic, ubiquitous businessmen and financiers from Illinois." As he said peripatetic and ubiquitous he looked at Dirksen and he held up his finger and pulled his finger down as if to say, "Look, I scored one on you." It was one of the wittiest occasions I have ever seen. Kennedy outdid Dirksen, and it was unplanned. A week or so later Kennedy was dead. And it was ironic that the brainiest President we have had since [Jefferson](#) and [Madison](#), was killed by a bullet to his brain.

Ritchie: Kennedy obviously had to use Dirksen, and Johnson did as well, because of the nature of the Senate.

Shuman: The votes were sometimes so close they did have to use him. But the election of Yates could have switched the ratio by two votes. They overdid it at our expense.

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Ritchie: And especially on issues that required two-thirds votes, like the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Civil Rights bill cloture, they had to have some Republican votes. Do you think that accounts for Dirksen's mushrooming in power, despite the fact that he really controlled a very small number of votes?

Shuman: I think Dirksen was smart enough to get everything he could get from his position of power. And I personally think Kennedy gave him too much, especially in his campaign against Sid Yates, needlessly gave him more than he should have. Especially that federal judge! It was used as a signal that the administration was abandoning Yates.

Ritchie: I was thinking that in terms of the payback, the following year Dirksen did throw his support behind the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and in '64 he was a major figure in the Civil Rights bill. Or at least he gets a lot of credit for it.

Shuman: Dirksen got a lot of credit, but public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of both at the time. He would not have supported them unless public opinion was with him. In 1956, 1957, and 1960 he opposed Civil Rights vehemently when it was unpopular. I never thought Dirksen had any great principles. He was representative of his party and of the interest groups behind his party. There's no question about that. I don't mean to say that in support of Civil Rights and the Treaty he was a

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flaming left-wing liberal in conservative clothing, nothing of the sort. But I don't think he ever really let principle get in the way of doing what he wanted to do. He could switch on issues, back and forth. He was on every side of issues from time to time, Civil Rights was one of those he supported but only after the battle was over and public opinion supported it overwhelmingly. He wasn't for it in 1957 and 1960 when we really needed him.

Ritchie: Well, I want to talk about that Civil Rights bill, but I think it might be a good idea to save it for the next session, rather than to try to make that the last item on the agenda today.

Shuman: All right.

End of Interview #5

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Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Interview #6: LBJ as President

(September 17, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Ritchie: Why don't we start with your story about attending the 1944 convention and then talk about some of the presidents that you have known and had dealings with.

Shuman: In 1944, when I was an apprentice seaman, between my period at the University of Michigan and going off to the Midshipman's School at Harvard, I spent about six or eight weeks at Great Lakes, and I had very little to do. They put me in the typing pool, but essentially I didn't have anything to do, and I could get long evenings in Chicago if I wanted to go down. It was forty or fifty miles, but there was very good train service. The Democratic Convention was there that summer. I was very interested, and I made a point to try to go to the convention. The first time I went down a policeman, saw me in my white Navy uniform, and let me in to sit in the press gallery, just behind the speaker's platform. I was about as close as one could get to the speaker.

The big thing I remember about it: I was there the evening when [Robert] Hannegan was on the platform, and it appeared certain that [Henry] Wallace would be nominated again for Vice President. The galleries were loaded with people chanting

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"We Want Wallace." They had been given extra tickets to get in. Of course, the powers that be did not want Wallace. They wanted either Truman or Justice [William] Douglas. They were the two, and Hannegan put Truman's name first on a list presented to Roosevelt, which was the reason he was chosen, I've read. Anyway, at nine o'clock or so at night, with Wallace a sure thing, the galleries full and the vote ready to be taken, or even underway, the presiding officer, who must have been the House Speaker, took a motion for adjournment. The question was all those in favor say aye, and there were almost no ayes. All those opposed no, and the whole place said no. He declared the ayes had it and gavelled adjournment! That night, in what were then called the smoke-filled rooms, Truman was agreed on. I came back the next day and watched as Truman accepted the nomination.

I then saw Truman one other time, when he came through on his whistlestop tour in '48 to Tolono, Illinois, which was about ten miles south of Champaign-Urbana. I went down there with my friend Dick Murphy, and we stood relatively close to the back of the train. There was an extraordinarily big crowd. We were surprised at the crowd; we thought we would be the only ones there. Truman gave one of his short "Give 'em Hell" speeches. It was very good. The farmers were in trouble, and he mentioned the grain storage bins, and left. I had no reason to think that he would win, except that in Clinton, Iowa, near my home in Northern Illinois

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Dewey gave a fatuous speech. [Thomas] Dewey said -- trying not to offend anyone in the election -- that "your past lies behind you and your future lies ahead of you," which reminded me of the famous Calvin Coolidge statement that when men are out of work, unemployment comes about. The same day Truman was at Tolono Dewey was in Southern Illinois. He criticized the Dewey train engineer for backing his train up into the crowd after taking on water. No one was hurt and it was a minor incident, Dewey called the engineer a "lunatic." A tip-off to the election was the engineer's reply. He said he wasn't bothered by Dewey's criticism because he wasn't going to vote for him anyway.

I had a very good friend, Arno Hill, who was running for county treasurer in Champaign. He and I were at the courthouse on election day, in the morning. I had voted early. As we were coming back in a taxi from downtown Urbana to the campus, Arno kept telling the taxi driver Truman is going to win. I kept saying, "Come on, Arno, it's okay to keep up pretenses during the campaign, but this is election day, and you don't have to continue with this line." He said, "No, I'm convinced he's going to win. No question about it." He said, "I've bet a lot of money on him." It turned out he had bet several hundred dollars with big odds that Truman would win. Later, I asked him why he was so confident. You remember I mentioned earlier about how the organization in Chicago kept presidents out until the Friday night

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before election. Well, Truman had come to Chicago the Friday evening before election; and the organization held a magnificent torchlight parade. I suppose more than a million people lined the streets, some of them of course produced by the organization. But nonetheless, Arno had been there and had seen a million people on the street. It was a very quiet crowd -- Mr. [Douglas](#) told me about it later as well -- very quiet, as if this were the end of an era. Arno saw the size and nature of that crowd, and became convinced that Truman was going to win, and bet a lot of money on him.

The only other person who thought Truman was going to win was Clifton Utley, the father of the NBC television correspondent Garrick Utley, from Chicago who was very famous and was offered network positions and refused to take them, who did five-minute commentaries in Chicago routinely for both the Chicago area and the networks. In any case he had polled the people at the NBC station in Chicago the morning of the election: how are you going to vote today? And he wrote it down and kept a record of it. Then when they came back from the polls, he asked them: how did you vote? And he found a great difference, and became convinced that when people got into the voting booth they were just unable to vote for Dewey. When Truman was a couple of million votes ahead and H.V. Kaltenborn was saying that when the rural districts came in Dewey would win, Utley was the first one to say that Truman would be the winner. Well, anyway, those are minor stories

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about Truman. The blue ribbon ticket of Stevenson and Douglas pulled Truman in in Illinois, as Douglas helped [Kennedy](#) in 1960. Kennedy said in 1960 he was hanging on to Paul Douglas' coattails for dear life.

When I was in Washington, from time to time I got down to the White House. I've mentioned the event with the Illinois group going to Europe meeting with Kennedy. I don't know whether I mentioned the time we were there about our postmasters, with Larry

Ritchie: O'Brien?

Shuman: O'Brien. This has to do with Lieutenant Colonel [Oliver] North in a sense. A lot of people have said that no lieutenant colonel could do what he did without orders from the top. I was never quite convinced about that, because of a situation with Larry O'Brien one time, when [Dirksen](#) was holding up our postmasters in Illinois. I went down to the White House with Senator Douglas, and he had a list of things he was interested in. We saw Larry O'Brien and complained about the postmasters being held up because Dirksen was in cahoots with [Olin Johnston](#), who was the chairman of the committee, from South Carolina, and who was a Dixiecrat. His heart did beat for poor people, but he gave terrible speeches against blacks, racist speeches on the Senate floor. Larry O'Brien picked up the phone and

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called Johnston while we were sitting there, without so much as a by-your-leave from Kennedy, and said to Olin Johnston: "The president wants the Illinois postmasters put through."

Now, I'm sure that O'Brien was confident the president would back him, that he didn't have to ask about it. But nonetheless it has always seemed to me that someone working out of the White House can quite easily do that. A lieutenant colonel can call an admiral and say: "Admiral, we've just had a meeting of the National Security Council, and I've been instructed by the President that you are to do such and so." I think a person can do that and get by with it, because no one outside the White House dares to say, "Well, I think I'll check with the president about that." That incident convinced me that an operator in the White House can get a heck of a lot done on his own agenda without actually going to his superiors or the president who can't be bothered with every item.

I want to talk later about the Buck case, which involved [Lyndon Johnson](#), but I want to talk about another incident that happened just after [Nixon](#) resigned and [\[Gerald\] Ford](#) was president. Ford held an economic meeting and brought in the major economists in the country. He met them in the East Room around a huge table. There must have been eighty to a hundred people there from all walks of economic life and of all political persuasions. Walter Heller was there. Ford didn't leave out the Democrats.

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I was there because Senator [Proxmire](#) was asked to go. Well, Ford sat all day long and listened to all of them speak and give their opinions, three or four minutes each on what Ford ought to do about domestic economic policy. I was really thrilled by this, because it was such a difference from Nixon, who had been holed up in the White House, unwilling to see anybody or speak to anyone. I was very, very impressed.

At the end of the day they adjourned, and I wasn't with anyone in particular -- the senator had gone back to the Senate -- and there was going to be a reception in the dining room, which is at the other end of the White House. Having nothing else to do, I walked through to the dining room and found myself the only one there. While I was there, I walked President Ford. Well, I remembered a reporter, Ed Leahy from the *Chicago Daily News*, a great reporter; self-educated, he hadn't been to college, but he was a great reporter. He had a phrase about covering the White House: "Fawn not on the mighty." Ford walked in and I was there with him, and I fawned all over him: "How are you, Mr. President?" "Great to see you, Mr. President." "Like you, Mr. President, I went to the University of Michigan." "My wife went to college in Michigan." All these cliches! I think I told him if we had to have a Republican president, he was the kind we should have. It

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was awful! The lesson is that everyone fawns on the president. Almost no one says anything to him other than to agree with him,

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to tell him what a great person he is. Unlike senators who go out and meet the public, day in and day out, and who hear criticism or are criticized to their face, that really doesn't happen to a president, except rarely. I think it is one of the great weaknesses of the American presidency. It certainly was my weakness that day. I fawned over that fellow, simonized the grapefruit, polished the apple, licked his shoes in a way that I've always been ashamed of.

One other anecdote about a president. I went down to the White House to a signing of a housing bill. Proxmire as chairman of the Housing Committee had produced a major housing bill. There was a signing ceremony in the Rose Garden which most of the mayors from the big cities attended along with other housing people. I knew a lot of them because of the Douglas Commission. After the ceremony, President [Jimmy] Carter came around and shook hands with everyone, including me. So I mentioned whom I worked for. "Oh," he said, "your senator had an amendment to the bill," and he mentioned it. Well, that bill was at least six inches thick and there were dozens of amendments to it. I remembered the amendment, but it was a very minor one. It occurred to me then what a waste of time it was that he was so well briefed on the minor amendments to that bill. Of course, it was the criticism of Carter, to me underlined by that event, that he overburdened himself with detail and swatted up the minor issues at the expense

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of the large picture. Now, of course, the opposite is clearly true of [Ronald] Reagan, who may have a grasp of the big picture but knows few of the details. Somewhere there's a happy medium, but I thought at the time that that event illustrated the general weakness of the Carter presidency.

Ritchie: Do you think that Lyndon Johnson was an example of a president who knew the broad picture and the details as well?

Shuman: Yes. I think he probably did combine the two better than most. Probably out of his legislative experience. He had all that time in Congress when he couldn't help but know about many of the details. Johnson was never interested in the academic side of legislation. He was in no way an intellectual, other than he was very quick and very bright. He must have had an IQ of 180. But he never had a philosophical thought that I'm aware of. He seldom inquired as to whether this was good or bad, or the best way to do things. He was good at taking

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advice from experts, but I don't think he ever had a philosophical thought. So he knew legislation, not the details of every line and every amendment, but he knew in general what an amendment was about, and whose interests were involved, and what the politics of the amendment were rather than the substance or intellectual quality of the amendment. So, I suppose yes, he probably did combine, with perhaps some shortsightedness in foreign policy, the details with the general political overview better than most.

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Ritchie: I wanted to talk a little bit about Johnson as president. We've talked a lot about him as senator.

Shuman: Right. And I was very critical of him as senator. I've always thought he was a better president than he was a majority leader, with which almost no one else agrees.

Ritchie: I found a quote from Senator Douglas in his memoirs; he said that "If I had been told in 1956 that ten years later I would be one of Lyndon Johnson's strongest supporters I would have thought the seer was out of his mind."

Shuman: That's true enough!

Ritchie: I wondered what was it that accounted for the change, both in Johnson and in the relationship between Johnson and Douglas?

Shuman: Well, I don't think Douglas did anything particularly to change it -- perhaps one or two things. But the big thing is that Johnson, as I have mentioned time and again, when he was in the Senate was beholden to the South for his power. That was his power base. He was unable to carry through the Democratic party position on issues, which was why Mr. Douglas was so critical of him. In fact, I looked up a speech last night, which Mr. Douglas made on the Senate floor in support of [Joe Clark](#)'s criticisms. That was a February '63 speech in which he was not

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criticizing Johnson, because he had left, but the power elite in the Senate. He complained that the Democrats as a whole campaign on certain issues and get to the Senate only to find out that the bipartisan coalition frustrates their goals, which was exactly what Johnson did as the head of the bipartisan coalition when he was majority leader. So they were at odds politically and on issues. When Johnson got to be president -- I don't know what his position was as vice

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president -- essentially he was emancipated, almost in the same sense that slaves were emancipated during the Civil War, from that power base. His power base then became a national power base. In '64 he was elected by the national Democratic party, and he campaigned in the larger industrial states which he won as well as the smaller states. He was no longer beholden to the coalition of Southern, mountain state, trans-Mississippi Republican senators and their economic and political interests. It was his transition. I remember seeing him in Chicago and East St. Louis in 1964 supping with the Democratic big city organizations whose interests he had spurned as [Majority Leader](#).

He was a man who, as I have said, was never a racist or anti-Semitic, or opposed to the poor in any visceral way. He was for the poor, but he never let that stand in his way to support the rich. He was quite able to take the Democratic agenda, and Kennedy's agenda which had not yet gone through, and he put them

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through in an amazing way. Not since Franklin Roosevelt's 100 days and the first term of Woodrow Wilson had anyone put through such a massive amount of major legislation. But I think he was emancipated from the political ties that had fettered him before, much in the way Gulliver was fettered. Oil and gas, public works, the filibuster, anti-Civil Rights, all those were the fetters that kept him from being a great national historical leader in the Senate, because he was tied to the Dixiecrats. So I think he was a much better domestic president than he was a Senate leader.

Ritchie: Did Senator Douglas have any suspicions about his sincerity, having dealt with Johnson in the Senate as one creature and dealing with him as another as president?

Shuman: No, I don't think Mr. Douglas thought Johnson was insincere on domestic policies as President. But I don't think he ever thought Johnson would be the liberal domestic president he became. There was an incident which I think made President Johnson think pretty well of Mr. Douglas. There was an old V.A. hospital I think in Dwight, Illinois, which was fifty or sixty years old. It had been started as a private hospital, originally for the treatment of alcoholics. It was in a very Republican town, eighty miles south and west of Chicago. When Johnson was on an economy kick, he proposed that it be closed along with a number of other outmoded installations for veterans in the country. This created one awful stink. Every member of the Senate and House

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with one of the institutions in his state or district raised holy hell. Mr. Douglas was the only one who said yes: it is an out moded institution, it doesn't do what it should be doing, and the President is right on economy grounds to close it. Well, Johnson called him on the phone. Mr. Douglas wasn't there, and he asked for me. He said, "I just want to call you to tell you how much I appreciate the support. Tell the Senator I'm a Douglas man!" I said, "Thank you very much, Mr. President." I said, "Up here we're Johnson men." And we both were lying through our teeth!

Of course, Mr. Douglas backed him on Vietnam, and was a part of a bipartisan group who supported Vietnam, which Johnson appreciated. But on the other hand, in 1967 and '68, after Mr. Douglas had been defeated and headed up the Douglas Commission on housing, which was quite critical of HUD, and of [Robert] Weaver, and of the housing program, Johnson was somewhat hostile. Johnson may have been talked into it by Weaver, or [Joseph] Califano, but in that period, Johnson treated Mr. Douglas and us very miserably. Joe Califano kept Mr. Douglas waiting for more than an hour outside his office one day, an outrageous gesture. I think those orders probably came from Johnson. Johnson really could not stand criticism of any kind. We were holding hearings in twenty-two cities of the country. We found out that most of the propaganda about what was being done on housing wasn't true. There was a new program which provided subsidized units. We found out that HUD,

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if they put four units of subsidized housing in an apartment building of a hundred units, with ninety-six units of housing paid for by the private market, counted a hundred units as part of their subsidized program. We exposed that practice, to the chagrin of Secretary Weaver and others. That kind of criticism was made public, and Johnson was pretty thin skinned about it.

Ritchie: Was Douglas ever close to Johnson during those years when he was working with him? Or were they just basically in agreement on the issues?

Shuman: Well, Johnson did I think one rather classy thing for Mr. Douglas at the time of the '64 or '65 Civil Rights bill. Mr. Douglas was never pushy. To be a successful politician, he would say, one must be pushy but not appear to be so -- which may have been a paraphrase of Oscar Wilde. Whenever we traveled together, Mr. Douglas would always wait to be the last one on the airplane. He wouldn't use his position to push on first. He would wait until everyone else was off before he got off. With a crowd of people he never would take any advantage of the fact he was a senator. There was the signing of the '64 or '65 Civil Rights Act, and I'm not sure now whether Johnson came up to Capitol Hill and signed it

-- I have a picture of it, it was under a big chandelier -- or signed it in the East Room of the White House, or in the President's Room in the Capitol.

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Ritchie: He signed the '64 bill in the White House, and the '65 Voting Rights bill at the Capitol.

Shuman: Well, then it was the '65 act, but I do have a photograph of it. In his way, Mr. Douglas did not push himself to the front of the group standing behind the president to be photographed. You see such pictures, and it always galls me when some pushy congressman or senator who had nothing to do with the legislation ends up standing next to the president. Mr. Douglas, was without question a, or the, key person behind the bill. He and Senator [Javits](#) were the key people in Civil Rights in terms of fighting for it longer and harder than anyone else. But Mr. Douglas was in the background. He stood back and away and didn't push himself to the front. Johnson during the ceremony singled him out and called him up to present a pen to him, which was a gesture which said he was sorry about the fights they had had earlier on this issue, and recognized what he had done. From other histories I know that Johnson almost never apologized directly for past mistakes or indignities. This was his way of saying he was sorry.

Ritchie: I wanted to ask you about the '64 Civil Rights bill, because I have read a lot of the literature on it, and while Senator Douglas is always very prominent in the discussions of the 1950s bills, he's almost never mentioned in relation to the '64 bill.

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Shuman: Well, in 1964 the president was for it. Douglas didn't need to be the point person. The fight for legislation was over. That vote was merely the ratification of an issue already decided. This sort of thing almost always happens, I think I've said it before. The person who gets the credit is the one who comes around at the key point. The Johnny-come-lately, not the pioneer, gets the credit. The difference between '64 and '57 was that public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of the bill. Everybody jumped on the bandwagon, everybody took credit. The newcomers were all out there appearing to fight, but the battle was over. As the saying goes, success has a thousand fathers. Failure is an orphan.

Ritchie: What was Douglas' role on the '64 bill? Did he play a role in it or was he just a general supporter of it?

Shuman: He played a major role. I have a sketch by Howard Brodie of Douglas debating [Stennis](#) and Olin Johnston in that fight. He spoke very strongly for it, but it was done. The battle was over. I don't remember what the final vote was, but it was overwhelming. It was like the Greek play. The battle had taken place offstage before the play was presented.

Ritchie: Once the filibuster was broken.

Shuman: Yes, correct. And there was no question that it would be broken. So it was a difference in climate.

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Ritchie: It's ironic that one of the senators who gets so much credit for that bill was Everett Dirksen, because he was one of the last, as you say, to climb on the bandwagon.

Shuman: He was not only one of the last, he was one of the bitter opponents all the way through, especially on the Voting Rights bill. I think I mentioned that in 1960, when Douglas and Javits proposed the Voting Rights bill, Johnson as majority leader, moved to table it, Dirksen seconded it, and they killed it. And five years later, I think to the day, Johnson as president sent the bill up, Dirksen introduced it, and they kept pounding themselves on the back and beating themselves on the chest saying what great Civil Righters they were. That was hard for me to take.

Ritchie: Do you think that it disturbed Douglas that Dirksen got his picture on the cover of *Time* magazine because of the Civil Rights bill, and that other people got the glory for the bill?

Shuman: No, I don't think it did. I'm sure he felt that a little bit, but not so much that he didn't get the credit. Perhaps he felt bad that the wrong people got the credit, but he was pleased that Johnson got the Civil Rights bill through, that the battle was won. He was more interested in the substance than in who got the credit. Throughout the period of the fight over Civil Rights bills, he kept trying to push other people forward to

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get the credit, and to join the fight. It was a very lonely thing when he was the point person. There was a great Civil War battle not too far south of here at Spottsylvania where the "Bloody Angle" at the mule shoe existed. I've been down there, where a group of northern troops attacked the key fulcrum point of the

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battle, where soldiers had almost no chance at all to survive. I used to think of Mr. Douglas in the manner of leading the charge, even a sharper charge than Pickett's charge at Gettysburg. I mean, they were blown out of the field at Spottsylvania and in the Senate when they attacked the citadel, the Southern strongholds and breastworks. Mr. Douglas was fulfilled that Civil Rights had finally made it, even if he didn't get the credit at the time, and he may not get the credit historically. I've seen people as able as Dave Broder report about that period -- a fine political writer, one of the most astute -- give the credit to some of the wrong people. I once dropped him a note about it. There is a lack of historical knowledge or perspective about what happened, which I would like to help put straight.

Ritchie: One other influence, it seems to me, on Senator Douglas, was his wife [Emily Douglas](#). I've seen a lot of references to her participating in Civil Rights demonstrations, as late as '64 and '65, the march on Selma and things like that. Was there any evidence of her influence on him in the office, or was that really a private part of his life?

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Shuman: She was quite good about not interfering in the office. I know there were a lot of senators' wives who did, and the staff were always very unhappy about it. But she was quite good about it. She seldom came to the office and never worked in the office, and almost never interfered with the staff. She wouldn't call me except on rare occasions to ask that I do something, but whatever influence she had she would talk to him about. And he thought she was a constructive influence, and that she had great political smarts. Of course, she herself had been a congresswoman. She was elected in '44 as Congresswoman at large in Illinois. So she knew the whole state, had campaigned the whole state. She was defeated in '46 by a man who made a very dirty campaign against her, who was a [Joe McCarthy](#) type. One of the things Mr. Douglas was always proud about was that both he and his wife improved the quality of the opponent every time they ran. So she was a smart political person in her own right and had very good instincts on issues. When I campaigned with him in Illinois in '60, '64, and '66, he would call her, usually in the morning at breakfast time, and talk with her at length about what he was doing, what the issues were, and what advice she might offer.

So yes, she had a very constructive influence on him, both on issues and in her political knowledge. The daughter of the sculptor Lorado Taft, she spent her summers near Oregon, Illinois, along the Rock River where the great sixty-foot-high statue of

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Blackhawk the Indian looks down the river. It was Taft's work. The area is a lovely, lovely place. There was an artist colony there. Emily was on the stage at a later time in her life. She was a very good speaker, very knowledgeable in political affairs, and had good instincts.

She did go to Selma, and she marched with King at the front of the line. When she called from Selma, I talked to her because the senator was on the floor. She told me about the impending chance that they would be attacked, and asked about what he thought was the right thing for her to do. His position was that she was a person in her own right, she should make up her own mind, regardless of what effect it might have on his political career. They worked very closely together.

He didn't drive because he'd lost the use of his left arm in the war, and so almost every day Emily would drive him to the Senate from their home up in the Northwest of Washington, Davenport Street, probably a thirty or forty minute drive. I know that on those occasions he would talk to her at length about what was coming up during the day.

There was the period in 1956, when Mr. Douglas tried to get the aborted Civil Rights bill out of committee, but was defeated so overwhelmingly by Johnson on his motion to adjourn, when he felt isolated and shunned by the establishment in the Senate. The

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attitude was picked up by the lesser-lights who believed in going along in order to get along, and they reflected at least publicly Johnson's will. I know that Emily gave him great strength at that time, in terms of advising him to hold his head high and to take it in stride and to be proud of what he was doing, when it was extraordinarily difficult for him to survive with all this collegial opposition on the floor of the Senate, even from people like [John Pastore](#) and others who supposedly were with him on the issue.

Ritchie: You mention that she didn't interfere with the staff at all

Shuman: In the day to day workings of the office. No, she worked through him and through his personal secretary, Jane Enger.

Ritchie: I was going to ask you about what Douglas' office was like in the 1960s. I know you began to spend more time at the office and less time on the floor.

Shuman: That's true. When I became Administrative Assistant, I spent more time in the office, but I still was sort of a super-legislative assistant. I did not really administer the office. We had an extraordinarily loyal office. We had one

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Administrative Assistant; we had one Legislative Assistant, Kenneth Gray, who was an extraordinarily able fellow. There was a metamorphosis of Kenneth Gray - I think I can say this. Kenneth

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was a PhD out of the University of Chicago. He worked in Mr. Douglas' campaigns. He has always been a marvelous fellow. His wife worked in [Humphrey's](#) office. But when Kenneth came to the office, his idea was that he really was a scholar who should work at the Library of Congress. His view was that he should go off into his cubical and sort of swat up an issue and come back. Well, that isn't the way it worked. The way I describe what I had to do was to shoot from the hip and correct the record. One had to make immediate decisions. The job was more like that in a newspaper office where a person had a daily assignment that was fresh and new, that he or she didn't really have time to plan, where one had to gather information very quickly. It had to be accurate, because if it wasn't we'd get into a hell of a lot of trouble. The senator would use the data in a speech or for a conference or a vote or a mark-up, and then we'd forgot it and go on to something else.

There was a daily encounter, almost a running battle. It wasn't anything like the leisurely academic pace. Furthermore, it differs from the academics in that people have to be very decisive and very quick. There was a time in '58 when Douglas was proposing in '58 a tax cut, and he held a hearing. He had proposed a six billion dollar tax cut designed to stimulate the economy quickly. In fact, if it had gone through, it probably would have saved Eisenhower's 1958 congressional election, which

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went so much against him. Probably the Republicans wouldn't have been as badly defeated as they were. Mr. Douglas proposed the cut, and the day it was coming up there was a meeting of the Joint Economic Committee at which six or eight economists testified, one after another. At the end of the testimony, at about noon, he said to them: "Today I am going to offer a six billion dollar tax cut. The purpose is to stimulate the economy. And I want to know how you economists would vote." He went up and down the line and asked them specifically. All but one said "maybe." "On the one hand this, on the other hand that." It reminded me of Truman's statement that he always wanted to have a one-handed economist so he couldn't say "on the one hand this and on the other hand that." But they couldn't make up their minds. He chastized them. He said, "The bell is ringing. The clerk is calling the roll. He is calling your name. You have to say yes or no; you can't say maybe." The only one who answered directly was Bob Nathan, who's

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still alive and who was an economist in the New Deal; I think he was also on the Council of Economic Advisors, or on the staff under Truman. Bob said yes; he was decisive. He had had political experience, but none of the others had. Those were the kinds of decisions that had to be made every day, decisively. That's the way it was. But the economists and the academics were indecisive.

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The point about Kenneth is he wasn't a natural, political legislative assistant when he came with us. He was an academic. He grew as time went on. In 1964 we loaned him to Hubert Humphrey for the Vice Presidential campaign, and Kenneth shepherded the press on the press plane, oversaw their baggage, was deeply involved in the Humphrey campaign and traveled with him all over the country. Kenneth came back a different person. He was very practical. He was no longer the academic-type of legislative assistant. He took to the political game. As a result, he was extraordinarily effective with respect to saving the Indiana Dunes, and Kenneth deserves a terrific amount of credit for saving the Dunes, along with the senator. But if he hadn't gone with Humphrey, I don't think he would have been as effective. He ended up being a very, very astute legislative assistant.

Ritchie: What was it about going along with Humphrey that changed him?

Shuman: Well, I don't quite know, but he probably saw that Humphrey had the combination of massive intelligence, quick intellect, the ability to understand an issue very quickly, and then translate that into doing something practical about it. Certainly all that must have rubbed off on Kenneth.

Ritchie: He's become somewhat flamboyant since then, hasn't he?

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Shuman: Oh, you're thinking of the wrong Kenneth Gray. This is not the Congressman [Kenneth Gray](#). This is Kenneth Gray who was our legislative assistant. The Congressman Kenneth Gray has always been flamboyant. He represented the most Southern of all the Illinois Congressional districts. He was a man who performed magic tricks and could even get other Congressmen to stand up in front of him and literally take their shirt off before large audiences. But there are two Kenneth Grays. Our Kenneth Gray was a PhD from the University of Chicago, in political science. I'm sure the other Kenneth Gray has many virtues, one of which is not that he was a PhD out of the University of Chicago.

Ritchie: Did [Paul Simon](#) work in your office at all?

Shuman: No, Paul Simon did not work in our office, but Paul Simon worked with us a lot. He was a protege of Mr. Douglas. Mr. Douglas promoted him at every possible time with the politicians and with the Democratic party in the state. Paul Simon started out as a very young newspaper editor in Troy, Illinois, got a string of papers over the state, small weekly or biweekly papers, ran for the state legislature in a very heavily Democratic stronghold near East St. Louis, which is more Democratic than Chicago, and upset the incumbent. He did it in the Douglas manner of going out and shaking hands, going house-to-house, and working street corners, at a time when the professional politicians relied on the organization to get them elected. Paul Simon defeated

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a professional politician who had been a time-server in the legislature. He exposed a corrupt practice involving kick-backs to the local sheriff and won the enmity of the local Democratic organization. But he won by going to the people over the heads of the organization. Then he went to the state senate. Somewhere in this period he met and married his wife, Jeanne, who was a Democratic legislator from one of the Chicago suburbs. Mr. Douglas used to say that this was the only time in history that two politicians actually fell in love with each other. That had never happened before. Politicians pretend to like each other, but generally they don't.

Then Paul ran for lieutenant governor. Before that, in the '64 election, when the Supreme Court had passed on one-man-one-vote, the Illinois legislature had to run at large. Ab Mikva, young Adlai Stevenson, Paul Simon, and half a dozen others, many of whom were proteges of Mr. Douglas in the progressive, ethical wing of the party, ran and came in at the very top of the ticket. I think the Democrats got about two-thirds of the seats in the state legislature, and Paul Simon and Adlai Stevenson and Abner Mikva were among them and led the ticket. Mr. Douglas campaigned with them in that election. Ab Mikva tells the story about when the group was in Southern Illinois and they were begged by someone to go talk to a small group of students who were very interested in listening to them and seeing them. Because it was in the

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evening after they had campaigned all day, they were reluctant to do it. They finally relented and went off fifteen or twenty miles to talk to this small group of interested students. When they got there, who was talking to them? Senator Douglas. I was there that night, I'll never forget it. Ab tells this story about the senator's dedication to campaigning.

Mr. Douglas promoted Paul Simon for lieutenant governor, where he served very well. When he was lieutenant governor, he hired as his parliamentarian [Dick Durbin](#), who is now Congressman from the Springfield area. Dick had started his career in the Douglas office when he was a student at Georgetown. He was our advance man in '66, without question the best advance man we ever had. He was terrific. He then became a protege of Paul Simon, was brought along by Paul, ran for Congress and finally won. Now he has that Springfield seat.

The Democratic organization dominated by Chicago, after Paul Simon had criticized it heavily over the years, needed to win -- I've forgotten which year it was -- and it adopted Paul Simon for Governor. That was when I learned that the organization could no longer produce. There was a time when it could win a statewide election if it decided to do it. It didn't win many. There was a deal. The *Chicago Tribune* supported the Democratic mayor and organization provided the Democratic Chicago organization didn't try too hard to win the governorship. It was a trade -- a rather

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raw political deal. The *Tribune* didn't criticize or investigate the organization. Then there was a time when the organization couldn't win statewide, but could nominate statewide. Then there was a time when it could win only in Cook County. Then it got to the place where it could win only in Chicago. Now it can't win there. Well, this was an example of the organization not even being able to deliver the nomination for governor. The party had agreed on Paul Simon. It needed a blue ribbon candidate, much like the Douglas-Stevenson candidacies in '48. It nominated Paul Simon, and then a man named [Daniel] Walker became a candidate in the Democratic primary and campaigned the state against the organization, winning the primary, largely because the Chicago organization couldn't deliver. It's a myth about the organization being able to deliver. It couldn't and it can't. If there was a really good candidate on the ticket and the opposition wasn't too good, it could deliver, but it couldn't deliver even in a pinch in the mid-60s. **Ritchie:** Is that because the times were changing, that the media was different, or was it because of inefficiency and poor organization?

Shuman: Well, it was a combination of things. One was the difference in media; two was the New Deal, which meant that the politicians didn't deliver food baskets anymore, or Christmas baskets to people. What the politicians could offer in the terms

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of material things vastly decreased. They couldn't get people beholden to them for favors as they once had done, because these necessities were now provided by government. One hopes the government is compassionate, but that is not always so. These were the major reasons why the organization could no longer deliver the vote. And then there was the big migration to the suburbs, especially of the Irish. There were all kinds of wards in Chicago where the ward committeemen or the precinct committeemen ostensibly lived in that ward but actually lived in the suburbs! It was a scandal. Some of them kept power for many years beyond the time when they actually lived in the wards and precincts. This wasn't true of Mayor Daley who stayed in his neighborhood.

Ritchie: As I recall, didn't Walker walk across the state.

Shuman: He did. I think he was the first one to do that. It was later picked up by [\[Lawton\] Chiles](#) and others. And Walker has just gone to jail for embezzlement. I was shaken by that, because as much as I didn't like him, I didn't think he was a crook. And as far as I know he did not have a crooked administration. He had a clean administration.

Ritchie: Well, so is Robert Anderson in jail now, too.

Shuman: Yes, I'm shocked by that. I saw him a lot. He used to come to see Mr. Douglas on treasury, and tax, and

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financial issues when he was Secretary of the Treasury under Eisenhower. I found him very conservative, but a very upright, straight-arrow type. I was amazed when he went to jail, and I don't understand it or what happened to him.

Ritchie: The question I was thinking about with Walker and his walking, was whether the organization was slower to respond to changes in the media than independent candidates. It seems as if it is the outsider who is best able to exploit the new changes, and the insider who goes along with the traditional and the comfortable.

Shuman: I think that's absolutely correct.

Ritchie: I wanted to ask a couple of questions about the press, and your experiences in dealing with it. How well did the press cover the Senate while you were there, and specifically Senator Douglas? What were the relations between his office and the press?

Shuman: We had good relations with the press, I would say, looking back on it. I think they were on the whole favorable to Mr. Douglas, especially the working press were very favorable to him. We always made a distinction between the editors and the working press.

Ritchie: You mean the reporters.

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Shuman: The reporters. And I don't think the reporters were necessarily liberal. They didn't go for him just because of his stands. In fact, on Vietnam and a few other things the reporters obviously were against him. But I think they admired him because of his ethical standards and the way he differed from most other politicians, particularly his intellectual qualities. The press people were interested in following him, interested in writing about him. I think the man who wrote the best article I ever saw about him was Peter Lisagor from the *Chicago Daily News*. Now, I knew Pete very well. I played tennis with him every Sunday for ten years before he died in '76. Pete was the head of the *Chicago Daily News* bureau, and he covered the White House, so he didn't come up to the Senate as much as Jim McCartney, and Bill McGaffin, and other Chicago Daily News reporters. But occasionally he would come up and then he'd write a think-piece. And on a couple of occasions when he did this, I thought he captured the essence of the senator better than anyone who had ever written about him, with the possible exception of Mary McGrory. Peter and Mary could look at the back of the neck of someone and tell you what their real personality was. It was an amazing sixth sense Peter had and Mary has. Very few even good reporters have it. That sixth sense is an enviable trait.

The Illinois press differed from the Washington press in an amazing way. I had to get used to them. The Washington press was

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quite gentlemanly in those days. They would make appointments. They would ask tough questions, but they wouldn't ask offensive questions. Those were off limits. When we campaigned in Chicago and Mr. Douglas went into a Democratic ward headquarters to meet with the alderman in his office, the Chicago press would barge in uninvited. They felt they could do anything, say anything, be as unkind in a physical way to a candidate or to a politician as they wanted to. It was very different from the rather genteel way in which the press in Washington treated us.

Our press relations on the whole were very good. I went to Europe with Senator Douglas in '57 and '61, and I believe the example I want to make occurred in '61. That was a time when there were still counterpart funds available abroad and no expense had to be made public. When we arrived at the airport in Paris, the State Department was there, and gave us an envelope full of French francs, to be used anyway we wanted. The funds didn't have to be reported. They weren't publicized in any way. I was the treasurer and Mr. Douglas was the Senator, and we made a point when we traveled of trying to live on the government per diem. We spent for the hotel, breakfast, lunch and dinner, what the government per diem was. Now, this wasn't too difficult, because we were invited to eat with others a great deal, but in response to that we always picked up the tab for the State Department staff representative who accompanied us. There was usually one, some-

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times two. We did live within the per diem. I kept an account of everything we spent. Furthermore, Mr. Douglas almost always traveled on commercial airlines, not military planes, and he traveled tourist class, not first class. We absolutely had to beat the State Department over the head to put us up in modest hotels. Mr. Douglas had visited Paris many times, and he had a modest hotel where he liked to stay. The State Department insisted on putting us up in the George the Fifth. We had a tough time to get them to change, which we did successfully on most occasions.

When we came back, he said to me, "I don't want to make my colleagues look bad, be a hot dog on this issue, but quietly call the Chicago press and the St. Louis press and tell them what we've done, and that we've got all the records, and that if they want to come up to the office and look at them, fine. They're open to them." I prepared all this in detail and had a written report of our schedule and expenses. Not a soul was interested. No one came up. If we'd tried to hide it, they would have been up in a second. But when we were open with them, they didn't do anything. So there's a double-standard in the press. News is something bad. Conflict is news. One of the things about dealing with the press that's important is to know what the press will go for. One thing they'll go for is conflict. Senator Proxmire, who had worked as a reporter early in his career, for the *Madison Capital-*

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Times, knew this. He knew how to generate conflict of one kind or another, which the press would almost always report.

One also had to know the weaknesses of the press, to know how to deal with them. For example, if you didn't give them a couple of days lead on a press release, it wouldn't get printed. Some of the press loved to come in at ten o'clock, come to a hearing, leave at eleven thirty or twelve, write the piece before lunch, then go to a good bar and enjoy a good lunch, and that was that. You couldn't really get most of them interested in any immediate news after lunch; they were not equipped to deal with it. So one had to know their foibles.

In some ways the press is lazy. They decide on what to cover, they write the article, and they don't want any other news to break because then they have to do more work. The wire services handle the breaking news.

The press, when I worked in the Senate, certainly through '66, through Mr. Douglas' time, was not very critical of people. They didn't report the drunks or the crooks. I have a vivid memory of Senator [\[Karl\] Mundt](#) of South Dakota with his arm around Bobby Baker in the most friendly way, just a day or two before Baker was fired. Mundt was very chummy, and the press would not, or did not report Bobby's peccadillos.

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I think the press has improved over the years. There are a lot of people who think that investigative reporting as a result of Watergate has gone too far, and in some ways it has, but it still is an improvement over the days when the press was part of the establishment. On the other hand those senators not in the club took a beating from Lyndon Johnson's press friends, especially William S. White. The *New York Times* in those days had as their Washington editor a man of Southern beliefs.

Ritchie: Arthur Krock?

Shuman: Arthur Krock, a very conservative fellow. And William White covered the Senate for the paper. What some people don't know is that most of the editors of papers around the country take their lead from what they read in the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*. The television news editors do the same. The only difference is the TV editors play the stories which have film to accompany them. So if William White wrote as he always did on Civil Rights, that the Northern liberals were going to lose -- he never would write about the substance -- they would follow what he said. It was the lemming approach. I have a speech here that I got out of the 1957 Record, a detailed speech during the Civil Rights debate on the ways in which blacks in the South were denied the vote, state by state, area by area, method by method, which I wrote for Mr. Douglas. It was never reported. It never got into the papers because they were

uninterested in the substance. They were interested almost exclusively in the battle: who's going to win? Who's got the votes? White, as Johnson's Boswell, constantly wrote about the knee-jerk liberals and what losers they were, how they didn't know how to count, and all the rest. That was then picked up by editors around the country. It had a big effect. It was a harmful effect. It was a major part of Mr. Douglas' difficulties in '66. Probably that plus his position on the Finance Committee, taking on oil and gas and the banks and savings and loans institutions who didn't pay any substantial taxes, was in the end a major reason for his defeat. The *New York Times* then had a major, almost dominant influence, which was on the whole a very conservative influence. And the *Washington Post*, even though it was edited by the husband of Katherine Graham, had a similar effect.

Ritchie: Phil Graham.

Shuman: Phil Graham was Johnson's great political ally, and was in Johnson's suite in Los Angeles when Kennedy offered him the nomination for vice president. Well, the *Post* at that time, had a fellow covering the Senate, a very nice fellow, who wrote in what I call a homogenized style. His articles reminded me of driving on an interstate highway and listening to Muzak while staying in a Holiday Inn motel. He was always the same. He never was critical of anybody, but he never praised anybody, and there was little

that was distinctive. It was almost a wire service story he wrote about the Senate. He would call me a lot to talk, and he always played very dumb. I could never figure whether he was dumb or whether he just pretended to be dumb. He was a meek, modest fellow who could write well. When he would call me, I got very suspicious, because he'd ask me a question and then he'd pretend not to understand the answer, and then ask me two or three additional questions. Could I explain it a little more? He was very good at getting things out of me that probably I shouldn't have told him.

But the point I want to make about the *Post*, is this. In those days the *Post* between big issues was on our side. But on the Civil Rights issues and on filibusters and so on, the *Post* was then a fair-weather friend and a sunshine soldier. Before the vote on any big issue, particularly in '57 and again on attempts to overturn the filibuster, after denouncing it editorially, in between times, when the vote came it would always have an editorial: now is not the time; this is not the place; wait until next year. Pure Johnsonian stuff. I found that Graham would

come in at those times and assert his position as publisher and change the editorials. So the paper was of very little help. Both those papers then were relatively conservative papers, at least with respect to the Washington coverage and the coverage they gave us. The *New York Times* editorials were superb. But the Washington

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bureau was the opposition. They were not our friends, when the chips were down, although individual reporters played it fair.

Ritchie: How would you plan strategy with the press? You mentioned that they liked conflict, would you try to design something, or try to leak things to reporters? How would you try to get a good press?

Shuman: Of course, it depended on the issue. There was one way we got a lot of good press in Chicago. I used to do this with Bill McGaffin of the *Chicago Daily News*. The *Chicago Daily News* was an afternoon paper, and their deadline was roughly twelve o'clock noon in Chicago, or eleven to twelve. So this is what I often did with McGaffin. If we had a good story, we knew that if he got it exclusively the paper would give it a big push. It would not always make the front page, but it would be a major story. The way to do that, without appearing to be unfair to the rest of the press -- because the press is very touchy about leaking good stories to others -- was to put a twelve noon release on the piece, but give it to McGaffin the night before, so he had time to write his piece. By the time the twelve noon hour came, the story would be in the *Chicago Daily News*. Their paper, even if printed at eleven in the morning, didn't get on the street till twelve, and was delivered at three and four and five in the afternoon. So it was quite legitimate. The story didn't get on the street before the twelve noon release. Then I would deliver the release

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to the Senate press gallery at eleven, with a twelve o'clock release, which meant that no other reporter would have time to actually do anything about it. That was legitimate and we used to get a lot of play from McGaffin, or some of the other papers depending upon the circumstances, as a result. That practice was a bit esoteric but it worked.

Second, it was necessary to have something that was newsworthy. You can't make news by faking it. It has to be genuine news. Reporters can smell it out if it's a fake. Because the press, as I've said, tends to be lazy (some of them), you've got to give them a big lead time if you have a major story. If you've got a story that you

develop on Thursday, don't write the press release and take it over to the gallery Friday for a Friday afternoon release. It will die. You might as well throw the release out the window, just let it go to the breezes. Generally speaking, if you wrote a release on Thursday, mailed it out on Thursday, it would get to most of the reporters on

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Friday; in fact, you aimed at getting it to them on Friday, because most reporters don't work on Saturday and Sunday. Then the second team comes in. The papers are very thin on Saturday, the stuff that's in the Sunday papers is generally written a considerable time ahead of time, Thursday think pieces. The quick stuff or breaking news comes from the wire services. So you'd write a piece for Monday release. If you got it in the hands of the reporters on Friday for a Monday release you'd get a play on it because the reporters would have time to read it on Friday and to write it either on Friday or early on Monday morning. You had to have a two or three day lead on a story to get a real play on it. It was a matter of knowing how the press works.

Another thing, you must never lie to them. You don't always have to tell them the entire truth, but never, never, never lie to them. It's unforgivable. You learn that. I think much of the hostility to the press that I find in the executive branch, now that I work in the executive branch, is because they've had no experience with the press. They don't know how the press works. I tell my students, who are getting their tickets punched for admiral and general, that it is very much a part of the commander's art to know how to deal with the press. It's as important that they know how to deal with the press as it is important that they know how to drive a ship or fly a plane, because dealing with the press is going to be a very, very important part of their job. It does no good to go around complaining about how bad they are, and that they are unfair. I think that on the whole the press is extraordinarily able. I can't tell you the number of times when I have read a story written about something I was involved in, on a very technical and difficult matter, a tax bill or maybe the hundred and sixty acre limitation in the reclamation law, when I was amazed at how succinctly and how simply they were

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able to take a very complicated issue and put it correctly, in simple language, and in a short space. It's an art. So I'm far from doing them in. A few I didn't much care for.

I think it's untrue that the press and the media are one sided or have a strong liberal bias. That's not true. If you look, especially now, at the television

programs, they are anything but that. Instead of getting two people, maybe one conservative and one moderately liberal who talk pretty intelligently, the talk shows feel that they now have to get the most extreme people they can get from each side. I feel myself almost never represented well by people who come on to speak from the liberal point of view. Now, maybe that's because I'm getting older, but I think it's because they almost always pick somebody who's an extremist. The same with the conservative side. They put on some really radical person, [Pat] Buchanan for one, or Bob Novak to name another. There was an economist from the Treasury early in the Reagan administration, [Paul Craig] Roberts, and I remember Alice Rivlin saying the number of times she'd been requested to go on a program with him, because he was almost the only one to give the radical supply side position. He was a nice fellow, but certainly his views were marginal views on the far right. But he was routinely asked to appear on programs. The use of Vigurie or Howard Samuels or Reid Irvine are other examples. The media now bends over backwards to present extreme

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conflicting views, and one finds even in a liberal paper like the *Post*, I suppose at least forty percent of the articles on their editorial page are written by relatively conservative people. That's fair enough, I believe in that. I'm a strong believer in having both sides represented. I believe in the cut and thrust of debate. It's our political method, it's our academic method, and it's our legal method as well. But the most radical or ridiculous views don't always have to be presented in a pro and con argument.

Ritchie: Did you find that there was any difference between dealing with reporters for newspapers and those for TV and radio? Did you have to approach them differently?

Shuman: Not too differently, mainly because most of the TV people -- the working TV people, not necessarily the people who are in the slot -- but most of the working stiffs who cover a particular story, are in fact trained journalists. They were journalists before they were TV people. I guess most of the anchor people have been journalists, or are journalists, but theirs is a different function. That's show business. Most of the working people both for the newspapers and for the television are well trained reporters. Of course, the TV reporters have only a thirty second or one minute bite. The TV news differs from the newspaper news in one very important way: the TV news is little more than a headline service. It reports the headline and the lead, and

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that's it. The working press at least sometimes get six or eight paragraphs to tell the story.

Ritchie: Senator Douglas' career spanned the period from when there really was no television broadcasting to the period when television had come into its own in terms of dominating news broadcasting. Was that a detriment to him? Towards the end he was getting older, he was in his seventies, he was up against an attractive young candidate. Does it work against somebody who's got intellect but perhaps isn't photogenic?

Shuman: Well, he was pretty good at television. Both in '60 and '66 we used television a lot. Almost every day we campaigned we would end up at the local television station, after the evening news, sometimes on a paid broadcast, sometimes they were just interviewing him. He did very well, because he was very articulate, and could speak without a note and knew what he was talking about. I suppose the television exaggerated his age.

The one place where I think [Percy](#) in particular had an advantage was in the ads. They marketed him much as they marketed soap. In fact, he made a deliberate effort never to wear a tie, to be young and youthful and vigorous and so on. It was an image or visual way of trying to make the age issue. He didn't make the age issue directly, but he kept saying things like, "Senator Douglas sees things through a rear-view mirror." We came back at

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him. Percy alleged that Mr. Douglas had been his teacher at the University of Chicago. Mr. Douglas couldn't remember that he'd ever had Percy in class, but it might have been because he'd had so many students. But we ended up by asking "Who's the teacher and who's the student?" Who is the modern man and who is the old fashioned person? Percy was against the eighteen-year-old vote, he was against Medicare, he was against saving the Dunes, and he had come out against open housing in '64. So we used those issues against him to answer his indirect challenges on age. I thought this tactic was reasonably effective.

The press in Chicago, though, in 1966, really did not help us. In fact, they were very much a detriment to our campaign. The big thing that the *Sun Times* did . . .

Ritchie: You mentioned about the polls they took.

Shuman: I mentioned the polls, but there were two or three other things the Chicago press did. There were marches in Chicago by the blacks into the white ethnic neighborhoods, and there were race riots in Chicago in 1966. The press

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played those to the hilt for days and days and days, and associated us with the rioting. The *Sun-Times* in particular for months, almost for two years before the election, blacked out Mr. Douglas. When your own president is in the White House, it's harder for a senator to get attention on issues than when the opposition is there, because

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you're not going around attacking your party very much. But there were a whole series of things that paper did, and I'll give you some examples. The *Chicago Sun-Times* carried Herblock's cartoons. There was a marvelous cartoon on Mr. Douglas that Herblock did on the Truth-in-Lending bill. I think it showed Douglas as the policeman on the beat, and the crooked guy had a wallet that he was pulling back from under the fence, but anyway it was a very telling Herblock cartoon. That wasn't printed by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, although they took the service and routinely printed the cartoons. Ordinarily you would expect them to print a cartoon having to do with a local senator. They didn't print it.

The second thing that happened concerned a woman out of New York or New Jersey who was a very good syndicated economics writer, Sylvia Porter. She did a series of articles on the Truth-in-Lending bill, pro and con, very balanced. The *Sun-Times* printed the con and didn't print the pro! There were a series of issues like this. I listed six or eight of them, and in fact I sent a personal letter to the editor. He really was tough about it. I mean, talk about thin skin! Talk about people being able to dish it out but not able to take it. You get that from some press people more than from anyone else. His basic answer was, without denying a specific point, that the charges were absolutely untrue and that he wanted me to know his wife was a Democrat. That was his argument! It had nothing to do with whether or not

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they had in fact blacked us out, but the *Sun Times* did essentially black out Mr. Douglas. That was their method, rather than to oppose him directly. I think I touched a raw nerve.

We did get in that election support from the *Post-Dispatch*, which came out for Mr. Douglas, and neutrality from the *Chicago Tribune*, which did not like Percy and endorsed him I think only the Sunday before election in a very tepid editorial, but allowed their paper, the second paper, the *Chicago American*, early to endorse Mr. Douglas in the strongest way. But the *American* was the least read paper in the city. The *Tribune* didn't care very much for Percy. We got editorial support from less than a dozen out of several hundred papers in the state. But I

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really can't complain about our coverage, over a long period of time. We didn't have a press secretary in the Douglas office, and I functioned as the press secretary.

Ritchie: Why didn't you have a press secretary?

Shuman: We felt the press secretary got in the way. This happened in Proxmire's office too. There were times in the Proxmire office when we had a press secretary, then if he left we didn't replace him. It was a very simple thing: a press secretary doubled the work. If you were involved in an issue, what you would have to do is sit down with the press secretary and explain in the greatest detail about the bill, the politics of it, what

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was going on. You would have to educate the press secretary about the bill, or about the release. Then he would write the release, and then you'd have to proof it to see that he got it right, before it was sent out. It really doubled the effort. So, we tried to hire people for our staff who could write. The first thing we wanted them to do was to write good, simple, straight forward English. They didn't necessarily have to know how the press worked, because I could tell them. I would always put the date on the release. The senator would see every release. No release went out without his approval. He would often rewrite the lead, because as a newspaper man he knew what the lead should be. So each of our substantive people would write the release for his or her subject area.

The senator -- Proxmire and Douglas too, but Proxmire especially -- would say, okay I want a press release every day this week, particularly when the Senate was out of session. Not all of these would be on national issues, some were. Some went to the state. Some were on economic or banking issues. We would get together as a staff and ask what news on what issue have we got? I asked each member of the staff, "Is there anything you've got that's newsworthy?" If so, that person would write the release and submit it. I would put the release time on it, and supervise it, and maybe rewrite part of it. So we functioned without a press person most of the time. In the Douglas office we hired a

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press person for the year before the '66 campaign, which was a mistake. A press person to be good has to crawl inside the senator. He's got to be with him all the time. He's got to know all the issues. I think that's the only way he can function. Unless we had a press person who did that, and who liked to do it, and who knew the issues, it was just more bother than it was worth.

Ritchie: I've heard press secretaries complain that the legislative assistants want to deal with the press directly.

Shuman: Sure.

Ritchie: And in a sense they have to fight them off. But what you're saying is that they should be dealing with the press directly.

Shuman: Yes, I think that's true. I would not have a press secretary. Maybe in the White House you've got to have one, but you've also noticed that the very best press secretaries in the White House were people who were the direct confidants of the president. The best one I suppose was Eisenhower's press secretary.

Ritchie: James Hagerty.

Shuman: Hagerty, and Kennedy's fellow, [\[Pierre\] Salinger](#), because they were involved in the day-to-day details of the

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subject matter. Unless you're prepared to do that it is better not to have one. In other words, I would say that the press secretary has either got to be the number one person in the office or at least present at the major events or you'd better not have one.

Ritchie: I have some questions I'd like to ask you about the housing commission that Douglas was appointed to chair when he left the Senate, but we've been talking for an hour and a half now, and I think it's a good idea for us to stop at this point. We can start with that the next time. I read your article, by the way, which I enjoyed quite a bit, "Behind the Scenes and Under the Rug," and that raised a lot of questions.

Shuman: That was the most difficult time I spent working for the public, the two years on that commission. That was hell on earth.

Ritchie: It was quite a hot time to be studying that issue.

Shuman: As I said, we preceded the riots and we followed the riots in the hot summer of 1967. We didn't go to Cleveland because we felt we would start a riot, which didn't happen, and we did go to Detroit because we figured there wouldn't be a riot, which did happen.

Ritchie: Let's begin the next time with that.

Shuman: I'd like also to talk about the Buck case.

Ritchie: Yes, I'd like to talk about that too.

End of Interview #6

Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Interview #7: Battling the Bureaucracy

(September 24, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Ritchie: You spent a great deal of attention, while you were on Senator [Douglas'](#) staff, on the case of Sergeant Carl Buck. I wondered if you could tell me what that was all about, and why you got so involved in it?

Shuman: The Sergeant Buck case represents several different things. I worked on it on and off for nine years. First of all, it has to do with the First Amendment, because the First Amendment states among other things that Congress shall make no law which would prohibit the right of the people to petition the government for a redress of their grievances. I think that Senate offices must spend half of their time answering the petitions of grievances of individual citizens. It is an institution of our government which is essentially unknown in most parliamentary governments, and I think is an extraordinarily important aspect of making this a political democracy and keeping us free to a much greater extent than other political democracies, Britain and France for example.

But in addition to that, the Buck case illustrates three other things. It illustrates what's wrong with military justice. It illustrates to me at least how unwilling to bend the

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bureaucracy was, the impossibility of getting the bureaucracy to change a decision that was wrong -- it just refused to do it. And the third thing, it was a detective story with a happy ending.

For me it started in 1956. I got the case by accident. Ordinarily I did not handle case work, but in July of that year the woman in the office who was the administrative person came to me and said "I'm going on vacation. This week a man by the name of Sergeant Buck, who has an incredible story, came in. I don't have time to do anything about it, will you take it while I'm gone?" I said, aye, aye, I'll do it. A few days later Sergeant Buck charged into our office. I was in a long, narrow office that had been built out of a corridor in the Old Senate Office Building, now the Russell Building. I had the very last desk, and there were at least five or six desks in front of me. Sergeant Buck charged down the corridor like a Marine landing at Tarawa or Iwo Jima. He charged back to my desk and

said, "You Howard Shuman?" I said yes. He said, "I'm Sergeant Buck." He was dressed in full Marine uniform. He was a Master Sergeant, so he had six stripes on one sleeve. He'd been in for twenty years, so he had all the fogey stripes on the other arm; and he had all his medals on his chest. He'd been in the Pacific during World War II. I told him to sit down, and for an hour or more he poured out his story -- an incredible story -- and he left me with a pile of papers a foot high. He rambled. He was disorganized. Later I

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found out the details, through almost living with him, because he came to my home every weekend. He'd drive out with his wife and his kids, and my wife would look out the window and say, "Oh, my God, here come the Bucks!" In great pain and anguish he would pour out his story to me on the weekends, and he would come in to the office almost every morning to tell his story.

Initially, at least, I had a lot of doubts about it. It was uncoordinated, but later I found out that while he didn't have a philosophical mind, he had a phenomenal memory. He could remember dates, times, places, people, and what happened in detail. Of course, I checked the facts out, and he was almost always right. So I believed him when he told me about specific events.

He had spent twenty years in the Marine Corps, and he was stationed at San Diego, at the boot camp. He was a baker, and he was in charge of the bakers, and he was also the president of the NCO club, and he was captain of the football team. He was a hero. He was the leader of the non-commissioned officers. Furthermore he had taken the exam to become warrant officer and passed it. He was waiting for the official promotion. On March 5, a Wednesday, 1952, during the Korean War, sometime at the noon hour, a Marine drove into Camp Pendleton 40 miles north. He was dressed in a Marine uniform of one kind or another, wore dark glasses, and parked outside a warehouse, 22-S-4. He went into the warehouse to talk to the storekeeper, Sergeant Shurlin Hatley was his name --

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Shurlin E. Hatley. The marine tried to make an off-the-record deal that he would give Hatley fifty dollars and a case of whiskey, for three cartons of chevrons that are sewed on the uniforms, the stripes. He said he wanted to come up on Friday at one o'clock to get them. He made some small talk and asked for the whereabouts of two marines. He left, and Hatley was going to lunch, so they met outside again. The thief went over to Hatley's car and they talked, and they agreed that he would come back at noon on Friday. Chevrons were in short

supply. They were needed by marines for the dress uniforms they bought at the local tailor shops.

Hatley took down the license number of the car, and gave the license number and a report of the incident to his superiors. The only name the thief gave was "Chuck." On Friday morning, the 7th of March, the officers called in a Marine investigative detective by the name of Walter Franz, also a Master Sergeant, and they put him in charge of the case. They told him to set a trap for the thief, which was done. Hatley, back at the warehouse, got three boxes of different types of chevrons, and brought them up front to his office. He failed to mark the boxes. There was another sergeant there Layton who was looking out the window, and Master Sergeant Franz, the detective, stationed himself away from them, but where he could watch what happened. At twelve o'clock precisely, a car drove up. Hatley cried out, "It's him." The car

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was a yellow or cream colored Studebaker. A man got out of the car. He had on dark glasses. His head was covered with a jacket or shawl. Descriptions of his height, uniform, whether he was clean shaven or wore a mustache, etc., varied widely. He came in the warehouse, talked to Hatley, said "Have you got 'em?" Hatley said, "Yes, they've been brought up front." Hatley then took the boxes and put them outside of the warehouse on the cement ramp, and from there the thief put them in the back seat of his car. He came back and paid Hatley. Hatley tried to delay him, but the thief said, "No, I got to get the hell out of here." He was in a hurry. He gave Hatley fifty dollars: two twenties and two fives. He went out and drove away. The wind was blowing very hard. The rain was coming down in torrents.

In the meantime, as the thief went out, Master Sergeant Franz came back in. He had parked his jeep in the wrong direction. He had it heading into the base (the warehouse was seven miles inside the gate), and the thief's car was parked to head out of the base. So Master Sergeant Franz ran out furiously. He had the thief, he had him with the goods, he had the money, but he'd parked his jeep in the wrong direction. He blew it. He went out, got in his jeep and started up the road to turn around. Meantime, the thief ran out and drove away, going pell mell down the highway inside the base, seven miles from the front gate. At a mile and a half before the gate, or five point five five miles to

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be precise, Master Sergeant Franz lost the man. He went into a baker's house there and called the front gate. Just as he called the front gate, the thief was going

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through. There were shouts to stop him, but he got through. Now, nobody knows where he went. Did he go north to LA? Did he go south to San Diego? Did he go into the town and along the beaches? Or did he turn around and come back and go up to the mountains? Whatever, he disappeared.

Just after that, Franz called the local town Marine patrol, to report: stop a Marine in a yellow Studebaker. Then the report was relayed to the California highway police. Now, on this day Buck had left San Diego. He had previously been stationed at Camp Pendleton. He had purchased a yellow Studebaker from the Studebaker dealer there, a man by the name of Freed, and he had come back because he had a bad cam shaft on his car and he hoped to get it fixed. Mind you, this day was very stormy. It was raining cats and dogs. Franz, when he was pursuing the thief, said he was slowed down by the wind and the rain. Also he had a governor on his car and he couldn't go more than fifty miles an hour. Still, he had the thief in view for almost five of the seven miles. Ultimately, one could precisely determine how long it took to get to the front gate if the thief averaged fifty miles an hour, forty-five miles per hour, forty, thirty and so on. So mathematically we could put the thief at the gate at a particular

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time, which was very important for the case. The thief left the warehouse between 12:07 and 12:10.

Buck had come up to Oceanside that day. Freed couldn't do anything about his car then. So Buck drove back to San Diego, where he had to be back at one o'clock. In a town, Solana Beach, which counting Oceanside was the sixth town south, and eighteen miles south of Oceanside, and according to the trial record twenty-two miles south of the warehouse, but in fact almost twenty-five miles south of the warehouse, Buck, driving his yellow Studebaker, pulled into the center of Solana Beach. As he stopped at the stop light, the driver next to him told him that his rear license plate was dangling loose. When the light turned green he pulled across the intersection and pulled onto a cement carpet on the right-hand side of the road, got out, covered his head, and fixed his license plate with a screwdriver.

At this moment there was screech of tires from a car that braked and parked next to him. It was a California Highway policeman. He said, "I've got a call to pick up a Marine in a yellow Studebaker." He took Buck's ID card and searched his car thoroughly. There were no chevrons in his car, there was no blanket in his car which had covered the chevrons, which the thief apparently had over his head. Buck was dressed in full Marine greens, with all his ribbons. He was not wearing dark glasses. And he was very calm. And he hadn't been speeding. He wasn't

tearing through the town. At Buck's court martial, the testimony by officer Doran was that this was 12:15 to 12:20. He denied it was as late as 12:30. So there was a time element that could be figured out. Buck was picked up 22 to 25 miles from the scene of the crime eight to ten minutes after the crime took place.

Well, Buck said he had been railroaded. There was some key testimony at his court martial, which was five months later, which convicted him. One was the identification. The military policeman, Franz, identified him, said the thief was Buck. And throughout his testimony he said, "Buck did this", "Buck did that", "Buck did the other." But no one had his name at the time, if it had been Buck or anybody else. The man was only known by the name of Chuck. But during the trial, Franz used the term "Buck this", "Buck that," at periods when there was no way he knew who it was, Buck or anybody else.

The storekeeper, Hatley, identified him in a quasi-way. Said, yes, he thought that was him, but he couldn't say what his dress was. He said he had a mustache, and Buck was part-Indian and couldn't grow a beard or a mustache. He put him in a variety of uniforms. He had him with dark glasses on and off. He had him in a fore and aft cap; he had him with a sweater over his head; with a shawl over his head. The identification was not very good. There were many discrepancies by all the witnesses. The third man, Johnston Layton, who was there, testified at the pretrial

that it definitely was not Buck. But at the trial he said he couldn't tell. He shifted his testimony. Incidentally, at this stage, Hatley had resigned from the Marine Corps. He got out for some reason. I think he was pressured. So number one was the identification.

The second thing at the trial was the alleged confession. Franz said that Buck had confessed to him after they had taken him from Solana Beach back in the paddywagon back to the police station in Oceanside. What happened there, according to Buck, was that Franz was surprised when he saw him, and looked him over, put dark glasses on his face, took them off, and finally pointed to him and said, "Yes, that's the man." Then Franz testified that when they were together on the way back to Camp Pendleton, Buck had confessed to him. That he said yes, he had taken the chevrons, and that he had given them to another Marine by the name of Blackman at the nursery road, which is about a mile before the gate. "He delivered them to a Blackman in a black Chevrolet," was what Franz said he said. But there was no record of the confession, no written confession. It was Franz'

word against Buck's that there was a confession. This was contradicted by Hatley's pretrial statement which was not used at the trial.

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Hatley said the thief asked him to go along with a story if he were stopped at the gate that taking the chevrons was a joke or a lark. But this important evidence was not used at the trial.

The third thing that was very important was that when Buck was put into the brig on that Friday, and kept there until the following Monday, he had some mad money, a fifty dollar bill, hidden in his wallet. He gave his clothes to the brig warden and got the clothes that he had to wear in the brig. He gave them all of his personal belongings, but at the last minute he retrieved his wallet and he said, "I've got to get the fifty dollar bill," which he gave them. When he came out of the brig on the following Monday, he got a check for his money rather than cash. As he was leaving, he said to the brig warden, "Where's my fifty dollar bill?" Whereupon he was jumped on by Franz who charged Buck for asking for the fifty dollars back. But remember it was two twenties and two fives that were paid for the chevrons, not a fifty dollar bill. That request became a very, very important item at the trial. The prosecutor referred to it as the icing on the cake, that Buck had asked for his fifty dollars back.

The fourth thing that happened, that helped convict him, involves Buck's stay in the brig from Friday to Monday. His wife had come up on Sunday and they wouldn't give her the time of day. She finally got to see him, after waiting and waiting and waiting for him, for just a few minutes. She retrieved the car, which was in Oceanside. They had a newly-born son who was ill, and she was desperate for the car. And she got a lawyer, by the name of Stevens. The lawyer came and got Buck out of the brig on Monday.

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Buck then had to go back to San Diego by bus. It was early evening. He got back to his house, which was south of San Diego, his wife picked him up at the bus station, and when he got home he couldn't get out of the car. He was in such pain from the rain and the dampness and his arthritis, that he could scarcely move. That evening she called for an ambulance and they took him to the San Diego naval hospital, where he stayed for most of a month. For a couple of weeks he was flat on his back.

Now, Stevens in Oceanside had a partner by the name of Daubney, whom Buck had never met. Daubney had been the prosecutor at the Marine Corps base -- he

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was a captain, I think -- and had left the Marines and gone into private practice in Oceanside, defending Marines. Within a week or so, Daubney was called by someone who said "What would you do if some government property was left with you?" He said, "I'd return it to the Marine Corps." Then a few days later he found, coming out of his office late at night, a blanket full of chevrons. He then called Sergeant Franz, whom he knew, and the chevrons were returned to the Marines by way of the local FBI man, who unfortunately never made a record of it, and later got into lots of trouble when the case became important. He took the chevrons back. And it was alleged, therefore, that the chevrons which were stolen were returned. As I said, Buck had never, ever met Daubney at this time. He knew Stevens, but had never met nor knew Daubney. Buck at this time was flat on his

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back in the San Diego hospital, which is something I found out in investigating the case. So the question was: why in the heck would anybody call Daubney? He wasn't Buck's lawyer at the time. It was almost three months later that Daubney became Buck's lawyer. When Buck was charged he went to see Stevens who was too busy to take the case and referred Buck to his partner Daubney.

But anyway a great deal was made about the returned chevrons, and what happened was that the prosecution called Daubney, who was Buck's defense lawyer at the courtmartial, to the stand as a prosecution witness -- something I've never, ever heard of before to testify about the return of the chevrons. Daubney testified about the call and he said that definitely the person on the phone was not Buck because Buck had a very, very deep voice. But nobody went into the question of whether the chevrons, which were loose in a blanket, were the chevrons that were stolen or not. A box of chevrons was put in evidence by the prosecution at the court martial, but neither the chevrons which were returned nor the chevrons offered as evidence were the chevrons which were stolen.

Buck's defenses by Daubney were two: number one, that no crime had taken place; and number two that Buck wasn't the person who did the no crime. The big argument on no crime was that the chevrons were removed from the warehouse by the storekeeper in whose custody they were, and therefore no larceny had taken place. It's as if my typewriter here were left outside the War College

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building and you came along and picked it up. That is not larceny. Secondly, Daubney brought in California highway policeman Doran who picked up Buck down at Solana Beach. The policeman testified to the time, he said 12:15 to 12:20,

definitely not later than 12:30. Secondly, he said Buck was calm. Thirdly, that he had searched the car and there were no chevrons of any kind. And fourth, that the Marines did not know who they were looking for. He heard calls to pick up a Blackman. They said, "Who have you got?" He said, "I've got Master Sergeant Buck here from San Diego." Buck had said to him, "I'm not Blackman from Pendleton, I'm Buck from San Diego." That information went back to Oceanside and then they sent the paddywagon down, and they were surprised when they got Buck instead of Blackman. But Franz finally sent back a call saying, "Your man is Sergeant Buck." This was after Buck's name was radioed back by officer Doran.

The testimony of Officer Doran was unknown to the Marine authorities. They hadn't looked him up. Now, there is one key point about court martials. They are held under the new Code of Military Justice, and the Code of Military Justice says there isn't supposed to be a prosecutor and defense in the normal American tradition. The Code had taken procedures from the French, who have an investigating officer, and the investigating officer's job is to find out everything about the case and to see that justice is done. Well, the investigating officer hadn't

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even talked to the chief witness on the time element, and the investigating officer refused to talk to Buck's friends who could prove that on Wednesday, at the time the offer was made, Buck was in San Diego. He wasn't at Camp Pendleton at all. Those witnesses were never seen by the investigating officer. Frankly, they railroaded him.

There was a board of review, and the board of review agreed that no crime had taken place. They dismissed the charges and freed Buck. But there is a curious thing about military justice: if the government loses, it can appeal the case automatically. If the defendant loses, in this case Buck, he can appeal only if the Judge Advocate General agrees. So there is a double standard. The defendant doesn't have the same rights as the government. The Navy JAG lost, and they appealed the case to the Court of Military Appeals, which is the Supreme Court of military justice. The Court of Military Appeals found that larceny had taken place. I've read the decision, over and over and over in great detail, and you know what? The only issue before them was did larceny take place? And they got the facts wrong. There's not a word of evidence that the thief carried the chevrons out of the warehouse. The evidence overwhelmingly, time and again, is that the chevrons were carried out by Hatley. So they got the evidence wrong, and they therefore said that larceny had taken place, and they referred the case back to a further board of review.

Unlike the first board of review, where the members said they had the gravest doubts about the identity, but they didn't have to reach that issue, the second board of review said they still had a lot of doubts, and they quoted some of Franz's testimony, and agreed he didn't have Buck's name, and there was one very outrageous bit of testimony where they said Franz's identification was impossible, but they said, nonetheless identity was for the jury to decide, rather than them. So they went with the jury and they upheld the conviction. Well, Buck had got eighteen months in prison, he was fined a lot of money, and he was reduced in rank to private. They stood him up at Camp Pendleton and literally ripped the Master Sergeant stripes off his sleeve.

In the period between the board of review and the court of military appeals and the final decision, Buck had been free and they'd paid him. They'd given him quarters' allowance and everything else, which he had spent, and they came back after the decision and impoverished him. He was allowed only his private's salary, and out of that salary some of it was to go to his wife, but they took that money to pay back the funds they had given him when he was free. He didn't serve eighteen months. He served only about eight or ten or twelve months, something like that. This was the state of affairs when he came into see me that day.

I said to him, "Look, Buck, you're in uniform. You've been discharged, but you're in uniform. They'll arrest you." He said, "I hope they do, because that will get me back into court." He worked as a baker at night, and his wife worked in a law office during the day. He would work all night and then he would come in to see me the first thing in the morning, then he'd sleep in the afternoon. One of the reasons I was reasonably convinced he was innocent, apart from the facts of the case, was the effort the two of them were going through to try to prove his innocence. I figured that his wife would have known whether he was innocent or not, and I think after having done all the things they had done for four years to exonerate him, that at some stage she would have said to him, "Look, you made your point. Now forget it." I was impressed by her loyalty. She was a very bright, intelligent woman as well.

One of the first things we did was to ask the Navy Judge Advocate General about the case. He sent a commander up to see me who was from Illinois. He was very smart about it, he didn't send some one from Texas. I had studied the case at this stage, and I wasn't absolutely convinced about Buck's innocence. I had read the record. But this commander came up and I said to him, "What about it? Suppose

somebody else confessed to the crime with the name of Blackman, and we agreed that he did it? Could you do anything about Buck's case?" He said, "Absolutely not. The case

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is closed. Nothing we can do. It doesn't matter. If twenty-five guys said they did it, we wouldn't change it. It's finished." I didn't think that was a very good answer.

The second thing that he said infuriated me. He said, "It doesn't matter. This guy's no good anyway. He's got a bad record. Forget him." And he produced a letter which said, and I won't forget it because of the names, that "Buck was out to make a fast buck." I said, "Who wrote that letter?" He said, "It's an anonymous letter from someone in New York." I thought that was pretty thin, and furthermore, I said, "Commander, you don't think I'm dumb, do you?" Before we took this case, I looked at Buck's record, and there were only two things in his record for twenty years of any importance at all. One was that one day when he was supposed to have rolls on the menu, the bakers hadn't made the rolls and gave the crew bread instead, and he'd been called in by his superior and it had been put in his record that he'd substituted bread for rolls. The second thing happened in Japan. He was stationed there after the war, and he was outside a geisha house at ten, eleven o'clock at night, after the curfew. The MPs stopped him and said, "What's your name?" He said, "My name is Buck." They said, "don't give us that, Marine." He said, "All right, my name is Smith." So he was called in for a captain's mast or whatever to explain this discrepancy, and they understood it. But those were the only two blemishes in his record in twenty

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years. So I said to the Commander, "Look, you don't think I'm dumb? We checked it out. If he'd had a record of thievery, believe you me we would never have touched the case."

I was infuriated with this, and as a result of that I decided to stick with the case. If that hadn't happened, I might have given it up, because of the time it took, and it wasn't my direct job. But anyway we worked on this case very hard. The Eisenhower administration, and the special counsel to Eisenhower, Gerald Morgan, agreed to review the case de nova, anew. Nobody believed that they would do that, and I had had faith that they would do it, based on the evidence. Everybody was amazed when it happened, and I was crowing about it. But in a few days he wrote back and said they'd made a mistake and they weren't going to review it. I'm sure that was done because of the intervention of the Navy JAG and

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the pardon attorney. That was number one. Then we got it to the [Kennedy](#) administration and got it to the White House. It was being reviewed, and the White House was willing to look at it. We had an agreement that they would start anew, and when Kennedy was murdered the case was about ready to be reviewed by them. But the Justice Department tried to sabotage the agreement. I spent a morning down there with one of their attorneys who said, "I'm sorry, we're not going to do it." He was supposed to review it, but when I talked with him his review was perfunctory. I said, "You ought to talk to Buck." "Oh," he said, "the prosecution

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isn't supposed to talk to the defense." So his position was he was not a reviewer but the prosecutor. I said, "I've got all this stuff about his innocence, and look what he's done and how hard he's fought it." "Well," he said, "they all say they're innocent." In other words, he tried to take back from us what the White House had promised us. But the White House was still with us when Kennedy was murdered.

In the meantime, we went before the board of correction for military records. I appeared with Buck, and the board changed his discharge from a bad conduct discharge to a regular, routine, general discharge. Furthermore, at about this time, the pardon people said that they would be willing to give him a pardon based on his good conduct since the crime, but they would not give him a pardon based on innocence. Buck turned it down, which I thought was very significant. He absolutely said no, even though by this time he had a general discharge, he could vote again, and he could always have waved that pardon and said, "Look, you see, I was pardoned by the President, I really didn't do it." But he was determined to turn it down.

Then we got it back to the White House again under Johnson. Lee White was in charge of it. He was an assistant counsel and my friend. I had worked with him on the Hill. Lee noticed one thing, which I want to bring up, to show how some of these things can change procedures. Lee was infuriated that the pardon

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attorney had had the last word in turning Buck down. He read the Constitution and he said the power of the pardon is a presidential power, and he insisted that the pardon attorney from then on submit to the White House not only the pardons he recommended, but the pardons he had turned down, on the ground that it was a presidential function. The pardon attorney was turning down

pardons, but that wasn't his job. That change took place as a result of the Buck case.

We pestered, and pestered, and pestered them. We agreed that if they would actually set up a review, we would abide by the result. If they would look at all the evidence, whatever decision they arrived at, we'd stop pestering them. And we had pestered the life out of them over a period of years: speeches on the floor, organizing other senators, [Mansfield](#) and the Florida fellow.

Ritchie: [George Smathers](#).

Shuman: Smathers, who were ex-Marines. We got all the ex-Marines in the Senate to support Buck. We did everything that you could imagine to publicize it. We didn't use Blackman's name, we used "Whiteman" as a substitute for Blackman. We did all these things, and the White House finally agreed to review it, and put Charlie Horsky, who was a very prominent lawyer who was in charge of D.C. matters, in charge. So I gathered all the material. I

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submitted all the evidence we had, the evidence on the chevrons especially -- the chevrons that were brought back were not the chevrons that were stolen. We detailed the time element. I got Geological Survey maps of the coast of California from Camp Pendleton to Solana Beach. We found out that there were something like ninety intersections between Pendleton and Solana Beach. There were six towns. There were nine stoplights. The speed limit over eleven miles of the eighteen was thirty-five miles an hour or less. There were only a few places where the limit was fifty-five. We got the highway department reports as to the number of cars that traveled that route -- it was a three-lane highway -- at the noon hour on a Friday. For Buck to have been the person to have arrived even by 12:30 he would have had to pass a couple of hundred cars going one way, and overtaken a similar number of cars going the other. There was no evidence that during that noon hour there was any speeding along the highway. It would have been noticed because the police patrolled it. So we had all this evidence as to mileage and time and so on, which was overwhelming.

Charley Horsky came to the office after we had submitted all the evidence to him. Oh, I must tell you that the number of the license plate never was presented at the trial. One of the things I always thought was that as the prosecution and Franz had the license plate and if it had been Buck's they sure as heck would

have used it, but it wasn't presented at the trial. So I made an extensive search for the license plate number. I called this fellow Hatley who was then in Chico, California, working in a dairy about it, because he had turned it over to his superiors. But he didn't have the number in his notes. I tried to trace all the yellow Studebakers in California to see what the license plate numbers were, and if any of them were owned by a Blackman. Horsky came up to the office one day and said, "We've done everything, but I'm not satisfied on this case until somebody interviews Blackman." I had asked the Marine Corps if there were any people by the name of Blackman stationed at Camp Pendleton on the day of the crime, because this question was asked of Franz at the trial. Franz said "No, there were no Blackmans. We looked everywhere. We called the battalion locators, we couldn't find one. There was no Blackman." That was his testimony. So I asked the Marine Corps if there was a Blackman stationed at camp Pendleton on the day of the crime, and they said yes, there were several. One of them was a Master Sergeant. So I asked for his picture and I got it, and he looked enough like Buck that they could have been kissing cousins. And ultimately we found seven Blackmans who were there at the time.

Horsky said, "Somebody's got to go talk to Blackman." It had to be Horsky, or Buck, or me, because we were the only ones who knew enough about the case to do it. Horsky was too busy to do

it, and obviously we couldn't ask Buck do it, so I went. The White House flew me to California on a military plane, and then Mr. Douglas and I shared the expenses of going down to San Diego to find Blackman. I went several miles back of San Diego to Blackman's house, which was on an old dirt road. I went in at an angle, drove up the hillside, and found a rather rickety house. I thought, "My God, he's really fallen on bad days." It was a rural slum. I knocked on the door and a very, very tall teenage girl opened the door. I asked for Sergeant Blackman. I hadn't told him I was coming. I made a mistake. I should have gone there with someone else, but I was alone. Well, she said, "He's not here." I said, "Where is he?" She said, "He's dead." I said, "What do you mean, dead?" Well, it turned out that a few weeks before during a period when there was a lot of publicity about this and we called the person "Whiteman," Blackman who worked for an auto dealer had taken a car at noon, gone back into one of the canyons in the mountains behind San Diego, and put a shotgun to his body and blew himself out of this world.

Well, I thought, that's the end of it. He not only killed himself but there was no way I could now prove Buck's innocence. I had permission to give him immunity

if he would talk. I had to prove Buck innocent. It wasn't enough to say that if he were tried again he would be found innocent. I was discouraged about this. I thought this was the end of it. I then drove up the

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coast and I met with Officer Doran, who told me everything that had happened in the same way that he had said it before. He was certain of himself. He was a very intelligent fellow. He didn't have a big pot belly. He was lean, and lithe and active and very believable. Buck and I together got the transcripts for some of the radio calls, not all of them, but some of them, especially the call by Franz saying "Your man is Sergeant Buck," after the call went out asking for Blackman. I had that on the transcripts. The transcripts unfortunately had been logged in late. I talked to the woman who was at the police station where they were logged in, who had been married to Officer Doran, a coincidence. She told me there was a man there who let the calls pile up and then logged them in late, so this was logged in at a later time and I couldn't prove complete innocence by the logs. The earliest I could prove by the logs that Buck was in Solana Beach was 12:40, which ultimately was sufficient.

Then I went up to Camp Pendleton and went to see their then prosecutor, and he welcomed me politely, because the Commandant of the Marine Corps' and headquarters had told him I was coming. We chatted for a bit, didn't say very much. It was late, six o'clock in the evening. But he gave me a pile of papers, fifty-five in all. I took the papers, went down the road, looked at the warehouse, looked at the baker's house where Franz had called in, saw the nursery road, went to the main gate, calculated the mileage on

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my odometer to see that it was correct, and went into Oceanside to the motel. There I started to look at the documents. At least forty of them were documents I had seen before, but there were a dozen to fifteen that I had not seen. They had been locked in a depository for thirteen years. This was 1965. The crime took place in '52. I had taken it on in '56. I looked at those documents, and I was delighted, because in my hands were documents written on the day of the crime in Franz's handwriting, which proved beyond any doubt that Buck was innocent.

The next day I went back to Camp Pendleton, talked to the prosecutor again. He was very nasty to me. "What are you trying to do," he said, "impugn the good name of the Marine Corps?" I said, "No, I'm trying to get justice." He said, "You should talk to Franz. He's the man who knows the most about the case." So I did. I found out that Franz was in Orange County, working for the court. He was a

bailiff. I went up to Santa Ana where the courthouse was, and tried to meet him. I went to see him at noon, and as I was walking in, apparently he was walking out. I saw three officers walk out. I went in and asked about him, and I was told, "You just passed him on the way out as you came in." So I followed them down the street. The three of them went to a restaurant. I thought, I'm not going to talk to him while the other two officers are with him. I waited until after the lunch hour and went back. Again I saw him on the steps of the court

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house. I told him who I was, and that I'd like to talk to him. He said, "I've been told not to talk about this case." I said, "I've just come from Camp Pendleton and the Major told me I should talk to you." "Well, I got a senator on my back," he said. "Get off my back!"

He said, "The trial's over, they ain't got no evidence against me." I said, "What about these papers I have with me?" and I read to him what was on the papers and showed him the papers. At that stage he got very excited and he ran down the steps, he ran up the street, he ran across the street. I followed him, saying "What about these papers? He came back down the other side of the street to a police van and tried to get in it to get away from me. But the door was locked and he fumbled with it, so there I was again confronting him. It was a stupid thing for me to do. You know, here was a policeman, and here I was. But anyway he was frightened and he ran, he literally ran from me. He finally got the door open, jumped into the van, and sped off.

I came back, gave the papers to Horsky on a Saturday, delivered them to him at the EOB [Executive Office Building] and was confident that Buck would be vindicated. Shortly after that, President [Johnson](#) called and told Mr. Douglas he had given Buck a pardon. Not just a normal pardon, but a pardon based on innocence, which was the first time it had been done in something like eighty-five years. Ultimately, Buck got back pay

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for thirteen years. He was promoted not only to warrant officer but to chief warrant officer. He had made the warrant officer promotion before his court martial, but they didn't give it to him because the court martial was pending. Now he was promoted to chief warrant officer, but he was too crippled at this stage by arthritis, to go back to active duty.

Now, I'm sure you want to know: what was the evidence? Well, several things. One piece was about the fifty dollar bill. There was in those documents the order

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that sent him to the brig, and at the top of that order in the brig warden's hand writing was a dollar sign and the words fifty dollar bill, followed by its serial number. So it was quite clear from that that Buck was correct. He had given them a fifty dollar bill. He didn't ask for two twenties and two fives, he asked for his fifty dollar bill back. Not only that, but on one of a series of notes made by Franz on the day of the crime thirteen years before, were the words fifty dollar bill and the same number. So Franz knew that it was a fifty dollar bill and not two twenties and two fives and had lied about Buck asking for the fifty dollars back. The second thing I had was a bunch of notes made by Franz on the day of the crime with the name Blackman on them, and with Headquarters Battalion Locator written on them and the address of the Blackman, and a couple of other Blackmans as well. He had found the same Blackman I found. His notes gave Blackman's name, address, serial

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number, age, and some personal details about him the FBI gave us earlier. So when Franz said at the trial there were "no Blackmans", he in fact perjured himself several times. Those were the two major pieces of evidence which proved that what Buck had told us was correct, that Franz lied, and this exonerated Buck.

I must say, though, that this was a very difficult period. The hostility of the Navy JAG and the hostility of the Justice Department were unbelievable. If it were not for the First Amendment, and for the politicians help against the bureaucrat, Buck would never have been pardoned on the basis of innocence. At one stage when Buck turned down a pardon based on good conduct he said that he was determined, because of his children, that he must be vindicated, that he must get his good name back. When he was told by Senator Douglas over the phone that President Johnson had given him the pardon based on his innocence, he was then living in Seattle, I asked his wife later what they did. Did they go out and celebrate? She said "No, we didn't celebrate. He went to bed and he slept for almost twenty-four hours. A great burden had been lifted from him." I've lost track of him now, but as I knew him later on I think that in a sense he lost his purpose in life. He had been so wound up in vindicating himself after thirteen years, that when he finally made it, he didn't have the same sense of purpose that he had before. But that is the story of Sergeant Buck.

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One point I forgot. One of the notes in Franz's handwriting noted that the "Sgt. runs tailor shop," which is exactly where chevrons were needed. Further, Franz's notes refer to a "stir it cup." Blackman ran a cafe in Oceanside called the "Coffee Cup." This was further proof Franz found a Blackman on the day of the crime.

I've always said that while I don't think what I did would get me into heaven, I thought it might keep me out of hell, although I don't hold traditional views about either of them. It was an example of all the things that I've mentioned about the Code, about bureaucracy, and the way in which the politicians in this country can go to bat for an aggrieved person in a way that would not be done elsewhere. My British parliamentary friends could not have accomplished this against the Home Office in a way that we did. It was the two politicians, Douglas and Johnson, who were responsible for his pardon.

Ritchie: Even after Johnson pardoned him, didn't the bureaucracy resist you?

Shuman: Yes, one other thing happened. The Navy refused to pay him. He had a lot of money coming for back pay, eighty or ninety thousand dollars. The Navy refused to pay him on grounds that when he got the general discharge he had signed a piece of paper that he had received all the back money coming to him.

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Well, he had received the back money that was due him on those grounds, but he certainly hadn't received the eighty-five thousand dollars. So they said it was illegal to give him the additional back pay and they refused to pay him, even after the President had pardoned him. Outrageous! What we did was to get the General Accounting Office, and the Comptroller General, Elmer Staats to review it. We also called in [Paul] Nitze, who was then Secretary of the Navy. Together, Nitze as Secretary and Elmer Staats as Comptroller General agreed that he would be paid, and the Navy did pay him. But even after the President pardoned him the Navy didn't want to pay him. They were vindictive.

Ritchie: Why do you think so?

Shuman: Well, because they'd been wrong and they refused to admit they were wrong. They had written reams of paper against Buck. The Navy Judge Advocate General, Chester Ward, an admiral who later was famous as a right wing ideologue, had written a twenty-three page paper, taking up most of the issues, which asserted that we were wrong about every one of them.

Ritchie: It's an interesting case here, because you pulled in just about every political figure: a senator, the President of the United States, the Secretary of the Navy, the Comptroller General, and yet the bureaucracy still reactive negatively.

Shuman: Yes, overwhelmingly.

Ritchie: Did that give you some pause about the whole sense of government, and what government does?

Shuman: Well, it certainly gave me a view of bureaucracy, which I had suspected but experienced only to a limited extent before. I thought some negative things about the bureaucracy, but not to that degree. I had never met the resistance before that I met from them in this case. I began to understand why the French revolted against Louis the XIV, Calvin opposed the Pope, and Cromwell revolted against Charles the I. The pity is that some of them were as arbitrary as those they displaced.

Ritchie: But most citizens don't get that much support against the bureaucracy.

Shuman: No, they don't. They get a lot of support, but they don't get that much support. I mean, we could have given up on it many, many, many times. Think of all the times when we could have quit. Buck was probably the big reason we didn't quit. He was so persistent, so determined, and as I said, when I checked him out, he was right. As I got into the case, Mr. Douglas kept saying to me: "Focus on the time element. That is the key to it." And it really was the key to it. But the Navy JAG and the Justice Department paid no attention to that.

Intellectually, I was certain that Buck was innocent. But there was one thing I did after I saw those papers at Oceanside.

I went back to Camp Pendleton on a Sunday, after I had been there on Thursday or Friday and had found the papers and challenged Franz. I went back, and on a Sunday at noon I drove the stretch of road from Camp Pendleton to the center of Solana Beach. I didn't drive, then, the seven miles from the warehouse to the main gate. I started out at the main gate and I drove as fast as I could into Oceanside, and I drove down to Solana Beach. Now, this was at a time when a new interstate highway had been built. I drove the old highway, 101, the three-lane highway. Because it was a Sunday and because of the new highway there was far less traffic than there would have been on that old highway on a Friday. It took me twenty-five or twenty-six minutes to drive it, going as fast as I could. So I knew we could prove Buck was there before 12:40, we knew that the thief was at the gate about 12:20, so there was no way the thief could have been Buck. But it was important to me to know that physically he couldn't have done it, as well as to know that intellectually he couldn't have done it, based on all of the evidence

we had. And of course Officer Doran testified he picked up Buck at 12:15 to 12:20 and before 12:30.

Ritchie: It also seems odd to me that Senator Douglas was such a great defender of the Marine Corps, and here he's encouraging one of his staff people to spend years on a case that doesn't make the Marines look very good.

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Shuman: I'll tell you why that happened, I think. Certainly he believed in the Marine Corps. He saved the Marine Corps. He stuck with the case because Buck was a Marine. This was the fault of a few Marines at Camp Pendleton and the Navy JAG. In fact General Greene who was then the Commandant welcomed Buck and his wife back to the Marines and was very, very nice to them. The Commandant called him Marine. But two things happened, one to Mr. Douglas and one to me. He had been on some court martials in World War II. He was a little suspicious of defendants, because many quite obviously guilty said they were innocent, but he had also been on court martials where there was command control. And I had had an experience with that. When I was in the Navy I was on a court martial board at the end of the war -- World War II -- out in the boondocks at the Naval Ammunition Depot at Waikale Gulch, Oahu.

We had a group of sailors who after the war was over were celebrating. They broke into the Marine Corps Non-Commissioned Officers Club and stole some beer. They took a Navy truck from the base; they cut the wire fence leading out of the base into the cane fields; and they went off to the beach. They were there most of the night. They got a little drunk, and coming back the next morning they tipped over the truck. The commandant wanted to make an example of the leading sailor. He was court martialed. He was charged with breaking and entering. He was charged with stealing

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beer. He was charged with illegal use of government property, of wrecking the truck, of cutting the fence. The charges were voluminous, and I was on the court martial board and my roommate, a Navy lieutenant, was the prosecutor, and the commandant of the base called on him almost every day and put great pressure on him to get the sailor convicted and to make an example of him. What we did was to find him guilty, because he was guilty. At least technically he was guilty. We couldn't say he was innocent, but at that time we set the punishment, which the commanding officer could reduce but could not increase. He had had a very good record. He was a professional Navy fellow who had been in for six or eight years, and had never done anything wrong. So we put him on probation for six

months and we fined him a relatively small amount of money, and that was that. And the skipper was livid. My friend, the prosecutor, was not promoted to lieutenant commander because of it. I had that experience. It was in the back of my mind. I knew what could happen. I think these were among the reasons we both stuck with Buck.

Buck was stateless. The only reason he came to us was a) he was a Marine, so he came to Mr. Douglas because once a Marine always a Marine, and b) for just a year or two at a very early age he'd lived in Granite City, Illinois so we had some reason to say he was our constituent.

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Ritchie: That's probably the longest constituent file that was ever created!

Shuman: I think so. I have before me a book that I have written about it, which I have been unable to publish. It's been in my attic. Maybe some day I'll redo it. The problem with the book is that I know too much about the case, the detail is overwhelming. If I could redo it and write it in less than a hundred pages and distill it, it might be published. I knew what happened every minute from 1200 to 1300 that day. I worked it out. On the day of the crime I knew where all the key people were, for every minute, 12:00 o'clock, 12:10, Franz was here, the thief was here, Buck was here. It was a puzzle.

Ritchie: I have a feeling that if another Marine came into your office you probably would have run out the back door.

Shuman: I don't think I could do it again. It was a most intense emotional experience, and I don't think I could get myself up to do it again. I think I've done my duty.

Ritchie: And that you were able to bring it through to a positive end is the most amazing part about the whole story. It obviously doesn't happen very often with the government. Well, by contrasting something that was very successful with something that was very frustrating, I wanted to ask you about the commission that you and Senator Douglas worked on from 1967 to 1968, that

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President Johnson appointed on housing. I wondered if you could tell me what the objectives of that commission were, why it was appointed, and what you had hoped to accomplish?

Shuman: Well, in 1965 or '66, President Johnson had made a major speech, I think at Syracuse, giving his plan for the cities, his urban speech. What happens when a president wants to propose a program is that he can think of four things to do but he can't think of a fifth thing, so he says he'll set up a commission to examine the problem. So we've had a proliferation of commissions. Occasionally they're very, very useful. The commission that [Ronald] Reagan and Congress set up on Social Security did a marvelous job. Occasionally they are very useful such as in the Warren Commission and very necessary. But most of the commissions are established, I think, as an afterthought to make a fifth point. I remember back in '69, which was the first time any group in the Senate took on the Pentagon on weapons systems as opposed to procurement. When that happened a group of about twenty senators and staff would go to the floor, and we were routinely defeated on trying to knock out this system or question that one. We ended up one day proposing an amendment to set up a commission, because we wanted something we could win on. I think we did set up a commission. It was a last resort.

Commissions are set up for a variety of reasons: to push things under the rug, as a fifth point in a presidential speech,

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to be able to say I'm doing something, often to postpone an issue, hoping that a hot issue will go away, and people can say as they did about our commission," Well, we'll wait until the commission reports before we take any action." For many of those reasons this presidential commission was proposed by Johnson. Almost immediately after Mr. Douglas was defeated we got back to Washington and Joe Califano from the White House came to Mr. Douglas and proposed that he head the commission. I wasn't there, but Mr. Douglas called me in and told me about it.

I looked up the law, and I found out that instead of a commission under the president as had been proposed, the legislation directed that it would be a committee under the direction of the Secretary of HUD. HUD had rewritten the language after the President's speech and message. It proposed a year-long study and \$1.5 million. I said to him, "I think it would be a mistake if you took this, because you wouldn't have any freedom of action as a committee under HUD. You've got to get it established from the President that you are head of a commission under the president, under his jurisdiction, and that you are free to go wherever the evidence leads you. He agreed with that, so he sent me down to negotiate with Larry Levinson and Bob Wood. Levinson was in the White House. Wood was Under Secretary. They were quite receptive: they said "That's right, we should do that." They were open-minded about it. Furthermore the law had stated some

relatively narrow things. It had talked about urban problems in general, but it didn't talk very much about housing. It talked specifically about building codes, housing codes, and zoning, and development standards, and local taxes. We insisted that housing and how to get an abundance of low-cost housing would be the central theme and that these other elements, which were vital to housing, were also part of our study, but the central theme was how to get an abundance of housing for poor people in the country.

The White House agreed, and we wrote a release saying this. I drafted it with the Presidential speech writers in the tank over at the Executive Office Building (EOB). We got everybody to sign off on it, and waited. This was in November. We waited and waited and waited, thinking they were going to announce it early on in December. Finally, Mr. Douglas left. He'd been through a very strenuous campaign, so over the Christmas period he went to the Caribbean, and I stayed in Washington. One day, Secretary [Robert] Weaver called me and asked me to come to his office. We talked about the commission, but then he told me, "Go home, go home, don't show your face around here. I don't want anything to do with the Commission until it is announced. No one must know anything about it." The appointment of it under Johnson was very secretive. If someone leaked who was going to be appointed a judge, Johnson would withdraw the nomination. So Weaver was afraid of that. I thought at the time that he was the most

insecure person I had ever dealt with, absolutely insecure. I found out later that what happened was he had taken a tongue lashing from the President over testimony that he had given on the Hill. He was afraid that knowledge of the commission would come before the announcement, and if I showed my face around and started talking to people it would get into the papers and the commission would fall through the cracks.

Well, we finally were established, but the announcement was made I think about the tenth of January. It was made on a Friday afternoon at five o'clock, along with a bunch of other announcements of minor appointments. Almost no word was written about us, there was almost nothing in the papers about it. If you know anything about press releases, five o'clock on Friday afternoon is the worst time for the release of anything. There was no Oval Office presentation or send off. So I had to decide what we were going to do, and I couldn't get in touch with Mr. Douglas. I called his son, John, who was close to him, and said here's what happened, what should we do? Should we go through with it, or should we say the heck with it? They had rewritten the release in such a way that they did give

us authority over housing, and they also said that we would work with but not under the Secretary of HUD. So after conferring with John I decided to go ahead.

Mr. Douglas insisted that we should have a woman member of the commission, as a condition of his acceptance because they

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were going to appoint all white males. He insisted on a woman, a black, and he wanted a couple of academics, which he got. He thought the academics would leven the results a bit. We had a lot of practical people, housing people, developers, architects, but he wanted someone who might leven their views. So we got that agreed to.

We started off and first of all HUD tried to control our money. We fought them and we won. We were determined they weren't going to control that. Then they insisted on having one of their people at every one of our meetings. I often referred to him as the spy. We said no, you do not have a right to do that, but we may invite him. So we invited someone each time we met. We made it quite certain that he was there by our grace and sufferance. But everything we did, every criticism we made about HUD, got reported back immediately.

It takes time to get a commission established, to get a staff and establish a program. Mr. Douglas said we had a superb staff: half of it was superbly good and half of it was superbly bad. And I can tell you that the superbly bad part of the staff, one half, were the staff that we got from the agencies. The agencies wouldn't let us have their good people. They sent us people they wanted to get rid of for a year or two. We got the commission extended to two years, because by the time we got started late in January we couldn't possibly have finished in a year. But we did

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not ask for any additional money, so the Congress agreed to two years. We got the law changed, Mr. Douglas went up to the Banking Committee where he had been a member, and promised them faithfully that he'd finish it on time and we wouldn't spend any more money, but that we got a late start and needed the extra time.

It takes time to get a staff together and it takes time to get organized, so he thought it was very important that we should hold hearings while this was going on. We did hold hearings, mostly in the summer of '67, but also through '68 in twenty-two cities of the country. At each hearing we had a different subject

matter. In New Haven it was urban renewal, because New Haven got more money for urban renewal per capita than any city in the country. In Boston it was redlining. In Pittsburgh we did a study on taxation, because they had a form of land tax which was different than anyone else's. The schools were financed not by the property tax but by a land tax, a single tax. It was shades of Henry George.

We would meet not in the court houses or in the city hall, but we'd meet in the local communities, in the ghettos. We went to schools, and churches, and community centers and places of that kind. It was an extraordinarily interesting experience, and it was done mainly during the summer of the riots. There were riots all over the country. We first were not going to go to Cleveland because Cleveland had a mayor we thought would use us to provoke

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a riot, so we went to Detroit, where there was a good mayor, and good unions, and the motor companies had been very good on race relations, housing, and so on, and we thought there wouldn't be a riot. Of course, what happened was that Detroit had a riot and Cleveland didn't. How do you explain that? I don't know.

As we traveled over the country we found a lot of things. We found that almost no housing for the poor was being built. Mr. Douglas had helped write the original housing act in '49 -- well, not helped write, he did write it. He led an expedition of senators down to the Southwest of Washington at the front gate of Fort McNair, which was then almost the biggest slum in the country. The new Southwest has been built in its place, and there was a lot of interest in urban renewal and public housing as a result. Congress in the 1949 Act combined urban renewal with the authorization of 600,000 units of public housing. One of the things we found in '67 was that in all the years since the '49 act the number of housing units that were to have been built in six years had not been built in almost twenty years. Incredible!

The poor people had been pushed out. They'd bulldozed the Southwest and other places, but they didn't provide any housing for the people pushed out to go to. This was universal. We got to New Haven, thinking this was the citadel of urban renewal. I remember saying we were bringing the mountain to Mohammed because the mayor was so well known for urban renewal. But at the noon

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hour that day we found that our hearing site had been surrounded by the local police, who feared a riot. At every hearing we welcomed public witnesses to come in who weren't on the official witness list. We ordered our witnesses. We had to

have the mayor, the city planners, and the housing people, and the housing organizations, and the builders, as witnesses. But we also always made room for any public citizen who wanted to testify. And we sought out citizen groups to do so. At the end of the mayor's testimony that day, some local people were outraged. They lived on the Hill. We thought we were going to have a riot there, that we might start it, and we softened the situation and may have prevented a riot by going with them over the noon hour to see what they wanted us to see. They showed where they had been pushed out and new Yale faculty housing had been built, upper middle class housing, and there they were in the slums on top of the Hill, and they were furious about it. This was repeated, time and again.

Obviously we got a lot of attention because of Mr. Douglas. When we went to New York, and New Haven, and Boston, he was on the evening television, and occasionally on the national television. And of course we were critical. We found in one instance, under one of the new housing programs, that HUD counted a building in which there were four subsidized units along with ninety-six nonsubsidized units, as a hundred units under the program, when in fact only four were for poor people. We exposed this. We had the

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most difficult time getting any specific figures from HUD. They dragged their feet. I'd ask them for figures about how many units had been built, and they'd delay and delay. We held meetings, argued about the definitions and got no results. Incredible.

What happened to us was that HUD undermined us at the White House. They claimed that our commission was racked with discontent, that members didn't agree with the chairman, and on, and on, and on. Meanwhile we held public hearings and, seventy meetings in all of the commission. The attendance of our sixteen members was excellent. Almost always twelve or thirteen came. Only one member didn't come. All the others were very, very faithful. They had a common experience, and they could see, feel, and touch what was going on. We were in the ghettos, we marched the streets and we preceded the riots, and we followed the riots in that stormy summer of 1967. What an experience!

I had the feeling after coming out of East St. Louis that God had abandoned East St. Louis. I mean, East St. Louis with the stockyards, and the chemical plants, and north of the city the steel mills, was forsaken by the deity. Those who owned the steel mills lived on the west side of St. Louis, because the prevailing winds are from west to east. So all the smog and effluent from St. Louis fell on East St. Louis. There was a chemical plant in the latter. It was a Monsanto Chemical Plant. There were houses next to it. The conditions surrounding those

houses, if they had been in a factory, would have caused the state to close down the factory because the chemical fumes were so bad. There was Granite City, Illinois, where the workers lived. It was a company town. The Granite City Steel Company paid no taxes to speak of. The company didn't pay any more taxes than a single working man did for his home. The company threatened to leave town if their taxes were raised. Well, we looked at these conditions because we were authorized to look at taxes and housing and so on. But I remember feeling after East St. Louis about as I felt after leaving Berlin, when I really got ill to my stomach every time I saw a wall. For several weeks, the experience of seeing East St. Louis at close hand made me almost ill to think about it. It was awful. They were forsaken.

The White House got very angry with us for saying things that were critical of HUD, even though they were true. When the commission finished we wrote a report. We got rave reviews from the writer of the "Easy Chair" in *Harper's*, who said it was the greatest report since the Constitution and the Federalist Papers, which was an exaggeration. But it was a very good report, and it was a unanimous report, and I wrote about two-thirds of it. Mr. Douglas tried to get the President to receive the report before we quit on December 31. For a month, we kept calling Joe Califano to arrange it. And Joe Califano wasn't in. When we'd call, they'd say, "He's home." When we'd call him at home they'd say, "He's in

the shower." He was either at home or in the shower for more than a month. Finally, in December, Mr. Douglas did go to see him, and Joe Califano kept Mr. Douglas sitting outside of his office for more than an hour after the time for the appointment. I later told [Hubert Humphrey](#) this, and he told me, "That happened to me." He said, "When I was Vice President, Califano did the same thing to me." Probably at the President's insistence. But he said, "As Vice President, I waited outside of his office for more than an hour on many occasions." I was outraged at that. I was outraged at what happened to Mr. Douglas, but even more outraged at what happened to Hubert, because he was the Vice President. Mr. Douglas was then an ex-Senator. Califano was an example of a power hungry young man too much in a hurry and too big for his britches. I am waiting for the day when he apologizes for his actions.

Mr. Douglas wanted to present the report to the President, and to have our people thanked, because they'd done a terrific job. Well, Califano first asked him if the report was unanimous. Mr. Douglas said yes, and Joe was utterly amazed, because he'd been getting stories from Weaver and Wood, who turned on us, that

we were split and couldn't get together. There was a lot of argument and differences of opinion, but Mr. Douglas promoted that. We promoted debate and tried to find some ground that we could agree on, and in most cases we did, and when we couldn't

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then the people could footnote their views. We had no minority view to the report, we just had footnotes occasionally where people differed. Califano was amazed at this, and then Mr. Douglas again asked to have the President receive us, and Califano said no. He said, "You should present this to [Nixon](#)," who had then been elected. Well, our report date was December 31. Nixon wasn't President until January 20, and Mr. Douglas said "No, I am not going to give this report to a non-President. He's not the government." So we told Califano we were going to release it on the 15th, I believe, of December." "No, you musn't do that," he said. Mr. Douglas said, "That is what I am going to do, and we are going to do it, period."

What I did, in fear the White House would try to suppress us or censor us, was to mimeograph several hundred copies, and got early copies into the hands of the *New York Times*, and the *Post*, and the wire services, with the December 15 release date on it, so there was no way we could be suppressed. Then we held the press conference I think on Friday for a Sunday release. It was a big, big press conference. People brought shopping bags to carry away the report. We not only filed the report, but we had organized forty study papers as well as five volumes of hearings. We ultimately published twenty of those papers after the commission went out of existence. The quality of about thirty of the forty papers was quite good, and publishable. The quality of ten of

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them were simply awful. We found that the less we paid for a report the better it was. If we got a slick outfit to do it, it was balderdash. But if we picked the expert, as we did on population -- a professor at the University of Chicago who was a world expert on it -- we got a great paper. That cost us two or three thousand dollars as opposed to think tanks asking fifty or a hundred thousand. So we didn't commission many expensive papers. I think we spent three hundred thousand all together for all forty studies.

The White House knew that our report was going to be released on Sunday. Their press people did their best to knock us off the front page by leaking a secret report on housing. It later turned out that report didn't exist. There was no such report. It never saw the light of day. And they had Johnson give a speech on

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Saturday in Texas on housing, which was quoted in the papers. But we nonetheless made the front pages of most of the papers in the country. Then HUD was supposed to send our report to Congress, and we found out that Bob Wood had only sent the narrow stuff on taxes, on building codes and housing codes, and development standards, to the Congress. So I took the total, the whole report to the [President of the Senate](#), and to the Speaker of the House, and got that report printed by the Congress as the report that our commission adopted. But even at this stage, HUD was trying to do us in. It was a remarkable experience.

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It was one of the most difficult experiences I've ever had. Those two years were not hell on earth, there are a lot of things worse, but they were very, very uncomfortable years, largely because our criticism of HUD on housing, the lack of housing when urban renewal was done, and on the slowness of urban renewal provoked their hostility. We found out that thirty-seven percent of urban renewal projects took more than nine years. Some of them were still not finished after fifteen years.

But it was a truthful report. It was an honest report. The only thing a commission can do, as it is not a legislative body, nor an administrative body and has no power, except the power of the word, is to report truthfully. The power of the word, the informing function, can be a very powerful thing, as HUD and Johnson knew, because they were so opposed to it.

Ritchie: Do you think that after the commission handed in its report it had any influence over the Nixon administration or over the Congress?

Shuman: It did. Of course, Nixon ended up with a housing moratorium, absolutely doing away with the housing programs. That action became part of the impeachment proceedings, and was even one of the clauses that the House Judiciary Committee proposed -- it wasn't passed -- as an article of impeachment.

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Yes, I checked it out over the years, about what happened to our recommendations, and it was amazing how over time so many of the recommendations were accepted. Furthermore, I worked with [Proxmire](#) right after that, and he was chairman of the [Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs] Committee, or near the top much of the time, and I made certain that our key recommendations got into the housing bills when they were a federal matter. So there was a way to get the recommendations translated into law.

Ritchie: What's the difference between what a commission can do and what a Senate committee can do in terms of oversight? Is a commission somehow different than regular Congressional oversight?

Shuman: I think a commission can be freer. I'll give you an example. There is a permanent commission here in Washington, little known, it has to do with all levels of government, federal, state and local: the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. It does superlative work. That commission has on it some governors, some mayors, and some senators. Its staff director told me one time -- I was asking this same question -- that some of his senators, who for political reasons in their state would vote one way on their Senate committees, maybe very conservative, took a much broader view when they were acting as members of the commission. They looked at it as if to say: what's the right thing to do? They were in a sense emancipated from the narrow political forces of their states when acting as a member of the commission.

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The same person reacted differently on the same subject at two different places. In that sense a commission can do a lot.

I think they can rise above narrow parochial views and try to say: here's what ought to be done. Now, if you politicians can get that done, fine. But here's what we think you ought to do. So yes, I think a commission can have importance. That was true of our commission. The members took the job very, very seriously.

Ritchie: Do you think perhaps they took it more seriously than Johnson expected them to?

Shuman: Yes.

Ritchie: In other words, do you think that Johnson wanted a real commission, or was he just appointing this to get a difficult issue off his back?

Shuman: I have several views about that. Number one, I think the proposal for the commission was put in the speech by the speech writers as a fifth point for their urban agenda. Number two, I don't think Johnson had any idea that the programs were going as poorly as they were. I think he had been misled by the HUD bureaucracy. Number three, he was of course very unhappy about any criticism of any kind. He was almost paranoid about criticism. So I think that he was unhappy with what we said. Number four, I think that on reflection, if he looked at it

subsequently, he would have agreed with virtually everything we said, because he really was very much in favor of housing, and housing for poor people. It was the one area where he and Mr. Douglas, when they clashed in the Senate, actually agreed, where Johnson actually did put through some good housing bills. Perhaps it was because John Sparkman was in charge of housing, but Johnson believed in it. We told him, at least by letter, Mr. Douglas did, that this was the kind of report that he really would like. Mr. Douglas told that to Califano. He said, "This is exactly what the President, given his background, would go for. You ought to tell him the truth about it."

Ritchie: It's sort of a commonplace in Washington to call HUD a dud.

Shuman: We called it dud. That was coined by us.

Ritchie: Well, now that's a very popular way of describing the department.

Shuman: I coined it and used it in Proxmire's releases in '69. And we also called them the Department of "No" Housing and Urban Development, which was true.

Ritchie: What is it about HUD? That Department was the creation of the Kennedy-Johnson administrations, to solve some

of the problems of housing and urban affairs, and everyone seems unanimous that it's one of the weakest of the cabinet departments.

Shuman: Well, for years and years they weren't a department, so they didn't have the clout. They had trouble keeping a good staff. They were an independent agency for a long time before they finally became a department. The one method of building housing that was the least expensive and the most efficient was public housing, but there was great opposition to public housing from neighborhoods, from the Chamber of Commerce, from the business community, to some considerable degree for racial reasons. But as a method of building housing it was the cheapest and best way to do it, because it was built with local bonds, which were tax free. I visited a variety of public housing in the country, and in some, like Milwaukee, it was extraordinarily good. We saw in '67 and '68 public housing that was built in the Depression that was still very substantial and doing very well. Where there was good management, it worked.

They got into trouble when they built the highrises. Do you know why there are highrises? It's silly, because you can go into a small town in Iowa, where there is public housing and it is a highrise building. First of all it is housing for the elderly. HUD couldn't build an abundance of public housing for families with kids because of the social consequences, but they could build public housing for the elderly, because the elderly don't stir up

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any problems. One of the things we found was that far more than half the new public housing was housing for the elderly. While that was useful, the problems were with the large poor families, not with the elderly, to the degree that housing was built for the latter. We'd find two high rise buildings in the small towns: one was the local grain elevator, and the second was the public housing. Now, the reason for building highrise public housing in New York, or Chicago, was land cost. Land was very expensive, so they built high. It was an awful place for kids to live. But there was no reason at all for highrise public housing in a small town in Iowa, because land costs there were cheap. The Agency could go to the edge of town and buy an acre of land for five or eight hundred dollars and build all the housing that was needed. It was very inexpensive. But highrises were built in small towns.

The reason it was done this way was because HUD was loaded with people who were out of the original New York bureaucracy, of whom Secretary Weaver was one. They had always built public housing high, and they had forms and plans. So the housers would build highrise public housing in East Whistlestop, Illinois, a town of two hundred and fifty people. It was ridiculous, but it was done because the architects and the planners had never thought about the basic purpose, and because most of the housing bureaucrats had come out of the New York Housing Authority, which was one of the earlier and better ones. But they couldn't overcome

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their provincialism on this issue. This provincialism on the part of the housing establishment and the tunnel vision of the architects and planners was the reason for highrise public housing in Middletown, Iowa and East Whistlestop, Illinois.

Ritchie: How would you assess Robert Weaver? You had such hard times with him. What was Weaver's problem, and why was he not as effective as he should have been?

Shuman: Well, Mr. Weaver was the first Black ever appointed to a Cabinet office. He had come up through the bureaucracy, both the New York housing bureaucracy, and the Washington bureaucracy. He was a very intelligent man, and I think he was a very good man. One of our real disappointments about him went back to his confirmation. He had a lot of trouble, because those who didn't want a Black man in at the time tried to find things in his backgrounds which might keep him out. There were a few minor peccadilloes, which had nothing to do with his honesty, or his integrity, or anything of the sort, but had to do with organizations he was in in the thirties. It was very minor, but his enemies tried to make a lot out of that. Mr. Douglas was very disappointed in what happened to us later, because he had gone to the mat to defend Weaver when he had come up for Secretary of HUD. He led the fight for Weaver.

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But I think that like so many things, who gets the credit and so on, the relatively noncontroversial establishment-type is the person who is selected to be the first of this or that. It isn't the radical or pioneer person who is selected. So with his background as a housing expert and as a bureaucrat and the first Black as well, and a very distinguished man, he was picked. But he had never been all that controversial on housing issues, and certainly when he was head of HUD he wasn't controversial in terms of policy. Perhaps that was the way he should have played it. He was out there as the first Black to head a Department, and I'm sure he thought that he ought to do as good a job as he could in the eyes of the organization and the establishment. He was an organization man.

One thing I was going to also say: why was it that urban renewal was so popular, considering what it did to the Blacks, and public housing was so unpopular? Well, mayors like to do development. They like to do it with the central city business community, and with the Chamber of Commerce. So senators got tremendous pressures from all over the country, and especially from the mayors and the governors, not to build public housing for poor people, but to use the subsidized funds, UDAG, urban renewal, massive amounts of public money, for the political forces that are dominant in the community. That meant building the new Southwest, and building UDAG projects and development projects. The power

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structure didn't want to build housing for poor people and lots of Black kids. That's a critical point, and HUD was really the agent of the power structure. Now, there were many people in HUD who had a broader view, but basically that was the case. The urban renewal side of the bureaucracy took over from the housing for the poor side of the bureaucracy.

Ritchie: Do you think that the Congress did an adequate job of pursuing this? They passed the legislation, they passed the housing acts, but did they really press HUD to carry them out?

Shuman: Well, a lot of senators came into the housing mark-ups with pet amendments for urban renewal projects here, there or elsewhere. I remember the University of Chicago one time had an urban renewal project which was for upper middle class faculty housing. They had done some things like providing parking lots as their contribution. That didn't count under the law as a local contribution, but they came in to pressure us to get an amendment that some of the things they had done which didn't count would count. This happened all over the country. Every senator had a bunch of amendments to say that some local contribution should count which was an exception to the law.

There was an instance in Milwaukee, it was about a UDAG project or an urban renewal project, where the local post office had been built with federal funds. It was in a federal building.

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There was a big effort for Milwaukee to be allowed to count that as a local contribution in terms of the ten or fifteen percent that the local community had to put up as local funds to match the government's eighty or ninety percent of the money. So these things were constantly being done by individual amendments to the act. I remember Pat Robertson's father, [Willis Robertson](#), had a whole bundle of them one time. He was utterly opposed to the program, but he had all these amendments to benefit Virginia. That was very common. The program was corrupted, I don't mean to say in a money way, but it was corrupted in its intent.

When the housing bill was passed in '49, Mr. Douglas and [Robert Taft](#) were the two big authors of the bill. Taft was for public housing. They saw urban renewal and public housing marching together like two animals onto Noah's ark. One was necessary for the other. If you were going to knock down the slums, then you had to provide a place for the dispossessed. The number of units for public housing were associated with the urban renewal program. But that never happened, because HUD didn't build the public housing.

Ritchie: Because there was more political support for other development than public housing?

Shuman: Yes, the political pressure was for urban renewal, and for the builders and the developers, not for the poor people.

That's one of the great problems that our society faces, both in this area and in other areas. When we were involved in the fight over the 160 acre limitation in the Western states, whose purpose it is to allow people to have enough land that they can have a homestead farm that would be privately owned, the same problem prevailed. Water would be put on their land, which was very cheap without water, but when water came on it, it would become very productive. The land was gobbled up by the large corporate farms. The problem in breaking them up was that the existing political pressures are much stronger than future political pressures. You can't do things for the next generation. People always say they're doing this for the next generation, but politically you do it for the forces which exist now. Existing forces are much more powerful than future non-existing forces, and the powerful existing forces win out.

Ritchie: So a good politician has got to take that into account.

Shuman: He should be aware of it, yes. I think even in the housing area it was the intention of Congress to do more than the bureaucracy did. In other words, with all its faults, I think the general intent of the legislation was to a very considerable degree watered down by the forces of the bureaucracy. That is not to say that Congress wasn't at fault. Generally people blame everything that goes wrong on Congress. I would say in this case

that seventy percent of the fault was the bureaucracy's -- local as well as federal -- and thirty percent was the fault of Congress. But it was Congress' intention, certainly both Taft and Douglas when that bill went through, that 600,000 housing units for the poor were to be built to accompany urban renewal.

Ritchie: That was the story of Lyndon Johnson: having come out of the Congress he seemed more aware of how you pass legislation, but I'm not sure he was aware of how you administer it, and carry it out. His administration was frustrated in a number of areas where passing the law wasn't enough.

Shuman: I used to say there were five political parties in this country, not two. There were the liberal Democrats and the Dixiecrats, and there were the bulk of the conservative Republicans and a few progressive Teddy Roosevelt Republicans. And there was the fifth political party which was the bureaucracy. It dominated the other four.

Ritchie: Certainly in both the cases we talked about today, the bureaucracy was a powerful instrument, and it took a lot of pressure to get it to respond.

Shuman: And you see it more and more now as the executive branch is insisting that it is supreme in the War Powers area. The executive is not omnipotent in the area of foreign policy. There's an outrageous statement today from the State Department

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that the executive branch is entirely responsible for interpreting treaties, and Congress doesn't have anything to do with it. This is a plebiscitary view, that once someone is elected he can do anything he wants, and the bureaucracy loves to go along with that view. It's in their interest to go along with it.

Ritchie: Why don't we conclude on that note, and then next time talk about the years when you worked for Senator Proxmire?

Shuman: Let's do that, but let me just say here that three times I was offered a job by Proxmire. In 1960, when Mr. Douglas was reelected, Proxmire asked me to become his AA. I turned him down because Mr. Douglas had told me that if he won the election and Kennedy was elected he was going to try to send Frank McCulloch to the National Labor Relations Board, and if that happened he wanted me to be his AA at the full salary. I wanted to stay with Mr. Douglas, so I turned down Proxmire right after the election in 1960.

Then in 1966, when Mr. Douglas was defeated, I was asked again. Almost immediately after the election Proxmire called me and asked me to be staff director of the Joint Economic Committee. He was going to be the new chairman. I thought about it, but before I turned him down, and I had determined to turn him down, Mr. Douglas offered me the staff directorship of the Douglas Commission. So I was not without a job. But I had made up my mind

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to turn it down for a reason. The fellow who was the staff director had agreed that if Mr. Douglas were defeated, and I had talked to him in detail about this, that some of our routine staff could go to the committee in clerical and other jobs, not professional jobs, but we had about eighteen people in the office and they would need jobs, and we saw the writing on the wall and I was trying to place them. He agreed to take a few. Well, I felt that having had this agreement with him that it really would be a bad show if I took his job. Now I don't think that was correct. I think now that every chairman has a right to have the staff director he wants and

that it wouldn't have been improper. But I had a twinge of conscience about that and was prepared to turn it down. I've now been told by a couple of other people that they were asked to be staff director one of whom thinks that he was the only one asked. I never told him I was asked, and I was asked, I'm sure, before he was asked. He might not take that very kindly.

The third time was near the end of the Douglas commission, when I went up to the Hill. This must have been in December of '68. I was anxious to give the Douglas Commission report to Proxmire and other senators who were on the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee. I met him at a hearing and he asked me to walk back to the office with him, and he offered me a job a third time, and that time I took it. So it had a gestation period of almost a decade.

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Ritchie: Well, why don't we start then at that point.

Shuman: Fine. We won't have to start out with that explanation.

End of Interview #7

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Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Interview #8: Proxmire and the Golden Fleece

(October 1, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Ritchie: We were at the point when you left Senator [Douglas](#)' staff. Could you draw some conclusions about his character?

Shuman: I'd like to say a few things. First of all, he had the greatest combination of massive intelligence and strength of personal character of anyone I've ever known. You often find a very intelligent person who may be a good person but without great strength of character. And you often find people of great strength of character who are not necessarily people of huge intelligence. His was a unique combination.

I remember being with him in Switzerland one time when he was with a group of Swiss reporters. He recalled the history of their cantons back to the thirteenth century. On that same trip we went to Bruges, where he sought out the Michaelangelo statue of the Bruges Madonna. We searched it out in this small church. That was the same period that he spoke in German to the people at the Berlin Wall. He had swatted up at one time or another in his life almost every subject. He knew Italian art. He knew economics and made a massive contribution to economics, especially in the Cobb-Douglas function. He had read in detail the history of the Constitution, knew what the founding fathers had said and thought,

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the intricacies of the Constitutional Convention, the history of the United States. He knew more about Supreme Court decisions than almost any lawyer I've ever known. I asked him one time about this, and he told me that he deliberately took time in the summers and at other stages in his life when he took a subject and just made an effort to learn the organized knowledge in that field, physics, and chemistry and the rest. So he had a massive intelligence, plus strength of character.

There were many anecdotes about his character. I mentioned how he would step out into the hall before his secretary would be allowed to say that he was out of the office. There was a lawyer who wanted to be a federal judge who sent him a check for about five thousand dollars. Mr. Douglas sent it back. The man wrote

back and said there was no connection between his wanting to be a judge and the campaign contribution. Mr. Douglas sent it back again, saying: "I know that there may be no connection, but since other people may think so I'm returning it." He had the two dollars and fifty cent rule in the office: no gift could be accepted worth more than two dollars and fifty cents, except for a book. He would take a book worth more than that. But in all kinds of small ways he was an extraordinarily ethical person as well as a man of great intelligence.

We took a ride on his magic carpet, is the way we put it, which was true. I think those who worked for him probably

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experienced the greatest public moments in their lives. It was a unique situation! There will never be one quite like it.

There was one other quality about Senator Douglas which I wanted to mention, and that was the way in which his intellectual activity was very important at times to the political outcome. It happened many times, but I'll use only one example, and that was when he was in charge of holding the hearings and carrying the bill for the increase in the minimum wage when Eisenhower was president. Eisenhower had proposed a ninety cent minimum wage. The AFL-CIO wanted a dollar and a quarter. Most of the progressive, northern liberal Democrats had committed themselves to a dollar and a quarter, and the Republicans were under pressure to vote with the president for ninety cents. Mr. Douglas held very long, elaborate hearings, got all kinds of experts in, and had a special paper done by a skilled man from the Library of Congress. And in an extraordinarily intellectual way, he provided the evidence, and the justification, and the backing for a minimum wage of a dollar. He proved that was the proper economic level at which the minimum wage should be set. And as I've said, economics is not a science, it's an art. I don't want to claim that this was a scientific result, but it was as close to an intellectual result as one could get.

The bill went to the floor, he was managing it, and it went through on a voice vote, because there was no opposition for the

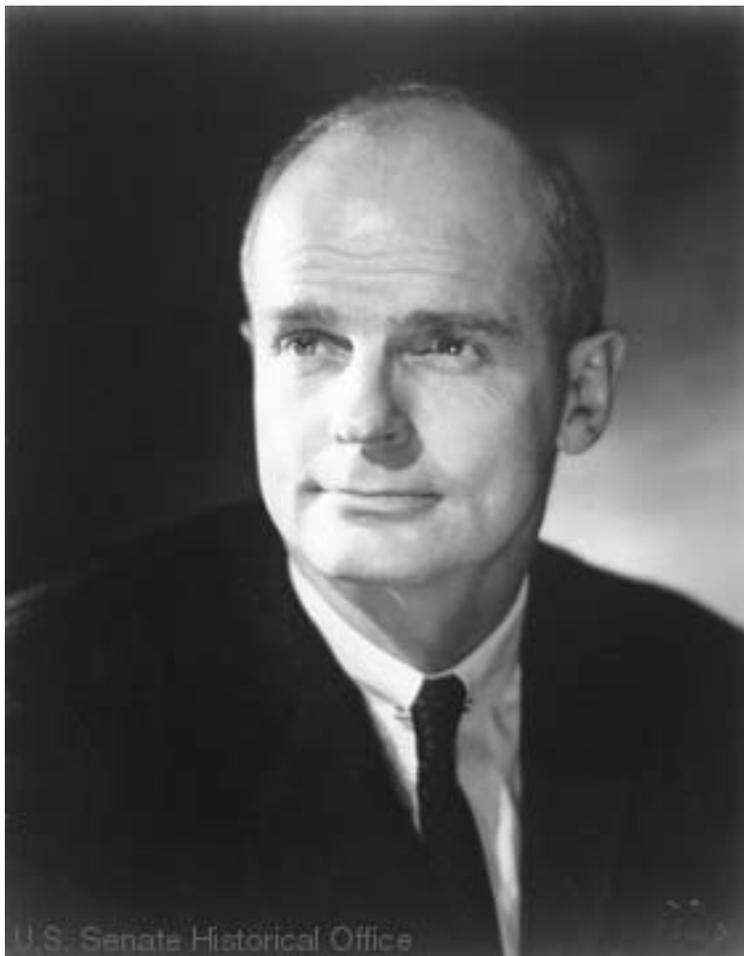
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dollar minimum wage. The Republicans didn't want to offend the AFL-CIO unnecessarily, but they didn't want to go for a dollar and a quarter, and they were very happy not to be put on the spot to vote for ninety cents. Most of the Democrats knew that a dollar and a quarter was too much, wasn't really right; it was part of the negotiating to begin with, so they were very happy to get off the

hook. So the bill went through for a dollar minimum wage without any controversy whatsoever. It was an example of the kind of a thing that Mr. Douglas did. It was a good example of the right answer, the fundamental answer to the problem. It was also an example of what a good politician he was. In other words, his intellectual activity drove the final result.

He had the same success when he was an arbitrator in the printing industry. He was the arbitrator between the unions and the management, and I think there wasn't a single time when his decision was not accepted by both sides, just on the sheer quality of the intellectual activity, and the evidence, and the proof. That was a quality he had, which I want to emphasize. He did that, time and time and time again in various pieces of legislation in which he was involved.

Ritchie: How would you compare Senator Douglas to the second senator you worked for, [William Proxmire](#)?



Senator William Proxmire
Senate Historical Office
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Shuman: They were alike in many ways, and they were different in many ways. I'll try to compare them and contrast them. They were both interested in roughly the same subject matter: economics, appropriations, funding, pork-barrel, taxes, the Joint Economic Committee. Both were chairmen of the Joint Economic Committee. Both were on the Banking Committee. Proxmire tried to get on the Finance Committee, and they did the same thing to him that they did to Mr. Douglas: they kept him off for five years, so finally he took a place on Appropriations. He really took from Mr. Douglas the phrase "A liberal need not be a wastrel," and practiced it. I think he did it for two reasons: one, he thought it was correct, and two, he thought it was very good politics for a Democrat. And both Senators were quite correct. I remember Mr. Douglas used to say, and Proxmire also -- Proxmire first said it -- that with respect to the military there were not hawks and doves, but as far as he was concerned there were fat hawks and lean hawks, and he was a lean hawk. I think many people misunderstood him and thought he was a dove.



Senator William Proxmire (second from left at dais), at a hearing before the Joint Economic Committee. Seated next to Proxmire is Senator William Roth (R-DE).
To the far right is Senator J. William Fulbright (D-AR).
Senate Historical Office Photo

Their work habits were very different. For example, I was always Mr. Douglas' witness when anyone of any importance would come to the office. The Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, no matter who it was, I would be there as his witness. I think he wanted a witness because there were two or

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three times in his life when he'd been without a witness when he was afraid what took place might have ended his career. One was when he was an alderman in Chicago and customarily walked to the office. There was a man who befriended him and who would meet him every day on this four or five block walk and accompany him to his alderman office. Mr. Douglas was told later that this man was selling his influence, allegedly to influence Mr. Douglas. Mr. Douglas didn't have the slightest idea that this was true, and he was very lucky to find it out, because his career might have been ruined. The man kept taking money on the side and had every appearance of influencing Mr. Douglas because he was walking with him. So I was his witness, or someone else was his witness, but mostly I was his witness.

Now, Proxmire didn't do it that way at all. He saw people one on one. I don't think it ever occurred to him that he needed a witness. If I needed to see Mr. Douglas I could walk in on him almost any time, and I did. So I spent a lot of time with him, almost like the buddy system in life guarding. Prox was quite different in that respect. In the morning, he came in usually at eight or eight thirty. He had breakfast in his office alone, and he did not want to be disturbed until about quarter of ten, just a few minutes before he went to his hearing. Then he was available right after the hearings. Then he was not really free until about three in the afternoon when he started to see people from

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the state or elsewhere. Then he was free again between five and six. But with Proxmire I was quite free to go home at six or six-thirty, close the door and go home. He would stay on his own. With Mr. Douglas, if the Senate were in session, someone, usually I, would stay with him -- sometimes all night long.

Mr. Douglas, I think, shared questions about what he should do with his staff to a greater degree. Senator Proxmire pretty much made up his mind on his own. Proxmire would ask, "How should I vote on this one?" And it was quite easy to say to him, "Well, this one is over the budget, so the vote is no." But with respect to some of the major decisions that he made, such as not running again, he didn't consult anyone, including his family; such as the time he gave almost a twenty-

four hour speech in the Senate on the debt ceiling. He told us at five o'clock in the evening that he was going to make the speech starting at six, and we got all kinds of data together, the economic indicators and the president's economic report with all the tables in it. He gave what I think is a massive, important, substantive and sequential speech. It was one of the best speeches I have ever heard on the issue. He did it off the top of his head with just an abundance of raw data at his fingertips, which we had gathered for him. But he made that decision on his own. When he went to the state, he really did not want any staff following him around. Even in one election when I was with him, it was '70, he wanted to shake hands with

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people quite alone, and we would stay back fifty feet or a hundred feet so as not to appear to be with him. His was pretty much a one-man show. And that was different from Mr. Douglas, although Mr. Douglas did not surround himself with any massive number of staff.

Mr. Douglas was quite frugal in his own office, but he was very generous with his staff and with his payroll, as was Proxmire. But in both cases they had a pretty tight staff. When Mr. Douglas was there the big states did not get enough money. The big states got only a third more money than the smallest states, so our staff was only slightly larger than that of Montana, which was next door to us. Our people got about half the salary and worked twice the hours. But when I was with Proxmire, the Senate had changed so there was sufficient money for the big as well as the small states. Of the two types of funds we had, one was for things like telephones, and trips back home, and telegrams, and that sort of thing, the other was for the staff salaries, both types of course supplied by the Senate. In Proxmire's case we made a point of turning back up to half of our operating expenses and certainly a third to forty percent of our staff funds over the years, because he felt that if he were going to be an economizer in the Senate, and point his finger at other people with the Fleece of the Month for the biggest, or the most ridiculous type of spending by the federal government, it was

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important that he live the same kind of life that he was advocating for others. We did that without too much difficulty. I'm quite convinced now that the Senate staffs -- not the staff people personally, but the amount of money that Senators get -- with the possible exception of the very largest states, is more than adequate for their needs, which was not true in the old days.

Proxmire had been a reporter, and I think he knew more about what Woodrow Wilson called the "informing function" than almost any other senator. I used to say there were two kinds of senators: the issue-oriented senators and the power-oriented senators. Power-oriented senators were people who twist arms in the cloakroom, who get on the pork-barrel committees and give out favors for favors in return, the way in which the Dixiecrats ran the Senate for years, but who when they leave the Senate, I think, are largely forgotten. What do they stand for, except a few public works projects and installations in their states? Those are important, but in the long run they don't change the face of history. Then I think there are the issue-oriented senators, in which category I put both Proxmire and Douglas, who are interested in making the country a better place in a variety of ways.

But Proxmire knew that the way to do this was to inform public opinion, to arouse public opinion, to change public opinion, which then reflected itself back on other senators who said, "I've got to know about that issue" -- the SST or whatever --

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"because it's going to be voted on tomorrow and I have to vote on it, so I'd better inform myself about it." He got senators to vote his way, not by giving them a favor in return for one of theirs, but by showing that it was an issue of major public importance, that public opinion was for it, that they really were bound to vote for it. That is the way he killed the SST.

Both men were very, very bright. Proxmire is extraordinarily bright. He is witty. He has a terrific IQ. Mr. Douglas wasn't quite as quick in the sense of getting a joke. He was often witty, but he sometimes didn't quite get the point. Proxmire in some ways was quicker than Douglas, but he didn't have the massive background in reading that Douglas had, in history, in economics, although Proxmire was very quick to learn. You could give him a sheet of paper with a bunch of examples and lots of information, and he could read it very quickly, absorb it, give it back to you, remember it, and use it very effectively.

One thing that Proxmire did which amazed me -- I don't think I could do it myself -- was to invite members of his staff in to debate him. In fact, I think he still does it, not just prior to an election but throughout the years. Both the summer interns and his regular staff would be asked, one of them about once a week, to come into the office at four thirty in the afternoon, to pick a subject that they had not told him about, to pick any side of the case they wanted to make, to make the argument in favor or against

some particular public issue, and then he would rebut it, and take whichever side was left. He did that regularly and routinely to sharpen himself for the debates that he had with his opponents. Unlike the common wisdom that a sitting senator isn't supposed to debate his opponent, because that's the way you give them exposure and raise their level of name recognition with the public, he was so good at it that on the whole the debates he held with his opponents hurt them because he was so much quicker and so much better informed than they were, through this practice.

We did some other things, both with Senator Douglas and with Senator Proxmire. If either senator was to be on "Meet the Press," or "Face the Nation," or one of the weekend talk shows, or were to go on television, we would routinely meet on Friday afternoon before the Sunday and bring in the five or six substantive people who worked for him, either on a committee or on his own personal staff, and for at least an hour, or sometimes longer, we would throw at him the toughest questions we could think of, and he would reply. Then on Sunday morning one or two of us would come in, after we'd had a chance to read the morning papers and get the latest news from the *Times* and the *Washington Post*. We would again throw questions for a half an hour to warm him up before he went to the program. We didn't overdo it, because we didn't want to kill the freshness and the spontaneity that would otherwise come. I think in all the years we did that, and we must

have done it for the major shows forty or fifty times, plus all the times we did it for more minor and mundane events, I don't think we ever missed a subject matter. We didn't always figure out ahead of time the precise question that would be asked, but I don't think we ever, ever missed the subject matter. And on the whole, our questions were tougher than the questions he got.

I would often call the TV producer and suggest that the senator might make some news for them -- that's what they were interested in, that he make news -- and suggest to them general areas where if they asked him a question he might well be prepared to make news. We would try to figure out ahead of time methods of making news, genuine news, not just frivolous stuff. Well, those may be some comparisons.

Ritchie: You mentioned that Proxmire liked his privacy. Would you describe him as something of a loner in his relations with people, with other senators as well as with staff?

Shuman: Well, he's a very independent minded person. He can't be bullied or flattered or bought to do something. He's not against helping a colleague if he can do it. If a colleague says, "I sure would like to have you help me on this," I think he does it if he can, but on the other hand he's very independent. If he'd made up his mind no, I don't think anything would change it. There are a lot of people who say about senators that they've

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got a lot of friends in the Senate, or they don't have a lot of friends in the Senate. I always thought that was a wrong method of judging a senator. I've known a lot of absolute nonentities in the Senate who were very nice people. I don't think it matters much in the Senate that you're a nice fellow and you've got a lot of friends. In fact, when [Johnson](#) was there, and [Russell](#) was there, it was just the opposite. There was no way that a friendly fellow like [Herbert Lehman](#) could be a part of the club, because for them he was wrong on the issues. It was the issues and how they voted on them that made them a part of the club. So I think that's a false method of judging a senator.

Both Senator Proxmire and Senator Douglas had colleagues they were close to on issues, with whom they agreed, or worked together, and yet they were both quite independent of a lot of people.

Ritchie: What was it about Proxmire that led him to take on the leadership and the establishment of the Senate, almost from the day he arrived?

Shuman: Well, he had come from the Wisconsin legislature, where they had held caucuses, where they met and decided things pretty much as a group. They didn't have any binding commitment, but if they got together, and worked together, and reached a consensus, generally most people would go along, because they

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would take into account everybody's view and determine their action. When he got to the Senate, there was no caucus. Johnson would hold a caucus only once a year and give his speech from the throne -- in fact, Democratic senators used to call it that -- just after Congress convened in January. And that was the last time there was ever a caucus of Democratic senators. Proxmire thought it was a very undemocratic method of proceeding. He took Johnson on. He made his major speech, which I think I have mentioned, "Proxmire's Farewell Address" on Washington's birthday, almost a year and a half after he got to the Senate. It was on February 23, 1959. He was critical at the way Johnson functioned.

Ritchie: Did Senator Proxmire get along any better with the leadership under [Mike Mansfield](#) and [Robert Byrd](#)?

Shuman: He liked Mike Mansfield very, very much, and he got along with Mansfield. Yes, he certainly did get along very much better with Mansfield. I used to say that Johnson was a benevolent dictator but under Mansfield it was anarchy. But anarchy was much better, because it was more pleasant.



Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (right)
with Senators Vance Hartke (D-IN) and George Aiken (R-VT).
Senate Historical Office Photo

Ritchie: So Proxmire wasn't just anti-leadership, and anti-establishment, he was anti-unfair leadership.

Shuman: I think so. And also he's gotten along quite well with Bob Byrd. I think he's voted for Byrd for leader all but the first time. Part of the reason for that: one of the things that

was very important to Proxmire was his voting record. He hasn't missed a vote in twenty years. He will shortly have more than ten thousand consecutive votes without missing one. Not quorums and votes. There was a man in the House who had a very, very extended record, which he claimed was longer than Proxmire had, but he counted the quorum calls as well as the votes, so it was unclear as to how many consecutive votes he had. But with respect to the Senate, the second largest consecutive voting record was [Margaret Chase Smith](#), who had just under

three thousand. Of course, Johnson would keep her from missing votes. I think it's fair to say that [Lewis] Strauss was defeated for Secretary of Commerce by Johnson with Margaret Chase Smith's vote, in part because he had preserved her voting record, and he then called in the chits when he needed that vote. Although with Margaret Chase Smith, one didn't dare trade directly. Johnson couldn't go to her and say, "I'll protect your voting record if you'll vote against Strauss." There was no way he could do that, but there were more subtle ways.

Ritchie: Why? Would she just resist completely an overt appeal?

Shuman: Yes, in vote after vote. I think she was still there at the time of the SST vote. There was a major vote where we were involved with her. The rule was: For God's sake don't approach her! Don't have the lobbying groups or anyone else go

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ask her. The first group that goes to ask her she'll say no to! That was a very, very important rule.

I got off the track there.

Ritchie: You were talking about leadership.

Shuman: Byrd protected Proxmire on his votes. Byrd would hold up the vote, make certain Proxmire had voted before he would call for the final tally. There were not many times, but there were certainly two or three times in this record of ten thousand votes, when Byrd kept him from missing a vote. I think, although he never said it, that one of the reasons he supported Byrd was because Byrd had done that favor for him. Byrd, of course, was known for this. He did small favors for everybody and then would send the person a note afterwards saying, "I did this for you." He would remind the senators in writing what he had done on their behalf. It was very, very common. I think that may have had some influence on Proxmire's support of Byrd. He got along quite well with him.

Ritchie: So the most important thing the leadership can do is to be fair and to be open, and not to try an end-run around the senators, which Johnson often did.

Shuman: Right. Johnson did it repeatedly for those who weren't under his thumb. He was quite unfair with them. There

were two kinds of senators, very much like George Orwell's pigs. Some pigs were more equal than others when Johnson was leader.

Ritchie: Both Proxmire and Douglas were chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, but Douglas never got to chair a standing committee of the Senate, whereas Proxmire became chairman of the Banking Committee. How different is the role of a senator when he becomes chairman? Does he have much more influence, or have the rules of the Senate made the chairman just first among equals?

Shuman: By the time Proxmire became chairman of the Banking Committee, he was first among equals. That was unlike the period through at least [Willis Robertson](#), when the chairman had control of most of the staff, controlled the agenda, controlled the subcommittees, and effectively controlled the committee. When Proxmire got there he was merely first among equals.

One very good example of that was [John Sparkman](#). He had been chairman of the committee and of the major subcommittee, the Housing Subcommittee. In fact, about sixty percent of the work of the Banking Committee was housing. So to be chairman of the Housing Subcommittee was extraordinarily important. Proxmire was very interested in that position, because on the Appropriations Committee he had the HUD, Independent Offices Appropriations Subcommittee, so here was a chance to have what I call the

"double-whammy," to be chairman of both the legislative committee and of the appropriations subcommittee handling the funds. It gives one very, very great power over the subject matter.

When Proxmire became chairman of the Banking Committee, the new rule was that a chairman of a committee could have only two chairmanships: one of his committee, and secondly he could be chairman of only one other subcommittee, either on his committee or on another committee. So if he were to retain his subcommittee chairmanship on Appropriations, he had to give up the Housing Subcommittee on Banking. He was the first chairman to which that applied. It was the [Adlai] Stevenson committee on the reform of the Senate which did that, and it did so because there were more junior members than there were chairmen and hence more votes to put it through. They really socked it to the chairmen at that time. Now, Proxmire got around that by holding the housing hearings in the full committee on grounds that it was of such importance that it should go to the

full committee. So he effectively controlled it. But there was a Housing Subcommittee chairman who had control of most of the Housing Subcommittee staff, which as I say was half the committee. So as chairman he didn't have as much authority as previous chairmen had had. He lost much of the staff.

I want to make a point about his independence. When he became chairman of the Banking Committee, he got calls from all

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over the country, especially I remember the New York banks, David Rockefeller and others, the California banks, all of whom wanted to come to see him. He said no, he wouldn't see them. He would see them in the committee. If they wanted to see him, they could testify on a bill, and he'd be glad to hear their views. But he wasn't going to see them. I had call after call after call when I told the most powerful and influential bankers in the country that I'm sorry, the chairman isn't about to see you. I didn't usually tell the person, I usually told my opposite number or the number one person working for him, who usually made about ten times as much as I did.

There was a second thing he did, which I thought was very good. He had been frustrated under Willis Robertson, as had Senator Douglas, because Robertson wouldn't process their bill or bills. He might send it to a subcommittee, but it would be killed in subcommittee if Robertson didn't like it. Proxmire took the view that any member of his committee who had a bill, if he wanted to have a hearing and wanted to have a vote on it, Proxmire would make that possible. He wouldn't stand in their way. So he would call, usually at the beginning of the Congress, and ask them which bills they were interested in. And if they wanted to have a hearing, he'd be glad to hold a hearing, and he'd be glad to arrange for them to get it out of committee if they had the votes. He helped them in every way. Well, it was very interesting,

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because it points up the fact that many, many bills, most bills, are put in not as serious bills but so a senator can say, "I've got a bill in, I've taken a stand on this, or I'm for that," without wanting to get it passed. That generous offer didn't bring with it a vast response from the members of the committee, most of whom had only one or two bills in which they really were interested.

It taught me another lesson in one thing which Proxmire did very, very well. That is, legislatively he concentrated on those issues over which he had some jurisdiction in the Banking Committee or in the Appropriations Committee,

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because he could get something done. It's virtually impossible for a senator on Banking or Appropriations to get a bill passed through the Commerce Committee, because no one there is interested in putting someone else's bill through, unless they have a great personal interest in it. I think to be effective, one needs to function that way. It's a very good lesson. It works. And as a result, I think Proxmire has a list of legislation with his name on it probably greater than any single senator in the Senate since he's been chairman of the Banking Committee. Bill after bill after bill; I could put a list in the record, but I won't.

Ritchie: Just the other day when he gave his talk at the Press Club they referred to him as "Mr. Banking." And he's going out with major legislation that he still hopes to get passed.

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Shuman: Well, he has new bills now, but he has had a vast number of bills in the past. Of course, that also brings up the point that any bill coming out of the Banking Committee has the chairman's name on it, so by being chairman of a committee a person will get much more credit than other people. In some ways the issue of how much legislation a person has passed is very misleading. I have yet to be in a campaign where the opponent hasn't said: "He's ineffective. Can you name three bills he's passed, bills that have his name on them?" Well, first of all, Proxmire had fifty bills with his name on them, but the average person, the public didn't know what the bills were, so the quick response was, "No, I can't think of a bill with his name on it." Secondly, unless a person is chairman of the committee, usually what happens is that a member's housing bill gets added as an amendment to the omnibus housing bill. The bill with his name on it ends up as part of a huge bill and is swallowed up in the totality, so the member doesn't get the credit for it. There are a variety of reasons why there are a relatively few bills called the [Wagner Act](#) as there have been in the past, or the [La Follette-Monroney Act](#). Very few pieces of legislation are now known by their authors, such as the [Glass-Steagall Act](#), even though certain people are the key people in the legislative process. It's unfair. That has always been raised as a red herring in every campaign I've been in: "How many bills has he passed?"

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A second red herring is: "Why hasn't he been here lately?" Well, a senator can be in every county in the state, as both my senators were, every year, and people don't know they were there. We used to send out lists to the papers saying when he'd be in the county, and here's the legislation that he'd passed, just as a defense against these two general arguments that are made against every incumbent senator.

Ritchie: When you mentioned the Stevenson rules change before, you were with Senator Douglas when he was operating on the outside against powerful chairmen, and you were with Senator Proxmire when he was the chairman of a committee. Do you think that the rules have moved in the right direction, or have they actually frustrated people when they finally got to a position of power and could no longer exert the power of the chairmanship?

Shuman: No, no, I fully agree with the general thrust of the Stevenson amendments. I think they made the Senate a much better place. They diffused power in the Senate instead of concentrating it. They were long overdue and needed to be done.

Ritchie: Well, is diffusion of power in itself good? Or is the question the people who hold the power? In the fifties the Southern Democrats held the top positions. When finally the liberals got into power, was it too diffuse to be effective?

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Shuman: No, it wasn't too diffuse to be effective, if the votes were there. And the votes were there starting in '58 and again in '64, and then for a short period after the '74 election after [Nixon](#) left. I suppose there is literature among political scientists about how power is concentrated in the House and the Senate, and then it's diffused, and then it becomes concentrated again. There's a constant swinging of the pendulum back and forth. But on the whole, I think it's much better for power to be diffused. Let me give one example. In the House today every member represents almost precisely a half a million people. It has never seemed proper to me that someone who's been there for twenty years, as in the old days, who's chairman of a committee, who's an autocrat, should have any more power than the most junior member, because they represent an equal number of people, and the junior member's constituents have the same right to be represented in the Congress as the constituents of the person who's been there for twenty years. Therefore, at least philosophically, I think that a chairman should be just first among equals. He has power to set the agenda, he has power to call the witnesses, he has power to schedule, so he still has a lot of power, but he shouldn't have the autocratic power that people have had in the past.

Ritchie: You were administrative assistant for Senator Proxmire. What did that job entail?

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Shuman: I performed much the same function as I performed for Senator Douglas. I was a super legislative assistant. I did not administer the office. I never

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tried to administer the office. I didn't want to administer the office. I was unconcerned about the petty details of the office. I didn't want to hire and fire. I did that only with respect to the legislative people, and even then in both cases the senators made that decision with recommendations from one or two of us. In the case of Proxmire, I usually brought in my successor, Ron Tammen, on the question of adding any legislative staff. Together we would pretty much agree, or if we didn't agree each would tell him whom we thought was better.

When I first came with Senator Proxmire, he didn't have an administrative assistant. He'd had administrative assistants, and he had a reputation for having an office with a big turnover. I don't know why, but it is true that after I came with him the turnover ceased. Some of it was the fault of the people he'd had as his head people. There are two examples. One person who preceded me came in thinking that this was his opportunity to mold a senator in the traditional way that a political scientist would want to mold a senator. He shortly found out that this wasn't possible, that he had a very independent person on his hands who wasn't about to be put into the mold of a political scientist. Another person who was his administrative assistant would publicly

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argue with him. A group of people would come in, and the senator would give his views on a subject, and the administrative assistant would interrupt and say, "I think you're wrong about that, senator." To give Proxmire credit, he was quite good about that because he believed in argument, and debate, and people presenting tough views. But I think it rankled a bit with him. So when that person left voluntarily, he did not fill the job.

When I came with him, that job was vacant. And after I came with him we had a very stable staff, perhaps because I didn't try to run the office in any detailed way. They paid me too much to be the administrator of an office. I think it's a great waste of resources to pay someone as much money as an administrative assistant gets, which is always within a couple of thousand dollars of the senator. You can't get more than a senator, but you can get almost as much. To run the mimeograph machine and decide what computer system you're going to have is really a waste of talent and effort, so I didn't do that. That was done by other people.

What I tried to do, and what both senators did, was first of all to hire people who knew how to write. I think the two most important things were that someone a) knew a subject matter, and b) could write clear, simple, straightforward English. It was imperative to hire people who used active verbs, short sentences, who knew how to write, could write quickly, and did not

procrastinate. Many people say, "I can speak well, but I can't put it down on paper." Writing is effort. Writing is work. Writing is organized thought, and it's not easy. I learned to write by doing a graduate thesis and by writing for a local newspaper and for Time magazine and because I had to meet deadlines. The way to learn to write is to discipline yourself and to meet deadlines.

The second method of operation I had was that each person on the staff had a subject matter, or several subject matters, over which they were expert. With both Douglas and Proxmire, they would go directly to the person who was in charge of environmental matters, or agricultural matters, or the dairy cow in the case of Wisconsin. I didn't get in between them. I was often there and listened, heard what the senator said, knew what deadlines he'd set, and perhaps would enforce these to some degree, or help the person, if he was in trouble or needed to get information.

I had no desire to perform the function of the executive officer in the military chain of command, or act as Donald Regan did in the White House. I think that's a mistake in a political office. I learned that lesson from a man I rode to work with for a year or two, who was the legislative assistant for Herbert Lehman. Herbert Lehman was a marvelous man. I think he shelled out about eighty thousand dollars a year from his own pocket to pay for a sufficient staff to answer the mail. It was a time when

the small states controlled the Senate, and had the big states by the throat, and when the big state senators got such a small additional amount of money that Herbert Lehman had to do that in order to serve his constituents. But the man I rode in with at a time when there was an administrative assistant and usually one legislative assistant, maybe two -- a big state probably had two -- but in this case the L.A. almost never got to see the senator. The administrative assistant guarded the door. Everything the L.A. wrote had to go to the administrative assistant and sometimes wouldn't get to the senator. The administrative assistant decided whether the senator was going to see it. The L.A. was very unhappy. He was a very able person and afterwards worked for Vice President [Humphrey](#) in a major capacity at the Executive Office Building. He was an extraordinarily able fellow who was totally frustrated by that set up. And I figured that was the wrong set up.

Now, one of the problems of working the way I did was that if you hired people whom you thought a) knew the subject matter, and b) could write, you were usually right three out of four times. But the fourth time you missed. I usually

missed because the person had an excellent biographical sketch, vita, but didn't live up to it. I resolved after having made one or two mistakes, especially after having made mistakes with the staff of the Douglas Commission, when we didn't really have much choice, but

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when people came in with marvelous looking biographical sketches and then couldn't meet a deadline, to do it in a different way. I determined I wasn't going to hire anybody I hadn't worked with. So I hired people, usually from other offices, I had worked with under the gun in a very important legislative situation, where we had to meet a quick deadline, where the senator would say: "I need this in the thirty minutes, give me a speech." I often wrote speeches in thirty minutes.

In fact, what I really did in Proxmire's office was to write. To characterize it, I wrote for a living. I wrote his articles, I wrote his speeches, I wrote his books. That brings up the question of plagiarism, which I thought was overdone in the [\[Joseph\] Biden](#) case, that is to say, I think Biden was criticized too much for what was called plagiarism. There isn't a senator who doesn't plagiarize his staff. I have a story I tell. It's not quite true. I've embellished it a bit. There is a book called *Uncle Sam, The Last of the Big Time Spenders*, which I have here -- I hold in my hand, as a former Wisconsin senator said. I wrote every word of this book except the preface. The senator was very good to me about this. He gave me I think more than half of the royalties. I put a daughter through college for one year on the royalties. I wrote a chapter a week over ten weeks during the summer vacation. Part of it was written at Cape Cod. I worked out a method of writing it. I wrote on Mondays, Tuesdays

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and Wednesdays, collected data Thursdays and Fridays, spent the weekend just absorbing it. Then Monday morning I worked for three hours writing ten pages of legal sized foolscap, corrected it that night, swatted up what I was going to do the next day, wrote the next morning, collected additional information, swatted it up, wrote Wednesday. I did that for ten weeks, and I wrote the book in ten weeks. But it also represented almost a lifetime of experience, enabling me to do that.

The senator put in the preface something like the following, although I'm exaggerating it a bit: "I want to thank my administrative assistant, Mr. Howard E. Shuman, without whose efforts, word by word, line by line, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, chapter by chapter, this book could not have been written." A little later on, he wrote a book of his own, called *You Can Do It*. It's a health book. And he wrote every word of it. So I went to see him one day and said,

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"Senator, why don't we call this book *You Can Do It by Howard Shuman*. And we'll put in the preface: I want to thank Senator William Proxmire, without whose help, word by word, line by line, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, chapter by chapter this book could not have been written." That's my story on that. I wrote for a living, and I liked to write. Writing is like speaking. If you do it a lot, it becomes easier. If you lay off for a couple of weeks, you find it very hard to get back into the stream of things.

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Ritchie: When you write for a senator who is going to either give it as a speech or release it otherwise, do you find that you write in that senator's style?

Shuman: Yes.

b>**Ritchie:** Do you try to adjust yourself?

Shuman: Yes. I wrote in Proxmire's style. I wrote in Douglas' style.

Ritchie: What were those styles? How would you think as a Douglas or a Proxmire?

Shuman: Well, they both wrote simple, straightforward English. Douglas was more thorough, less punchy, explained things in greater detail, and used more factual information. He liked to pile up the evidence and prove his conclusions. Proxmire was the journalist who wrote a good lead. Proxmire had a genius for writing the lead. Almost the only thing he'd change in the stuff I wrote for him was to change the lead. He was more assertive and did less of piling up the proof. He knew what a good newspaper lead was, how to grab attention, to say what was the essence of the article or the speech in the first sentence or the first paragraph. He was very good at that, but he didn't change very much except the lead. The fact is I crawled inside both of them. I knew them well enough, worked with them closely enough, went to

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hearings with them, knew what they thought, what they said, what their position was, that almost never did they change what I wrote in any substantial way. In fact, most of the time my style of writing was really at best revised first draft. It came out as I wrote it. I think Proxmire will tell you that I could write very quickly. And I like to write.

Ritchie: That leads to the question of the "Golden Fleece" awards.

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Shuman: I knew that was coming up!

Ritchie: What was the history of the Golden Fleece?

Shuman: It's a very simple history. It really begins with the first thing that happened to me when I came to work for Senator Proxmire. I came to work for him early in January of 1969, and the previous December, I think it was the tenth or the twelfth, during a recess of the Senate he held a hearing. He loved to hold hearings during the recesses, between Christmas and New Year, between the 10th of December and Christmas, or on a Saturday, anytime when the press was desperate for news. In fact, I remember one time we had a report which we issued between Christmas and the New Year for the Joint Economic Committee, when almost no one was in town except the senator. I think every camera and every press person in town was there. He held the press conference to release the report, but the press conference

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was held a day or so before the release date, so they'd have time to read it, absorb it, and write their stories. So there was no immediate news that day. After the senator had finished detailing the report, what was in it, and so on, one of the newspaper people got up and said: "Senator, can't you say something else? We're desperate for news!" The senator knew this and took advantage of it.

He had held a hearing in December on the C-5A airplane at which Ernie Fitzgerald had testified. Critics say that Ernie came up and blabbed out that there was a two billion dollar overrun on the C-5A and was disloyal to the Air Force. Ernie doesn't deny that, but that isn't quite what happened. What really happened was that Richard Kaufman of the Joint Economic Committee staff had been briefed at the Pentagon on the C-5A, and had just stumbled, during the briefing, on the fact that there was a two billion dollar overrun. So when Ernie came up to testify, he was asked about that. I went back to read the record, because I put it in the book. But if you read the record you'll find that Ernie demurred, several times. He wasn't about to confirm it. So finally, Proxmire put it to him that there is a two billion dollar overrun on the C-5A, to which Ernie finally answered yes, which was truthful. He wasn't going to lie. Ernie is a hero, and I think deserves all kinds of credit, and has been fired and rehired, and Carter campaigned that he was going to reinstate him,

and then got in and refused to do it; Ernie deserves a lot. Very few people have the guts and the fortitude to do what he's done. But still, if you go back and read the record, he wasn't that much of a hero at the initial stage.

Well, Proxmire asked me, very early, in January, whether he should continue with this issue. I said, "Yes, you must." Two billion dollars is something people cannot understand. They cannot see, feel, and touch two billion dollars. It's just too much. But when it was personified by the Air Force firing the poor guy who told the truth and blew the whistle that was real live stuff. What the senator was trying to do was cut waste at the Pentagon and to make the Air Force procure more efficiently. Now it was personalized by Ernie. That's exactly the kind of issue you want to deal with.

We tried to adopt that principle to government waste in general. So we decided to try to personalize the issue by examples of the biggest, the most ridiculous instances of wasteful spending for the month. We originally held a contest in the office to get a name for it. I didn't win it, two other people came up with the name "The Golden Fleece," which is a double entendre. There was a golden fleece in Greek mythology. Who was it, Jason and the golden fleece? It also has the entendre of fleecing the public. So it was a very good name.

I was responsible for editing and getting out the fleece every month, from about '74 when we started, maybe '75, until 1982 when I left. I wrote about a third of them, and I was responsible for and edited all of them. One of the things I kid about as the consummate administrative assistant is that when the senator was sued for one of the golden fleeces, even though I had been responsible, my subordinate who drafted it and the senator who okayed it, were sued. They didn't sue me. Now, it takes a certain amount of bureaucratic expertise to survive that situation! They were the butt, the senator and the subordinate. Seriously, it was inadvertent that they were sued for \$8 million, not me.

But its purpose was to try to draw attention to issues that otherwise people didn't notice. I would like to give one example. There is a man in Washington by the name of I.F. Stone. I.F. Stone wrote a newsletter, which made great news and was a big contribution to public information about all sorts of subjects, because he merely went through the public documents of Congress, the hearings, and wrote about things that other people missed. Now, the press is in a sense lazy. The press likes a fight, conflict, so they spend great effort before an issue is finally resolved, when the big issue is in committee or on the Senate floor, writing about who's

going to win, who's going to lose. They write very little about the substance of the bill, but they do write about the fight, who's winning, who's losing on Civil

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Rights, on a whole variety of issues, on the B-1 bomber, the MX missile. But where the power is, where the money is, in the appropriations committees, which is really the place that funds the programs and where the policy is carried out, the press almost doesn't cover it.

So here was Proxmire who from time to time was chairman of the Appropriations subcommittees on foreign aid, HUD and independent agencies, and on Health and Human Services. He's also on the defense subcommittee of the Appropriation Committee. But the press doesn't come to the hearings. They are seldom involved in what happens in the mark-ups, which are now public. They are very lazy. After the initial fight is over, they forget it. Well, the Appropriations subcommittee is where policy is made. It's the source of policy. Proxmire would cut or increase the budget of HUD, or the space agency, or some defense item, and the press would pay no attention to it at all. The budget is the priorities document. We couldn't get their attention focused on this. So the fleece of the month's purpose was to try to get some attention on these areas which were essentially overlooked by the press in the Appropriations Committee, which were of such magnitude that people couldn't see, feel or touch and understand them, unless there were good examples. The fleece served that purpose very well.

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It had quite a good effect. After the first year, I did a survey, because people would say, "Well, does it do any good?" I did the survey to find out what, if anything, had happened as a result of our criticism. We found out that in two-thirds of the cases, it may have been three-quarters, eight or nine of the twelve, that in fact either the practice that we'd complained about had been changed or modified, or the fleece had some other major effect. There was one effect that it had which was not such a good effect: the National Science Foundation, which was then putting out relatively small amounts of money for what seemed to us to be very silly projects -- why people fall in love, and things of that kind, whether fish that got drunk on tequila or on gin were the more vicious, really ridiculous types of things. What they did was to go through their awards, and in order to keep us from finding ridiculous examples, they changed the names. They didn't change what they did, they merely changed the name. But contrary to the charge that was made against us that we merely picked up things that had a stupid name, we never picked something merely because of the title. We often found things that had rather silly names but which in fact seemed to be quite good projects,

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and we did not give them the fleece of the month, unless there was some really good reason to do so.

Ritchie: Did you ever in retrospect regret a fleece?

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Shuman: No, not even the one we got sued on. In fact, I feel more strongly about the one that we got sued on than almost any other. We did not make an error. There was no error of fact or substance there. One of the things that happened with that fleece (and I can say this because it's part of the record, I'm now quoting the record of the court) was that the fellow who received the grant -- we didn't give it a person, we gave it to the agency, so the person who got the fleece was the National Science Foundation, not the person who received the grant. We said the Science Foundation was at fault for giving such ridiculous sums of money to the person who got them. The person who got the grants had been fired from his job for some of the same things we complained about.

I have no regrets about any one of them, because they were accurate. Over the number of years that I was involved in it, we almost never made a mistake. The only factual mistake I can remember -- there were two, and I can only remember one -- was that we got the city wrong. The person who got the grant was from one city in Indiana, and the research took place elsewhere, and we got the cities mixed up. But apart from that we almost never had a factual error. The one I enjoyed a great deal hit very close to home. I play tennis about five times a week. I live in North Arlington. Within a mile or two of my house there must be fifty public tennis courts, and I play on them all the time. There was

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an article in the suburban press about a study that the National Science Foundation had funded for a small amount of money, five, eight, ten thousand dollars, to find out why people get angry on the tennis courts. The researcher set up a very elaborate study: there was a survey of tennis players. The researcher hired a psychiatrist to interview people. She did all the things behavioralists and the psychologists do, and she ended up finding that the reason people got angry when they were at the tennis courts was that more people wanted to play tennis than there were courts to play on!

When I first saw it, I thought it was a hoax. So I called the reporter, and he said, no, this isn't a hoax. Then I called the researcher, and the researcher was very excited about the work. I really felt rather badly about it, because she was so enthusiastic about her piece of research. But nonetheless we did give the fleece to

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the grant that went to Arlington. It pointed up one of the things that was wrong with the way the Foundation (in this case it was the Endowment for the Humanities) gave the money. They gave the money to the State of Virginia without asking the state what it was going to do with the money. Virginia got its share of the money that went out to the 50 states. Then it was of no concern to the Endowment what happened to those funds. Now, the Endowment made the argument, and there was some sense to it. They said, think of the administrative costs if we

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have to follow up on what the states do with every small ten thousand dollar grant. But the small grants add up to a lot of money -- one-hundred twenty-five or thirty million dollars I think they were getting per year at that time -- over which the Endowment relinquished jurisdiction and over which they said they were not concerned or interested in what happened. We pointed that out.

Ritchie: It certainly was a tremendously successful public relations tactic. It always made the newspapers.

Shuman: It always made some of the newspapers. The *Washington Post* sometimes did not print it. Often the *Washington Post* printed the fleece not as the original story but the criticism of the story by the agency who received it.

Ritchie: Why do you think that was?

Shuman: I think they felt it was beneath their dignity. If they had found it, it would be a good story, but for some senator to find out something that was newsworthy and to put it out once a month was sort of interfering with their business and they weren't really going to acknowledge that. Also, the story was written by their staff person, who covered the agency getting the award. And that person, in order to protect sources often gets co-opted by the agency he or she covers. I never asked them, because I learned very early not to complain to newspapers about what they did or didn't run, because they always have the last

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word. In fact, when we were sued, the first story to appear was the rebuttal by the person who got the grant. And the reason for that was that I think the *Detroit Free Press* or the *Detroit News* got our release, say on a Saturday morning, which was for a Monday morning release, and on Saturday afternoon they called the researcher and said, "Here's what's being said about you. What about this?" He gave his reply, and they printed his rebuttal. His rebuttal to our fleece was the

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story that was put out first. We read it as the rebuttal to our fleece, which had not yet appeared. I never thought he was maligned as a public figure because his reply preceded any allegation we made. It was like Alice in Wonderland, "Verdict first, evidence later."

Ritchie: Do you think that some of the papers may have reacted that way because they thought it was a stunt? Because the senator was doing this on a regular basis?

Shuman: They might have.

Ritchie: That they might have been suspicious of something that looked overtly like a public relations operation?

Shuman: Well, I think they thought that. But so what? They do it all the time, and they don't think anything is wrong with it. If it were news, they printed it, believe you me they printed it. And we had access to sources that the papers didn't have. Most of our stuff came from digging deep into the subject

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matter of our Appropriations Committee. We had people around on the Joint Economic Committee and on the Appropriations Committee staff and in our own office who kept an eye out for these examples. And if we saw something that was interesting, we could command the papers. We could ask the agency for the details behind it; we could get the original contract, which we did, and which we read, and from which we quoted. We had the basic information, and that's why we were so accurate. But that was information that no one else could get. So, I make no apology for it at all.

Ritchie: Just the other day, Senator Proxmire was asked what he was going to do with the golden fleece after he retired, if he was going to will it to another senator. He said actually he was thinking about taking it with him, and he hoped that he could continue the tradition.

There was another thing about Proxmire that I was always interested in: when he begins to do something he seems very dogged about it. He gave a speech every day for years on the genocide treaty. He makes a point of making a speech every day during the Morning Hour. There are certain issues that he repeats and repeats. Is there something about his character that accounts for that tenacity?

Shuman: Yes, we always called him an over-achiever. We meant this as praise. He has incredible self-discipline and determination. I don't know how many years he gave a speech virtually every day on the genocide convention. He decided years ago that people hadn't paid enough attention to it. He said, "I'm going to give a speech every day until it's passed." It took about twenty years to get it passed! But it did get passed. And he got a lot of credit for it when it was passed. The same is true with his record on consecutive votes. The same is also true about going back to the state. He makes a point to shake at least a thousand hands every day he's back in the state.

I remember when, I think it was with Ernie Fitzgerald, the Defense Department tried to muzzle or to punish Ernie for testifying before the Joint Economic Committee. There's a statute which makes it illegal for a department or agency to punish an employee for giving testimony to Congress. Congress has to be able to get information and protect itself. Well, obviously, the Justice Department was unwilling to do anything about this. I think that the conflict of interest in the Department of Justice is one of the worst things in the government. There hasn't been an Attorney General to speak of, with one or two exceptions, who wasn't either the brother of the president, or from the law firm of the president, as was true of Nixon, or his personal lawyer as was true of the first Attorney General under both [Jimmy] Carter and [Ronald] Reagan.

Ritchie: William French Smith.

Shuman: Smith. The Attorney General is almost always someone who is put in to protect the rear of the president and to keep anyone in his administration from being indicted. That is the purpose of the Attorney General, and it's wrong. They should be independent. Their purpose is to enforce the law. This may be apocryphal, but there's a story that over one of the doorways of the Justice Department there are the words: "All ye seeking justice enter here." And there's a big sign at that entrance saying: "Please use the other door." I think that's true. So what we did after writing to the Attorney General two or three times, this was Nixon's Attorney General, asking him what he was going to do about this obvious attempt to muzzle a person for testifying before Congress in violation of the law. And we didn't get a reply. We started putting things in the record like "today is the forty-fifth day since we sent the letter to the Attorney General asking what he was going to do." Then we'd say it's the forty-sixth day, and the fiftieth day, and the hundredth day, and so on, which was a very good device to draw attention. There's nothing wrong with that, because it's what Woodrow Wilson called the

informing function, which is as important as the direct method of legislating. You can't legislate without informing, and that was an example of the informing function.

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Proxmire never, ever was interested in publicity in personal terms. When he went home at night, he would go to bed at nine thirty or ten o'clock, and wouldn't answer the phone. He had an unlisted number. I remember the morning when the Iran rescue mission failed. I got a call at six o'clock in the morning from the press, saying, "Where is he? We can't get hold of the senator. What does he have to say about this?" I said, "Call him at the office, he'll be in at eight thirty, and he'll answer your questions." But he wouldn't interrupt his private life to appear on television, he wouldn't do a lot of the things that people who are anxious for press coverage would do. He did it because he felt it was a fundamental part of his job, and that this was the way he could get his issues across. It was not a method of self-aggrandizement. People don't understand that, they don't believe me when I tell them that, but that is in fact the case.

Ritchie: And having been a reporter, he knew -- if you had an issue to get out -- all the things you had to do.

Shuman: Correct. It was a part of his profession. He was trained in it.

I remember one morning about three o'clock, I got a call from the District of Columbia police. Proxmire's son had almost been killed in an auto accident on the Baltimore Beltway. The police couldn't get in touch with him, so they called me in the middle

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of the night. I called the senator, because I had his unlisted number, but he didn't answer. He often refused to answer the phone. What I had to do was I had to get the Capitol Police, tell them who I was, (I knew them, so they knew who I was) to tell them to tell the D.C. Police to go to his house and wake him up. The D.C. Police were unwilling to do that on my word. They were afraid to go knock on a senator's door at three o'clock in the morning. But I had the Capitol Police call the D.C. police, and they in turn did call at his house and got him up. But he wasn't about to answer the phone in the middle of the night. If a senator has a listed phone, he gets a lot of calls from drunks in the middle of the night, people who have got a big argument, mostly drunks.

Ritchie: Your mentioning the accident reminded me of the time the senator was mugged during one of his jogs. He always used to jog to the Capitol and back home again every day.

Shuman: Yes, he used to run in. It wasn't jogging; he ran in and he ran home. There is a distinction between running and jogging. He did this long before it was as popular as it is now. He was on his way home only a few blocks from the Capitol when he was mugged by two black teenagers. One I think was fourteen and the other fifteen. They were both underage, both juveniles. They robbed him, and he fought them, and they ran off. But there was a police car near by which the senator hailed in a matter of

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minutes. There must have been fifteen police cars that descended on the area, and they caught them really quickly. Those kids were very surprised at what happened to them when they mugged a senator!

Well, the senator went down to the hearing, and one of the boys' parents were there. The senator was quite impressed with the family, thought this kid had a good chance. So I suggested to him that he hire those two young men to come into the office after school to give them something to do and to keep them out of trouble. They could help us get out the mail, that is fold the letters, lick the envelopes, get them stacked together and mailed out, which was an hour or two of work. We would pay them the minimum wage or better. I've forgotten what we paid them now, not a lot, but something fair. We did that for about a year, and we didn't tell anybody, and we didn't get any news out of it. It was two or three years later when the *Milwaukee Journal* reporter found out about it and called us. Of course, I couldn't lie to him, so I told him what had happened. But I think it's an example to show that the senator wasn't just interested in publicity.

One of them made it, the other one didn't. It was kind of a sad thing. The one who didn't make it was a big kid, very tall, quite heavy. Afterwards he went into one of the main stores in Washington and shoplifted and was caught redhanded. It bothered me. It bothered me not so much that he did it but how stupid he

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was. I mean, there was no way that a big tall black teenager could walk into Woodward and Lothrop and shoplift without half a dozen people watching him. I criticized him very severely afterwards, not for the immorality, but for the stupidity of what he did. I was unhappy about that. He didn't make it, and I'm sorry he didn't make it. I don't know what else we could have done.

Ritchie: Well, it's an interesting side of his character that he would hire his two assailants.

Another question I was going to ask about was the relationship of a senator's staff to the staff of the committee that he chairs. What is it? Is it a friendly relationship, a distant relationship, a competitive relationship? How well did you work with the staff of the Banking Committee?

Shuman: I worked well with the staff of the Banking Committee, with perhaps one exception. That wasn't a personality thing but was over an issue in which our chief person on the Banking Committee disagreed with what we were doing and asked to opt out. So I had to take over the issue, which I did. But that wasn't a routine friction, that was just on that issue.

I didn't have any conflict with the committees. We had a good committee staff on the Joint Economic Committee, but even on that committee they were not as attuned to the senator's personal style in the way I was. So that every month when the Bureau of

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Labor Statistics reported out the unemployment figures, we would get those figures at nine o'clock for the ten o'clock meeting, and I almost routinely wrote a statement for him as to the significance of the figures. Sometimes he wrote his own statement. One of the things I did with the Banking Committee and the Appropriations Committee, was to go to the hearing and listen and then sum up what had happened. Then I would go out maybe twenty or thirty minutes before the hearing was over and write up a closing statement for him, summarizing what had happened that day. Very, very often that statement summarizing the hearing became the key factor in the news stories, in the leads on television and in the newspapers. That was impossible to do before the fact. Once he was severely criticized by a HUD witness for reading a written statement at the end of a hearing on grounds he had pre-judged the evidence. That wasn't true. I wrote the statement after consulting with him on the dais after hearing the evidence.

If it were a very technical legislative statement, the staff of the committee would do it. But if it were more of a political statement, I did it. So we didn't get in each other's way very much. But I was his economic writer, and since he was mainly interested in economic issues, the budget, monetary policy, tax policy, fiscal policy, I did an awful lot of the writing for the committees in addition to the kind of things that the staff would do, such as preparing detailed questions for him, briefing him.

I suppose, of all the senators I've known, with the possible exception of Mr. Douglas, he was better prepared for a hearing than any senator. Most senators come in and the staff gives them a couple of questions to ask and the senators don't know very much about the subject. They ask the question, and then they don't have a follow up. Well, with Proxmire, we prepared for those hearings much as he prepared to go on Meet the Press. We'd meet with him usually the evening before the hearing, not at nine o'clock in the morning. The staff people would have good questions. I would often write an opening statement the next morning. He would have a list of questions that had been prepared for him to ask, and he would ask them and get the answer that we thought the witness would give. Then he'd be prepared for two or three follow-up questions as well. So he was extraordinarily well prepared. He did his homework in a way that very few people do. It was a joy to work for him, for that reason.

But even after that disciplined preparation he pulled many surprises. Frequently the television people would come around and ask me, "Is he going to make any news?" The hearings would be almost over, and I'd say, "As far as I know he's not going to say anything more." And then he would come in with something at the end of the hearing that was an absolute shocker, but he did it on his own, often without telling us. Sometimes he would tell us, or sometimes he'd say, "Here's what I want to do, go write a

statement." As I say, my job was to write, and to write quickly, and to do it under fire. I did it both at the hearings and for the Senate floor.

There is something people don't really understand very well about the way the floor functions. The legislative process -- I don't think it's a process, everything is called a process these days -- really is not a process in the sense of a factory assembly line where things come in order and go down the line and a wheel is put on here and a motor is put in there and it all comes out as a whole at the end. That isn't the way it works. It's more like a barroom brawl than it is an orderly process that one can study. That's true of almost everything, the legislative process, the budgetary process. Everybody talks about process. Baloney! It's a barroom brawl. The Senate action is very much like getting out a newspaper in the sense that you have to work very fast, write quickly and accurately, speak or issue a statement, forget it and go on to something else the next day.

In this procedure, there are some resources available to senators which sometimes aren't very good resources. I don't mean to say this in a demeaning

way, but I mean to say that the Congressional Research Service, for example, is very useful if you have a month to prepare for a hearing. But unless you know precisely the expert, and have his phone number, the CRS is almost no use to you when you are in the middle of the battle. It takes

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their ammunition days to get to you. So that if a big issue comes up on the floor, as it often does, and some senator says you're wrong about that issue and that your facts are wrong, what you've got to do is to know where to go quickly to get the facts. And in those circumstances, unless you know exactly the right person at the Library, that source is not very helpful.

I knew some people, like George Galloway, who was the Congressional Research Service's expert on Congress. He was the staff man for the La Follette-Monroney Act. He was the American staff person to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. He knew legislative matters backwards and forwards, both the British parliament and the American legislature. I used to say if you've got George Galloway's number, you've got an expert at the other end of the line. So I could call George and get some fact really quickly. Lou Fisher at the Library is another person. Roger Davidson and Walter Oleszek are others. They're the kind of people I know on a personal basis, and I can get them on the phone, and very often they can within a few minutes give me the facts or call back. And there are people on the Joint Economic Committee and other committees who can do that. But generally speaking, those massive resources aren't very useful in the cut and thrust of debate and during the battle, when they are most needed. The Library really doesn't understand that. I wish they understood it better.

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Ritchie: You mentioned a barroom brawl as an analogy. Would you carry it a little further and say that the person who has the advantage is the one with the most muscle? How much power does a person need in the process, or is everyone equal?

Shuman: Well, as I said before, there is the Orwell point that some pigs are more equal than others. When we were up against [Lyndon Johnson](#) or [Dick Russell](#) and they had the votes, the battle was unequal. In that sense it is true that muscle counts, but contrary to the Johnsonian position that talk didn't make any difference, it made a whale of a lot of difference in some circumstances and then one needed facts and information very quickly.

This is from the preface to my book, *Politics and the Budget: The Struggle Between the President and the Congress* (Prentice Hall), which makes the point I've been making: "While there is a timetable for action on a fiscal year budget and there are certain legal deadlines under the 1974 Budget and Impoundment Control Act, one cannot describe what happens as the budget process, with goals, timetables and schedules. The budget is not produced in a factory, where intricate bits and pieces are polished, honed, and fed into an assembly line to be fastened, stapled or riveted together, emerge at the end as a functional whole. The budget is not a process, but rather a tale of conflict and struggle. At the end of the Congressional session, when the continuing resolution or the Christmas tree tax bill is before the Senate, the atmos-

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phere is that of a barroom brawl, or of the waiting room in a crowded airport after the boarding call has gone out. The budget is not put together in a mechanical, predetermined, orderly way, as the elementary textbooks on how to pass a bill or on the budget process would have one believe." That's the point I'm trying to make. It's shoot from the hip and correct the record more than it is let's sit down and think about this for a month and then act.

Ritchie: That reminds me of Edwin Corwin's description of American foreign policy, that the Constitution is an "invitation to struggle."

Shuman: Yes, I quoted that in an article I wrote only a week or two ago. He was using that as a rebuttal to the thing we keep hearing now. Of course, he wrote that years ago, but we keep hearing all the time that the president is supreme in foreign policy. Not true. Corwin rebuts this by saying that if you read the Constitution it's an invitation to struggle between the president and the Congress over foreign policy matters.

Ritchie: And you would suggest over the budget as well?

Shuman: Certainly. In fact, on the budget, until 1921 there was no presidential budget. There was a "Book of Estimates" and every agency just took its book of estimates, what they wanted, up to a particular Congressional committee. The president has no budgetary authority in the Constitution at all. It's all

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in Congress. This business that it's the president's budget irks me. It rankles me as a person who worked in the legislative branch most of my life.

Ritchie: I have a series of questions I'd like to ask about the atmosphere during the Nixon years, and Watergate, but since we've been talking for over an hour and a half, I think it would be a good idea for us to stop for now.

Shuman: Very good.

End of Interview #8

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Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Interview #9: Ethics in Government

(October 9, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Ritchie: You served in the Senate during the Eisenhower, [Kennedy](#) and [Johnson](#) years with Senator [Douglas](#), and then you came back to the Senate with Senator [Proxmire](#), just about the time that [Nixon](#) became president. I wanted to ask you how you would describe executive-legislative relations during the Nixon period? What was the atmosphere like under the Nixon administration?

Shuman: I was surprised at the way Nixon handled the presidency. I obviously was not fond of Nixon. I really never forgave him for what he did to [Jerry Voorhis](#) and to [Helen Gahagan Douglas](#), which is in the public record. But I felt that when he became president he might well have vindicated himself. He had been a Congressman, a senator, a vice president, and he had campaigned all over the country for his party. As I mentioned earlier in talking about Senator Douglas and how he would go back to the state and come back refreshed after having been in touch with the public and the people, I thought that the process of Nixon having been in office for such a long time and campaigning for his party would mellow him. And I was extraordinarily surprised when a couple of things happened.

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First of all, he surrounded himself in the White House with people from his campaign rather than people who had a lot of Washington experience. And I think that was a mistake. They looked upon the presidency as a battle, as war, whereas I think if he had taken some people similar to [Howard Baker](#) now in the White House, it would have been a very different atmosphere. In the first few months of the Nixon administration, I was at an evening dinner at Brookings, where a few Washington people such as myself, Andy Biemiller from the AFL-CIO, Elmer Staats from the General Accounting Office, a half a dozen of us of this stripe, along with a bunch of mostly New York City middle level business executives, met with [John] Ehrlichman. In that meeting, very early in the administration, Ehrlichman took the position of the Imperial Presidency, and told us that they were not going to have anything to do with Congress. They would make their foreign policy, they'd make their defense policy. Congress was out of the loop, as far as he was concerned. Andy Biemiller and I took him on. We

objected strenuously to what he said. I'll never forget it because of what happened later.

As a result of this, I've always believed that it was very important for any president to surround himself with people who were at least fortyish -- middle aged -- people who had had a lot of Washington experience, and people who had had some failure in life, so that they were mellowed a bit. I was surprised that

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Nixon didn't surround himself -- not just the Cabinet but his personal staff -- with people who had had Washington experience and who knew how the system functioned. But clearly he did not. He really brought in the warriors, people who hated with a vengeance, some of them.

When Watergate happened, Joe Rauh, whom I'd worked with very regularly on Civil Rights matters, told me not to worry about the government, not to worry about how things were going to come out, that once the matter got into court the legal system would winnow out the truth. He in fact was right about that, and as a result of my conversation with him, and as a result of having worked on the Hill for a considerable period of time, I never lost faith that the system would function. I know a lot of people were fearful, but I wasn't. I thought that the courts, and the Congress, and the press, and our other institutions, when put to the test, would survive. We had survived for almost two hundred years. So I was confident throughout that experience that there wouldn't be a take-over by the White House, there wouldn't be a dictatorship. And as it turned out, the institutions of the press, the courts, and Congress, particularly through Judge [Ervin](#) and [Bob Byrd](#), essentially saw to it that the truth came out and that justice was done. I'm pleased about that. It was a revealing experience. It wasn't a happy experience.

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I do not give Nixon as much credit as some people do in rewriting history, that he was such a great foreign policy expert. After all, in '68 he campaigned that he had a plan to end the war in Vietnam. So far as I can see, he never had a plan. And for many, many years he heated up the war by invading Cambodia, the secret bombing of Cambodia, and so on. I don't think there ever was a secret plan, and I don't think he handled Vietnam very well. In fact, physically the war was won in Vietnam, at least all my military friends tell me that it was, we won the battle -- even Tet -- but we lost it psychologically, and ultimately when we withdrew our forces first in '73 and then there was the '75 incident when we helped to evacuate the remaining Vietnamese, we lost entirely. So even though he was very good

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about the opening to China -- ironically he had chastised other people for being soft on the Chinese and on Communism early in his career -- while he gets credit for that, I don't think that in other respects his policies were unusual in the foreign policy arena. He brought about "detente" but its results were disappointing.

I used to say, and I think maybe I've said this before, that in 1960 the the worst thing that could happen would be that either Nixon or Johnson became president, because they both had flawed characters. And the flaw in Nixon's character is the thing that I'm afraid he'll be remembered for.

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The Nixon White House didn't have a very good legislative liaison group, although Bryce Harlow, who worked in the White House, was extraordinarily good at it. He was supreme. But apart from Bryce the kind of people I saw I didn't think were very good at legislative liaison. They reminded me a lot of the [Jimmy] Carter group: inexperienced in Washington. Is that enough?

Ritchie: Yes. What was required of a good legislative liaison from the White House, and what kind of failings did you see in the Nixon people?

Shuman: There are a lot of things. One was they should never threaten. Two, I think we should see something of them from time to time. Three, I think they ought to know how to compromise and work the system. At least the people I worked for and the people I saw at close hand, other senators, were almost always willing to try to work the system, to compromise the system, to get a consensus. I don't mean compromise in a bad way, but most people were willing to give and take on legislation, to seek an end. You saw a lot of what people call hard-ball playing with the Nixon group. Especially starting in '72 after winning reelection, they really believed in something called the plebiscitary presidency, that is to say, he'd won by a big margin, he had won a plebiscite, and therefore he had the right to do anything he pleased. An example was the impoundment of funds, where he cut off all the HUD programs, and refused to spend the money on,

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I think, fifteen different categorical programs. The Nixon administration took the position that it did not have to enforce or to carry out existing law, and that a possible proposed law really took the place of an existing law on the books!

Well, that conflicts with the Constitutional requirement, the "take care" clause, that the president shall take care to see that the laws are faithfully executed. If he

had come up and said I don't like this law, and I think there's a better one, and here's my substitute, and then carried out the law until the substitute came into being, that would have been fine. There were enough things wrong with the Housing bills (I was associated with them very closely) that he could have made a good case, and I think things like changes in urban renewal and some changes in public housing would have gone through, would have gone through our committee, but he took the position that he was king, he was sovereign. In this country the people are sovereign, not the president.

Ritchie: What was the attitude of the senators at that stage?

Shuman: Well, I saw one thing on the Senate floor that I never will forget. There was a period in '72 and '73 when Nixon and the White House infuriated everybody. First of all, they killed the city programs, and this outraged the liberals. The

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second thing they did was to put a moratorium on a series of farm programs, and this outraged the conservatives. I remember the senator from North Dakota, who was the ranking Republican on the Appropriations Committee.

Ritchie: Oh, [Milton Young](#).

Shuman: Milton Young was furious. He stuttered and he couldn't quite get it out, but he was furious at what had happened. So first of all they infuriated the liberals and the conservatives. Then they infuriated people who were both with them and against them on the war, because before the invasion of Cambodia they transferred funds that had been earmarked for foreign aid for Turkey, Greece, and two or three other places, and used that money quite illegally for the invasion. There was another occasion, when the Senate and House had earmarked a contingency fund of seven hundred and fifty million dollars that could be used for other military purposes in Vietnam, provided they came back and informed the Senate and the committees and got approval. They spent the funds I think in December and January of 1972, '73, and by the time they reported to Congress in March or April all the money had been spent. These things infuriated Republicans and Democrats, Northerners and Southerners, liberals and conservatives, and I saw the eruption, several times, on the Senate floor, of virtually everyone against what was going on. He alienated everybody, friend and foe alike.

Ritchie: Was some of the outrage a reaction to a sense of powerlessness, of not being able to combat that kind of presidential policy?

Shuman: No, there were ways of combatting it, I think, although I'll tell you of one event that may weaken this point. We had a hearing with the Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird. This was in June of 1972, just before the election. Senator Proxmire asked him what would the Defense Department do if on June 30, which was then the end of the fiscal year, all funds were cut off, and no funds of any kind were available for the Defense Department to fight the war in Vietnam. What if Congress just stopped the money? No extra money! No left-overs! The whole thing would be shut off. No funds could be used for the war. What would he do? And Laird said, "We would invoke the feed and forage act." Now, the feed and forage act was an act going back to the Civil War. The purpose of it was that if Congress failed to appropriate funds by the end of the fiscal year, the army with its troops in Montana or Wyoming or somewhere two thousand miles away didn't have to let the horses die. They could use funds, spend money for things such as medical supplies and food for the troops -- hence the term feed and forage act -- and then could come back to Congress for those items and be reimbursed. Laird considered that gasoline for planes was the same as food for the horses. In fact, we checked it out. We asked the General

Accounting Office whether funds had been used under that Act. I've forgotten the figure now, Lou Fisher of the Library of Congress knows the figures very well, but several billion dollars had been spent in Vietnam, for purposes Congress had not specifically authorized, under the provisions of the feed and forage act, and the bills were later presented as a *fait accompli*, and the Congress had to pay them.

So it was an Imperial Presidency. It was the British system under George the III where the king was sovereign. The king could go to war without asking Parliament; the king could send troops anywhere he wanted, without asking; the king could make treaties without the advice and consent of Parliament; the king could make appointments on his own authority. And the Nixon crowd considered that having won the '72 election they were free to reign. So I think the title of Arthur Schlesinger's book *The Imperial Presidency* was the right thing to call them.

Ritchie: In 1974 the Congress passed the Budget and Impoundment Act. Do you think that effectively solved the problems that they saw coming along?

Shuman: That Congress saw?

Ritchie: That Congress saw during the Nixon period. Did it settle the issues?

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Shuman: No, it did not. I was deeply involved in that act. Senator Proxmire was a member of the "poobah" study committee between House and Senate. I did the staff work for him. It was composed of all the chairmen and key people from Appropriations, from Finance, from the Joint Economic Committee, who were first of all involved in it, and who tried to write the bill originally giving excessive power, I thought, to the barons on Appropriations and Finance with respect to the budget. That was later watered down, especially by the Government Operations Committee, which made it a much better law. The Senate bill was watered down, and [Dick Bolling](#) in the House expanded the provisions of the act to include more than the top dogs from the big money committees on the new Budget Committees.

That Budget Act, in terms of the way it was written and put together, is almost a work of art. I've read it many, many times, and I marvel at what a beautiful, artistic act it is. I said in my book "It would be a gross exaggeration to call it the political equivalent of Pathagoras's Theorem, Michaelangelo's David or a Hawksmoor Tower, but in the political sphere it has an order, logic, and structural elegance rarely seen." It has a symmetry both as to numbers and to time. And for the first few years, from 1975 through 1981, through the first year of Reagan, it worked very, very, very well indeed. I can't tell you how well it worked. The deadlines were met on time, and so on. But the

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reason it worked was there was a consensus on budget policy, and after 1981 the consensus broke down, and the situation became a struggle between the president and the Congress, not between Republicans and Democrats, but between the president and the Congress, with the Republicans in the Senate in 1985 trying to do on their own the things that would answer at least part of the deficit problem. They proposed a small tax increase, freezing the cost of living allowances, and cutting back on the military build-up. It passed the Senate by one vote, but the president immediately pulled the rug out from under it, and [Gramm-Rudman-Hollings](#) came about as a result.

What you have in the Budget Act, in my view, is this. In 1974 we added through the Budget Act, a lot of process, to a constitutional system which is designed to limit major changes to those with overwhelming support. We have a division of

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powers and a House and a Senate, where it takes a long time to get bills passed, and where it is very easy to stop almost anything. So we added a new process. No institutions were repealed. Everything was added to the existing system, and it worked for a time while there was consensus. Then when the system got into even more trouble in 1985, Congress piled process on process, and the system is now weighed down. It is almost impossible to make it work. If there is a consensus on budget policy, if the president tries hard and the Congress tries hard to reach an agreement, you don't need

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all that process. If there is no consensus, as is the situation on October 9th -- and I blame the president specifically for being unwilling to pay for the military build-up by a tax increase, and I blame him and Congress for that 1981 tax cut, which was the key to the deficit -- no additional process, Constitutional amendment, line item veto, a new Gramm-Rudman trigger, a two year budget cycle, none of these things will solve the problem. To add them would be big mistakes. So I'm now willing to abandon much of the Budget Act. The Budget committees have worked pretty well, the CBO [Congressional Budget Office] has been terrific, and impoundment control has worked but apart from that, the system has had put on its plate far more than it can possibly digest. It's been overwhelmed by time tables and procedures and process. That's my view of it. And what we are seeing now is a frenzied effort to avoid the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings "sequestration" procedures, and the son of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings procedures. I go into this in the final chapter of my book *Politics and the Budget*, the second edition of which, with a critique of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings, has just come out.

Ritchie: Do you think part of it is because the Budget Act was written specifically to try to end the situation that existed under Nixon rather than contemplating the larger issues?

Shuman: No, the part that was written because of Nixon, that is the anti-impoundment provisions, deferral and rescission,

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have worked quite well. They are some of the better parts of the act. So, no, I don't think so. But the Budget Act was a part of Watergate. It was an intricate part of Watergate. It was a part of the Constitutional crisis. I've differed with Alan Schick, who wrote a book about the "budget war" between Nixon and the Congress. It was more than a "budget war." The Budget Act was a part of the bigger Constitutional issue called Watergate. And there was one provision in the House list of indictments that the [Judiciary] committee passed on, which

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included some of the impoundment actions as a part of the indictment for impeachment. Now, that provision didn't actually pass the committee, and I asked a member of the committee, the Congressman from Madison, Wisconsin, [Bob Kastenmeier](#), about it. He said that they did that with eyes open, because they thought that Nixon had in fact infringed on the money powers of the Congress in the way he'd gone about impoundment.

Ritchie: Also during the Nixon administration, Senator Proxmire took on the administration in the SST bill. Were you involved with him on that?

Shuman: I was involved in the SST battle because everybody in the office was involved, but I wasn't the chief staff person. I certainly did help on it a great deal. That is, I think, an example of the informing function winning out over what most people think is the way politics work in this town. We went into

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the final phase of that fight about dead-even on votes. There were twelve undecided votes, and at that time I had a beard, and it came out white. I looked like Ernest Hemingway. My children loved it, but the senator didn't think much of it. He never said very much, but he frowned whenever he saw me in my white beard. So did my father.

A day or two before the vote, knowing that there were twelve undecided Senators, and that the president was calling all the undecided people, and knowing something about the power of the president, I told the Senator if he won I'd shave off my beard, confident that he would lose. And what happened? I was sitting in the Senate gallery with a tally sheet, and as the names were called -- and most of the undecided names were at the beginning of the alphabet -- we got virtually every undecided vote. How did that happen, with the entire defense industry against us, the labor unions against us, the White House against us, all the agencies against us, the establishment against us? Well, we organized the grassroots, the environmental groups, and made it a public issue. We got lots of publicity about it, and the victory was an example of what Woodrow Wilson called the informing function working. These narrow political forces were overpowered by public opinion. It was really democracy at work. The Senator was successful, and I shaved off my beard.

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Ritchie: Did that fight cause him any difficulties in his relations with people like [Henry Jackson](#) and [Warren Magnuson](#) and others who were strongly on the other side of the issue?

Shuman: No, not in the long run. There was an immediate friction, a little friction. There is now a first rate member of the House from near Seattle, who was an all-American football player from the state of Washington, who is a very good tennis player [[Norm Dicks](#)]. I play tennis with him and he speaks to my classes. At that time he was Maggie's legislative assistant, and he was really irate about our victory. But within a matter of a day or two that had gone. Politicians generally don't hold grudges against people on great public issues, because every day they vote with someone who the next day is against them. So politicians get over those things very fast.

Ritchie: On the other hand, the Nixon administration was famous for its grudges. Did they cause any particular trouble for the senator?

Shuman: No, because he never really wanted anything from them. The senator never asked them for anything. He didn't want any judges, he didn't want any dams, he didn't want any military bases. So there was very little they could do to him. He was too independent to worry about that. He didn't need any campaign funds. He was relatively safe politically because of his record.

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Ritchie: It certainly reinforced his image as a person fighting against government spending.

Shuman: Yes. Of course, the big argument on the SST was, the argument you always hear, well, we've spent half the money; we've sunk all of this money and we've got to go ahead, even with a lemon. We worked out at one stage on that bill, that not only wouldn't the fares for the plane pay for the sunk costs for the investment, but they wouldn't pay for the operating costs. We figured out that if every seat was full on every flight, that another sixty seats would have to be put on each wing in order for enough money to come in to pay the operating costs from London to Washington. So it was a silly project. And of course it would benefit only a relatively few people, most of whom had sufficient funds to pay the economic fare for the plane. It was two decades too early. There will be an SST one day, and the technology will make it efficient and cost effective, and then it will happen.

Ritchie: An earlier battle that Proxmire took on and won was truth in lending, and you were involved with both Senator Douglas and Proxmire on that issue.

Shuman: Yes, the Truth in Lending bill was finally passed in '67. It was delayed because [Willis Robertson](#), who was the father of Pat Robertson, as chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, kept that bill holed up in the committee for seven

years. Robertson was defeated in the primary in '66, Mr. Douglas was defeated in the general election. Proxmire moved up on the committee, took over the Truth in Lending bill, and was very successful in getting it passed. There was some criticism of him, to begin with, that he was willing to compromise on the bill, to too big a degree. Mr. Douglas, who was the father of the bill, never agreed with that. He defended precisely what Proxmire did. He thought the compromises were necessary to get it through the Senate.

Then it went to the House and a Congresswoman by the name of [\[Leonor Sullivan\]](#) from Missouri beefed-up the bill in a way we never believed it would get beefed-up, and put back into it all the things that had to be sacrificed in the Senate. That was an example of a bill which once it got to the Senate or House floor was unbeatable. We always knew that. We couldn't win in the committee, because the committee members, most of them, were beholden to the interests who were opposed to it. So at the committee level, behind the scenes, in the dark alleys of the legislative procedures, the opponents could beat it. But once it got out on the floor and into the sunshine, I think it passed almost unanimously in the Senate. It was beefed-up in the House and the conference report passed again almost unanimously. So Proxmire did a very good job and Mr. Douglas was very supportive of him for what he did.

There was one thing I wanted to mention about Watergate before we get off that subject. On the Monday morning after Watergate, I was called on the phone by a man by the name of Cyrus Anderson, who was originally from Illinois, the East St. Louis area, who had been the treasurer of the Democratic Party there, which in terms of organization was a stronger organization than the Chicago organization. People don't know that, but they could produce eighty-five percent of the vote across the board in East St. Louis. Cy Anderson also worked for one of the railway unions, and later became a lobbyist on the Hill. Because of a part he played in representing a mail order company out of Chicago, he ultimately went to jail for a short time. Cy Anderson was a diamond in the rough. Very gruff, but soft-hearted underneath. At one stage he came to us to tell Mr. Douglas that a staff member in the Senate had gone to one of the automobile dealers in Alexandria and gotten a car for himself, which was put in Mr. Douglas' name, at the basic cost to the dealer. That was very common then. The major automobile companies would arrange for senators to get automobiles at cost. Mr. Douglas did not know that that was done. Cy Anderson came to say that because the Senator hadn't used the privilege, a staff person had gone ahead and arranged for the dealer to give a car to him in Mr. Douglas' name. The long and short of it was that

it was going to be made public that the Senator got a car at cost. We wrote the dealer, and we got him to sign a letter saying that

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the senator hadn't bought the car, so the issue died. So Cy had helped us out from time to time.

He called me on the Monday morning after Watergate, and he said, "Senator Proxmire is chairman of the Banking Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Federal Reserve Board. The large bills that were found on the people who broke into Watergate can be traced. You can find out where that money came from. You should call the Federal Reserve and ask them." Well, I did. I called the Philadelphia Federal Reserve Bank, and I called the Miami Bank, because the leads were that these two places were probably where the money came from. I asked them to trace those \$100 dollar bills and tell us where they came from, whose account and so forth. Well, they stalled. Then I asked them to call me back within an hour or two and give me their reply, and they didn't call back. Then we called the Federal Reserve Board in Washington. They had been on the phone with Philadelphia and Miami, and they stalled. They were unwilling to help us at all. They claimed that the matter was sub judice, and that they wouldn't have anything to do with it. I reminded them that they were an agent of the Congress -- the 1913 Act makes them independent of the executive, but they are still an agent of the Congress -- and that it was very important for them to act on this.

They failed to act, and we issued a very, very hot press release which I drafted charging them with stonewalling. It was

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dated June 20, the day after the original release announcing what we asked for and which asked them to report to us shortly. The information was available. The second release said: "The Federal Reserve has ducked, misled, hid out, avoided calls, has given us the idiot treatment with respect to our request for the source of the hundred dollar bills." And the release called it "a despicable act, and unworthy of them as an arm of Congress," which was strong language. But it was also true.

Later, when I found that the FBI had for years kept Senator Douglas on a list of people to round up and put in jail in case there was a national emergency, even through the time that he was a Senator, I asked them for my file. I wanted to know what they were going to do with me! I asked them for my file not under the Freedom of Information Act, I just called them up. They were quite willing then

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to give a senator's aide what was in his file (about him). They called back to say they really didn't have anything except one thing, and that was this request to the Federal Reserve Board. Apparently what happened was that the chairman, Burns, or his staff, had called the FBI and said, "Please, won't you take this away from us so we can say its sub judice, and there's this fellow Shuman who is calling us insisting that we give him the list of hundred dollar bills." That was the only thing in my FBI file, after all these years. I was amazed at that, because when I went to work for the Douglas

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Commission, I got letters from my British friends saying that representatives of the U.S. had come to them to inquire about me, and they were all writing me saying, "You must be a candidate for a major job in the government." I have reason to believe that what happened was when we got into the rhubarb with HUD that Secretary Weaver or his agents called for full field investigations of us on security grounds, although we didn't handle any security matters whatsoever. It was an attempt by them to find something on us they could use against us. I have a top secret security clearance so they obviously struck out.

Ritchie: It antedated the Nixon administration's similar activities.

Shuman: It did. Anyway, as a result of our request to the Federal Reserve Board, it was found out where the money came from and helped to open up the case. So we had a small part in the original phase of Watergate. It's a minor thing, but I've always felt it was an important thing to have done.

Ritchie: Didn't it go back to a fund raiser who was funding both Nixon and [Hubert Humphrey](#)?

Shuman: It went back to a contributor who was a strong friend of Hubert Humphrey who contributed twenty-five thousand dollars to the Nixon campaign. The money went into a Miami bank,

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and the funds were traced in that way. He was aboard President Eisenhower's plane, in 1961 when I went to Berlin with Senators Douglas and Humphrey.

Ritchie: Wasn't this same Cyrus Anderson involved in the [Daniel Brewster](#) case?

Shuman: Yes, he was involved in the Daniel Brewster case, and that I think illustrates one of the dangers of working in the Senate. My point is that before

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you take a job up there, or shortly thereafter, you should have thought through how you would act in a series of difficult ethical situations. Daniel Brewster, a Maryland senator, was on the Post Office and Civil Service Committee. It had jurisdiction over postal rates. The mail order catalog house Spiegel from Chicago had hired Cy Anderson as their lobbyist. They obviously wanted low rates for their catalogs. The Post Office Committee was virtually unanimous in the vote on this. They were all for Spiegel. Cy Anderson had given a Spiegel campaign contribution to Dan Brewster. His administrative assistant took the money and put it in his personal bank account and did not put it into the senator's campaign fund. When this was found out, the AA claimed he had done this on behalf of the senator, that it was a bribe to the senator, and that he hadn't embezzled the funds. The prosecuting authorities, I think a bit zealous to get big fish, indicted Brewster and indicted Cy Anderson for giving a bribe.

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Brewster was ill, and I think he was convicted but never went to jail, but quit in disgrace. Cy Anderson went to jail for a short period of time, I think unfairly. I don't think there was a bribe. I think it was a legitimate campaign contribution. The vote wasn't needed, it was eight to one or eight to nothing in the committee. It was what I would call legal or "honest graft," rather than "dishonest graft," if there is a distinction. I say that because I think that legal campaign contributions are out of control. What I'm saying is that it was a questionable ethical act but not necessarily an illegal act. About a year or so later, the administrative assistant, who was then the treasurer of his national fraternity, was indicted for embezzlement of the funds of his national fraternity. I always believed that both Brewster and Cy Anderson were the victims of a man who had done wrong and then dumped on his superior. I saw that happen two or three times while I was in the Senate. It happened, I believe, to the Senator from Florida, [\[Edward\] Gurney](#), and it may have happened to one or two others. It's one of the great dangers of being in public life.

Ritchie: How did Senator Proxmire handle ethical questions in his office? Spending, contributions, invitations to speak, and all those things.

Shuman: Well, we had some pretty clear guidelines. First of all, we didn't take any gifts in the office. We had a form of

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the Douglas rule that if it was worth more than five dollars or if we couldn't eat it or drink it on the spot, we didn't take it. It never bothered me to have a lobbyist pick up my lunch bill. I didn't think that was wrong. I cleared it with the senator.

But he would never ride, for example, in a company plane. In fact, there was one time when he had to fly from Milwaukee to some place in Indiana, which was difficult to get to and would have taken him many extra hours to reach, and a Milwaukee businessman offered to fly him, said he was on his way down there anyway. The senator refused to do it. So we were very careful about that.

There was one time when we were complaining about people using military transport planes in the executive branch to go here, there, and yonder, sometimes on private or personal business or when commercial transportation was available and cheaper. It was an abuse both by members of Congress and by members of the executive. I remember, the head of the Energy Department under Nixon, at the time of the oil crisis, when he was urging everybody to save fuel, flew down to New Orleans or somewhere in that area on a military plane, which had four engines, and cost like fifty thousand dollars to fly down and back. We showed that there were all kinds of commercial flights, even first class, that he could have taken in the same period of time for one twenty fifth of the cost.

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There was one time when the senator flew out to Lake Forest, Illinois, by commercial airline for the funeral of his sister, when Bob Byrd called just at the very moment of the funeral and asked him to fly back for a very important vote. He did come back on a military plane, but he reimbursed the government for the cost. When we exposed these other flights, many years later, this issue came up. Somebody was about ready to charge him with "being another," as the saying goes, hypocrite, but he'd saved the receipt and had it, so nobody ever raised that issue about him.

Proxmire refused to take trips abroad. He didn't take junkets abroad. I think he should have flown abroad. The Senate appropriates billions for defense and other programs abroad, such as foreign aid, which he was in charge of. I think it would have been a very useful thing for him to have examined, and to have looked at some of those foreign aid programs as chairman of the committee with jurisdiction over them. But he refused to do that.

What we did about speech-making was very interesting. He got hundreds of requests to speak, and often was offered something like a thousand or two thousand dollars for the speech. There was of course a limit on how much a senator could make on outside speech-making. I think it was about twenty-five thousand dollars a year. So by giving two speeches a month at one thousand dollars or one speech a month for twelve months at two thousand dollars, he could reach the limit. He would ask his staff about it. If it

was a banking group he would ask the staff director of the Banking Committee about it, and if it was any other speech he would ask me if it were right to take the fee. I would call the organization and casually ask about the speech, when it was, where it was to be, what the circumstances were, who was to be there. Then I would always casually ask them if they had any legislation before the Senate. They'd almost always say, "We have a bill, or we don't have, no we don't." If they had any legislation before the Senate, that was an automatic turn-down, so there wouldn't be any conflict of interest.

In the old days, when I was with Senator Douglas, he did much the same thing, and he generally took a speaking fee only from academic, university, or community organizations that sponsored major speakers. Further he needed the money to help pay his expenses, as the small states then did not give the big states enough to cover their routine expenses. [Herbert Lehman](#) contributed about \$85,000 a year of his own money to keep his staff. The big states were held in bondage by the small states. But as time went on, and as the federal government got into more and more activities, especially education, it got to the place where there was almost no group one could speak to that didn't have some kind of a major conflict with legislation in the Congress. But we routinely turned down any request where there was the slightest conflict. He still was able to speak enough to reach the limit.

Now, there are people who don't know about government, or about senators' time, who say "why wouldn't a senator speak for free?" Well, he did speak for free in his state, and dozens of times a month, but very few senators are going to fly to Los Angeles on Saturday, make a speech Saturday night, and fly back on Sunday on their weekend and do it for expenses. Why should they do that? The voters who elect them aren't there. He's got other things to do. He hardly sees his family. He could be in his own state. So those are reasons people are paid to speak. But it has gotten to be a racket, where interest groups with massive legislation before the committees on which senators are members pay them thousands of dollars to make a local luncheon speech. The banking community does it. A variety of interest groups do it. I think it's a scandalous situation. Everybody says you can't bribe them for two thousand dollars, and generally that's true. It isn't a direct bribe, but what it is is a form of entre. They get in the door. They get their position heard in a way that the ordinary citizen does not.

Ritchie: Of course, on the other hand, the people whom a banking organization would want to hear would be the chairman of the Banking Committee. They wouldn't necessarily want to hear anybody on Foreign Relations or Agriculture.

Shuman: That's true.

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Ritchie: So presumably there is some affinity between the two. But then the question comes: where is the ethical line? Where do you step beyond?

Shuman: The answer to that, for Senator Proxmire, was easy: he spoke to banking groups from Wisconsin and without a fee.

Senator Proxmire was uninterested in patronage. He was delighted when they ended the postmasters coming under the patronage of senators. On judicial appointments he appointed what are called "blue-ribbon committees" in the state to make recommendations, and he more or less automatically forwarded their recommendations to the Justice Department. Now, I'm not certain I agree with that policy, because what happened was that the patronage then became who we were going to appoint to the committee, and there were all kinds of people who wanted to be appointed to the judicial selection committee. The second thing about it was that what it did was to put the patronage in the hands of the Justice Department, and mind you, they treated it as patronage in the same way that a lot of senators did. They had their friends they wanted to put into judicial spots, some of whom were quite undeserving, some of whom were not very good candidates. So it's a conundrum.

We did the same with appointments to the military academies. We had blue-ribbon local community groups who decided who would be

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selected. Of course, actually, what really happens is that the academies and the services select those people. Because every senator, I think, sends them a list of people who pass the exam, and the academy essentially selects the ones they want. So that patronage is now the patronage of the academies, and they're not all that pure either about who comes. So it's an unending and difficult problem. But Senator Proxmire was uninterested in this. He thought that it wasn't worth the candle, that he made more enemies than friends in doing so, and that it was better not to select them.

I have in my file here a case about a doctor who came in one day. It was several years before the senator was running again. He gave the senator's personal secretary an envelope with ten one hundred dollar bills in it. She gave it to me but he left before I had a chance to open it. I opened it. Earlier this fellow had come to the senator and asked if the senator would help his brother get a job at the World Bank. He lived in the District of Columbia, and had no representative. The senator was then chairman of the District of Columbia appropriation subcommittee, and he did in fact write to the World Bank on behalf of the brother. Then later, the man dropped by to give this campaign contribution. I opened the envelope and found \$1,000 in \$100 dollar bills. I drafted a letter immediately thanking him very much for his note and saying to him that what we did for his

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brother was the kind of service the senator performs routinely on behalf of citizens of the state or stateless citizens, and it was a service for which no charge of any kind was made, and that while he appreciated the thousand dollars, it would be unethical and improper for him to accept it under the circumstances, and that "I am immediately returning the ten one hundred dollar bills which you gave to my secretary only a few moments ago." We sent it by registered, insured mail, and I still have in my files the bill numbers and the receipt to be able to prove that we had immediately acted on this case and in this situation. But that's what we generally did: if there was any question about it being unethical and improper, or a payment of any kind of a service, we sent it back.

Ritchie: One of the reasons why Senator Proxmire could send that money back was that he rarely spent much money on his campaigns. He spent less than two hundred dollars on his last campaign.

Shuman: This was in 1971 -- I think he was reelected in '70, so this was a year after he had been reelected, when he didn't need any campaign money. But in '70 he'd spent about three hundred thousand dollars. It wasn't until the next election he decided that he would try to run without any funds whatsoever.

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Ritchie: How is that possible? Every senator complains that he needs hundreds of thousands of dollars for television commercials. How can a senator run without spending any money?

Shuman: Well, you can't run without spending any money. Senator Proxmire had to spend I think a hundred and seventy-seven dollars in one of his campaigns

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to pay for forms and postage for the nominating petitions. What money buys in a campaign is name identification and television time -- or it buys television time whose purpose is name identification. He was in every county in the state every year. At least once every four years he talked to almost every high school in the state. He went back to the state every weekend. We tried to make news, national news, which is better than paid ads. So, by the time he had been in the Senate eighteen to twenty years, he had name identification. His probably was the best-known name in Wisconsin. He shook a thousand hands every day he was in the state. He made it a routine to do that. The senator used to say the best place to campaign was outside a hockey rink in Madison, Wisconsin in January on a night when the temperature was several degrees below zero. It was a good place, first, because citizens like to see their politicians suffer. Second, it was so cold no one would stop to talk and thus he could shake the hands of everyone who went by.

He had name identification, so he was able to run without billboards, without TV, without bumper stickers, without ads of

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any type, without any literature. The only thing he had to pay for, essentially, was for the sheets and the stamps to mail in the signatures needed to get his name on the ballot. He also paid for his hotel room, gasoline for his car, but those were expenses which didn't have to be reported to the Federal Election Commission. So his reported expenses were about one hundred and seventy-seven dollars.

He also agreed to debate all of his opponents, which almost no one else does. It goes against the the conventional wisdom. So he got a lot of free TV time, against his opponent, to be seen. That is how he did it, and he won with overwhelming proportions of the votes. I think as much as seventy-two percent in one election.

Ritchie: When he deliberately underspent, did that put the onus on the opposition, that they can't spend too much?

Shuman: Yes, there were complaints from one of the candidates who ran against him, that he was unable to raise money because his friends said, "Well, if Proxmire can run without money, why can't you?"

However, he never promised not to raise money. He announced each time that he was going to try to run his campaign without raising any campaign contributions, and he was able to do that. But he left the door open so that if there were a big smear

campaign the last week he could raise the funds to answer. But he never had to do it. It freed him. He wore no one's collar. He could vote as he thought right on the Banking Committee, and he was really relieved at being able to vote without obligation to any interest group. Mr. Douglas used to say that in the Senate he had to face more ethical problems in a year than most people face in a lifetime. And he often said that when he was with the Marines in the Pacific the Japanese were after his body, and that in the Senate people were after his soul.

Ritchie: You mentioned earlier about the ways that Senator Proxmire's office operated, and I wondered if you could say a few words about that.

Shuman: We didn't have a military line operation. We had a method by which power was reduced into clusters. It wasn't a line organization. We didn't necessarily hire people from the state. One of the questions I ask my students in Congress courses is: what would you do if you became a senator? Would you hire the county chairman's son or daughter? (Provided he or she were competent to do the work.) Our answer was no, that if we hired the county chairman's son or daughter and he or she didn't work out, we couldn't fire her. As far as Senator Proxmire was concerned, people didn't necessarily have to come from his state. He hired people on the basis of their ability and their expertise, which I thought was a very good way to do it. Different people do

it in different ways. Everyone in the office had the right -- that is, all the legislative people -- had the right to see him directly, and he worked with them very directly, which was his way of functioning.

We had relatively small turnover. We paid our staff well, but we nonetheless returned a large proportion of our money to the Treasury. Those were the key principles. I did not administer the office. On the whole, his personal secretary did the administration of the office. We had a person who worked with her who did things like buying office supplies and machinery and other administrative details. I wasn't involved in those at all. I think it's a waste of the time and funds to have the administrative assistant doing those kinds of things. You don't need to pay somebody as much as they paid me to do that.

We had high esprit in the office. People were very competent. We had very little turnover. There was great loyalty to the senator and to the main thrust of his efforts.

Ritchie: What about other senators from that period? Did you work closely with any besides Senator Proxmire?

Shuman: I worked with a lot of senators over the years. I worked closely with [\[Walter\] Mondale](#), when he was in the Senate, both when I was with Mr. Douglas and with Senator Proxmire. In one case, I went to him when he went on the Finance Committee,

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urging him not to go on the Finance Committee. I called him and asked to see him, to tell him that I thought it was a mistake. The reason I did was the experience I had when Senator Douglas was on the committee. I told him that if he went on that committee he would have to do one of two things: number one, he would have to take on the most powerful economic forces in the country, day in and day out, or two that he would have to look the other way when they came in for their largess, and that he would be unhappy with himself if he did that. If he took them on, fought them, then I thought it would ultimately mean his defeat politically, because I think that was some part of why Mr. Douglas was ultimately defeated. He took on the oil interests and other major tax favored groups in the Senate committee. Ultimately, those pressures drove him out.

Then Senator Mondale said: sorry, that he had another reason to go on that committee, which had to do with the budget. The Finance Committee now has jurisdiction over more of the budget than the Appropriations committees or the Budget committees. It has all the jurisdiction over one half the budget, namely the tax side. And on the spending side, the Finance Committee has jurisdiction over half the budget: they have Social Security, they have Medicare and Medicaid, they have all the welfare programs, they have unemployment compensation. They have jurisdiction over the debt, and the debt ceiling, and the interest on the debt.

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If you add those up, they have jurisdiction over all the revenue side and half the spending side or three-quarters of the budget. They are the most powerful committee in the Senate now, and historically they have been the most powerful committee in the Senate. They've had several future presidents, several former Speakers of the House, the biggest names in the Senate, and future vice presidents who have served on that committee.

Mondale said, "Well, I'm now on the Labor Committee. I'm most interested in issues such as unemployment compensation, and welfare, and issues of that kind, which nominally the Labor Committee has jurisdiction over. But every time I turn

around, the Finance Committee has jurisdiction over the issue." So he said he wanted to go on for that reason, and he did go on, against my advice. But he shortly became vice president.

There's one story I want to tell about him. I got to know him pretty well in the Senate and I liked him. Something that really didn't come over on TV when he ran for president was his wit. The man is extraordinarily witty and quick on his feet. We had a nomination, when Carter was president, for Secretary of the Treasury, a man who had been chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, who was from Rhode Island, and who was head of a helicopter company.

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Ritchie: Michael Blumenthal was Secretary of the Treasury, but there was someone else who came after him.

Shuman: It was after Blumenthal. It was G. William Miller. But anyway, it was a very controversial nomination, because the company, Bell Helicopter, had sold helicopters to Iran, and it turned out that the representative of Bell Helicopter in Iran was the Iranian equivalent of our chief of staff of the air force, and he was getting five percent or something for all the helicopters that were sold. We asked the nominee about this. He was known as a very hands on chief executive officer, and had spent six months or so in Iran. We had a member of our staff with us then for part of a year, John Washburn, who was a political science fellow from the State Department, who had been in Iran, in the commercial section when Bell Helicopter was doing these things. The candidate for Secretary of the Treasury insisted that he knew nothing about the fact that the chief of staff of the Iranian air force was in his employ. Our fellow, who was a senior foreign service officer, told us that everybody in Teheran knew it. It was no secret. So we had great trouble believing the testimony of the candidate -- Miller, G. William Miller. We called on his subordinates to testify, and they said they knew it but they never told the boss. It was the Poindexter argument, they hadn't told the boss. We were reasonably certain, although we couldn't prove it, that Miller knew. We were giving him a very, very hard time.

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Later after the embassy was sacked by the Aylattolah the evidence came out that Miller knew.

Well, I was at a banquet -- it was the week Hubert Humphrey died -- the White House Correspondent's Banquet, and Bill Eaton was the president. Bill Eaton had been with the *Chicago Daily News*. He's now in Moscow as the *Los Angeles*

Times' representative, and a group of us spent a week with him last April and May in Greece. He's one of my long-time friends. He as president invited my wife and me to the dinner. We sat at the table just below the head table, in front of the speaker. Mondale was the key speaker that night. So while I was eating, he motioned me up to the platform, and said, "I sure wish you'd help us with the Miller nomination." I fenced with him saying "I'd like to help, but you know what my problem is: the man I work for sometimes thinks he is senator." He came back immediately and said, "I understand. The man I work for sometimes thinks he's president," which I thought was a very, very quick response.

Ritchie: That raises the question of Jimmy Carter. After the Nixon and [Ford](#) administrations, I suppose that Democrats like Proxmire were looking forward to the return of a Democratic administration, but it wasn't quite the same as previous Democratic administrations. What was your assessment of the Carter administration?

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Shuman: Well, I think we were all somewhat disappointed by Carter and by the Carter administration, although history may treat him reasonably well. He made the same mistake Nixon did in surrounding himself with people who hadn't had any Washington experience. That was true not only of the immediate White House staff, but it was also true of his director of the Bureau of the Budget.

Ritchie: Bert Lance.

Shuman: Bert Lance. We were deeply involved in the Bert Lance matter. In fact, we were responsible really for his downfall. Bert Lance had banking connections, and when he came to be confirmed, not by us but by the Government Operations Committee -- and he was confirmed under a bill that Proxmire had put in which required the head of OMB to be confirmed. I think he was the first one to come under our bill, because the person who was there at the time we exempted, so that it would only apply in the future, in order to get the bill through. Bert Lance was the first one, so we were concerned about how they did it. He had banking connections, but he didn't want to sell his bank stock. He said please give me a year or so to get rid of my stock so I don't have to dump it on the market and lose a lot of money. That was agreed to, but it was also agreed that during this period he would not, as head of OMB, take part in any banking matter. If there was banking legislation, he wouldn't

sign off on the recommendation either for it or against it. He would have nothing to do with it.

Well, we had a piece of banking legislation we were very interested in. It was a Proxmire bill. I can't remember precisely what it was, but what happened was that Bert Lance sent up a letter to the committee, signed by him, saying he was against the legislation as head of the OMB, in violation of what he had agreed to do. That was number one. And then, number two, he asked at virtually the same time for an extension of the time to get rid of his stock.

We had a small meeting with Lance, with his assistant, a fellow who was from Georgia, Senator [\[Edward\] Brooke](#), who was the ranking Republican, Senator Proxmire, myself, Brooke's man, and the staff director of the Banking Committee, Ken McLean, seven in all. We met with Lance in an Appropriation Committee Room just below the Senate floor. If I hadn't had those years with Lyndon Johnson, I would have been taken in by Lance. Lance was exactly like Johnson: he had lined up all his excuses. He told us of all the great sacrifices he was making to come up to Washington, what an honest man he was, on and on and on. He had the gift of gab, and he gave us the Lyndon Johnson treatment.

It was interesting to me that the two other staff people were taken in by him, they wanted to extend the time. They swallowed what he'd said, lock, stock and barrel. I didn't because of the previous experience of watching people like that operate. He was the kind of salesman I saw at the county fair selling patent medicine. But the most interesting thing to me was that neither Proxmire nor Brooke were taken in by it, at all. They were very polite to him. I think he left thinking he had convinced them, but within minutes after he had left both Brooke and Proxmire wouldn't have anything to do with it, and they reported to [Abe Ribicoff](#), the head of Government Operations, that that was their position, because Ribicoff had asked them what they thought. He was willing to take their advice from the Banking Committee to the Government Operations Committee on what to do about it. Ribicoff turned the Lance request down. As a result of that people looked into his finances. There was an investigation by the Comptroller of the Currency, over whom we, i.e., the Banking Committee had jurisdiction, a very fine fellow from New York, John Hyman, who made a splendid report. Several years before I had commissioned him to do a study for the Douglas Commission. When Carter got the report, before reading it because it was a devastating report, Carter gave Lance a clean bill of health. So we were involved, I think, with both Mr. Miller's problems and Mr. Lance's problems in the Carter administration.

The point of the story is that Carter put into key positions people who had had no Washington experience, and he had campaigned basically that he was going to reorganize the government. He was going to make it an efficient government, and he put into the key job to reorganize the government, the man who managed the government, a person who had had absolutely no Washington experience, Lance. I don't think any of his immediate staff had a day of Washington experience. That was a tragic mistake on Carter's part, just a big mistake.

I worked with his staff when they were campaigning in 1976. A group of us, whom we called the "Chairmen's Men" -- I suppose now we would call them the "Chairperson's Persons" -- met several days a week for breakfast. Either the staff directors of the Democratic controlled committees, or the AAs in the key senators' offices, or both, worked with the Carter people to issue press releases on subject matters in our area which he was speaking about the same day, to back him up and to reinforce what he was doing during the election campaign. I was much taken with Carter's people because they were very self-deprecating. They didn't take themselves too seriously. This was shortly after the Nixon problems, with Ehrlichman and Haldeman and all the people we saw, and it was a breath of fresh air. The one thing I will say about them, and I said at the time, was there was no danger of this crowd ever trying to take over

the government, to have a *coup*, to be a part of the Imperial Presidency. And that turned out to be true. But they were very inexperienced and they were very poor legislative liaison people.

I would say if I had any one criticism of Carter is that he, unlike what Reagan did in his first year, failed to take one or two really major issues, push them, win on them, and then go forward. He proposed too many things, which took too much political clout to do all at once. I think history will treat him more kindly than he's being treated now. But those were the flaws I saw. Carter should get credit, lots of credit, for the Panama Canal Treaty, for his emphasis on human rights, for the Egyptian-Israeli Agreements, and for getting all the hostages back from Iran without loss of life. His successes clearly outshine his minor failings.

Ritchie: Early on, Carter took on the entire Congress on the issue of water projects. How would you assess that? On one hand he had some legitimate complaints. . . .

Shuman: Absolutely legitimate.

Ritchie: But on the other hand he made a lot of enemies.

Shuman: On the problem of water projects, base closings, and pork barrel, if I were a president, which I obviously am not,

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I think I would do it differently. I would not send up a list of twenty projects that were going to be stopped all at once, because all that does is to bring a coalition against the President. People scratch each other's back. I think if I were giving advice, I'd suggest the president pick them off one by one. I would isolate each project one by one, rather than to have a list at a specific time of twenty bases to close or twenty projects to do away with, and I'd do it quietly. The way to do it is to just tell the agencies which are involved not to budget them, and don't announce it. Let each senator or congressman howl about it, but if you don't have a coalition, there isn't much they can do. I think that's the way I'd do it politically. But he was absolutely right in trying to do it. Another way to do it is to take functions away from bases by administrative actions without closing them.

Ritchie: But he in a sense put himself against the entire Congress.

Shuman: Well, I don't know how strongly members feel about these things. Their constituents put intolerable pressure on them. They make a lot of noise about them, and they cater to their local interests. Whether senators and congressmen care deeply about them, I'm not clear. I think they think politically they have got to oppose a president who tries to close down something in their state or district. The problem

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is the schizophrenia of the public who want frugal government for others but not themselves.

Ritchie: How well did Senator Proxmire get along with President Carter?

Shuman: Pretty well. He wrote Carter before the inauguration urging him to walk, not ride, in the parade, which Carter did. Carter called him from time to time, but mostly they were calls on his birthday and things like that. The senator turned down almost all invitations to the White House. I don't think he ever went down to a dinner party or social occasion. He automatically turned them down, as he did from every president. I had calls from the White House asking me for his unlisted phone number, and I turned them down. They got very angry with me.

They said, "the White House wants it." I said, "Well, have the president call him then." We did not give out, even to the White House, his unlisted phone number.

At the end of the Carter years, the last few weeks of the campaign, I got a lot of calls at home from the Carter White House. Having worked in his 1976 campaign, but then been ignored by them for years, I got a lot of calls at home. Betty would answer the phone, and she'd say, "Howard, the White House is on the phone." I'd take the phone and they'd say, "Could you do this or that or the other?" My answer to them was, "Where the hell

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have you been for three and a half years?" I told them that almost every time. They essentially ignored Congress in the intervening years. I read in Speaker [\[Tip\] O'Neil's](#) new book [*Man of the House*] that he felt the same way about them. It was a curious group.

I was going to mention a couple of other things: people often ask how does a senator vote? Does the staff have excessive influence on him? It's a perennial question, mostly raised by critics of Congress, people who don't have much knowledge of Congress. But in our case, I would say so far as the senator's votes were concerned, the staff had very little influence in the sense that he was his own man on how to vote. He wanted to know on a budget vote if the amount was over the budget, in which case the vote was automatically no. On banking issues, he made up his own mind because he knew the subject matter very, very well. And on almost all economic issues he knew the subject matter very, very well, and there was no way I could dissuade him from the way he was going to vote, even if I disagreed with him. Generally, I did not disagree with him. I agreed with him on most things.

He would want to know how he had voted on the same issue previously, so that he could be consistent, because if he were inconsistent the papers would pick it up and say he was inconsistent. So consistency was an issue on how he was going to vote.

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Certainly it was true that on environmental issues, on issues affecting defense, he did listen to his staff. But his staff had to present to him the issues in enough detail that he had enough information to make a judgment, and he made the judgment, not the staff. We did not pull him around with a ring in his nose! There was no way we could do that. He was very, very independent, often voting against the advice of his staff, especially on issues like abortion and the Constitutional

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amendment on a balanced budget. All the time I was with him, I convinced him not to vote for the latter. After I left him, he voted for it. He said the situation had gotten so bad that he felt he had to do it. I was always against it. I still am opposed to it. I think it's absolutely unworkable and has no place in the Constitution. He made up his own mind on voting. So did Senator Douglas. It's an illusion of the public that somehow the staff people can tell them how to vote, and have unusual influence on them. I could tell him, "Senator, the vote on that is yes." Or "Senator, the vote on that is no." But I said that knowing for example that the amendment was over the budget, which was an automatic "no" vote. There were certain principles involved when I did that.

I want to mention one other thing that goes back to the Nixon administration. I guess it was shortly after the Watergate break in, in '73, during the second term of Nixon. There was a situation having to do with the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The

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press conference that was routinely held, usually I think the last Friday of the month or the first Friday of the month, when the statistics on unemployment were released, was canceled by the Nixon administration. The BLS, Bureau of Labor Statistics, was an absolutely honest agency and extraordinarily professional. They never juggled the figures. Their press releases were about as objective as anyone could ever write. There were periods when there was bad news, and they released it objectively. The President got the figures the night before. I think the chairman of the president's economic council got them, and the Secretary of Labor. I think they were the only people outside the BLS who knew the figures. Certainly we never got the figures ahead of time, even as chairman of the committee with jurisdiction over the figures.

The White House canceled the press conference because of the bad news. They shot the messenger. The Secretary of Labor and the White House then issued their interpretation of the changes in the unemployment figures. We thought this was very bad. When you consider how important the unemployment figures are, the senator reasoned that if an administration in order to win an election was willing to stage a crime, a burglary as in Watergate, certainly it would be willing to jiggle the unemployment figures, which was much less of a crime. If they were going to go as far as they did, they would be willing to tamper with the figures, and we

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weren't going to have this. What happened at that time is that Proxmire as chairman of the Joint Economic Committee called the head of the BLS up to

Congress and we held a hearing at ten o'clock, in place of their previous nine o'clock press conference. We invited all the press to come in. And that hearing still goes on to this day. It's purpose was to make certain that the figures were not tampered with, and they never have been tampered with.

At that time the head of the BLS was out of the Bureau of Economic Research in New York. It was the preeminent group of economists on business cycles and unemployment in the country. Arthur Burns once headed it. I've forgotten his name now, but the BLS head was a very honest, very dry, totally lacking in personality, statistician. He carried water for the administration. He never, ever said a bad word about them. He never criticized them. He didn't praise them, he was just as objective as he could be, but he was an absolutely down the line supporter of the Nixon administration. After the 1972 election they fired him. They replaced him for no reason at all. In the past, that position had been held for as long as the person wanted to stay. A competent person was put in and kept through one administration to the next, which I think is the proper policy. We were responsible for those unemployment hearings, and I was the key staff person in the senator's office for them and usually wrote the senator's introduction statement. I got the release at nine in

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the morning and by ten o'clock when our hearings started I had written the statement. The hearings were also an outcome of Watergate.

Ritchie: It's an interesting thing about presidents like Johnson and Nixon: they got so sensitive on every issue, as if everything that the government did was a reflection on them, and as if they could somehow control every aspect of it. Especially in the Nixon administration it seemed pathological.

Shuman: It was. He was paranoid about it. They looked upon everyone as their enemies. They were surrounded. That of course is not a new statement, I think most people agree with it.

There was one other item about policy, and that's the way Senator Proxmire treated nominations. I think, although this sounds odd now in the middle of the [Robert] Bork nomination, for the most part the Senate has allowed the advice and consent procedures to atrophy. The general position the Senate takes on a nomination, short of the Bork nomination, is that the president has a right to have the person he wants. Certainly this is the position about most cabinet members. It is the position on judges for the lower courts, and on military nominations. Not one or two times a year is a nomination contested, or at least contested for the right reasons.

The Senate takes the view, generally speaking, on nominations that unless the person has shot his or her mother or robbed a bank, he or she is quite capable of running the government. That was not Senator Proxmire's position at all. He thought people going into a job, to the Federal Reserve Board, to the Treasury, to HUD, wherever, should have considerable experience in the field, and he used the example of a football coach. His example was that if George Allen, who had been the coach of the Redskins, was proposed as Secretary of the Treasury, everybody would vote yes on that nomination because he'd had a spectacular career, was an able fellow, hadn't robbed a bank, hadn't killed his mother, and had a winning football team. The view was that one competent in one field, obviously could run the government. It was a bit like the old Oxford feeling that if a person knew how to read Greek and Latin he could run the Foreign Office. That in general was the attitude. Now, one wouldn't take the present Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. [James] Baker and say because he's a very competent man, he's been in the White House, a man of great authority on areas of taxation and finance, he ought to coach the Redskins. He would be turned down. Everyone would think that was silly, but the Senate on the whole has taken the position on advice and consent that senators don't ask too many questions.

What happened, time and time and time again, was that a candidate for a major office would come up to the Senate, and

would visit members of the committee one by one. Members of the committee would ask him how his wife was, and his children, and try to find some area they both had some common feelings, the old college ties, and when the nominee left after having not discussed for a single moment any of the issues connected with the job, the senator would say, "Fine, I'll support you at the hearing." Then we'd hold a hearing, and we would find that the nominee hadn't robbed a bank or killed his mother, but knew nothing about the field or had had some serious problem in the past. It happened many, many times, especially with members of the Federal Reserve. In the case of [William] Casey when he was up for the SEC -- he was later the head of the CIA -- because his record in financial dealings was about as close to the wind as anything I had ever seen. I mean, the man barely escaped going to jail about a half a dozen times. He was a conniver. We'd bring that out and members would say, "Gee, I didn't know that. He came to my office and I promised to support him, because I liked his blue eyes or the way he parted his hair." That wasn't true with Casey, because he didn't have any hair. So a superficial judgment is generally made about candidates for some of the highest offices in the land.

Now, I think that in the case of a Supreme Court justice, there is a somewhat different standard. But even there it only happens rarely that tough questions are asked. I did not object to the way Bork was queried by the committee, and I did not think,

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contrary to much that I've been reading in the press the questions were in any way improper. Maybe there were one or two, but basically they were not improper. They didn't go into his personal life. They dwelt on what he had said, his speeches, and his decisions and what his views were on the Constitution, which I think were perfectly legitimate things to ask him. But I think Senator Proxmire is one of the very few people in the Senate to hold the views he holds about the procedures on nominations. He very often voted against nominees. There were many, many votes 90 to 1 when he was the only one to vote against the nominee. I think he voted against about a third of the nominees for Reagan's cabinet, and for Carter's cabinet, and for Nixon's cabinet, on grounds they weren't competent in the field that they were appointed to manage.

Ritchie: Although it seems that on cabinet nominations the Senate has generally felt that a president deserves to have. . . .

Shuman: The president can have anyone he wants, yes. That is the view of the Senate. I think that's a wrong view.

Ritchie: Whereas on Supreme Court nominations they have turned down a much larger percentage.

Shuman: That is true. But I think the Supreme Court is almost the only area where that is true. Of the thousands of military nominations that go through, almost no one ever objects

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to a general. I think in all the time I was on the Hill there was only one general, and he was a fellow, Lavelle, who had been in charge of the illegal bombing and had jiggered the records on what was bombed in Vietnam. We opposed him. I did the staff work which was very detailed. The navy also bombed illegally, but they didn't get caught! Senator Proxmire's attitude on nominations is an interesting side of his record.

On sponsoring bills, the policy of Senator Proxmire was that he rarely sponsored bills he didn't have control over. He early found out that if he sponsored a bill

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that went to some other committee, foreign relations, or commerce or whatever, it was difficult to get anyone on that committee to take it up. The committee didn't take it up, and therefore the bill went nowhere. So in the next campaign the issue would be raised: "He introduced fifty bills and not one of them ever passed," which is always used in a campaign. So it was our policy on the whole, in sponsoring, introducing them, and in cosponsoring bills, that we didn't sponsor a bill unless we were involved directly, that is when we could call a hearing, call witnesses, and so on.

There's one other thing Senator Proxmire did I think was very good. He was way ahead of the curve, as they say, on ethical matters, on opening up Congress, on issues like seniority, on creating subcommittees, on the general change that has come I think for the better over recent years in the Congress. As chair-

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man of the Banking Committee he was the first chairman to hold open mark-up meetings. I may have mentioned to you before that he asked every member of his committee what bills they wanted to push. He put his income tax returns in the *Record* more than twenty years ago, and has done so every year since then. He has paid attention to duty in a way that's unequaled by any senator, in the sense that he has not missed a vote for more than twenty years, and in the sense that he's gone back to the state every week, or every other week over thirty years. He's done both the job he's supposed to do with respect to representing the people of his state, and he's done the job in the sense of doing his duty in the Senate by not missing a vote, which is really the only unique thing a senator can do. That is: to vote. No staff person can vote for him. He can't vote by proxy. He must be there. He's done both jobs in a unique way.

I therefore thought that when he decided not to run again -- about which I was flabbergasted, I was certain he was going to run again -- I ended up thinking it was a class act. Here was a man who would be seventy-three shortly after he was reelected, if he ran again, and seventy-nine, almost eighty when his term was finished. He is now number two in seniority in the Senate, after [\[John\] Stennis](#), in the Democratic party. With Stennis stepping down Proxmire would have become [President Pro Tem](#) and probably chairman of the Appropriations Committee. To give up that power

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voluntarily was a pretty classy thing to do. As I thought about it I recalled things such as putting his income tax returns in the *Record*, holding open hearings,

which at the time were very difficult to do. Those actions were unique. So I shouldn't have been surprised.

The reason he did it, he told me, was that he had watched so many of his colleagues, some of whom are there now, specifically Senator Stennis, and in the past people like [Murray](#) from Montana, [Joe O'Mahoney](#) from Wyoming, even perhaps Mr. Douglas, stay too long. Mr. Douglas didn't stay too long, but it might have been too long if he had been reelected, although it did turn out that he didn't have a stroke until after his term would have ended if he had been reelected. But Senator Proxmire thought that he did not want to leave the Senate at age seventy-nine with people saying he'd been senile for two years before he left.

I think in a very real sense it was a classy thing to do, and on reflection I'm not as surprised as I was initially. About a week before he announced he was not going to run again, two of my friends from the *Milwaukee Journal* asked me what I thought, and I assured them without question he would run again. I think he would have won the seat easily. I think he is going to last another six or seven years without becoming senile, and if anybody can survive to age seventy-nine, he's the one, given the way he

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takes care of himself. He doesn't smoke, doesn't drink, still exercises faithfully, gets a lot of sleep, eats a good diet, and does all the proper things.

Ritchie: Maybe everybody deserves some time out of the Senate as well!

Shuman: Well, the Senate is so much of his life I really don't know what he'll do when he leaves the Senate. I think he will be lost for a time. There is life after the Senate, as all kinds of people will tell you, as I can tell you.

Ritchie: How did you decide to retire in 1982?

Shuman: I made a deliberate decision to retire. Several things happened. Number one, as I told you earlier, I taught before I started to work in the Senate, and I like to teach very much, but I was starved out. The year before I went to work for Senator Douglas I was looking around for another job. I spent the summer here, took the foreign service exam, applied to the *Washington Post*, was offered a job at the *Post* and WTOP. Several things happened, but I really had to have another job because I couldn't afford to teach. I decided along about 1979 or 1980, certainly when the Reagan people came in and I knew there would be at least another four years, and maybe eight years before there was any possibility I could move to the executive branch -- which I didn't particularly want to do in any case -- that I wanted to

go back to teaching. I did that for several reasons. One is I wanted to teach, and two with the retirement income I could afford to do it. Number three was that I was fearful that I would become a time-server if I continued in the Senate. I had seen that happen, especially with people on the Appropriations Committee staff who had been around for twenty-five years and really got to the place where they were just serving time. I noticed that while the job was extraordinarily interesting and exciting and I still wanted to come to work everyday, that almost everything that happened I had seen happen before in one form or another. That was a condition.

Another reason was that there was no future. I couldn't be promoted to be senator. I was in a cul de sac, there was no place to go. I could stick in the same job for another six or seven years perhaps. Then, there was an indignity, I thought, and still do, that for one period of eight years and another period of three years, eleven years out of thirteen, I got no pay raise of any kind at all, because a senator's staff cannot get any more than the senator. All of us of the senior staff were within a thousand dollars of the senator. For all these reasons, I decided I would go back to teach.

I spent about two years before I left looking for the right spot. I was determined not to become a lobbyist. I had seen former colleagues do that and make a pile of money, but when they

came back to the Hill I felt they did so apologetically and with their tails between their legs. So I decided not to do that. I picked four or five places I wanted to teach, both because of the university and because of the climate, the geography, and I was offered a position at Santa Barbara, to fill in for Roger Davidson, who is now the chief expert at the Library of Congress on Congress and who has written a number of very excellent books about Congress. He and his friend, who also works at the Library, Walter Oletz, I think are among the very best academic writers on Congress. He was here on a leave of absence from Santa Barbara to decide whether he was going to stay here or not, and I filled in for him at Santa Barbara, teaching courses on Congress, on the presidency, on public policy, and doing a very interesting course called the Simulated Congress where we picked students to represent members of the House, gave them districts, and had a Congress meeting once a week for most of an afternoon, subcommittees and committees and so on, which I ran because I had had the experience. I enjoyed that very, very much.

I came back to Washington basically because my wife preferred to live in Washington rather than Santa Barbara, for a variety of reasons. So I am now teaching at the National War College, and I enjoy it very much. I teach Congress, the presidency and the Budget. I spent yesterday afternoon on the Hill with forty-five of my students from about twelve-thirty until five. In the

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Senate gallery we saw a Senate vote. I took them around to the Appropriations Committee office. We were with a group from the national press waiting for Bork to leave the Senate. We went through Proxmire's office and I showed them what a Senate office was like. The previous week he had talked to them in his office. Then we heard from [Mo Udall](#) on the House side, and from a congressman by the name of [Tom Ridge](#) from Pennsylvania, a Republican who is the chairman of the military reform committee, and a very, very attractive person. So I have a laboratory within a mile of where I work, and I think the course we teach here on Congress is not duplicated either at the Kennedy School [of Government] or at Santa Barbara or at Berkeley or anywhere else, because we are so close to the living laboratory.

Ritchie: Most of your students are middle-rank officers who are working their way up to general and admiral?

Shuman: My students are colonels, lieutenant colonels in the air force, army, and marine corps, and navy captains and navy commanders who have spent about twenty years in the service and who are here to get their tickets punched to become admiral and general. A quarter of our students are from the State Department or other civilian agencies, and they are here to get their tickets punched for ambassador. They are here for ten months, taking a wide range of courses and subjects. The course I teach on

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Congress is an elective. But about forty percent of what they do is military, military strategy and history. They read the classic authors, Clausewitz, Sun Tsu and Mahon. Of the rest of the sixty percent, half of it is on international affairs and the remaining half is on domestic institutions, including the presidency, the Joint Chiefs, the National Security Council, and the Congress. That's my area.

Ritchie: Do you find that they come with an anti-Congress bias?

Shuman: Yes. Next to the Russians, Congress and the press are the enemy. I try to dispel that. I think we are successful by the hands-on approach we take. It's the

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old saying that if you take a poll on what do you think of Congress, eighty percent hate the Congress, ten percent love the Congress, and ten percent don't know. If you then take a poll on what do you think of your congressman, eighty percent love him, ten percent hate him, and ten percent don't know. It's just the reverse. So by going up as we did yesterday and watching the Senate in action, visiting Congressmen -- my class has heard from about eight senators or House members in the last month -- by doing that, I think they get a very, very different impression.

Ritchie: Do you find that you have a different view of the Senate and the Congress now that you're a teacher and looking at

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it from the outside? Have you changed your opinions at all since you left the Senate in 1982?

Shuman: No, I haven't changed my opinions very much. When I first came here to teach there were people who thought I was a partisan Democrat, and I am a partisan Democrat, I don't mind saying so but I don't try to push those views. But as time went on, they found out that what I really am is a partisan of Congress as opposed to the executive branch. That really is where I come from. Because of the experience with the Buck case, and with the Federal Reserve Board and others, I am really a partisan of Congress, and as you know a strong believer in the role and function that Congress plays, and would not want to change in any radical way the basic institution. I would not want to go to a parliamentary system. I'm a Madisonian and a Jeffersonian in those respects. I believe in the diffusion of power. I think it works best of all. If anything, I believe more strongly in the institution in terms of principles than I did before. I knew about the separation of power when I came to work for the Senate, but I was only vaguely aware of its implications. Twenty seven years of experience taught me a lot. I think Congress gets a bum rap because people don't understand its basic function.

I think that Congress at the moment is less interesting than when I worked there, but that may be a function of age. As much as I did not think well of Johnson, and Kerr, and some of the

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others who were leading senators in the early times I worked there, nonetheless they were much more interesting figures as a group than the people who are there now. I think the congressional staff is now excessive.

I think Congress is misunderstood about why it exempts itself from some of the critical laws of the land, like the Equal Employment Act and others. There are very good reasons, based on the division of power, why that's true. If Congress came under the Civil Rights Act or the Equal Employment Act, then another arm of government, namely the Justice Department in the executive branch on the one hand, or the courts on the other, would have to intervene to see that the law was carried out by an independent branch of the government, and that I think is against the principles of the separation of powers. Almost no one understands that. I was just reading today from the Congressional Handbook that while Congress isn't under the Equal Employment Act, the Ethics Committees in both the House and the Senate demand that members abide by those principles, that members cannot fire somebody on grounds of race, or creed, or color, or sex. That's in the ethics provisions. Now, sometimes those aren't well enforced, and I doubt very much if they could be enforced by the courts. I doubt if the court would take such a case. In fact there was a case of a Congressman who refused to hire any women, I've forgotten who he was now, and I believe the Court did not -- they

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threw some verbal crumbs to the cause for equal opportunity for women -- decide it, on grounds that they didn't have the right to interfere.

Suppose you were a Congressman from an all-black district on the Southside of Chicago, elected by that district, and had a mandate from the people. The only requirement in the Constitution is that you be twenty-five years of age, a citizen for seven years, and a resident of the area, whatever that means. It doesn't say you have to vote there, it just says on the day of election you have to be there. Those are the only requirements. Well, the question is can the courts impose additional requirements? If you want to hire an all-black staff from an all-black district, who is to say you shouldn't do it? Isn't that an issue that the people in your district have to decide rather than the courts or the Justice Department.

That is one reason why there is some justification for some of the things Congress does that are not understood. But in addition the two Houses can censure a member of their House, and expel a member by a two-thirds vote. My students get very irate about Congress exempting itself from some of the laws which apply to others, and I can understand that. I think Congress should abide by those laws, but I don't think they should be enforced by the Justice Department. I remember in the Nixon period, the first Congressman, from New Jersey, who introduced the first impeachment

resolution, was very shortly indicted by the Nixon Justice Department, for allegedly taking bribes for immigration bills. The immunity clause is in the Constitution to prevent the Justice Department from indicting Congressional critics of the administration in power.

That leads me to say one other thing, which is one of the pitfalls of being in the Senate. A lot of lawyers will tell immigrants who need a bill to keep them here, an individual bill, that Congress charges for this, and will charge their clients excessive amounts of money for something that is done free by senators and Congressmen on behalf of their constituents. There is no charge at all. We got to the place in the Douglas office where on any letter to a person for whom we had introduced a private bill, we attached a notice that there was no fee of any kind charged for this service, and that if any lawyer told them that there was, it was a falsehood, that this was a free service that their rights as potential citizens to petition us were free. We did it without any charge and we wanted them to know that, in order to prevent people from taking advantage of them. It was a very, very serious matter.

Ritchie: You're right that the Congress does exempt itself from everything from Civil Rights bills to the Freedom of Information Act. . . .

Shuman: Yes, but it has to do with the immunity clause.

Ritchie: But in the long run, at least in the cases that I'm familiar with, there is an attempt to live up to the spirit of the law. I think it's probably easier to open records of the Senate than it is the records of the executive branch, even though the Congress isn't under the Freedom of Information Act.

Shuman: This issue goes back, I think, to Charles I, who charged a member of parliament who criticized the King for excessive spending, with sedition, and in fact the member of parliament was convicted of sedition. And then Charles I was dethroned by Cromwell. I believe I've got the right king.

Ritchie: Charles I.

Shuman: Cromwell came in, and by the time the throne was restored the execution had not been carried out, and the Parliament adopted its speech and debate clause that a member cannot be called to account in any other place for any speech and debate in Parliament. Parliament has a speech and debate clause

and the Congress has a speech or debate clause. We took that provision directly from the British Parliament, so that no member of Congress could be charged or taken to any other place, which means to a court, for any action connected with official duties. Now, combined with that is a provision in the Constitution that

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each house shall make its own rules, and in addition to that, each house has the ability to expel a member by a two-thirds vote.

So the recourses against a member of Congress for violating his responsibilities or official duties, or for doing excessive things, are really three: one, he can be censured, as McCarthy was; number two, he can be expelled by the body by a two-thirds vote, if his conduct is excessive. The reason for the two-thirds vote on that issue is very simple. If it were a majority vote the majority party would be constantly expelling members of the minority, so the two-thirds vote is required. Three, the member can be defeated by his constituents at the next election, which is two years for the House, six years for the Senate. Those are the remedies against a member of Congress who does things in excess. I think those provisions are essential, the immunity clause and those remedies, if there is to be full and free debate, if members are to be unafraid to speak their mind. If a member could be sued for libel, for getting up on the Senate floor and saying the wings could drop off the C5A, which my senator did, there were cracks in the wings and danger of the wings falling off, Lockheed Aircraft would sue him and he'd be spending his time answering in another place, namely in the district courts somewhere, to a libel suit. So the Constitution gives members full and free debate, even to say outrageous things, in order to protect them from harrasing suits.

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One of the problems with the Hutchinson against Proxmire case was the court limited that freedom in a way that had not been done before. The court overturned a hundred and ninety years of history of the country by an eight-to-one vote, I think absolutely wrongly, because it limited the immunity protection for debate to debate on the floor or in committee. I have some grave doubts about that. Suppose that as a senator you hold a hearing on the overruns on the C5A on a Friday, and the Senate isn't meeting that day. The hearing ends at noon and CBS comes along and says, "Senator, what do you have to say about those wings falling off the C5A?" And the senator says, "Well, I'm very sorry but the Supreme Court has ruled now that I can be sued for libel for something I say that's either not said in committee or on the floor, so I'll have to wait until the Senate convenes next Monday in order to repeat what I said in committee." Or in some

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cases when the Senate goes out from before Thanksgiving till January 3rd, the senator would have to say, "I'll have to wait two months before I can speak to that issue," which is ridiculous.

I think a senator or a Congressman should be free to speak in public without being sued for libel on any subject that is connected with his legislative activities. I don't think he should be able to say, either on the floor or on CBS that the wife of one of his constituents is a lady of the night. I really don't think the Senate should protect that. The immunity clause does protect

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a member now for saying that on the Senate floor, but that has virtually nothing to do with official duties. [Huey Long](#), I think, did some of those things one time and got by with it, and couldn't be sued.

Ritchie: [Adam Clayton Powell](#) called some woman a "bag lady" and couldn't go back to his home district for a couple of years because of the courts, but he could say it in Washington.

Shuman: He could say it on the floor. But nonetheless, I think the court has the principle wrong. What the immunity clause's purpose is is to promote full and free debate on public issues. Now, congressmen and senators are involved in the most sensitive kinds of issues, the issues with the greatest conflict. They've got great economic forces for and against them. They talk about the most controversial issues. So if they can be sued for what they say on the stump about a public issue, as the Supreme Court now holds, (wrongly, I think, although it's the law of the land and you've got to obey it, and I would obey it) that limits free debate, which was not the intention of the speech or debate clause.

They went a step further in our case. One of our staff people, Morton Schwartz, called the National Science Foundation, which had given the grant to the researcher, and I now refer to the documents in the case. The researcher had been fired from his

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job by the State of Michigan for misuse of funds. He had taken unusual trips and done a variety of things. He didn't embezzle any funds, I don't want to put it that way, but he had misused his funds. He had taken, for example, some of his staff down to the Caribbean at Christmas to study the behavior of fish in their natural habitat. He did things like that. He took flying lessons and charged them to the government -- this is a private citizen with a grant -- on the grounds he wanted to

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study the behavior of certain kind of animals at ten thousand feet. He worked for the state of Michigan but he was fired by the state. There was a report. They almost indicted him, but they didn't. They fired him.

So our staff member called the National Science Foundation to ask about this. What do you do in cases like this, where it is quite clear that a state agency has said that the funds which were both state and federal had been misused? The National Science Foundation told him they didn't do anything about it. They were uninterested in it. But they did make a note of the conversation, and one of the things Schwartz was sued for, he and the senator, was for illegal interference, "tortuous interference"

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with the man's contract -- and this was an agency over which the senator had jurisdiction on the Appropriations Committee, and this issue had first been raised in a hearing before the Appropriations Committee. The Supreme Court decided in *Hutchinson v. Proxmire* that in fact Schwartz could be sued for "tortuous interference" with the contract. They did not rule on guilt or innocence, only that he could be sued.

Now, something like this was drawn to my attention at least twice a year, during the twenty-seven years I worked on the Hill. At least twice a year I got some kind of a case where it was charged that somebody was trying to steal the Capitol dome, or was embezzling funds or one thing or another, and I routinely, on such issues, bucked it to the General Accounting Office, but sometimes to the appropriate agency. Well, a few months after the case, I got such a charge, and I called the counsel of the Senate, [Michael] Davidson, and said, "What should I do about this? The Supreme Court says if I buck this around I can be sued." And he urged me not to send it to the General Accounting Office on the grounds that I could be subject to libel under the decision.

It's one of the loose ends, but I think that Congress could pass a law saying that the immunity clause applies to all legislative activity, and legislative activity includes speaking not only on the floor and in committee, but in public on issues affecting the public interest, such as the candidates for president are now doing. I don't think anybody ought to be able to bring a libel suit against [Paul Simon](#) for something he says on a public issue in the heat of debate with his colleagues. I hope the Supreme Court would find that that was all right, but I'm fearful about it.

Or one might acquiesce in the Supreme Court interpretation, but pass a law saying that if anyone brings a libel suit, if the person who loses the suit he pays the bill. This is the British law. In a libel suit if the person bringing the libel loses, he pays the bills for both sides. Under the present circumstances, an enemy of a sitting senator could quite easily bring a half a dozen libel suits against him on frivolous grounds and tie him up for months, keep him from coming to the Senate because he's in court, or because he refused to settle. As in our case, where the Senate paid our legal costs, there was criticism about that. There's no public outcry if someone sues the Attorney General, Mr. [Edwin] Meese, or the Postmaster General, or the Secretary of State. Automatically in the executive branch that's part of their job, and the suit is paid for with public funds, but when a senator is sued for something he does in his public life, people say, "Well, we're not going to pay for that bum's legal charges."

So there's a very, very real problem with the Supreme Court's decision, and I think the Court's decision was fundamentally flawed. Their new point of view had never been true before. It came about, I think, because of Chief Justice [Warren] Burger's antipathy towards the press, and the decision not only threatens members of Congress, but it threatens the press as well. The court left open the question whether the press could be sued for repeating the statements the senator made on the floor, because

what we did was we put out a press release which was identical with what he said on the floor. The court said what he said on the floor was protected, but that the distribution of that press release was subject to a libel suit. That was their view. But is the distribution of the *Congressional Record* libelous? Should it be libelous?

The suit raises a lot of issues, and it raises an issue about the courts which I find fascinating. The Constitution gives no immunity to the court. It gives no immunity to the executive branch. There is an immunity clause for Congress, and what the courts and executive branch have done is to say that where there is no immunity clause they have virtually complete immunity, but where there is an immunity clause, it's limited. So Congress with an immunity clause has less immunity than either the judicial or the executive branch, which is absurd. If the Supreme Court applied to itself the principle it applied in our case, Justices could get up on decision day and read from the bench, as they do, the decision in a certain case. But suppose in the course of that decision, one of the justices said that a lady was a lady of the night, or that John Jones was a crook, or something

that otherwise might be libelous if it had not come from the court bench. If the court took the position it took against us, the justice could say that from the bench, but if that judgment was distributed, as it is was mailed it out to newspapers, or handed out, then

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Chief Justice [William] Rhenquist could be sued in court for distributing a statement that he had immunity for saying on the bench but which he didn't have immunity to broadcast or mail out.

I don't see how the informing function of Congress can be carried out if the court takes the position that it's okay to say it on the floor but it's not all right to broadcast it, in the general term of speaking it, of getting it out, of sending out a press release, of saying it on the radio or in the press. It's very, very serious matter, and people should read that decision.

I worked on that case for five years, and I was dumbfounded by that Supreme Court decision. I thought they hadn't read the briefs. I don't think they knew the history, and one of the problems was that at that time, not a single member of that court, Mrs. [Sandra] O'Connor wasn't on the court then, had had a single day's experience in the legislative branch. Not one of them. I think they got the wrong answer, and they did it eight to one.

Ritchie: Justice Brennan dissented.

Shuman: Brennan was the only one, and Brennan didn't say anything of substance in our case. He had no extensive minority view. But he just voted against it. I have reason to believe that the Chief Justice took this as a personal matter, because of

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his view of the press, and prevailed upon the court to act as it did and not to write much more about it.

Before that case there had been a series of opinions on this general subject in which there was a lot of dicta, that is to say, statements not based on the facts of the case, or going to the heart of the case, but a passing phrase. In the preceding ten years, there were three or four very interesting cases with lots of dicta. Some people said, "Well, you'll lose this case if it goes to the Court because they'll make dicta into law in your case." And I think Berger was waiting for a case to do that. I didn't think so then, and what we did was to challenge the Court. I sat in on the

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question of what should we do. Should we be pliant or should we challenge them? We decided to challenge them, to say that they were wrong, that their dicta was absurd, and that here was their chance to change it. Instead they made dicta into decision.

But I honestly don't think they read the briefs, at least not very thoroughly, because they made all kinds of mistakes of facts, especially about what had happened in the case of the man who brought the suit. The briefs were full of the background of the case which the decision didn't seem to be aware of. I was very disappointed. I thought it was a sloppy job among other things.

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Ritchie: Did it affect the way Senator Proxmire handled the golden fleece after that?

Shuman: No. We determined we weren't going to be intimidated by it, and we weren't.

Ritchie: That was in 1978, I believe, that the case was decided. The Congress has lived with it for almost a decade now. Why do you think they haven't made any effort to pass legislation to correct it?

Shuman: Because they don't know about it. I was with a Congressman only yesterday and he didn't understand the immunity clause. Somebody raised the very issue we've been talking about: why doesn't Congress apply the laws to itself. He didn't have a clue about the immunity clause. When this issue came up in the Senate, only a couple of senators really knew the issue. Bob Byrd knew the issue, and Howard Baker knew the issue. Immediately, within a day or two of the time we were sued, they sent us a counsel. In fact, what happened is I first drafted a letter to the Justice Department, because I called around to ask people what happens when a senator is sued. They said in the past the Justice Department has handled the cases on behalf of the Senate, as they did in [\[John\] McClellan's](#) case. Well, I called around, and in fact we sent a letter to the Justice Department asking if they would be willing to defend us in this case. Then I got hold of

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these decisions in the previous decade, and in those cases the Justice Department had been on the wrong side! One of them was the case of the Senator from Alaska, who released the Pentagon Papers.

Ritchie: [Mike Gravel](#).

Shuman: In that case, the Justice Department had brought the case against Gravel, saying he didn't have immunity. He read the papers in a subcommittee. He convened a meeting of the subcommittee and read the papers, and the Justice Department wanted to get him for that. I don't necessarily agree with what Gravel did, but I thought he was immune from prosecution for it. The Justice Department was on the wrong side, so when I read that I thought this is a mistake, they're not going to be very good defense lawyers. They're going to be giving the case away! The other side will just quote back what the Justice Department had said before.

So I called the Secretary of the Majority, Charlie Ferris, who had been a Justice Department lawyer, and a very, very savvy fellow, a very, very ethical fellow. The difference between Charlie Ferris on the Senate floor and Bobby Baker was like night and day. It was a thousand percent improvement in the quality of the staff of the Senate. Charlie said, "Don't get the Justice Department to do it. We'll do it." Within hours he, on the

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advice of Byrd and Baker, sent us a lawyer who was a very good lawyer, and whom I felt very sorry for when we lost the case because I thought he was a thousand percent correct.

Over a period of about five years I spent certainly twenty percent of my time on that case. I was a dead ender. I wanted to fight it all the way. I don't think the senator cared as much as I did about fighting it, and ultimately he did settle it. He thought, rightly, his time should be spent on his Senate duties not in court. That's an additional argument for the immunity clause. An eight million law suit was settled for ten thousand dollars, which the lawyers told us was a very, very good deal. So it never went to court. We never lost the case. A lot of people say we lost the case. All the Supreme Court decided was that the other fellow had a right to sue. I don't think we would have lost the case in court. We were factually correct in what we said in that case.

You can study the Constitution as I do. I read it time, and time, and time again, and every time I read it I find new things in it. But to understand the immunity clause takes a case. As a result of that suit, I found out a lot about the immunity clause I'd never before dreamed existed.

Ritchie: What was your opinion -- just as an aside -- of the various Justice Department attempts to prosecute senators,

particularly with the Abscam investigation. Do you think that's crossing the border?

Shuman: Yes, sir, I certainly do. I thought the Abscam cases were improper. I have very great doubts of the guilt of a couple of people. In some cases, they took members of the House who had bad reputations and dangled money before them, and they took it. But I don't think the Justice Department ought to be in the business of committing crimes in order to catch people committing crimes. It's got a legal name.

Ritchie: Entrapment.

Shuman: Entrapment. I personally thought it was entrapment. [Pete Williams](#) was one person I thought was unjustly dealt with, and the reason I did is that I had watched him at very close range since 1958 when he first came to the Senate. In fact, I had known him as a Congressman a year or two before that. He was on the Senate Banking Committee, and I must have been in more than a hundred meetings either of the committee, or the conference committees, or in caucuses of the Democratic members, when I spent hours sitting beside him, or listening to him, or watching him. He was the most self-effacing person I ever knew. I never once heard him boast that "I'll get this done," or "I'll do that," or "By God, we're going to have this for my state." None of that. He was anything but that.

In the tape they had of him, he boasts to these characters dressed up as Middle Eastern sheiks, that "I'm a big man in New Jersey, and you can count on me to use my influence on your behalf." It was absolutely out of character. Not once in twenty-five years had I ever heard him say anything like that. He claimed in his defense that that was what he was told to say by the Justice Department agent, a man who had had a criminal record and who came to him and said here's what you have to say to these sheiks, and that is what he said. So I believed the senator when he said that he'd been told to do this, he'd been set up by it. Now, there were others who saw the film who thought he was guilty, but I did not think he was guilty. I thought he had been taken. And without knowing as much in detail about it, I thought the other Congressman from New Jersey.

Ritchie: Was that [\[Henry\] Helstoski](#)?

Shuman: No, I think that was the man who was indicted by Nixon for allegedly selling legislation. No, this was an almost blue-ribbon, blue-stocking fellow from New Jersey, well-liked, tall thin fellow, [[Frank Thompson](#)].

As you can see, I have a certain passion about these matters. One time I gave a lengthy talk to the press staff of Democratic members of the House in which I went into the immunity clause in greater detail, and I've forgotten some of the nuances of it now.

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But along these lines there was one thing I did I want to mention. I won't say that I'm proud of it, but I did it, I should have done it, it was in the line of duty. A woman professor from the University of Wisconsin called one day. She had been fired by the University of Wisconsin, Madison. This was in our state. She complained of two things: one, she complained of sexual harassment by her superior; and two, she complained that he had misused public funds which were grants from the federal government and the Department of Health and Human Services. She had chapter and verse. There had been a hearing at the university. The scientist who had quite a reputation as an environmentalist had testified in many cases about how toxic things were. She complained about his misuse of funds, and she had specific details. He had gone to a professional meeting in Florida at Christmastime, but had gone by way of Vail, Colorado and skied for a week on the way and charged it to the federal government. She had this and other abuses in black and white. There had been a hearing by her dean, who was new. The hearing was superficial. He really didn't go into it. She was fired but the professor stayed.

So she called and then came in, and she was desperate. She had lost her job, but she thought she was right. What I said was that we didn't have any jurisdiction over the sexual harassment charges, that wasn't a federal issue, but we certainly did have jurisdiction over the question of whether the federal funds had

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been properly used. What I did was to buck the case to the Health and Human Services Department, where there was a man there, Tom Morris whom I had known from years back. He was either an assistant secretary or under secretary, who had previously been in charge of procurement at the Pentagon, and who had been number two man at the GAO. I sent the stuff to him and merely asked if he would look into it. Well, he did look into it, and a year or more later after I had forgotten all about it, I got a call from the U.S. Attorney in Madison saying, "We wanted you to know that today we've indicted the professor, and he has pleaded

guilty. We have gone to court, and we wanted you to know in case you want to say anything about it." I said, "No, we certainly don't want to say anything about it." We didn't. We weren't particularly happy to crow about a man who might go to jail.

It turned out that what she had said was absolutely correct, and the U.S. Attorney had found all kinds of other places he had misused funds. It also turned out, and this was really the sad part of it, that as a scientist he had jiggered his scientific evidence. We came under a lot of criticism from some of the environmental groups, because they had depended on him as their expert witness in a series of very important cases. It turned out that his testimony was fraudulent. He was fired. I can't remember whether he went to jail or not.

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I think in that case we bucked it over before the Hutchinson case came down from the Supreme Court, and I found out the results afterwards. It was at this stage that the counsel for the Senate, Davidson, told me that what I had done could now be subject to libel. Well, how is a staff member able to protect the public interest in a case like that? We didn't charge off and say the guy was guilty when I bucked it over to them. All I said was, "Would you look into it?" If you get a case like that, and you don't look into it, or you don't ask the GAO or somebody to examine it, and later there's a big case about it, it will be said, "We sent that stuff to Senator Proxmire and he sat on it." That's a very improper thing to do. You have to do something about those cases. And for a staff person to be subject to a libel suit for acting in the public interest is wrong. Take that Supreme Court! I'm not against the Supreme Court in general, but I really do have problems with that case.

Ritchie: Well, fortunately it doesn't seem to have been applied since then.

Shuman: No, but Congress has got to do something about it. Congress probably won't do anything about it until somebody tries to sue [Bob Dole](#) or somebody who's got great standing, and then they'll do it. It was true in that instance that our colleagues left us in droves. They were reluctant to really back us up very much, except for the leadership. The leadership was

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convinced by Charlie Ferris and others that a great principle was at stake. And the counsel on the House side was extraordinarily supportive. He's since left the House staff.

Ritchie: Why do you think the other senators were less interested?

Shuman: Well, they had to vote the money.

Ritchie: But it was a relatively small amount.

Shuman: I think the total amount in the end was something like a hundred and twenty thousand dollars. It was in the courts for some time. It was expensive to pay the law firm. The lawyer actually charged us only eighty dollars an hour. That was at a time when they were getting a hundred and twenty, a hundred and fifty dollars an hour. He did pro bono publico work. I'm sure he didn't charge us for all the hours he was involved in it.

Ritchie: So it can be dangerous to be a staff member on Capitol Hill!

Shuman: Extraordinarily dangerous. You don't know whether you should do it or not anymore. If you were a driver of a Post Office truck and were drunk and ran into somebody, you would be immune from prosecution, according to the cases. The government would probably settle it. But historically the government has had to agree to be sued in order for it to be sued. But not

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the Congress. It's a one-sided point of view. Yet Congress is supposed to be protected by the immunity clause, which neither the courts nor the Executive Branch have.

Ritchie: It's an interesting coda, considering how often in your career you were involved in things like that.

Shuman: Many times a year.

Ritchie: Well, I think you've done a magnificent job of covering twenty-seven years worth of Congressional activities.

Shuman: There's one question you asked me that I didn't answer, because I got off on the Mondale story. It was about other senators we worked with.

Ritchie: Oh, yes.

Shuman: We worked with [Ted Kennedy](#) a lot on tax loopholes, and shortly after I retired from the Senate my wife got a call at home asking if there was anyone in our office who was coming by my house, because he had a gift for me which was

fragile. My wife kept thinking they were going to send china or a piece of Waterford glass. One of the women in our office who did the casework lived near us, and so she brought the gift to my house. It was a framed copy of the tax code, enclosed in glass. Senator Kennedy had punched holes through this book, which was three inches thick, like holes in Swiss cheese, and had

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written something on the bottom about the part I had played in helping to stop the tax loopholes.

I worked with [Howard Metzenbaum](#) on similar issues. Metzenbaum, Kennedy, and Proxmire were the ones who got up and stopped the rot on the tax bills. Earlier I worked very close with [Albert Gore, Sr.](#) He and Mr. Douglas were on the Finance Committee, and I got to know Senator Gore very, very well indeed. Of course, we worked with [Gaylord Nelson](#), of whom I think very highly. He was a great public-interest senator from Wisconsin. On Civil Rights we worked with [Jack Javits](#), very closely, and with [Cliff Case](#) of New Jersey.

Proxmire worked with [Fulbright](#) on some of the issues in connection with foreign aid. There was a period when Proxmire chaired the Appropriations subcommittee on foreign aid, when there was just no estimate of the totality of foreign aid in all its parts, including military aid. We held a very major hearing in the subcommittee, and Fulbright was then chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, so they had a lot of clout in getting information, and we had a very good staff man as well, Bill Jordan, and he was tough as nails. I was present when he brought in the Pentagon generals one time to the Appropriations Committee room in the Capitol, and layed down the law to them as if they were privates, because they were refused to help us compile the totality of all foreign aid. I think it amounted to fifteen to

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twenty billion dollars at a time when the budget said it was a figure of one and a half to two billion. I mean, they had hidden the rest of it, squirreled it away in all kinds of places. So that was a case of working closely with Fulbright, and I got to know him pretty well as a result of that.

One other person I want to mention whom I worked with a lot with Mr. Douglas was [John Williams](#) of Delaware. John Williams was a very conservative fellow, but he was straight as an arrow, uncorruptible. He and Mr. Douglas were the watchdogs of the Senate, bipartisan watchdogs. I must tell you that at the time of the Bobby Baker incident -- I had forgotten this and it's important -- John

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Williams was the man who really got the evidence on Bobby Baker, because what had happened had happened in the Finance Committee with the shake-down of the stock savings and loan institutions. John Williams came to Mr. Douglas and said, "You are the one person I trust in the Senate, and I want to leave a copy of my evidence with you in case anything happens to me. I want you to have it because I think you're the only one I can trust to keep it and do what's right about it." They had that kind of relationship. Obviously, Mr. Douglas thought very highly of John Williams and he of Mr. Douglas, or they wouldn't have agreed on that.

Going back, of course Hubert Humphrey was a great ally, I've told about the instances with John Kennedy on two or three issues.

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We worked with [John Sparkman](#) from time to time, because of the closeness on the Banking Committee.

Ritchie: I was going to ask you if you found there were any senators that you couldn't work with.

Shuman: Well, [Johnson](#) was very difficult to work with. [Kerr](#) was impossible to work with. He was against us on every issue, oil, and public works and all the rest. There was the instance of the Indiana Senator.

Ritchie: [Vance Hartke](#)?

Shuman: No, the other one, the heavy-set one, a Republican.

Ritchie: Oh, [Homer Capehart](#).

Shuman: Capehart -- where in saving the Indiana Dunes, Mr. Douglas went to him first and asked him to lead on that issue, because it was in Indiana. Capehart originally seemed to be willing to do it, but he said he wanted to go back and check in the state. He came back later and said there was no way he could do it, and that if Mr. Douglas said he'd once agreed to it, or thought he would do it, he would have to deny it. He wasn't obnoxious or anything like that, but he did oppose us very, very strenuously on that issue. I thought needlessly.

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In a very minor degree for a time we were somewhat estranged from [\[Edmund\] Muskie](#), which was unfortunate. It wasn't done deliberately. Muskie defeated

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[\[Frederick\] Payne](#) of Maine. Payne of Maine was probably the most progressive Republican in the Senate, and Mr. Douglas had originally come from Maine, had graduated from Bowdoin College, and they were on the Banking Committee together. Payne was the cosponsor of Douglas' Depressed Areas bill, and Payne was running for reelection in '58. Muskie asked Mr. Douglas to come to Maine to speak for him, and Mr. Douglas didn't feel that he could, because of his relations with Payne, and because they had cosponsored this bill. They worked very closely together. It would have been the wrong thing to do. I think what Douglas told Muskie was: "I'll make a statement on your behalf saying what a good fellow you are, but I just can't come to Maine and appear against Payne." He didn't, and I speculate that Muskie really never quite forgave him for that. But in similar circumstances I'm sure Muskie would not have gone to Oklahoma to speak against his Republican colleague, [Bellmon](#), on the Budget Committee. Muskie was a key holdout on our Truth-in-Lending bill for years. He was against us time and again, and we never could quite figure out where he was coming from. But I think Muskie was a very great senator. He had a hot temper. I think he was more qualified to be President than any of the last five Presidents.

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Ritchie: Did he support it after Proxmire picked it up?

Shuman: I don't know whether he did or not. He must have voted for it on the floor, because everybody did. Once it got out of committee, they all voted for it. But there was something there that I never quite knew about.

[Clint Anderson](#) from New Mexico was quite a fine senator, but Mr. Douglas never could quite understand his motives. One understood why most senators voted this way or that way. They'd tell you, "I'm sorry, I'd like to be with you, but I can't do it on this one." But Anderson was an enigma in terms of where he came from. He was quite independent and had a great record. He went to New Mexico as a young man, I think he went there for his health to begin with, was a newspaper reporter and exposed Teapot Dome.

I remember [\[George\] Bush](#)'s father, [Prescott Bush](#). He was on the Banking Committee, and Mr. Douglas had quite a good relationship with him. He was a more progressive senator than most. Bush and the other senator from Connecticut, [Purtell](#), were our sometime allies. We had a very good relationship with not only [Herbert Lehman](#) but the other senator from New York.

Ritchie: [Irving Ives](#).

Shuman: Irving Ives, because of the Civil Rights issue, and [Ken Keating](#). Irving Ives' son was his AA, and I got to know him

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very well and liked him a lot; as well as [\[Leverett\] Saltonstall](#)'s son, who was an upright fellow on the Republican side. We were very close to the New Jersey senator, Cliff Case, and his staff. I suppose I was about as close to his staff as any staff in the Senate.

Ritchie: It sounds like what you're saying is that party was not as important as say ideology or in some cases even personality.

Shuman: Well, in the Johnson years it was less important. It was really the big states against the South and the Mountain state coalition. We were allies with the big states. [\[Thomas\] Kuchel](#) of California was our very close friend and ally. I ran into him on the street in London, on Piccadilly, a couple of years ago. I hadn't seen him for ten or fifteen years. He had a staff man who wrote a great book about the Appropriations Committee, and who now is president at Long Beach.

Ritchie: Steve Horn.

Shuman: Steve Horn, and we had very close working relations with him. [Scoop Jackson](#) was our friend and ally. I was very close to Scoop Jackson, in fact I saw him when I left the Senate, he invited me over to his office and we talked long and hard. He told me that he got into politics because of a speech Mr. Douglas gave at the University of Washington when he was a student. He

said he went to hear him and got greatly interested in what he was saying, and it really was a major part of getting him interested in politics as a career. So you never know what influence you have on people. We weren't close to [Warren Magnuson](#). Magnuson was the pro's pro. He almost always voted right, but he wasn't very strong in his support. He had a good, liberal voting record, but he didn't help very much to break the filibusters or anything like that. He was an insider. But in his later years after he married and ran the Commerce Committee, in choosing staff and pushing consumer legislation, he made a great name for himself. We were close to [Dick Neuberger](#), and his wife [Maureen](#). [John Carroll](#) of Colorado was a friend and an ally.

In Proxmire's time we were with [George McGovern](#) in a curious way on a number of issues, some of them agriculture, not necessarily liberal or conservative issues.

Ritchie: Why do you say curious?

Shuman: Well, by that I mean to say -- curious isn't the right word -- I mean we weren't necessarily with George because of his stand on liberal issues, we were with him on a lot of issues that were more regional in character. They were not necessarily liberal or conservative, but we just happened to be with him on a lot of things. I remember one time after he was defeated for president. You may remember Jim Tobin of Yale, who became a Nobel

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Prize winner. He was from Champaign, Illinois, Tobin's father, Mike Tobin, was head of public relations for the athletic department and one of the few Democrats around. His mother worked for all kinds of community causes. His brother and I were precinct committeemen in 1948. Jim Tobin wrote an article for George McGovern in the 1972 election when McGovern was defeated, advocating a hundred dollars per person as a negative tax. My memory is that if you had a minus income, you got a hundred dollars. The Republicans made a big to-do about it. It was a tactical mistake, something they ran with.

I remember after the election, when McGovern was on the Senate floor, someone from the Republican side proposed an amendment of almost identical nature, and all of a sudden it occurred to people, and especially to McGovern, that those who had opposed him so vehemently on this were now proposing something of the same thing. And he made a great to-do about it. I told him at the time: "George, I think you'll have to wait to get your reward in heaven, I don't think you'll ever get it here on earth." There were a whole series of issues after that election in which he was badly defeated in which he proved to be correct, and which people admitted he was correct on a range of things, but he has not, and did not get his reward in this world. As the son of a minister, he may get it in the next world.

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[\[James\] Abourezk](#) was our ally with Proxmire, because Abourezk was our kind of person in the sense of raising holy hell about a lot of watchdog types of things. [Adlai Stevenson III](#) was on the Banking Committee with Proxmire, and we were with him on a number of issues, and I was particularly, because I had had that relationship with his father. I was part of the steering committee for young Adlai's reelection. He met with us several times. I think the group I was with was mostly window dressing, but I did write him a long memo about what I thought he should do, how he should campaign in Illinois. As a result of the campaigns I had been through, and I thought very highly of him.

Thinking back over this, I've been too critical in what I've said to you about Adlai Stevenson, his father. I've pointed out the places where he and Mr. Douglas were at odds, but I think it's a wrong impression for me to have expressed so much criticism of him because basically I was excited about his candidacy for governor and for president and his record as governor and at the U.N. I wasn't for him in '60, but I was certainly for him in '48, '52 and '56. He brought a distinction to politics that had not existed in Illinois until he and Mr. Douglas ran, so it's unfair to be overly critical of him, whatever his minor faults may have been.

His son, I thought, in some respects was -- I don't want to say better -- but he had some strengths that his father didn't have. I

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think he was more decisive. Sometimes he was too decisive. There were times when Adlai III got hold of an issue and you couldn't get him off the issue. He chewed, and chewed, and chewed on it. He was extraordinarily helpful in the New York battle -- it was either New York or Chrysler, I can't remember now -- but he essentially crafted the basic outcome and put in protections for the federal government in the act which we hadn't really thought about, and which he had a very, very important role. And of course his role in changing the committee system in the Senate was very important. He didn't get everything he wanted on that, but he got a lot.

In fact, I got an amendment to that bill. In the old days, there were these ad hoc or ex-parte members of the Appropriations Committee who came in from the substantive committees. Did you know about that? Well, it goes back to 1921. Until 1921, and in fact throughout the history of committees, the legislative committees and the appropriations committees were often the same -- in fact, predominantly the legislative committee also appropriated. I think it was 1836 in the House and about 1850 in the Senate when the first distinctions were made, and from then on sometimes committees would be both legislative and appropriation committees, and sometimes they weren't. Generally speaking there were appropriations committees for the minor things, legislative appropriations and the District of Columbia, but not for the big

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issues. At the time the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 came into effect, and as a result of the act, Congress established appropriations subcommittees which rivaled or reflected the executive agencies, the departments. This was new in some of those instances.

To mollify the barons or poohbahs of the legislative committees, the Senate decided that when the defense bill was up before the Appropriation Committee, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee and the ranking Republican would be ad hoc members of the Appropriations Committee for that purpose. But it turned out, as an accident of history, that this was done almost exclusively for the most important committees. That is, the Labor Committee didn't have anybody to do it; there weren't two extra votes for labor and health, but there were two extra votes for defense. The thing that got me was that under the HUD independent offices appropriation subcommittee the space agency got special consideration. Every time the House would cut their budget and the bill would come over to the Senate and we'd propose that they be cut a bit more, at the last minute in would walk [\[Barry\] Goldwater](#) and the Senator from Utah.

Ritchie: [Jake Garn](#)?

Shuman: No, the Democrat.

Ritchie: Oh, [Moss](#)?

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Shuman: Ted Moss, who was gung ho on space, and usually one other majority member. They had three extra votes. They'd come in and they'd undo everything we'd done. We might as well not have held the hearings. They didn't come to the hearings, they didn't testify, all they did was to walk in at the mark-up and indiscriminately vote for space. All this and heaven too I think would be a proper way to put it, since space goes to the heavens. Well, we were unhappy about that. I wrote an article for the *New York Times* about it, which they printed on the editorial page. The Stevenson bill was up and I raised this issue with them, and sure enough they changed the practice. I proposed either that everyone be equal, or that no one do it, and the committee cut it out. So the ad hoc members were cut out, I think rightly so, as extra people on the Appropriation Committee. And you can see how powerful a thing that was at the time when the committee chairmen were so dominant. I mean, it really gave the chairmen extra power to have the legislative chairman as well as the line-up of Southern Democrats on the Appropriations Committee to vote for their pork and positions. Barry Goldwater wrote me a nasty note about the article as I mentioned him. But I didn't knuckle under to him because what he had done was a matter of public record and I had every right to mention it.

Ritchie: It must give you some sense of satisfaction, having come into an institution, seen it in one way, and had a chance

to influence its change dramatically. By the time you left the Senate in 1982 it was a very different institution than it had been in 1954.

Shuman: It certainly was. It was a very different institution, and I think a better institution. I think the breakdown into subcommittees was very important. Although the staff is too large now, I think we needed more staff. The Congress doesn't need to rival the executive branch, but it sure needs a lot more expertise than it had to begin with. The filibuster, because of the passage of Civil Rights, has more or less gone by the way, but, I as I have mentioned would change the rule to allow for full and free debate and for the Senate to decide an issue ultimately by a Constitutional majority vote.

End of Interview #9

Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Interview #10: Heroes and Theories

(October 22, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Shuman: We were talking about senators who were close to Senator [Douglas](#) and who I knew or worked with. Mr. Douglas supported [Kefauver](#) for President in 1952, I remember when the Senate adjourned late at night, I think it was in 1956, before the Democratic Convention, around eleven o'clock or so, Estes Kefauver went around the Senate chamber and shook everybody's hand, all the staff, all the senators, he couldn't keep from campaigning!

Ritchie: Would you like to talk about some of the other senators with whom you worked over your career in the Senate?

Shuman: Yes, either those with whom I worked, or who were close to Mr. Douglas. I made a list of those who were close to the senator. I think [Hubert Humphrey](#) was the closest person, without question, but [Lister Hill](#), who was chairman of the Labor Committee when Mr. Douglas was second on that committee and chairman of the Labor subcommittee, was very close to Mr. Douglas.

[Ernest Gruening](#) was a very close friend, before he was in the Senate, when he was in the Senate, and after he was in the Senate. The story on the Tonkin Gulf Resolution is about the two senators [Morse](#) and Gruening who voted against it. Morse apparently voted

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against it because he had a spy from the Pentagon who told him that the reports of the attacks were not correct, were not true. Gruening voted against it out of visceral reaction, from the gut, he didn't have a spy -- let us call him a secret patriot -- to set him right.

There's one picture I have of Gruening which I'll never forget. When he first came to the Senate, Alaska had just become a state, I think the Senate was working on what was called the enabling legislation, deciding what Alaska would get, what former federal lands and projects would be transferred to the new state, and the question was: how would he vote on the cloture rule? Just as the vote was ready to begin, in the cloakroom behind the Vice President's chair, which is open to

staff and senators alike, I watched [Bob Kerr](#) really work over Ernest Gruening. Kerr, chairman of the Public Works Committee, had a long list of projects Alaska needed, and he was saying to him one by one, what about this project? What about the other project? The whole point of it was to tell Ernest that he was supposed to vote against changing the cloture rule if he wanted these public lands and public works projects. Blackmail is exactly what it was, and Gruening voted to keep the cloture rule, against the way we thought he was going to vote. It was political blackmail.

Bill Benton was a great friend of Mr. Douglas. Of course he was a millionaire. There was a time after Benton left the Senate,

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I think it was before the '66 election, when Benton proposed to buy a wardrobe of clothes for Senator Douglas -- he thought he was so shabbily dressed that he needed to become more dapper! Of course, the senator refused it. But it brought to his attention clearly that some people didn't think he was the most elegant dresser in the world.

[Tom Dodd](#) was pretty close to Mr. Douglas. Mr. Douglas wrote the book on ethics and held the hearings on ethics in government, but he was always very forgiving of people who got in trouble. He told me how in a way the only good thing about his defeat in '66 was that he didn't have to vote on Dodd's censure motion. I think he was prepared to vote for Dodd rather than against him. They were close friends, and he thought people didn't understand the pressures that had been put on Dodd, pressures on people in public life, and the extent to which he needed funds to run.

[Russell Long](#) was a person Mr. Douglas was pretty close to. Russell Long had a populist streak, as his father did, earlier in his career rather than later. As time went on, I think Russell got more conservative. But there was a period when he was a radical and a populist on a lot of domestic issues. Mr. Douglas sponsored him for whip. We held a series of luncheons for senators whom one would not ordinarily think would vote for Russell Long, and Mr. Douglas invited people down from the *New York Post*, which was then a very liberal paper, and from the *New*

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York Times and other papers, to have lunch with Russell Long, and introduced him around. I don't know whether he ever thought afterwards he'd made a mistake on that. I did think he made a mistake. But Russell Long put him on to

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two very interesting things that he should do: he told Mr. Douglas first of all that the way to get at segregation and voting in the South was to send federal registrars into the Southern states to register blacks, so in a sense Russell Long was the person who tipped him off about what they should do in the 1960 Voting Rights bill, which in 1965 Johnson made the president's bill and passed, and is the law of the land today.

The second thing he told him was about depletion. He said, "Paul, you're making a mistake in thinking oil depletion is the biggest loophole. That isn't where the big money is. The big money is the expensing or writing off of the drilling and development costs for oil and gas wells in the first year."

[Phil Hart](#) was close to Mr. Douglas and vice versa. As I mentioned, Mr. Douglas often said that Hart was proof a saint could actually be a member of the Senate. I had long talks with him on the Senate floor shortly before he died of cancer, and his private views of some of his colleagues were not as saintly as his public views.

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His counterpart in Michigan, [Pat McNamara](#), was very close to Mr. Douglas. Pat McNamara was on the Public Works Committee. We were involved with him on a number of issues, particularly the Lake Michigan Water Diversion bill. McNamara used to tell Mr. Douglas not to pay so much attention to the Catholic hierarchy. The organization in Illinois, the Chicago organization, was almost entirely Irish, Italian, Polish, all of whom were Catholic, and here was this Quaker in this party of Catholics. As a consequence, Mr. Douglas was if anything unduly sensitive to how the bishops, the archbishop, the cardinal, might think. Pat McNamara constantly told him not to pay any attention to them. He said, "They're all Republicans, they're all conservatives, Paul." He said, "Don't go out of your way to help them." So this good Irishman told him what to do on issues the hierarchy opposed.

Mr. Douglas on the whole was very good about not catering to people's religious views. In 1960 when he campaigned so extensively for [Kennedy](#) he mainly made the arguments for Kennedy and that a Catholic could and should become President, in the down state bible belt areas. When we got to Effingham, for example, where the Democratic Party was almost entirely a Catholic Party in a Protestant environment, he refused to use his PT boat example and to cater to them to vote for Kennedy on the religious issue. He thought that was both wrong and inappropriate.

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[Charlie Potter](#), another senator from Michigan -- I think he was only a one-term senator -- but Charlie Potter was one of the true believers on Civil Rights, who had strong and intensive feelings, and stuck with us as a very, very loyal ally during the Civil Rights fights. He was a Republican.

Now I come to [Gene McCarthy](#). Interesting background. Eugene McCarthy had been on the Ways and Means Committee in the House, and as you recall, Mr. Douglas spent seven years at least, and at least seven vacancies, trying to get on the Senate Finance Committee. When McCarthy came to the Senate, he got on the Finance Committee as a freshman. Mr. Douglas was elated -- ecstatic -- that at long last, a northern liberal had gotten on as a freshman senator. Mr. Douglas had been pushing tax reform on his own, almost a single voice in the Senate. He and Hubert Humphrey started it back in '54, when they made the first big attack on the tax loopholes. Then Mr. Douglas carried on that fight pretty much alone. In the '55, '56, '57 period I was doing the staff work, and we devised a series of amendments which Mr. Douglas would propose on every tax bill. One was on oil depletion, one was on business expense accounts -- and that was a good one. I had worked up dozens of examples where business expense deductions were simply ridiculous. There was one of a company selling yachts in Miami where they deducted their expenses for tennis shoes on grounds that they needed to wear them when they were aboard trying

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to sell their yachts. We had dozens and dozens of those kinds of examples. Then we worked on the issue of withholding of dividends and interest at the source, and we had a fourth amendment, which was on the dividend credit. People were allowed to take as a credit, as a result of the '54 act, four or six or some percentage of the dividends they got, tax free.

So Mr. Douglas had offered all of these amendments, and after the '58 election he gave away these amendments in order to try to strengthen the group of people who were fighting. So [Bill Proxmire](#) got one, withholding on interest and dividends. Gene McCarthy had been against the dividend credit when he was on the Ways and Means Committee. We gave [Joe Clark](#) the best one. We gave Joe Clark's people the amendment and all my beautiful examples on business expense accounts. And Mr. Douglas kept the oil depletion amendment. We had a joint press release about this: "Four Senators to Offer Tax Loophole Amendments." I did the staff work and wrote the release, and I remember Gene McCarthy coming down to our office and working it over with me, as did Bill Proxmire. We got to the floor, and Mr. Douglas decided that he would go last, because he expected to get fewer votes on depletion.

We started off with the strongest one, which was the business expense one, and I think Joe Clark got a partial victory, using all my beautiful examples. Then McCarthy put up the dividend

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credit, and he won at least a partial victory on that. Two out of two we won on. Then Proxmire did the withholding, and I think we only got 23 votes, something like that. It was not a winner. Then finally Mr. Douglas came along with his depletion allowance. When he offered the depletion allowance amendment, Gene McCarthy voted against us. I was at a loss to understand this, and I went over to his Administrative Assistant, Hynes, the father of Patrick Hynes who is now in the Democratic Cloakroom, and I said, "What the hell is going on? He signed the release, we put it out in our name, we're sticking together, and he votes against us!" He said, "Well, he's just got a slightly different view of what the amendment should be, it's a technical view." Well, that was the first inkling we had, and from then on, Gene McCarthy in the Finance Committee would always vote against doing anything about the depletion allowance, and usually Bob Kerr had his proxie. I got curious about this and I finally found out, several years later, what had happened. When McCarthy came to the Senate, he wanted to be on the Finance Committee. He was told by Johnson that he had to clear it with Kerr who was the number two on the committee, and the oil senator from Oklahoma. McCarthy sent a man I've talked about before, Cyrus Anderson, as his agent -- Cy told me this, years later -- to see Kerr, and Kerr said, "There's one thing he's got to do, he's got to vote with us on gas and oil." And McCarthy agreed. That was how it came about.

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It always pained me, during the period of the New Hampshire primary in 1968, knowing this background of McCarthy. How sincere was he? He was taking a moral position against the war, but he sold out on oil and gas. To what degree was he sore at Johnson over his failure to bring him on as vice president in 1964, or was he really strongly against the war? His position on oil and gas always made it difficult for me, after that period, to know quite what Gene McCarthy's motives were. I must say, he was always very kind to me. He always spoke to me. He was pleasant to me. He was very friendly to me personally, and I've always felt badly in some degree about poor mouthing him. But this is a public position I think that needs to be known. Mr. Douglas' great joy at his going on the committee faded as time went on, because of those votes. He felt a deep hurt about it.

[Clifford Case](#), of course, was a very close ally, because of Civil Rights, and of course [Jacob Javits](#) and [Herbert Lehman](#) of New York were very close for the

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same reason. [Frank Graham](#) was a very close personal friend of the senator, and he told Frank Graham time and again, "Don't vote with us on Civil Rights." Graham would come in, and he couldn't make up his mind what to do. He was from North Carolina, and I think he genuinely believed in Civil Rights, but it was what Mr. Douglas used to call a suicide issue for someone from North Carolina in those days, so he advised Graham not to vote with us. Graham was attacked heavily for

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supposedly being for Civil Rights in his campaigns, but at the very last minute he voted against. Mr. Douglas always felt that he should have come out very early on, and very quickly, and that he might have saved his seat if he had done that.

[William Langer](#) from North Dakota. It was said that he was unpredictable, however he was the most predictable senator in the Senate. He was an isolationist on anything that had to do with foreign policy, and he was a populist and a radical on domestic policy. I once saw him do what I thought was an extraordinarily brave thing. There was a man who was cited for contempt of the Senate for taking the Fifth Amendment with respect to membership in a Communist Party front organization, and there was a vote on the Senate floor as to whether or not to cite the fellow so that the Justice Department could take action against him. Langer got up on the Senate floor and said, "I've never met this man, I don't know him, but I believe that everyone has a right to a defense." He talked for more than an hour from the notes the man's lawyer had given him, in defense of this fellow and what he had done. And that was at a time, '55 or '56, even [\[Joe\] McCarthy](#) was still alive and in the Senate. He'd been censured, but the country still had some fairly strong feelings about this sort of thing. I think Langer's was the only vote in support of the fellow, but it took a lot of guts in those days to do what Langer did.

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He was also an ally in the debate over overriding [Truman's](#) veto on the anti-Communist McCarran act, when they were meeting in the old Senate Chamber, which was also the old Supreme Court chamber. Mr. Douglas and Langer and a few others were filibustering. Langer collapsed on the Senate floor during this filibuster, and I think Mr. Douglas was the only other one there. Langer was a diabetic and apparently hadn't eaten right or his insulin had run out. It was late at night. I remember Mr. Douglas telling about it. I wasn't there, but he told many times how he had to keep the debate going. He couldn't give any assistance to Langer. Langer lay prone on the floor and Mr. Douglas was stepping over him and around him during this debate, not knowing whether or not Langer was still

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alive. Langer was one of the five other senators who voted with Douglas in 1956 on the motion to adjourn, when Johnson crushed him over the Civil Rights bill.

[Frank Lauche](#) was an interesting fellow. Lauche did something that not many people knew about. Lauche would come to the floor at noon, and invariably he would ask a lot of questions to prove he was there. Then he left and he played golf many afternoons. But the Record always showed that he was there, taking part in the debates, asking questions, putting stuff in the Record. But he actually was out playing golf much of the time. Not many people knew about it, but it was true.

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Of course, the two Neubergeres [[Richard](#) and [Maurine](#)] were very great friends of Senator Douglas and me. [Wayne Morse](#) was close until 1957. Wayne Morse was born in Wisconsin. He was born in the same town as old [Bob La Follette](#), and he saw himself as the reincarnation of old Bob La Follette, very independent, impossible to get along with, getting up and moralizing in a way that very few other people did. In 1954 he came to Illinois and spoke on behalf of Senator Douglas' reelection. I heard him a couple of times. He gave a fiery, marvelous speech at Centralia, Illinois, for one. He would go on and on like the old tent meetings where people would talk two or three hours, very fiery. But there was a falling out in '57 when Morse accused those who tried to put the Civil Rights bill coming from the House on the Senate calendar, and things were never quite the same after that.

Estes Kefauver was a close friend of Senator Douglas. There's one story about Kefauver I want to tell. It has since come out that Kefauver was a womanizer, which is true. He was in Madison, Wisconsin, to speak. [Gaylord Nelson](#) was the governor, and there was a very prominent woman who was Estes Kefauver's "friend" when he was in Madison, put it that way. Let's say the woman's name was Mrs. Smith. When Gaylord Nelson introduced him and Kefauver got up to acknowledge the people on the platform, he referred to "Governor Gaylord Smith." And everyone in the crowd knew precisely what was going on!

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[Ralph Yarborough](#) was an ally of Senator Douglas, because he represented the progressive wing of the party in Texas and because he and Johnson were not very close.

I want to tell you something about [Ted Moss](#) of Utah. In 1958, early in the campaign, it wasn't at all clear that a lot of the Democrats running that year would be elected. Ted Moss was in a very tough race, and eventually won it

because of the split between the existing senator, [\[Arthur\] Watkins](#), who was chairman of the committee that took on Joe McCarthy, and a very conservative ideologue who ran as an independent, the mayor of St. Lake City [J. Bracken Lee]. The three-way race allowed Moss to get in. Near the end of the campaign, it became clear from the polls that a lot of these people might win, and they had not received any money to speak of from the senatorial campaign committee. So the committee rushed out to find them at the last minute. This was not done from a magnanimous view because the Southerners didn't want liberals to win. When the establishment saw the writing on the wall they wanted the newcomers to be indebted to them.

There was a staff person on the campaign committee, whose name I've now forgotten, and he's dead, but I knew him in those days and I would have to look it up, but I know that this is true from first-hand. He told Mr. Douglas. He went around the country with funds from the senatorial campaign committee. When he got to

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Utah, he asked Moss near the end of the campaign if he could use ten thousand dollars. Moss, who had almost no money, said, "Could I use ten thousand dollars! Of course I could." The staff fellow said, "Well, there's one caveat. What's your position on oil depletion?" Ted Moss told him he hadn't really studied it very much, he really was undecided on the issue, but if he had to commit himself on the issue, he would have to turn down the money. And in fact he did turn down the money. The staff fellow called back, I think to Mrs. [\[Mary\] Lasker](#), but I'm not sure about this. Anyway he called some close friend of the Democratic party who had money, I think it was Mrs. Lasker, and told the party what had happened. He said, "My God, we've got an honest man, but he needs the money." He got ten thousand bucks with no strings for Ted Moss. Now, I heard this from the staff man, as did Mr. Douglas, and I was with Mr. Douglas once when he asked Ted Moss about it. Moss didn't acknowledge it, but he didn't deny it. In fact, his facial expressions and his body language said yes. I didn't actually hear him say it happened, but I have every reason to think that that is a true story.

[Ralph Flanders](#) was an ally of Senator Douglas' because he was from New England. Flanders and [\[George\] Aiken](#) were from Vermont, and the Vermont Republican party then was really two parties. It had factions, and there was a very progressive faction and a conservative faction. I think both Aiken and Flanders were from

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the progressive faction. For almost all purposes, they might well have been progressive Democrats instead of progressive Republicans. They voted with the Republicans for organization and took their whip and so on, but at least in the early days both Aiken and Flanders were very progressive people. Of course, Flanders had the first motion to censure McCarthy, and Mr. Douglas was a cosponsor of it. As time went on, Aiken got more conservative, at least domestically, although he still remained a progressive and was fairly radical on the war. He made that famous remark that we should declare victory and leave. He was a classy fellow. Senator [Tobey](#) was even closer to the Douglas' and Mrs. Tobey was with Emily at Selma.

[Scoop Jackson](#) was another ally. I mention these people because I didn't mention some of them before. He was my personal friend.

Today I was reminded about an interesting thing that happened because Bob Solow of MIT won the Nobel Prize for Economics, yesterday. His picture is in the paper today. He was on the news last night. Bob Solow is one of the economists I got to know pretty well during the Kennedy administration, because he worked very closely with the Joint Economic Committee and with Mr. Douglas because of his role in the Senate. When the Kennedy Administration wanted to cut taxes in '62, Solow and Walter Heller were lobbying Mr. Douglas to cut taxes, and Mr. Douglas I think

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was the key reason that a tax cut was delayed, because Heller and Solow and others were predicting a recession, but there were no signs of a recession. They wanted to head off a recession by a tax cut, and Mr. Douglas' view was that you should wait until you see the whites of their eyes, that is, if the facts showed unemployment going up and GNP going down over two quarters which is the definition of a recession, then act, and act fast. But don't act before the fact. Don't act on projections. He convinced Kennedy along those lines, so a tax cut was delayed because they were afraid that Mr. Douglas and his point of view would prevail if they offered one; they really had to have everybody in line.

It was during this period that the Kennedy administration, I think it was in 1962, proposed tax reform, which we welcomed very much. I went down to the White House a couple of times and in particular met with Bob Solow and a small group of people at the Hay-Adams Hotel, one noon for lunch, where we discussed the effort they were going to make on a tax reform bill. What happened was that the economists, both from the Treasury and from the Council of Economic Advisors, and Solow the key one, all wanted to play politician. They were saying, "We were going to offer this, but we don't think it can get through." I remember telling

them in no uncertain terms, really sort of ticking them off, that their Job was to propose what was right, what should be done, what

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the loopholes were, what the grievances were, and then let the politicians, namely the president and the Congress decide which ones they could get through. I have a very, very vivid memory of the economists wanting to play politician, and to some degree the politicians wanting to play economist, reversing the roles each should properly have played. But he was a very engaging, and intelligent, and witty fellow, Bob Solow, one of the nicest people you could ever wish to meet.

Ritchie: Do you think that's a trend, that people who come to Washington who aren't politicians, once they get here want to play politician?

Shuman: They do, and it's a big mistake for the people who advise the president. They should give their best expert advice, and then let the politicians figure out whether they can do it or not. I think that's true of military policy: the Joint Chiefs should do that, the Treasury should do that. The president should get the best advice available on the factual matters. The experts should let the politicians decide the politics of it, or at least decide it at a different time.

There are some loose ends and some random thoughts I want to mention before we end these interviews. I've been thinking back over them, having reread them. I studied economic history and taught economic history, and as I reread some of the things I was

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talking to you about earlier, as well as thinking about the political experiences I have had, it seemed to me that if I could put myself in an historical category it would be that I was greatly influenced by what would be called the indigenous radical American, populist, Midwestern, farmer, rural, westward agrarian movement. It was all those things. The two senators I worked for were from that mold. Now, that movement was stronger in places like Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and North Dakota, and Montana, than it was in Northern Illinois, where I grew up. But the events of the depression spilled over and the farmers in our area were Republicans politically, but were Democrats with respect to the economy and their pocketbooks, and were strongly for the programs that Roosevelt initiated in the thirties. My father's closest allies all said "We can't let the farmers go through the ringer." Their opponents supported the view of "root, hog, or die," the view that the newly born runt pig should perish. It was social Darwinism. I got caught up in the former, and I think it's fair to say, historically,

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that I was a product of that. If it had not been for the depression first of all and for World War II second, I might have been a Republican, as the migration of my ancestors was across the northern part of the country through New York and the Pennsylvania Dutch (German) country to Central Illinois. That was the Republican migration, and all the places I lived, except Jerseyville, were very heavily Republican. I cannot, however, remotely think of myself as a Republican although there

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are many constructive forces in that party but generally, and certainly now, not the dominant ones.

But those two events really made me a Democrat, and a strong Democrat, and unlike many of the new neo-conservatives I have never budged from my views. Most of the neo-conservatives are intellectuals who are agile enough to justify their expedient moves on grounds of principle. The Republicans where I lived, the mainstream of them, not all of them, but the people who ran the party, were bitter in their hatred of the New Deal and of what Roosevelt was trying to do. I remember when he was elected in 1940, at the local Rotary Club at least one man said he'd like to see Roosevelt killed, and some people there took that person on as a result. The *Chicago Tribune* was isolationist. It's really ironic that today it is thought that the party of Reagan is the strong national defense party and that the Democrats are wimps, because that was not my history. The Democrats were the ones who were interventionists in the late '30s, early '40s. The Democrats were largely the supporters of NATO, of Truman's intervention in Greece and Turkey, of the standing up to the Russians over Berlin, both in '48 and again in '61, and of Truman's policy in Korea. I mean, the history of the party was that for years and years we were fighting off -- at least I was in very personal terms -- or against the large body of Republicans who were isolationist towards Europe, although they tended to be, I always thought,

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interventionists and imperialists with respect to Asia. They really weren't isolationists, they were just isolationists toward Europe. The dominant forces in the Republican Party were also allied domestically with the Dixiecrats.

Then if you look at the history of the Civil Rights movement, essentially what happened was that populism moved to the South. The forces of power and wealth, the dominant interests, utility interests, railroad interests and so on, used race as the means to split, divide and kill off the progressive populist movement. [Pitchfork Ben Tillman](#) and others were responsible for devising the tactic and

used the blacks as a means of diverting the poor whites from their populist origins and their legitimate grievances. That theme you could see running through the Senate all during the Civil Rights fights in which I was involved in.

I was going to tell you about an incident that concerned my father. It doesn't really illustrate this point, but it does in a way. It has to do with the draft board where I lived. I don't think I've mentioned it before. My father was the county agent and he was the advisor to the draft board as to which farm kids should stay home and not go to war, because they were needed on the farm. There was a Mennonite community north of the Rock River, on the good, black soil, and the Mennonites were pacifists. This was at a period when I was in the navy, and my brother, who was a year younger than I, was going off to the air

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force. We were eighteen and nineteen. The draft board did not understand why these Mennonite sons were pacifists and didn't want to go to war, although there were provisions in the draft act in World War II for exemptions for those who held religious views against war. As an advisor on farm issues and who should be drafted, my father convinced the draft board that the Mennonites should be exempted, even though his own two sons were in the war. I always thought that was revealing of what is best about this country, and I always felt that one of the things I was fighting for was the right for the Mennonites to be pacifists and conscientious objectors if they genuinely felt that way.

I didn't feel that way about people who stayed in college to get out of the Vietnam war, or who went off to Canada. I felt if people really had the strength of their convictions they should register as pacifists and go to work camps, or do medical work, or something else, or even go to jail if necessary to uphold their convictions. I doubted their strength of conviction if they were unwilling to accept the consequences of expressing their views.

On another point I have some schizophrenic views about the Constitution, and also about politics and the division of power. In peacetime I'm a strong believer in those principles of Madisonian and Jeffersonian democracy, that power should be diffused, should be shared between the executive and the legislature, and I'm extremely worried now that there is an

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extraordinarily strong belief by the people I meet and see and work with, that only the president has the war power, and only the president is supposed to deal in foreign affairs, and only the president is to say what the budget is, and the

president, when he nominates someone for the Supreme Court has a right, because he was elected, to have the Senate just roll over and support the nominee. It's a unitary state that's being proposed, along the lines of the British Parliament, where the prime minister, exercising the sovereign powers of the monarch, can go to war without a vote, can sign a treaty and have it accepted without a vote of parliament, can present her budget or his budget and it is accepted, and who can nominate all kinds of people without so much as a by-your-leave. Mrs. Thatcher can even nominate bishops without any advice and consent procedures. It seems to me that that is now being proposed quite seriously by some, like Lloyd Cutler, who makes a responsible and intellectual case for it, but that it is being proposed unwittingly by other people such as the Vice President, who has made a number of speeches in recent times that Congress has no right to interfere in Central American foreign policy issues.

It also has behind it what one could call the plebiscitary presidency, the presidency of Charles de Gaulle, that having been elected, he therefore has the right to do anything he wanted to do for the period of his election. This was [Nixon's](#) view after '72.

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It is argued that that should be the case with respect to President Reagan now, and there are a lot of people who have not read the Constitution who I think don't know what's in the Constitution with respect to the powers of Congress and who are advocates of the unitary state or the plebiscitary presidency. I take the view that power should be diffused, although I do believe that in times of emergency, as in the depression and as in a genuine war, World War II, the president has to have more power, more prerogatives than in peacetime.

It's a little hard to justify both views. That's why I said I feel schizophrenic about this. But I think the test is the degree of danger to the country, and that the president can exercise prerogative power only when there is a genuine crisis, as Lincoln did in the first years of the Civil War, when Congress was out of session -- he helped keep them out of session -- when he did all sorts of things he had no presidential power to do. But the test in part is whether the public accepts it or not. That was the test in the case of Lincoln, and he went back to Congress and said I've done these things which are your powers but I'm sure you would have done them had you been here, and I'm sure you agree with what I have done. In fact, Congress did agree with what he did, so he got by with it. Franklin Roosevelt, both in the depression and from time to time in '39 to '41 before we got into World War II, exercised great power, but

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for the most part, Congress voted him the power. An exception was the destroyers for bases deal.

Basically, I believe that except for times of very real crisis, the system works much better by consensus and shared power and diffusion of power than it does by having a plebiscitary presidency.

I also have a certain schizophrenic interpretation of other parts of the Constitution. I think the Articles of the Constitution must have a fairly broad interpretation and change with the times; that's fundamental. I heard the Attorney General speak the other day, and you will recall that he has said in the past that he believes in the views of the founding fathers, that the Constitution should be interpreted along the lines of the original intentions of the founding fathers. But when it came to the War Powers Resolution, he declared it to be unconstitutional, as he had done before, although that is the right of the Court not of the Attorney General, to do. The Attorney General and the president must obey the law until such time as it is no longer the law, under the provision that the president shall take care to see that the laws are faithfully executed. It is not up to them to pronounce the Constitutionality of any law!

For some reason, Mr. Meese does not ask what was the original intent of the Founding Fathers or those who passed the War Powers

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Resolution, because if he did he would find that the Founding Fathers gave almost all war powers and many foreign policy powers to Congress and that the purpose of the War Powers Resolution was to quell some of the arbitrary power that almost every president has used in modern times.

While I believe on the one hand that the Constitution should be fairly broadly interpreted, I've always thought the Bill of Rights should be read very narrowly and interpreted very strictly if the freedoms which the country enjoys are to be kept.

Ritchie: In the years that you were here, do you think that the direction has been going more towards the presidency, or has the Congress been able to balance things out?

Shuman: Well, there were periods when, until Nixon had to leave, there was no question that the president was getting much stronger. Nixon impounded funds. Nixon arbitrarily went to war with Cambodia. Nixon transferred funds from foreign aid to bombing in Vietnam and Cambodia, not authorized in any way, and insisted he had a right to do it. He froze thirteen or fifteen housing programs on

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the grounds he had a right to stop them because he had proposed new legislation. He insisted that while an existing law need not be carried out, a future proposed law should be. That was his view, which always seemed to me remarkable. Then, he got his comeuppance. At that stage a number

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of things happened such as the Budget Act and the War Powers Resolution, which were designed to regain power Congress had either delegated or given away, or acquiesced in, from the president. So then there was a swinging back. But I think at the moment there is a very, very strong movement towards more power for the president which is heavily and successfully resisted by the Congress.

Among the people I work with in the executive branch, it's overwhelming. Day in and day out I hear over, and over, and over again, what I call trashing the Congress. I heard a man the other day say about [William] Casey, the former CIA head, that the reason Mr. Casey lied to Congress was that he didn't trust the Intelligence Committees or their staff to keep a secret. He tried to justify lying and breaking the law. Now, I think I'm correct on this, I think it's true, that with respect to any secret, no member of the Intelligence committees of the House and Senate, or their staffs, has ever leaked secret information. There was one instance when one member of the committee preliminarily gave out a report of the committee which was not secret, and as a result resigned from the vice-chairmanship. But that was not a secrecy matter. I don't think there has been a case. Yet, at the same time we were being told this, by a very prominent person, about why Mr. Casey would lie to the Intelligence committees or not tell the truth wholly, he forgot that Mr. Casey spilled his guts to Bob

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Woodward on the most secret matters one could possibly imagine. There is therefore a double standard. I am told on good authority that Allen Dulles met once a week with Joseph Alsop and regularly let him see secret documents. Almost every CIA head has spilled his guts to his political Boswell in the press.

Most of the leaks, as I think you know or as at least I believe, come from the executive branch, and they generally come from people very high up in the executive branch. They generally do not come from relatively low level civil servants. I have leaked many times, but I never leaked on a national security matter, not once in thirty years. But I did let Jack Anderson and others know when people were trying to steal the Capitol Dome, several times, with the evidence. My students ask why leakers shouldn't be prosecuted. My answer is:

"Do you want to put the President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, the head of the CIA, and the staff director of the National Security Council in jail?"

Ritchie: In what kind of situations did you let Jack Anderson know?

Shuman: Well, situations in the Banking Committee on markups, when all kinds of pork were being labeled out. At that time those executive sessions were secret, and there were intense battles. I will tell about one instance. I've forgotten the

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subject, but it was a mark-up session of the committee when a lot of things happened I would say were clearly not in the public interest, because when Jack Anderson printed them some members were furious because it was so embarrassing. All I did was during a public hearing ask the clerk of the committee to see the transcript of the mark-up held a day or two earlier. I took it back to the office, xeroxed the key pages, and brought it back. The clerk did not notice I had left the room. I gave it back and then gave that evidence, from the transcript of the committee, to a journalist. Well, later on there was a great furor about it, and it was suspected that I had done it. But the proposition was that I had had a secret microphone on during the session and had secretly transcribed what had gone on, which was not the truth. I could honestly deny that that was the case. I didn't have to lie about it. I wouldn't have lied about it, but I could honestly say no, I did not do that, which was true. But they were furious that the truth leaked out. It wasn't national security. It was the pork barrel.

On another issue I've thought a lot about when or where military force ought to be or can be used. I think there are certain fundamental propositions about American foreign policy and about when force can or should be used. I think it certainly should not be used in an imperial way, or we shouldn't act as a bully, or jingoistically. But it seems to me there are major

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principles that we should remember. One is a Walter Lippmann principle that anything which threatens the countries along the perimeter of the Atlantic, at least in the Northern Hemisphere and in Latin America, is in our vital interests and we really can't allow an aggressor to threaten France, or Britain, or Holland, or Belgium or NATO. It's quite a different thing when you are talking about an interior Eastern European country, where we don't have the ability to reach it with forces. But almost any aggression towards major countries on the fringes of

the Atlantic I think imperils us in terms of our national interests, and therefore we must react against that.

We also have vital interests with respect to Central and Latin America both under the Monroe Doctrine and indigenously, but most people haven't read the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine has two sides to it. One is that no European power is to be influential in the Western Hemisphere unless the country involved acquiesces. But it also says that we should have no interest in European matters. I always find it interesting when people quote the Monroe Doctrine to ask if they have read it, because there are portions of the Monroe Doctrine which if followed would keep us out of Europe, NATO, the Persian Gulf, and elsewhere. We would have no business in any of those places under the Monroe Doctrine.

Then I think there are geographical limits as to what we should do with respect to places on the Asian continent, which I

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have already noted. I would say that is a basic principle we offended against in Vietnam, that it is almost impossible for us to put ground forces on the continent of Asia, and that is a fundamental mistake. One can justify Korea, even though it's on the continent of Asia, because it is a peninsula, and because both sea and air power can be brought to bear very effectively. If we had stopped at the waist of Korea, north of the 38th Parallel, we probably would have been more successful than we were, although I think we "won" in Korea. We accomplished our goal. Mr. Douglas went to President Truman in 1950 and urged him to stop at the waist or the neck of North Korea. It was defensible militarily and would have given us all but the rugged mountainous areas of North Korea. McArthur, instead, pushed up to the Yalu on his own initiative and against the advice of the rest of the world, and got clobbered.

I think another principle is that in stopping aggression on the whole it should be collective, that we can't go it alone, that we must do our best to go with our allies and be supported by our allies, and that it is quite unwise for us in the Middle East, especially, and elsewhere to be there alone and without allies.

Finally, I think policy needs the support of the public, and therefore I support very strongly the War Powers Resolution, not necessarily because it's the law, although I do support it because

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it's the law, but because I think the consulting provisions and the requirement that Congress needs to get aboard in sixty to ninety days, are wise, not just legal, but wise. The president needs to share the burden with Congress, which represents the public, and with the public. Failing to do that means he's going to have a failed policy if he tries to sustain it for very long. So for all those reasons, I'm a strong supporter of the War Powers Resolution. Finally, the President has the right under the Resolution to return fire on us, to rescue embattled American citizens, and to resist invasion.

I have some heroes in American history. Obviously [Jefferson](#) and [Madison](#), and [Andrew Jackson](#), great Democrats, and [Polk](#), who has been too little noticed. You know what happened to Polk. He was a great president but no one knew it. Polk's diaries were revealed sometime after the turn of the century, in 1910, and all of a sudden historians realized Polk was a very great president. So Polk has been dusted off in the twentieth century and now is held in quite high respect, especially compared with the bunch of ninnies who succeeded Jackson and preceded Lincoln, especially those "dough faces" [Pierce](#) and [Buchanan](#). I think Polk was almost the only president in that group who amounted to anything. I'm sorry to say some of them were Democrats, who were among the most pusillanimous people who ever lived in the White House.

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Of course [Lincoln](#), was our greatest president, and I think [Teddy Roosevelt](#) was a great president. There are now reinterpretations of Teddy Roosevelt. There's an historian from Michigan, Marks, who's written a biography of Teddy Roosevelt who claims in fact that Teddy Roosevelt wasn't the carry-the-big-stick fellow, that given the work he did on the peace treaty, for which he got the Nobel Peace Prize, and other things, he was very careful to keep his powder dry, and that he wasn't the strong military person that he appears to be from some of his writings and from his actions in the Spanish-American war. That doesn't quite square with my views of him. Nonetheless, he was the first of the modern presidents.

And I have great respect for Woodrow Wilson, not only Wilson the wartime president and for his work at Versailles, which was flawed because of his nature -- you probably have read [John Maynard] Keynes' vignettes on the major people at the Versailles Treaty negotiations. He says Wilson was ". . . like a nonconformist minister, perhaps a Presbyterian. His thought and his temperament were essentially theological, not intellectual." He was a moralist and Keynes paints a picture of him with a starched white collar. He calls the British prime minister, Lloyd George, the Welsh witch, a chameleon "who can tether a broomstick." He referred to him as ". . . this syren, this goatfooted bard, this half-human visitor to our age from the hag-ridden magic and

enchanted woods of Celtic antiquity." Keynes could write! Keynes describes him as a man who had an aura of mysticism and the characteristics of a personality which was beyond that of ordinary mortals, this man from the Celtic fringe. But Wilson, I think, should be remembered as much for his first term as for his wartime presidency. He did something that was very interesting with respect to seniority in the Senate. There was a senator by the name of [John W. Kern](#), from Indiana, who was elected leader of the Senate after having been there only two years. People say that seniority has always been with the Senate. Not true. What Kern did was to appoint Wilson men to be chairmen of most of the key committees of the Senate, regardless of seniority. Because of that action vast amounts of legislation, which up to that time was the most legislation any president had ever gotten through Congress, the Clayton Act, the Federal Trade Commission, and a whole list of modern progressive legislation, went through largely because of what Kern did in overriding seniority. Wilson deserves as much for that first term as for what he did as wartime president.

Of course, Franklin Roosevelt was my hero, as well as Harry Truman. Eisenhower qualifies, belatedly, because he knew how to keep his powder dry and he knew the limits of American power as a result of his experience in World War II and as a result of his service to NATO. He, I think, is looking better all the time.

President Kennedy, of course, lifted the country and his murder is, I think, responsible for unleashing many of the negative forces dominant since then.

[George Norris](#) deserves to be one of the five pictures on the wall in the anteroom of the Senate, as one of the five greatest senators. But the story was that there could only be two modern senators, one liberal and one conservative, and it came to a choice between Norris, a Republican and [\[Robert\] La Follette \[Sr.\]](#), a Progressive and they chose La Follette instead of Norris. But Norris should have been there as well as La Follette. They put [\[Robert\] Taft \[Sr.\]](#) in as the other modern senator, because they had to have a Republican conservative but he was not as great as George Norris.

A person who greatly influenced my public life was Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. When I was in college at Illinois, there was a professor of law by the name of George Gobel, who had written a book about the meaning of democracy. It was called *The Design of Democracy*. He strongly supported the Bill of Rights and he quoted Holmes a lot. He was a friend of mine. I never took a class from him, but he was a personal friend, and he recommended that I read the

ceremonial speeches of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, a small volume put out by Little, Brown, of about fifteen or twenty ceremonial speeches. Some of the greatest nuggets, the phrases and aphorisms of Justice Holmes,

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are found in those speeches. They are marvellous speeches. Catherine Drinker Bowen wrote a biography of Holmes, *Yankee From Olympus*, which is an historical novel, which I read as a passenger on the destroyer the USS Stringham on my way from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor in World War II. She who quotes all these sources, but it wasn't until I read the ceremonial speeches that I realized where those quotes came from, not so much from his opinions as from his speeches. "Life is action and passion, therefore a man must take part in the actions and passions of his time in fear of being judged not to have lived," is from one of his speeches.

That led me to read his decisions. I read, I think, every decision with his name on it, dissenting or majority. He took part by the time he left the Court in more than a third of the cases before the Supreme Court in the history of the Supreme Court. But at one stage in my life, when I was a graduate student, I read them and read those great ceremonial speeches, and they were full of references to the greatest influence on his life, which was the Civil War. He was a very brave fellow in the Civil War. He was wounded a couple of times. I've been to some of the places where he fought. It was the first modern war. It was just like World War I where masses and masses of troops were thrown at each other and slaughtered. No hope! But those speeches and his decisions on the Bill of Rights and the quality

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of struggle, that life is struggle, have always appealed to me. In fact, the title of my book, which is called *Politics and the Budget: The Struggle Between the President and the Congress*, is a result of Holmes' emphasis on combat and struggle. I think I also see politics and issues as a struggle, not as a process but as struggle and strife. It's not the budget "process," it's more like what happens in a barroom brawl. The Civil Rights fights deepened my belief that public life is struggle. I haven't been enamored with [Clay](#), and especially not with [Calhoun](#) or [Webster](#), who I think was a crook.

Ritchie: That's interesting. Why not the three great senators of the nineteenth century?

Shuman: Well, of course, Calhoun was a segregationist, supporter of slavery, and an anti-federalist. We wouldn't have a country today if Calhoun had had his way. Clay stands much higher as the great compromiser, looking for ways to keep things together. Perhaps I've been too harsh on Clay. But Webster, for all his debating skills, actually took money for votes in the Senate. Today he'd be thrown out on his ear. That therefore makes it difficult for me to think highly of him, knowing that background. Those are the reasons. You asked a good question, I hope you got -- not necessarily a good answer -- but a quick answer.

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There was one thing I picked up when I was in England, from Alan Bullock, the biographer of Hitler, which I dubbed the Mount Vernon Theory of the American Revolution. It was Bullock's view, and I remember him telling me about it years ago, but I was reminded of it over the years when my British friends would visit here, many of them Labor Party members. I would take them down to Mount Vernon, and they would see the great estate of George Washington and marvel at it. Many of them wished they lived there. They liked the view of the Potomac and this vast estate and this marvelous aristocratic area. Washington held 800 acres. The point of Bullock's story, that these visits reminded me, was that Bullock's view was that America was not started by a bunch of radical revolutionaries or radical farmers, but that America was started by a group of very intelligent, well-educated, landed, wealthy aristocrats. It was not a revolt of the down-and-out against the well-to-do. It was a revolt of American aristocrats against the fifth and stupid sons of the British aristocracy who were sent here as Colonial Governors.

What happened, according to Bullock, was that in the eighteenth century the landed aristocracy provided the talent for the British government. The oldest son, the most mature and the brightest son, went to the Foreign Office, because he had gone to Oxford or Cambridge, and got a first class honors degree and got picked for the Foreign Office under the assumption that if

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he could read Latin and Greek he could handle any problem of the world. So the number one son went to the Foreign Office. The number two son went to the navy, which was the senior service in England because it is an island country. The number three son went to the army, to one of the Queen or King's regiments, which was an aristocratic -- and still is to a large degree -- army. The fourth son went to the church and was given a living somewhere to keep him going. The fifth, and the dumb son, went to the Colonial Office and was sent to the colonies -- before we were the United States -- as a colonial governor. It was the revolt of the Jeffersons and the Madisons and the Washingtons, who were extraordinarily

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well-read, well-educated, against the dumb fifth sons of the British aristocracy which really was the reason for the American Revolution. I dubbed Bullock's idea the "Mount Vernon Theory of the American Revolution" as a result of my British friends awe at the estate. One espouses this with a lilt in the eye and a tongue in the cheek, but it has a ring of the truth.

I have one other theory I put forward, and that's the Thurmon Munson theory of the United States. Have I told you that? The Senate is the only remaining Constitutionally Gerrymandered legislative body remaining in the United States. Seven percent of the population with thirty-four senators can beat a treaty or defeat a Constitutional amendment, sustain a veto, convict on impeachment,

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or can fail to expel a senator. There are, five things that require a two-thirds vote. Theoretically the representatives of seven percent of the people can defeat any one of them. The fact that each state has two senators makes it very difficult for the big states to get a fair representation. The big states pay for the government with their taxes. But they don't get their share of the bounty.

Well, as strongly as I feel about this, it has a certain redeeming feature. The redeeming feature of the Gerrymandered Senate is that it has made it possible for us to organize a continent and to stay together as a country. The effect of it is that no radical change can take place without a general consensus of the opinion of the public. The malrepresentation of the big states and the overrepresentation of the small states in the Senate, as well as the fact that we've got divided power between the executive and legislative branches and a divided power because of the two chambers of the Congress means there must be overwhelming agreement before action can take place. So in every way power is diffused in our system.

This was brought home very strongly to me when I was in Alaska in 1979. My wife and I flew to Fairbanks, Alaska from Washington, and to get there we passed through five time zones, a distance that was farther than from London to Moscow. In the same distance in Europe, one would have crossed a dozen countries,

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probably people who spoke fifty different languages, and many motley, splintered groups. But we could fly from Washington to Seattle to Fairbanks through five time zones, basically over a contiguous society.

We were coming back from Anchorage on one of the Alaskan ferries, filled with people from all over the United States, when it was announced over the loud-speaker that Thurmon Munson, the catcher for the New York Yankees, had been killed in a private plane crash in Ohio at the Akron Airport. The point about it was that five time zones away from Akron, Ohio, which is in the Eastern Time Zone, everyone on that vessel knew who Thurmon Munson was. There was a common experience, and a shared experience. So with all the faults of the division of powers, and the shared powers, and the Gerrymandered Senate, and the slowness by which policy is made in this country, what essentially this has allowed us to do is to unite a continent in a way that doesn't exist, I think, in any other place. Canada may be the one exception. I call that the Thurmon Munson theory of the American Constitution, and I think it puts things in perspective, especially for one who has worked in the Senate and has often felt aggrieved by the slowness of change, by the difficulty of getting things done, and by the frustrations involved in the legislative principles, the filibuster, the two House Congress, and the division of power.

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I also had a principle which I called my Seven-Year Principle when I worked in the Senate. And that was that it took seven years from the time you got a good idea and introduced it as legislation, until it was passed. I saw that in the Civil Rights fights from '57 to '64. It took seven years for the Truth in Lending bill to finally make it. It took six, almost seven years for the Depressed Areas bill to make it. It took us that long to save the Indiana Dunes. It took nine years to vindicate Sergeant Buck. Most of the major legislation I worked on, that was new, forward-looking, which started out heavily opposed and without a mandate, after seven years of convincing, of publicity, of talking, of arguing, of hearings, finally made it. It had to be a good idea. I don't think a bad idea could necessarily have passed, but a good idea could get passed in seven years. It took that much time, and that much effort, and that much struggle for it to come off. "Struggle" is the word.

So I am enamoured with the Mount Vernon Theory of the American Revolution, the Thurmon Munson Theory of the Constitution, and the Seven-Year Theory, which I put forward not in the hope they will be added to the archives of philosophy but perhaps to the folklore of the Senate. If you want to ask me any more questions, fine, but I'm finished now!

Ritchie: Well, I think you've covered the history and folklore of the Senate from your point of view and from the point

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of view of the senators who were here with a magnificent panorama over a thirty years period, and I thank you for contributing your recollections and observations.

Shuman: It's been my privilege. I've enjoyed it. I've had to reminisce about things, but while there's a lot of reminiscing in what I've said, I hope that it has a stronger vein of principles about why things happened as they did, in addition to just pure reminiscing.

Ritchie: You've grounded your perspectives strongly in principle. I think that comes through very clearly.

Shuman: The motto is "forward." That was Mr. Douglas' motto. It was the motto of the Scottish Douglas clan, and I've tried to pick it up as my motto. Perhaps the Hamiltons lived by it.

Ritchie: I'd say, "forward, with patience and persistence" is the story that you've told. It doesn't happen right away, but if you hang in there long enough you can bring about change.

Shuman: Yes, I think that's true. For the things you think have no chance whatsoever, the seven-year theory holds pretty well. The 1986 tax reform bill was an exception, I didn't think it would ever pass. That took thirty years, and then it did pass in a moment of magic. It was a modern miracle that it passed.

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It was like the Biblical walls of Jerico, or the dropping of water on a rock until it splits. That is the nature of the legislative process.

Ritchie: There are enough forces that hold things back, but eventually things break through.

Shuman: Good ideas succeed. The forces of history prevail.

Ritchie: And that to some degree the purpose of the legislative process is to delay things until there is a national consensus, on the grounds that if things happen too soon it may not always be for the best.

Shuman: Yes. In general I agree with that. I don't agree with that about Civil Rights. I've said it took seven years for the Civil Rights bills to be passed. Actually, it took a hundred years, and that was too long. But it was seven years from the time the push came, from the fifties to the sixties. Civil Rights and legal

equality were too long delayed. But to be involved in that struggle was the most rewarding as well as the most difficult -- perhaps equal to the Buck case on an individual basis -- issue during my years working in the Senate. To work there with the senators I worked for was a privilege few citizens are honored to receive. My life was fulfilled by my work in the Senate.

End of Interview #10

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Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

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