

ROY L. ELSON

**Administrative Assistant to Senator Carl Hayden
and Candidate for the United States Senate**

1955-1969

Oral History Interviews
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PREFACE

The "Great Compromise" that made the Constitution possible gave the small states equal status in the United States Senate, regardless of their population size. In 1912, when Carl Hayden first won election to Congress as Arizona's sole representative in the House, his state had a population of 204,354. Neighboring California, by comparison, had eleven members representing 2,378,000 people. Hayden served in the House from 1912 until 1927, and in the Senate from 1927 until he retired on January 2, 1969. When he left office, Arizona's population had increased to 1,663,000, earning it three representatives in the House; while California had 37 representatives and a population of 19,300,000. Despite their enormous disparity in size, however, Arizona and California each elected two senators.

During Hayden's forty-two years in the Senate, California sent eleven men to the Senate, none of whom could match Hayden's seniority. From 1955 until 1969 Hayden chaired the Senate Appropriations Committee, and from 1957 to 1969 he was elected president pro tempore of the Senate. He also chaired the Democratic Patronage Committee. Over the years, Hayden exerted considerable legislative influence to provide federal funds for his state. President Franklin D. Roosevelt once asked the senator why he always talked about roads. "Because Arizona has two things people will drive thousands of miles to see—the Grand Canyon and the Petrified Forest," Hayden replied. "They can't get there without roads." In 1934, Hayden sponsored legislation to provide \$400 million in highway construction funds to the states without requiring them to match the money. When Roosevelt asked how he had arrived at that figure, Hayden explained that he had telegraphed all the state highway departments and asked them how much they could spend.

President John F. Kennedy acknowledged that "every federal program which has contributed to Western irrigation, power, and reclamation bears Carl Hayden's mark." Although many water projects were a testament to his work, Hayden's greatest monument was the Central Arizona Project to harness the waters of the Lower Colorado River Basin. He first proposed the project in the 1920s, and fought for its approval through state legislatures, the courts, and the Congress. Much of his battle was against the competing claims of California, New Mexico, and Colorado. After one of the longest legislative battles in history, Hayden achieved his goal in

1968, his last year in the Senate, causing the editor of the *Arizona Republic* to proclaim that "Carl Hayden, more than any other man, created what America knows today as Arizona."

In 1952, when Senator Hayden was 75, he hired 22-year-old Roy L. Elson as an assistant secretary on his Washington office staff. By 27, Elson had become Hayden's Administrative Assistant. The aging senator found that the youthful staff "thought his thoughts." Elson became the senator's surrogate in countless meetings involving the Central Arizona Project and other legislative issues. In 1962 he planned the senator's last campaign for reelection. And Elson himself ran as the Democratic candidate for the Senate from Arizona, in 1964 against Paul Fannin, and in 1968 against Barry Goldwater. He was one of the first Senate staff members to become a candidate. Although he was unsuccessful, other staff members followed in his path. At the time Roy Elson gave these interviews in 1990, both the Senate majority leader and the Speaker of the House, as well as other members of both bodies, had previously served on the Congressional staff.

Born in 1930 in Elrama, Pennsylvania, Roy Elson went to Arizona in 1938 with his mother, who was suffering from tuberculosis. His childhood thereafter was divided between Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Southern California. He attended public school in Tucson, and graduated from the University of Arizona. In 1952 he joined Senator Hayden's staff, and then was called to active duty in the air force during the Korean War. He returned to the Senate in 1955 and remained until Senator Hayden retired in 1969. Elson became a Washington lobbyist and a representative of the National Association of Broadcasters. In 1986 he was the government's principal witness before a grand jury investigating organized crime on the West Coast, an experience that caused him to go into hiding for self-protection. From 1989 to 1990 he rejoined the Senate staff to prepare a new edition of *Senate Procedure*.

As Carl Hayden wrote in endorsement of Roy Elson's Senate candidacy, "Roy knows the Congress." In these interviews he shares that knowledge and experience, recalls his personal career, reflects on the senators and staff with whom he served, and offers a candid view of the legislative and appropriations processes.

Roy L. Elson died in Senoita, Arizona, on February 25, 2010.

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* (1980), *The U.S. Constitution* (1989), *History of a Free Nation* (1991), and *Press Gallery: Congress and the Washington Correspondents* (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.

JOINING CARL HAYDEN'S STAFF

Interview #1

Friday, April 27, 1990

ELSON: I remember the first assignment I was given personally by Carl Hayden, to do some legislative research for him. It involved the Grand Canyon National Park. He established the Grand Canyon National Park, I mean he passed the legislation back in the late teens. Then there was apparently an amendment to it in 1927, and he couldn't remember, or figure out, how it got in there, the way it got in there and how it was all done. I don't know what the significance was, why he wanted to know, but he wanted to know. So, I went to work on it, figuring I could research this in nothing flat.

To Carl Hayden, if you couldn't put it in a one-page memorandum, you didn't understand the problem. He liked everything in short, one-page memorandums. Well, I started looking and I couldn't find the answer to how this provision got in there. Finally I asked the National Park Service, then I asked the Legislative Reference Service. I had everyone looking. I hate to think about how many thousands of man-hours went into this. I spent two hours practically every day on it. The great thing about Carl Hayden was that he had a fabulous memory, of who he told to do what. He'd come by every so often and ask: "How're you comin' on the project?" I'd say, "Senator, this is a little more difficult than I thought." Finally, after weeks, maybe a couple of months, I got it down to two pages and a quarter page on the third page. I gave it to his then AA at the time, Paul Eaton, and said, "Paul, this is the best I can do." And I told him all that I had done. He looked at it and said, "Well, it's your project. Take it in to the senator."

He was in there, and I took in the memo. He was sitting behind his desk smoking that corncob pipe. I gave it to him, and I was sort of standing at attention. He said, "Relax." He looked at it, and went through it, read one page, turned to the next page. Finally he finished it and said, "[Expletive]! Sit down young man, I'll tell you how it happened." And all we had done with all this research was to remind him of a conversation that took place between him, the then majority leader, and the minority

leader, in the Republican cloakroom in 1927. He said, "We just had a verbal agreement and we put it in." That's the way it was done.

I learned a great lesson from that experience, so when I took over as his acting AA, and then as his AA, I don't know how many thousands of hours of other people doing research we saved. When we had a real problem, I would ask a staff member to do some hasty research, do dates and all this, and give me a little one-page. And then I would sneak it in every Monday morning and say, "Senator, would you take a look at this." And this would remind him of something, and he'd save all these man-hours of research because so many of these things you would never find. I learned from that incident that you could search all the records and all the papers you wanted for a thousand years and in many instances you would never find out unless someone had done an oral history, or unless someone had been present, you would never know how it happened because so much happened in the cloakroom or discussions between a member took place on the telephone, or something like that. Over the next ten years I must have saved us and the taxpayer a lot of money just by asking him, because he had this fabulous memory for times and dates and details, who did what, and how agreements were made. And as Darrell [St. Claire] pointed out in his oral history, so many of the committee records, the minutes of those, are sort of sparse and there's not much there. Anyhow, I learned a good lesson from that, and followed it.

To this day I still regret not having gotten more of his life on tape. But in those days all they had were those wire tape recorders, and they were bulky, you couldn't carry them around, and he didn't like equipment like that, and balked at it. Then when I wanted to do it, the guy that I put in charge of it turned out to be an alcoholic and I had to fire him. And, in those days they weren't doing many oral histories, or didn't see the value of it like they do today, which I think is probably richer than any written history.

RITCHIE: Well, the written history has gotten poorer, unfortunately, so the oral history has become a necessity. What always impresses me is all the chance and circumstance that's involved in history, when you assume that everything follows logically and then you find out that it was just an accident.

ELSON: Yes, just a little quirk. [laughs] So I have always told everyone you can never know much really about Carl Hayden unless you've talked with some of the people who were around him, members and others. Mainly because, though his files are quite interesting, and historically very good files, but so much of his strength rested in his great abilities in conference, in laying the groundwork for things, and doing the hard work that went into making the system work. He had a great sense of time, where he'd rather take the half-step rather than the giant step and fall on his face. He was always laying slowing the groundwork, thinking he'd be around forever, I guess.

RITCHIE: He almost was.

ELSON: Yeah! [laughs]

RITCHIE: Of course, Hayden presents a tremendous problem for historians, because if you read the *Congressional Record* it's almost as if he wasn't there.

ELSON: Well, no, that's not quite true. Now, something that you might be interested in, and I saw that Darrell gave you some historic stuff, I had the Senate Library, or the Library of Congress, go through everything regarding Carl Hayden, and single-space we came up with a legal-size thing about that thick of references, either committee reports, speeches, legislative actions, things that he had done. It's a lot larger than you would think. I know I have it, I think it's out in storage, but I never turned it over to the library because I only had the one copy, when we turned over his papers, because I wanted to go through that, thinking I would do something with it. I think I still have it out there, which I intend to give to whoever wants it, because it would save a lot of time in doing the research in looking in the *Congressional Record* and committee reports and all that. But it was a lot bigger than I ever realized, because he always had this reputation of not saying very much.

RITCHIE: I just read the other day a story about a member of the House who rarely spoke for more than once a session. In August he stood up and made a speech, at the end of which he said, "I want to take this occasion to wish my colleagues a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

Well, I'd like to start these interviews with a focus on you, and what you did before you came to the Senate, as well as what you did while you were with the Senate. I noted that you were the youngest of nine children.

ELSON: Yeah.

RITCHIE: That sounds like quite a family. Can you tell me about the Elson family.

ELSON: Well, I was the last of nine. As you know, my oldest brother, Edward, was chaplain of the Senate for twelve years. He came to the Senate just when I left in '69. One of my first lobbying jobs was to get the Catholics to vote for him in the Democratic caucus, Kennedy and some of the others. But we were all born in Pennsylvania. My oldest brother and my oldest sister were born in Monongahela, and the other seven of us were all born in a little railroad town called Elrama, about eight miles down the river. All born at home, no one out of a hospital. I was the second heaviest baby, I was told that. My brother Edward weighed twelve pounds, and I weighed eleven and three-quarters. All the boys, there were six boys and three girls, and all the boys weighed over ten-and-a-half pounds, and all the girls over eight. So we were big, and our mother was very slight. She was a beautiful woman, but she wasn't very big, and I guess every time she delivered one of these monsters, it about killed her.

I grew up, my early years, there in Elrama. But my oldest brother, my oldest sister, a lot of them had already left. In fact, my brother was an ordained minister before I was born. There was about twenty-five years' difference in our ages, so that's the spread. Same mother, though. I have vivid memories, because I was a Depression baby—I was born in 1930—and the first thing I can remember was that my mother was always dying. She was very frail and had tuberculosis. Then I remember all those depression days, because my father always had a good job, he was a railroader. In fact, back before the turn of the century he was a fireman at seventeen and an engineer at eighteen and was one of the founding members of the International Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers, and was an engineer on those big steam locomotives that were going through those Pennsylvania mountains and all that way back before the turn of the century. He always had a job during the Depression, so we

were feeding lots of family members, other than our immediate family. I had an uncle stay with us, and his kid, and it seemed like there was always a lot of people at the table. But I remember those years rather vividly.

I went to the first grade in this little town of Elrama where they had a four-room school. It went through the eighth grade, and there were two classes to each room. My second year, my mother didn't like the teacher at this little country school, so I went with my brothers and sisters to Clairton. My two sisters and one brother, we would ride the train down to Clairton every morning, and come home in the evening, walk this mile hill up to school. So I went to the second grade in Clairton.

Then my mother, whom I said had tuberculosis, in those days they recommended you go to a dry climate, so they selected Tucson in Arizona for my mother. So we went out on the train. This would be—I think this was probably '38 rather than '37, because I remember '37. Yeah, it would be '38. 1937 I can still remember the steel mill strikes, and the Pinkerton gangs and all that down at the big steel works in Clairton and Wilson, Pennsylvania, the fires and real violence, union organizing and all that. So we moved to Tucson and went out with one brother and two of my sisters and spent all that year in Tucson, which was a town in those days around thirty thousand, maybe thirty-three, but it was small. Getting used to the desert after coming out of the green valleys of Pennsylvania was something. We spent that first year there, and my mother got well. But I went all through the third grade there in Tucson. My sisters went to high school, and my other brother, he stayed with us for awhile and then went back to Pennsylvania. Then we returned to Pennsylvania the following year, and I went to the fourth and fifth grade again in this little school in Elrama. It was just a little country school, but a good school, I thought.

Then my mother got sick again, except this time, because the heat in Arizona in those days—the summers were really brutal, and all you had were those old-fashioned air-coolers with the excelsior and the water dripping down and a little fan, and unless you had a good adobe house that had thick walls, the fans worked but it was still damn hot and it took a toll on my mother. So this time we went to what was then a little town in Southern California called Santa Ana. I went to the sixth grade there. This would be 1941 we went out there. My father, who had worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad for over fifty years was going to retire. The war—we were in Santa Ana when

World War II and Pearl Harbor can—I remember that Sunday morning pretty well. My father had stayed in Pennsylvania—there was only my sister, and myself, and my mother in California at the time, another sister came out to go to nurse's training school. In March of '42 my father was going to retire and come out and join us in California. Well, instead one day—in those days they sent death messages by wire, and my mother got a phone call that there was a Western Union message for her. We thought it was giving a time of arrival for my father, but instead it was a wire from my brother indicating that our father had been killed in an automobile accident on his way to work. A young kid and his date, half crooked, on the way to a dance in Pittsburgh had hit my father, going about ninety miles an hour as he was crossing this road.

All of a sudden that changed the plans, so we all went back for the funeral. Then my sister and I, who were in school, we returned to California and my mother stayed to close up things, take care of my father's affairs. While she was back there, and we were back in California, my mother fell down the steps in her house and punctured her lung, broke seven ribs, and got pneumonia. As a result, the TB came back again. So, when she came back to California, after she got well enough to travel, we then moved back to Arizona. We moved that summer back to Tucson. From then on, I went to a series of different schools in Tucson. My mother got well again, but she ended up eventually dying there, alone with me—it seems like everyone dies alone with me, and rest goes on, but anyhow that's how I ended up getting to Arizona permanently.

I went through the seventh grade at Mansfield Junior High School. The eighth and ninth at Roskrige Junior High and then I went to Tucson High, and then I went to the University of Arizona. And how I got to the University of Arizona—this was right after WW II—I was in the high school class of '48. We didn't have any money. You either went on active duty and tried to get the GI Bill, spend your two years in and hope you didn't get shot or something, or a lot of kids who could afford it went on to the University of Arizona. It was a state school and it wasn't that expensive, but still if you didn't have anything it was. But I had gotten an academic scholarship, so I got to go to the university. And of course in those days you were going with all these veterans who had come back from World War II, so the competition was keen, because they were serious. Most of them were really serious about getting an education, and hell, I didn't know what I wanted to do.

But I went on to the University of Arizona—and I always had to work—even though I joined a fraternity, but I managed the fraternity house and got my room and board for free. My mother died my freshman year. I was really the only one in the family that called Arizona home, and stayed there. My sister, a surgical nurse, went off to California, but subsequently returned for the last year before my mother died. My other sister had gotten married, and everyone else was gone. So I stayed on and was house manager of this fraternity house for two years and got my room and board that way. Then I always had odd jobs, like a candy concession, a laundry concession, a flower concession. I always had money, because I'd take from one to pay the other. The cash flow was there until the end of the year, and then I had to come up with the balance.

I stayed on at the university, although I could never make up my mind what I wanted to major in. When I started out I thought I wanted to be a geologist. I liked the outdoors and all of that. Then I always liked politics, mainly because I grew up in a family that was politically active. I had an uncle who was a great fan of [Franklin] Roosevelt's, and the only people that mattered were Democrats. He used to tell me all these stories. As a little boy I remember handing out things at the polling places in 1936 and '40, when Roosevelt ran against [Wendell] Willkie. I was doing that as a young kid, and the whole family was always involved in some sort of social work. My oldest sister was head of home service for the Red Cross in Toledo, Ohio. My brother was a minister. The other brothers, one brother was in the F.B.I., he had been in the military, and the other brother was in personnel, and the other two sisters were nurses. So we were all sort of oriented toward service-type careers. Finally, I decided I was going to stat in political science, so I changed my major to that, and I was minoring in history and philosophy. Then I decided I wanted to be a shrink, so I switched to psychology, and eventually got my degree in psychology, though I was still taking all these political science courses. I recently noted, however, from an alumni listing that I received my degree in philosophy. Which is all right with me.

I always had plenty of hours, but sometimes I didn't have the right hours, so when 1952 came I went back to finish up eight hours to get my [bachelor's] degree. And I was taking ten towards graduate credit. So I went back that fall to finish up and do some graduate work. Well, when the mid-terms came that fall, right before Thanksgiving, I was working also about a hundred hours a week. I was working at this

deaf and blind school, and also seven days a week from midnight to eight o'clock in the morning at the county hospital on the switchboard, and keeping track of records of patients, and that sort of thing. It was a big old switchboard with the old stick-in wires. Then I was riding my bicycle all these places, from the university to the deaf and blind school and back out to the county hospital, which was on the other side of town. And one night I passed out at the hospital. I started taking amphetamines in those days, because my sister was back in town and she was a nurse, so I got all these pills, mainly to stay awake, so I could do all these things. I don't know whether it was a combination of that and no sleep—I was only averaging maybe six or eight hours of sleep a week—but I passed out. I remember waking up and here's this switchboard all lit up anyhow!

I decided that morning, right then and there, that I was quitting. I either had to give up work or school, and I had my ROTC commission as a second lieutenant, because all you had to do was complete the program, you didn't need your degree. I was in the last class that had a contract that way. I said: Well, I'll either go on active duty, or keep my job, because I needed the money. So I decided to give up school, because I knew I was killing myself and I couldn't keep this pace up. Well, when I went around to sign-on, because I had done marvelously on my mid-terms everywhere, they couldn't understand why I wanted to leave. I said, "Just sign the papers." But when I went in to see Neil Houghton, who was head of the political science department at the University of Arizona, he said, "You can't do this!" I said, "Yeah, I can. Just sign them." He said, "You can't do that—besides I just recommended you for a position on Carl Hayden's staff back in Washington, D.C. Do you want to be interviewed?" I said, "Yeah, I'd like to be interviewed."

In those days, Carl Hayden used to go back to this man and to the University of Arizona principally to get staff members. Those that wanted to continue their education, and someone who was interested in politics, to come back. He would start them out as low-man-on-the-totem-pole in his office and train them the way he wanted to. This was just before Thanksgiving, and the guy arrived in town—his AA at the time was Paul Eaton, and he was out there interviewing. I actually had to go and borrow money to buy a pair of slacks and a sport coat, and a shirt and a tie, to have the interview, because all I wore were Levis and tee shirts and boots. I went to the interview, and I don't know how many Paul interviewed at that time, but maybe ten

or twelve, practically all of them from the University of Arizona, and he said he'd let me know. So, just before Thanksgiving I got a wire from Carl Hayden offering me a job and asking: Can you be in Washington by December 1? It went on to say respond by telegram, or something like that. So I sent back a one-word answer: Yes.

Then it was a race to get back here. A friend of mine who was the president of the fraternity at the time I was house manager of the fraternity I belonged to, he had been married, and I went to him and they loaned me the money not only to get back here but to go buy some clothes. It took me a while to pay them back, years later, but I went and bought a couple of suits, and even bought a hat, not a Western hat but I was told what you should wear back East. I then flew back to Washington, and I wired my oldest brother, who was in 1946 had become pastor of the National Presbyterian Church here in Washington. I just sent him a short wire saying I was arriving in Washington to go to work for Senator Carl Hayden and would he meet me, didn't tell him anything else. Well, we hadn't seen each other in years, so when I got off the airplane I had a suit and tie on, and a hat, and deliberately—because he didn't recognize me—I walked right by him, and then finally came up behind him and said, "Here I am!" That was December 1, 1952.

The Korean War was going on and actually I thought I had a deferment, because I had met with the ROTC people and the military advisor out there. I thought I had a deferment because I was going to enroll in school back here in January. So I started on the senator's payroll at \$5200 a year, as his assistant secretary. There were seven people in the office: two other men, his AA, his secretary, and me, and four secretaries. We had a total staff of seven. The way he started you out in his office was you'd open all the mail, match it up with the files, take it in and distribute it, and at the end of the day you'd get the files back, you would be responsible for filing them. The reason he did that is so you would get to not only read everything but see how things worked and the way it was all set up. Then I would get assignments like veterans cases, or social security cases, individual constituent problems at first. And then after awhile, as I mentioned, like that Grand Canyon question, you'd get other things assigned to you.

Part of the additional duty at that time was driving Mrs. Hayden, taking her for rides. She had a stroke, I think in '48 or '50, but she loved to ride through the park and go to the see the zoo and the botanical gardens. So after lunch you'd take the

limousine and take her for a drive. It was interesting, and she was a lovely, lovely lady. She smoked all the time. She had a cigarette holder, and because of the stroke she drooled a lot, and so her face was getting a little distorted. But she had a great sense of humor. I know others before me had done the same thing. I mean, they drove her. Bob Koch was the secretary, and he had done that before. It became something of a chore, and it sort of interfered with getting work done, but it was fun, and I got to know her quite well, and she liked me.

Anyhow, back to this early period. When [Dwight] Eisenhower had beaten [Adlai] Stevenson, I remember it was the first inaugural I had gone to. Carl Hayden was on the inaugural committee, so we had all sorts of tickets. I remember giving them out to all these people, because I handled part of that. I don't know, we must have had hundreds, and I was really impressed that the senator had that much clout when a Republican was coming in. It was my first inaugural and I stayed out all night partying and going to parties. It was very exciting. I walked in the next morning, because I always the first one in because I wanted to get to opening the mail early. I was in there probably at seven or eight in the morning. First thing I opened was addressed to me, and it was orders calling me to active duty. I said: This can't be! Then I thought: Man, is that fast work, the Republicans are in one day and I get called up! Exaggerating my importance a little bit. So that started a whole long process of appealing. I didn't want to go on active duty. I thought I had an exemption since I had enrolled at American University and was taking courses out there. I finally lost my appeal. I went over to the Pentagon and appeared before a board, and finally I just decided I'd better go rather than fight this.

I got new orders issued and I got called to active duty. I left here in June of 1953. So I was only here for about seven months, working for the Senate at that time. I flew out of there and went west to see a lady that I had dated in college. While out there we decided to elope and get married, and we did. And on my way to report to active duty in New York, at Mitchell air force base, to a troop carrier outfit—this was the Air Force—we got married in Yuma, Arizona. In those days you didn't have to wait very long, in fact, we went into one of these drive-in chapels and as part of the ceremony they'd wash your car for free. So that's the way that marriage started. It ended up in a divorce a few years later because—well, lots of reasons.

Anyhow, those first seven months back here I remember so vividly because when I was in school I was sort of an activist politically. I remember being back here in Washington in the later '40s and early '50s, remember Owen Latimore and Judith Copland, and I went to her trial, and I'd read all of Latimore's stuff and I thought he was pretty damn good myself. I don't know what I would have called myself, I was certainly a Democrat, probably with socialistic tendencies.

RITCHIE: You went to these while you were on Hayden's staff?

ELSON: No, no. Let's see, when was the Copland trial? I think I was back here on something else. That was 1950, wasn't it? But it also started the era of McCarthyism, and I remember coming back here after always mouthing off in college and around groups and talking politics all the time, and then getting back here I was really shocked and it left a deep mark on me those first seven months here at the height of McCarthyism, because people wouldn't talk. There was this silence. There was only one building here then and that was the old Senate Office Building, and you'd walk down the corridors, and where I was used to being friendly and talking and arguing, man, there was a silence that was frightening. This guy had really scared people. There was something going on, you could feel the undercurrent, at least I sensed it and I hadn't been here that long. I got to know Roy Cohn and Dave Schine over at the Carroll Arms, in fact, we used to drink together over there when they first got here. Roy Cohn scared the holy hell out of me, because first of all he was extremely bright, just brighter than hell, but sort of an amoral person, ruthless, you could just sense that about him. Schine, on the other hand, seemed like a decent sort of person. Later remind me sometime about seeing Roy Cohn in New York at a fund raiser just a few years ago with [George] Steinbrunner at Yankee Stadium, at a fund raiser for Peter Rodino. Roy Cohn showed up at that and we had a conversation about those early years at the Carroll Arms.

It was a frightening time to me and just scared the hell out of me. When I left I didn't want to come back, because I said, if this is what's it all about. . . . But there were a number of reasons why I didn't want to come back. I didn't think I was ready for Washington. It wasn't until just before I left to report to active duty, I knew I wasn't any brilliant person but I knew I was reasonably bright, but I really got intimidated because when I started getting assignments and doing more substantive

work I'd call down to like an assistant secretary at the Department of the Interior. I may have talked to him before and then I'm calling back to get more information and these guys would have total recall. They'd remember everything. I thought, Jesus Christ, they have lots of bright people back here, I'm not ready for this! Then, later on, after this had happened a few times, I was talking to, of all people, Darrell St. Claire. Darrell had sort of taken a liking to me, I think, and was giving me some fatherly advice, and I said, "Darrell, I don't think I'm ready for this. I'm just not up to it. I thought I was pretty bright, and I'm obviously not." I told him why I felt this way. He said, "Roy, don't you understand what goes on? What happens when anyone from the Hill calls down there, automatically the guy pushes a little switch on his desk and the secretary is listening in and taking down in shorthand everything you say, and writing a memorandum for the file. So when you call back the next time, you notice that they don't get on the line right away, they'll either call you back or there's a waiting period while they read the memorandum, so they knew exactly what you said. Now, if you did that with every call you make, you'd get nothing done." That taught me a good lesson even before I left.

After that, anytime I'd have conversations like that with someone, and particularly if I'd gotten to know them—this was after I had come back—I'd say, "Say, Jim, was that you I saw going down Virginia Avenue heading into Rock Creek Park? Who was that good-looking blond you were with? Was that your wife or was that someone else?" And then I say, "Well, did you get into her pants," or something like that, and all of a sudden there would be a line surge. [laughs] I could just see them typing that up and saying, "Ha, ha, joke," yeah, well, it doesn't come out that way when you put it on hard copy. It doesn't sound quite the same. From that, I also learned that I just anticipated that there wasn't a conversation in this town of any import that someone wasn't listening to, and that opinion had not changed in all these years. In fact, more so than ever. I can relate lots of stories about that. But as I said, it changed my whole attitude and I felt a lot better after Darrell alerted me to the real world at that time, and I never forgot it. It was one of the better pieces of advice that I got from Darrell.

Anyhow, I fought the Korean War very valiantly over in Germany and France. While at the U of A I went to advance ROTC and was offered a regular commission, which I didn't accept, but I never went to summer camp. You were supposed to go summer camp, but when Korea broke out in 1950 they canceled all those summer

programs. So when I reported for active duty the only military training that I had was what you got at the university in ROTC, meeting once a week and doing drills. I didn't go through Lackland, I didn't go through any processing, I went right into this tactical unit, which turned out to be a troop carrier unit. They were flying 119s. I went in as the adjutant. Well, I didn't know morning reports or any of that stuff. It was a real shocker, and I ended up with a "Queeg" for a commander. First, I went into the hospital for thirty days with mononucleosis and slept—of course, I'd just gotten married, so that really helped a lot.

Then we got ordered overseas. We moved down to Donaldson air force base from Mitchell to get prepared for overseas. By December of that year we were on our way overseas. This was the first airlift where a unit was flown with all its equipment, spare engines and all—we had fifty-seven aircraft—and you took all your personnel records and all your men. It was the first airlift over the Atlantic, and one of our squadrons, the squadron I was with, went into Wiesbaden. The other went down to Munich, and the other one went into a place called Toul Rossiere, which was in eastern France near Nancy. Our group headquarters went there, and that's where we all eventually ended up later the following year. We flew these fifty-seven airplanes, and 119s, as you know, were two-engine aircraft. That's, as far as I'm concerned, a four-engine ocean. Anyhow, we finally got all the airplanes over there safely.

I spent practically my whole military duty in Par—I started to say Paris, I spent a lot of time there—but in Germany and France. At the end of my tour, I was in correspondence with the senator's office and the senator. I did not want to come back to Washington. In fact, I had enrolled in the Sorbonne, the London School of Economics, and [laughs] the American School of Photography in Mexico City. I had gotten an interest in photography, and I thought, gee that would be fun, and I like Mexico. But I had to return to the United States to get separated. Mainly because I knew I was going to go through a divorce, because my wife didn't want to come to Europe. It got to be a big mess. Though we're still great friends, I guess we were in heat and probably shouldn't have gotten married in the first place. But we were young, and in love, and impetuous. So I knew I had to come back.

In the meantime, I had corresponded with the senator and he wrote me a letter—or Paul or whoever wrote it, but the senator supposedly—and said, "Before you make up

your mind what you're going to do, come through Washington and let's talk about it." So when I came back, and got off the boat in New York, I came down and met my wife, and we worked out that I would file for the divorce when I went out to Arizona. But on the way to Arizona I came through Washington and I saw the senator and his AA. The senator said, "What are you going to do?" I said, "Well, I want to go back to school." He said, "Why don't you come back and stay here, come back on the staff, and you can go to school. If you don't want to stay, the only commitment I want is for you to stay through the '56 campaign." And here it is May or June of '55. "Then if you want to leave, or whatever you can do it after the campaign."

I said, "Let me go get separated and I'll call you from there." He said, "You really don't have anything better to do, why don't you come back." So I took a month off, after I got separated from the service, and drove around the west, and San Francisco, and saw people, and finally said, "Yeah, I'd like to come back." So I came back to the same position I had occupied before, though he had brought in another man, the first man I think he had hired from Arizona State University, a guy by the name of Frank Baniceovich. So we had four males on the staff. But I came back in my old position, so I was really the number three person in the office.

We were getting ready for the '56 campaign, so all the other people went to Arizona during the campaign and I ran this office, the Washington office, and then fed all the stuff from here out there for his reelection campaign. I went through the '56 campaign running this office while Paul and Bob went to Arizona with the senator. After the '56 campaign, I had enrolled and was taking some graduate courses at the time. I had also met this lady who was teaching air force dependent children at the last place I was stationed in France. She was from North Carolina and she had taught previously air force dependent children in Japan. So we were dating all that fall, because she had come and was teaching here in the Washington area. Well, after the campaign was over, early in '57, Bob Koch, the senator's then secretary was finishing his doctorate. He decided he wanted to go back to Arizona and become a stock broker. I was trying to decide what to do, and I was asked if I'd take Bob's job and become the senator's number two person.

Whoever was the secretary had the best of all jobs, because Paul Eaton was a workaholic and he liked to do most of the heavy stuff for the senator. Then there was

the person in my position and the one Frank was in, they had to do a lot of the legwork, research, and other stuff. So the guy who was the secretary would work on special projects, like Bob Koch worked on the Bricker Amendment, he became the specialist. That was his field, international affairs, he had his Master's in it. It was an ideal place, and I was told, "You could stay here, you could go to school and finish up." And I was then thinking of going on to law school, so this was going to work beautifully, and I was also thinking of marrying this lady. So Bob Koch left that year and I became the senator's secretary.

In those days there were only two [staff] titles listed in the *Congressional Directory*, the AA [Administrative Assistant] and the secretary. "Secretary" meant something different to each office. Some were really secretaries, personal secretaries, and the others like in Carl Hayden's office, that was the number two man in the office. And they were all men in Carl Hayden's office. So I became his secretary, but as it turned out, Paul started giving me—whether it was because he liked my work, or the senator liked it, or whatever—I didn't find I had all this free time, although I started to go to law school, and I did get married that year to a lovely lady. I'm divorced from her now, but she was a wonderful lady and the mother of my two children. I think that fall of '57 I started law school at night, down at American University, when it was downtown at G and 20th.

Paul started giving me a lot of heavy stuff, reclamation projects, military stuff, so we were working pretty well together. We shared the same office, but I was really doing substantive stuff, and busier than hell. In '57, of course, is when I took over as an additional duty the patronage books for the Senate Democratic Patronage Committee, which consisted of Carl Hayden and I don't know to this day who the other members of the committee were. I got it from Darrell St. Claire, who wanted to move over to the Foreign Relations Committee, and he couldn't move unless he got someone to take care of the patronage books, as he had handled them for years. So Darrell sweet-talked me into taking over the patronage books and patronage, which turned out to be a whole separate item.

It really didn't take that much time, but I would meet every Saturday with Joe Duke, who was sergeant at arms, or Skeeter [Felton] Johnson, who was then the secretary of the Senate, but mainly with Joe because there was more patronage under

him than there was under Skeeter. We deliberately, when vacancies came up over there [in the office of the Secretary of the Senate] because you needed to have that continuity on the floor, and in those office you needed some trained people and professionals, so we pretty much over the years got everything out from under political appointments. But each Democratic member, when we divided up the patronage between the Republicans and the Democrats, there was a formula depending on how big the majority was, but Carl Hayden would always assign every member so many slots. They would normally have an elevator operator, police private, a mail carrier, or a doorman, or something like that, and a page. The senior members would get a page, I think there were only sixteen or nineteen pages at the time. Of course, they were all male. But we always had enough room in the patronage area to take care of emergencies, if a senator had a particular problem, and if a senator didn't fill his we had lots of room to do temporary things. But most of them fell under Joe Duke, the policemen, the mail carriers, and the elevator operators—well, those were pretty separate—but there was a lot of patronage.

I had that additional duty up until Carl Hayden left. He was always chairman—from 1933 until January 1969 he was chairman of the Democratic senatorial patronage committee, until I turned over the books to Mike Mansfield in the fall of '68. I was the clerk from '57 until the senator retired and I left here in January '69.

Back to '57, though, the McCarthy period had come to a head and then things were a little more relaxed. It was all during the Eisenhower administration. In '58, I think, Paul Eaton, the AA at the time, had a cerebral hemorrhage, he had an aneurysm, and nearly died. I'm still just twenty-seven years old, and all of a sudden I'm thrust into acting AA at that age. I think at that time I was probably the youngest AA in the history of the Senate. When I finally took over full time I was still under thirty, when Paul finally moved over to the Appropriations Committee. But at that time I effectively became Carl Hayden's AA. Well, that was pretty heady stuff!

I remember that I knew that I wasn't ready for all this, because everything was going on. Besides the work, and all the excitement of the times, the Cold War, and everything that was going on, taking it over, and then the politics of Arizona. Though I had known a lot about it, but a lot of these people were names without faces, sort of bloody statistics. You knew the names but had never met the people, and trying to find

out who were the real friends of the senator, and who counted most, and all that. So I really worked my tail off, even though I was still going to law school at night. I was averaging about three, four hours sleep a night, and was back taking amphetamines and that sort of stuff, just because of the load, but it was an exciting time.

I think the senator, for a long time—not a long time, but for awhile there—he was testing me a lot. He had a way of doing it. For instance, how he kept track—I'm sort of meandering here—but he had a way of keeping track of what was going on in the office, because he lived in the Methodist Building [across the street from the Capitol and Senate Office Building], he was in the office seven days a week, and in those days I first lived out on Porter Street, near the zoo. Then after I got married after about a year I moved up here on Capitol Hill. So I was coming in the office six days a week, and you'd come in on Saturday and think you'd only be there until noon. Well, you'd end up being there most of the day, because he was there most of the day. He'd just walk over.

What he'd do on the weekends, he'd come in and of course they delivered mail every day. So he would pick out of the mail certain letters coming from certain agencies at random, pick out some mail coming from Arizona. And he was always picking up the junk mail—he liked to go through newsletters and junk like that—and he was always getting the Arizona papers. He always read the two Phoenix papers every day, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and of course the Washington papers. He'd take those home. So first thing Monday morning, when he came in, he'd want to see those files that he had selected and see how you were handling them. You'd have a little session, say the letter was a new one from home, he'd want to know what you were going to do with it. Or if it was in response to something we had sent, then he'd want to see the file. Sometimes it would be on a project, and he'd pull it out. So you never knew what he was going to ask you on Monday morning. It was almost like taking an exam!

Of course, in those days our mail wasn't that heavy. It started getting heavy in '56 and '57 for some reason, I have an opinion on it, but I'm not sure it's accurate, but anyhow, he had a rule that we had to have a response or an acknowledgment out of that office within twenty-four hours to anyone from Arizona. Had to. And be working on the case, either sent an inquiry to the agency or something like that. And of course,

all the secretaries that we had were all superb secretaries. They all had short hand and great typing skills. He would not let a letter go out of there, nor would the AA, that had even a type-over. I mean any blemish on it at all. Now, that meant an original and a copy, with a little stamp on it saying: return this with your response—when we sent it to a federal agency or any governmental agency—and there would be two file copies, a yellow and blue. One went into our "tickler" system and one was on the file. These had to be clean of any errors. So they were great, the secretaries. We didn't have such things as xeroxes or copy machines or anything like that. But you had to get this response out. This is how he kept track, though, of what was going on in his office. He'd do it over in the Appropriations Committee too.

He was a wise old man. Hell, when I came back with him, he was seventy-five years old. In fact, I'm digressing again, when I was interviewed in '52, I remember talking to Dr. Houghton, and I said, "Jesus, is the guy really alive?" Because, you know, he was a legend then, and no one saw him, he never put out press releases. But we knew we had this great member of the United States Senate back here, and he was a legend even then. I knew more than most people about him. Arizonans really didn't know that much about him, because he didn't go out of his way to publicize himself. But anyhow, back to taking over.

When Paul came back, he was out for almost a year, but he fully recovered. They operated on him, they were able to surgically put a clamp around there. I got him out to the hospital, Walter Reed, where this surgeon during the Korean War must have done a couple of hundred of these a year, compared to most neurosurgeons who are lucky to do a half a dozen. When he came back, he knew that he couldn't keep that pace, and didn't. At that time a vacancy came up for the person who would handle the Interior Department appropriation bill and related agencies, so he moved over to the Appropriations Committee.

It was the first time I took a real strong stand, because I had told Paul: "If you're going, though I've been acting AA, I want the job, or I'm leaving too." I knew if I left, he couldn't move, because I didn't think that the senator would make Frank, the other guy who was there, the AA. I said, "I want the job, and I want everything that goes with it. I want the top salary and all this." Of course, Carl Hayden was very conservative in his paying policy. He always returned to the Treasury about a third

of his payroll every year. Paul was getting the top salary, and I said, "I want it." He said, "Oh, no problem, everything is fine. Yes you're going to be the AA in title and everything." So I get it and Paul moves over to the Appropriations Committee.

When the first pay period came around, I had a small raise. I said, "Well, this isn't quite right," but I waited until the next pay period thinking maybe he's doing it in increments or something like that. Again, in those days, I don't know whether you're familiar with the payrolls, you can never quite figure them out unless you had the codes and worked with the Disbursing Office. You could never figure out what exactly the take-home pay was because they had these formulas. The next pay period came and it was the same increment. So I went in and saw the senator. I said, "Senator, I've got a problem here," and told him that it was my understanding when I took over that I'd get this salary, and that I wanted this salary, or if he didn't have any confidence in me, I know I'm young and haven't been here this long, get someone else. But I'm leaving. You've given me the responsibility, despite my age, and I want the money that goes with it. Christ, I forget what it was then, about eighteen thousand dollars, it really wasn't very much. I don't think anyone had ever talked to him that way before. He said, "I'll take care of it."

Next pay period came, and here's another increment, but it didn't figure out to be the top. So I waited another pay period, and it came again. Finally I had to go back in again. I said, "Senator, to me it's very simple. You've given me the job, you've given me all the responsibilities. I think I'm doing the job. If I'm not doing the job get someone in. I'll even help you find someone. Get rid of me. But if I've got it, I want to be with all my compatriots, the people who are in the same position that I am, that are getting it. And I think I'm entitled, unless you don't have any confidence in me." He said, "I thought I took care of that." I said, "You didn't. This is what it's supposed to be." He took care of it that afternoon. Again, I think I was the only person that really went in and sort of yelled at him. You could talk that way to him. You could really express your opinion. So finally after a few months after having gotten the title and the responsibility, I finally got the money to go with it.

RITCHIE: Was it strictly Hayden, or was it the Disbursing Office as well?

ELSON: No, it was the senator. He just thought I was a little too young to get that much salary. So I sort of changed all that when I became his AA. We increased his staff, mainly because of the pick-up in the mail and the type of things that were happening after that new class of nineteen new senators came in 1958, things changed. The advent of jet travel, and then lobbying activities were beginning to get more organized, and your mail was coming in heavy.

During most of the '50s, because Arizona was so far away from everything, 90, 95 percent of the time when someone came to Washington on a problem, we had either corresponded with them, and most of the time we had seen them in the state, because the senator always went back when the session was over, and we'd travel around the state. When we'd get back in January we never had a surprise, something coming up that we had not foreseen, or had already met with the people and knew the problem and actually started working on. So when people came back here, we'd probably made their hotel reservation, set up their appointments, all that, in at least ninety percent of the time. We were rarely surprised. As a result of doing work in the office, you could set aside, for instance, both Paul and I used to dictate—not at the same time, because we were sharing the same office—but he'd dictate say around ten o'clock in the morning, and then I would try dictating from eleven to twelve or right after lunch. But you had time to do that without interruption. You just wouldn't answer phones or see anyone, you weren't interrupted that much.

But then starting in about 1958, I think with the advent of jet travel, boy that soon reversed itself. After a while it ended up the other way around, where by the early '60s only 10 percent of the people would have had contact with us beforehand. And then we getting all these big surprises, people walking in with major problems, particularly as the sessions grew longer during the '60s, and the state was growing so much. I'm trying to give you a rough idea of how things were when I went with the senator.

In about '60, everyone thought that Carl Hayden probably wouldn't run again. And of course everyone kept expecting him to die or something like that, all his political opponents were waiting in the bush, and he outlived most of them. I was one of the few—well, you could see the rats beginning to flee the ship—they thought he isn't going to run. Particularly when Mrs. Hayden died in '61, they were sure he wouldn't run again, or he wouldn't last six months because of how close they were—and they were.

I was one of the few, I think, that really believed that you don't understand this man, he's something else. Mrs. Hayden's death wasn't the end, he's got too much left to do. We were anticipating the Supreme Court ruling in California versus Arizona, and all these other things. I think it was sometime in '61 that I prepared a fifteen-page memorandum for him on all the things, because I had done a political survey earlier in the year, that showed that about forty percent of the people in Arizona didn't even know who Carl Hayden was. I said, "If you are going to run again. . . ." I outlined a program of things we had to do for him to get reelected. When I gave it to him, I only made a couple of copies of it. He took it home to the Methodist Building to think about it. Finally I said to him, "You've got to make up your mind," because it's going to take this long. I wanted to get the press secretary to start putting stuff in cans, doing TV, all the things that he had never had to do before. Raising money. This was early in '61. We started talking about it in late '60, but this was early '61. I don't think Mrs. Hayden had died yet, I'm trying to remember. She died in '61 as I recall. Yeah, she was still alive.

But I made him make a decision, and the decision was: okay, go ahead and do it. And I made him initial that memorandum, because I said, "I'm going to do these things." So I started quietly doing them. For instance, one of the things on fund raising, we set up a fiftieth anniversary dinner for him, that no one said I could put together because doing a hundred-dollar-a-plate dinner in Arizona was unheard of, no one would come, and all this and that. Senator [Warren] Magnuson's AA at that time was a guy by the name of Irv Hoff. Maggie's office was right next to ours, down the hall there. This would be about August of '61, and Maggie was up for reelection and they were going to put on a dinner for him, which was his silver anniversary.

One day over at the Carroll Arms, Irv and I were talking about how we were having problems, we wanted [John F.] Kennedy to come out, and Kenny O'Donnell and the rest of them were saying, "Well, he doesn't want to get involved in all this." So Irv and I decided, why don't we each pick a date back-to-back. Then we went through and checked every Senate member and every House member's service, and there wasn't anyone coming up for another couple of years who had both a silver and a golden anniversary in Congress. I said, "Why don't we put them back-to-back, and we get Kennedy to come out." If anyone else asks him, he can say, "When you have your silver or your golden anniversary, I'll come." He didn't have to worry about it, because he

didn't want to get involved in his first year in the presidency in a lot of fundraisers and stuff like that.

Irv Hoff and I went down, this would be in late August, I think, because we didn't have much time. They had already arranged for their dinner and I hadn't even set one up. So we went down and saw Kenny O'Donnell at the White House. I loved Kenny O'Donnell, mainly because he'd make a decision and no [expletive]. He'd give you an answer, yes, no, and that was pretty much it. And he said, "Yep, we'll be there." So Maggie scheduled his first, and then the next night we'd have it in Phoenix. I remember so well running back that day, Irv and I when we were coming back from the White House were just tickled. We agreed we wouldn't tell anyone until we had this all set up. When I came back, the senator had just come back from the floor, and I said, "Senator, the president, barring some international crisis, is coming to your dinner." His eyes sort of twinkled. And I said, "You know what I'd like you to do now, if you would, is go grab Lyndon the next time you see him, but don't tell him the president's coming, but tell him that your friends are putting on this anniversary dinner for you, and we want you to come." And the senator, I could just see his mind working, so sure enough, I think it was the next day he comes back and calls me in his office, and says, "Well, I just saw Lyndon and explained to him you're setting up this dinner, and Lyndon says, 'Carl, unless there's a global holocaust, I'll be there. I wouldn't miss this. I will be there. I can't think of anything that would prevent me from being there.'"

So we started to put on this dinner, and I went out to Arizona between late August, and our dinner was on I think November 17, and Maggie had his on the 16th. I averaged a trip from August through that dinner every three and a half to four days to Phoenix back and forth, oh God, became a zombie. At this time you may remember that [Sam] Rayburn found he had cancer and he wasn't well. We were worried that he would die and that would screw up everything—Irv and I were worried about it. But it finally got out that President Kennedy was coming to our dinner, and I remember the first call I got from Walter Jenkins, who was with Lyndon as his number one man. Walter said, "Roy, there may be a problem about Lyndon attending the senator's dinner, there's this international conference." I said, "Walter, you'd better have the vice president talk to Carl Hayden. There's no point in talking to me, because as I understand it the vice president made a personal commitment that barring war or some

natural catastrophe, or his death or something, that he would be at Carl Hayden's dinner." This happened I don't know how many times. Finally, as this dinner approached, Sam Rayburn did die.

Well, at this dinner for Carl Hayden in Arizona, the way it had worked out, I had made Lyndon master of ceremonies, which I thought was a little bold. [laughs] Then the president would make his little spiel, and we must have had all the leadership of the Senate and some of the House members on both sides. We had ranking Republicans, I don't know how many, but quite a few. My problem was, I had oversold the dinner, had a dinner committee that did a lot of work, but we oversold it here and we had all these members and we couldn't even put them on one dais. We had to put some down at the front tables and things like that. Pissed off a few of the junior senators, but that's the way it happened.

I'll never forget this. We're out in Arizona, just before the dinner. Sam has died, that same week, and Walter calls me again, saying that because of how close the vice president was to Sam, he's sort of like his son, that he's in such grief. I said, "Walter, look, they're going to go to Maggie's dinner, they're coming back here, the president's going, and everyone's going to leave from here and go to the funeral in Bonham. It seems to me . . . but I think you'd better have Lyndon call Carl Hayden, because I'm not the one that can relieve him of his obligation." So I said to the senator, "I think you had better call him." I'll never forget this conversation, as long as I live. I'm on the other line, the senator reaches Johnson down at his ranch. Lyndon gets on the line. He starts with, "You know how close we were, and Lady Bird's all shook up, and gee, Carl, I just don't see how we can come up," and he goes on about Sam and how close they were. And the senator doesn't say a word. Finally, he says, "Lyndon, I came to the House of Representatives of February of 1912. Sam came to the House in March of 1913. We became friends at that time and have been friends up until the day he died. I believe you were probably only three years old at that time. And if I know Sam Rayburn, I think he would expect you at my dinner." And you could have heard a pin drop! Finally, Lyndon spoke and said, "Carl, I'll be there. I don't think Lady Bird can come, but I'll be there." And he showed up.

And when we had the dinner, and Lyndon was going to make all the introductions and comments about all the members, and Justice [Hugo] Black was there, we had a

couple of members of the Supreme Court, it was quite an affair. The only time someone's made me cry was when the place was packed and Lyndon called me up. I was there with Liz Carpenter in the back of the dais with this silly smile, and people were eating and everything. And he says [clenches teeth]: "You [expletive], you'd better have these right and these better be in order," and just chewed me a new [expletive]. I had to leave the auditorium, went out, went into the bathroom and just wept, I was so [expletive] mad. But I must say, he performed like a trooper, did it well. Actually, Carl Hayden stole his own show, but Kennedy did a beautiful twelve minute little thing that was just funnier than hell, just charming.

I don't know that you want things like this in here, about arranging for a place for president to have an assignation?

RITCHIE: Sure.

ELSON: Well, I think we'd better stop here. [laughs] I've got to go to a luncheon, if it's all right to stop at this junction.

RITCHIE: Well, we'll pick it up at that point and go from there. [laughs] This has been fascinating, and I have lots of questions to go back over.

ELSON: Well, I start rambling, free association, just looking at a little bit of Darrell's oral history reminded me of so many things too. I just don't know what you want.

RITCHIE: In the beginning, I want to know what is important to you, and later on we can go back and fill in some of the questions that I have as well. But it's all part of the whole picture, and it's fascinating stuff.

ELSON: Well, it's fun for me.

End of Interview #1

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Interview #2

Thursday, May 3, 1990

ELSON: Last night I finished a quick review of the first interview, and I found myself meandering, a great deal of poor grammar, but for the most part I sort of enjoyed what I read. Then I realized I didn't know whether you wanted to go about this chronologically or you wanted me to finish telling you briefly about my abortive career, or how did you want to continue?

RITCHIE: I thought it might be good to keep it chronological. So we might want to stay in the 1950s and talk about it. On the other hand, if you would rather just give me an overview and then go back to ask questions, we could do it that way as well, whichever you feel comfortable with.

ELSON: Well, I could do it chronologically, I mean that's the way I think, in those terms. However, I'm afraid I'll be too lengthy if we do it chronologically.

RITCHIE: That's okay, I've got time. There's no reason to condense it in anyway.

ELSON: Well, you can throw out what you don't want. Okay, where do we start?

RITCHIE: You left just as you were about to arrange for an assignation for the president of the United States. You can't leave that one dangling!

ELSON: Then do you want to go back to the '50s? Because I was just moving along hitting highlights as things came to mind. Well, yes, that was at the dinner for Carl Hayden. I don't know whether it was common knowledge, but everyone who was around here sort of knew that Kennedy certainly had an eye for the ladies. There was no question that the arrangement that we made was for a meeting. The Secret Service had problems with it, because the house that we selected was out near Camelback Mountain, as I recall, and it was a beautiful place, you could see from the mountain and all that, but they apparently found it an inappropriate place. I don't know which—I have my suspicions about which lady was there, but I can't prove it, and I really didn't want to know at the time.

Kenny, I think, was the one that asked me to make a special arrangement, other than the suite we had for him at the Westward Ho Hotel, where we had the dinner, in downtown Phoenix. He wanted a place where he could relax and not be cornered in the hotel, in other words. So we found this house for him. I can't remember the exact words that Kenny used, but there was no question in my mind that it had to be a discrete place and a place where there would be a great deal of privacy, and where the president could enjoy himself, and we accommodated and made the appropriate arrangements, and he used it. I don't want to speculate about who it was.

RITCHIE: You talked about the Carroll Arms a number of times last week, about meetings with different people there, and it pops up in everybody's reminiscences. I get the sense that the Carroll Arms was the great relaxation place.

ELSON: Watering hole. Of course, when I first came back here there was only the Old Senate Office Building, now the Russell Building. So the closest bar or eating place was right catercornered or diagonally across the street from the Senate Office Building. The bar and eating place was down the steps. Everyone sort of met there. For instance, that's where Mark Russell got his start over there. He started out playing the piano. Then down the street was the Plaza [hotel], and it wasn't until 1960, I think that the Monocle [restaurant] opened. So there weren't too many decent eating places, or any eating places, certainly a bar, so everyone congregated over there after work. It was a fascinating place in the sense that you saw not only senators there but your staff colleagues, though you might have been fighting with them all day—and that's one of the differences I see in the Senate then and the Senate today—there was a camaraderie, though you could disagree there was a great deal of integrity in your disagreement. There wasn't a lot of dishonesty or lying to you, or misleading you. You fought fair and square for the most part. After you might have lost a legislative battle you'd meet over at the Carroll Arms and have a drink and laugh about it.

As I said, it was just amazing the number of people that went in there. I'm sure it destroyed a lot of marriages and caused problems at home for a lot of people, because

it was almost a ritual that you would go across the street and have a few drinks and talk about the day's activities. I started going there a lot because I discovered I found out a lot over there, just in talking and listening and seeing people. You always had your antenna out for picking up everything. I used to pride myself, or I was accused I might say, and I think there might have been some merit to what they said, but I could pick up weaknesses in people rather easily, and

could remember them. I always put them in the back of my mind for later use, politically, but always in terms of the senator, not for any personal reasons but more for gathering political strength.

So it was a great watering hole for finding out what was going on other than the things you were directly dealing with, because you spent a lot of time in your office, you weren't seeing everyone that day, you weren't always going to the floor. So it was one place where you could pick up on the gossip. It just seemed like it was the place to go and have a drink, and congregate, and associate. I went there practically every night before I went home, and lots of times I never got home. [laughs] I think I mentioned to you that's where I met Cohn and Schine, but lots of senators went over there besides the staff people.

It was also a luncheon place. When I first came back here, I always in the early years used to go down to the cafeteria in the Old Senate Office Building, it's still over there but they have machines there now, for lunch. It would be a quick lunch, practically the same thing every day, a hamburger, a piece of pie or cake and ice cream, a bowl of bean soup, and back to the office. You'd be through eating in fifteen, twenty minutes, and that was sort of silly. After I took over as the senator's Administrative Assistant, then I almost made it a point of meeting people for lunch. I found that getting out of the office I could get a lot of things done—politics, or fund raising, or whatever—by going outside the building rather than going down into the cafeteria. Unfortunately, that also meant a cocktail.

But I found it a very useful thing, and most of the time I went there until the Monocle opened. I know I was one of the first to go into the Monocle, so between the Carroll Arms and the Monocle that's pretty much where I hung out, and occasionally at the Plaza, which was a hotel, which later was the police headquarters, and then they just this past year tore down the building. Those two places was pretty much where I hung out at lunch, and then after work I'd probably stop at the Carroll Arms, come

back to the office because of the time difference between Arizona and Washington, I'd go back and work maybe for another hour, make long-distance phone calls to check on things in Arizona or return people's phone calls, and then I might go back to either the Carroll Arms and have dinner, and then maybe go back to the office, or meet someone late, have another cocktail, and might end up at a place like Anna Maria's—I don't know whether you know that place.

RITCHIE: The only place that would stay open late.

ELSON: Yeah. At two o'clock in the morning and have another meal, spaghetti and sausage and green peppers—I had a prodigious appetite. I don't know where I put it, but I could eat two meals a night and think nothing of it. So maybe I'd get home at two, three o'clock in the morning, and be back in the office by eight at the latest, because the senator was always there early. We would meet first thing in the morning. I was always the first person to see him during the day, and the last person at night. That's when we got our things done, unless he came back at lunchtime, sometimes we'd go downstairs to the cafeteria when he wanted to have lunch. But most of the time I would be going out. But the Carroll Arms was a hub of a lot of activity. If those walls could talk, or the bricks that are scattered all over hell now, I'm sure each one of them could tell a story. In fact, I could tell you some good stories about the Carroll Arms. When I was running [for the Senate] in '64—well, we can get to that, because it was a story about my picking up some money from some Texas interests over there, and it was the first time I ever saw a pornographic movie being made.

RITCHIE: Being made?

ELSON: Over in the Carroll Arms. I thought, "Jesus Christ, all they have to do is swing the camera this direction once and I'm through as a candidate for anything!" I was accidentally there thinking that's where I was supposed to meet this person to pick up the money. Well, it's a long story.

RITCHIE: I was going to ask you if this was a lobbyists' hangout as well?

ELSON: Oh, yeah. Lobbyists went there mainly because there wasn't very much else around here. You had the old Dodge Hotel, and some of those places, but

there was nothing really very decent around here, and that was so convenient, because if you had to get back in a hurry you could just walk across the street. It was more because of its location, you could fall in the place. A lot of senators fell in and out of there too. But that was also the place where one of Carl Hayden's Administrative Assistants committed suicide over there, so it had a lot of history. I was really sorry to see them tear the place down. I spent time there when I was traveling back and forth, when I'd move my family to Arizona I'd stay over there, particularly when I was running, mainly because it was so close and convenient. Although it wasn't the greatest hotel in the world, it certainly was interesting. Just a fascinating place. I think if you talk to anyone who was around here during the '50s, '60s and even the '70s up until the Senate took it over, they all have stories to tell about the Carroll Arms and what happened there. A lot of assignments, and just a lot of activity.

RITCHIE: It seems like sort of an off-limits place that was right next door.

ELSON: Yeah, you didn't see many outsiders. There weren't that many tourists staying there, though there were some. But it was mainly Hill people, they overwhelmed it. They had a great lady there who was a waitress, who didn't take crap from anyone. Her name was Flo Black, she was really something else. She came from Alabama, I think, and had a southern accent, cute and well-built, but she wouldn't take anything and her language left something to be desired. It was rather colorful. She'd tell senators to go kiss her, you know, wherever. [laughs] If you ordered a Coke, she'd say, "This is no drugstore, we only serve drinks here." She was something else. They had some interesting waitresses there. Well, just everyone, lobbyists, members and staff people, you could have conversations going on all over that place, plots and counterplots.

It was a wonderful institution and it was a great place, and I'm sure it must have been in the years before I arrived here. I don't know what it was like during the war, I don't recall hearing too much about it, other than it was a watering hole and hotel. A lot of members, when they first got elected, would stay over there. I remember Senator [Alan] Cranston, when he first came back he stayed over there for a while until his family moved back. A number of them would live there. I'm trying to think, there were a couple of members who did live there on a more or less permanent basis, I'm

trying to recall who they were. I believe George Aiken was one of them. But it was a wonderful place, and I miss it.

RITCHIE: Was Kennedy a regular over there when he was a senator?

ELSON: He would come over but I wouldn't call him a regular. I would see his brother over there. There were always a lot of poker games going on over there, some pretty high stakes games. Denny Chavez, for instance, from New Mexico, he was a regular over there. Dennis had a problem with the bottle and I know one night I took him home because I came out of there and he was hanging onto the lamppost. He was a wonderful old guy, and loved Carl Hayden, but he spent a lot of time there. And of course Joe McCarthy spent a lot of time over there. I think everyone spent a lot of time over there, except those that didn't drink, or went home like they should have to their families. But it was such a political place that you almost felt as though you were missing some valuable information if you didn't at least stop in for one drink, or meet someone there, because it was a good listening spot, and it was addictive.

RITCHIE: Did newspaper reporters hang out there as well?

ELSON: Some.

RITCHIE: They never wrote about it.

ELSON: I know, but everyone was always a little leery of reporters. They knew who they were. All the press secretaries around here would hang out over there. There was something about the press corps, they could always consume a lot of alcohol. But you would always be very careful around there, and you knew who they were. There were some, but not many as I recall, and if they were, we sort talked on the frivolous, or about women and sex and things like that.

RITCHIE: But the press in those days really left politicians' private lives private.

ELSON: Oh, yeah, it was not that they didn't know, they just respected the privacy of senators' lives and knew that they were unwinding the way they could. Unless they really got out of hand, or were so open and notorious that they couldn't

avoid it, most of them would ignore what they knew. You know, there are no secrets in this town, as you must know. Sooner or later, someone knows and it's going to come out. There's so many leaks to the press, and some are better than others in leaking it. Members were good at it. Some cultivated the press. A lot of it changed as I think I mentioned before, where I saw the big change was in the class of 1958. Those nineteen new senators, thirteen Democrats and six Republicans as I recall.

Television became national, and they were the first generation of media buffs and they started playing to the galleries, to the press people. And of course they wanted to change some of the rules of the Senate. Under Lyndon Johnson's leadership we did change, particularly in the Democratic caucus, where a new member would get a major committee assignment, where prior to that they started out with a minor committee, the District of Columbia and others, but now gave them a major committee assignment as soon as they arrived in the Senate. They all got on good committees, but I noticed this was a class that knew how to use the media, and had used it in their election campaigns, and was really I think probably the first television class. Then it got worse as time went on. Now today, my God, it seems like television is running the world, and the journalists are running the world.

There are all sorts of stories about Carl Hayden and the press. Carl Hayden would talk to any reporter, but I would always be amazed that nothing ever appeared in print or on the news, because he refused to get into speculation of which might happen or what was going to happen. He would tell them what had happened, but they would always ask, "What do you think is going to happen?" He would say, "Look, there's a hundred members up here, they're all individuals, and I'll not speculate on what they're going to do. If you're reporting the news, this is what you're supposed to be doing." Of course, there's that old story about him calling the *New York Times* reporter down from the gallery. The guy thought maybe he was going to get a big interview or a red hot story, I forget what his name was.

RITCHIE: Was that William S. White?

ELSON: Might have been someone like that, but I can't recall right off hand. But he came racing down and all the senator wanted to do was [expletive] about not getting

his *New York Times*, or the subscription not being delivered to the Methodist Building. [laughs] I was amazed at that.

As I say, with that class that came in '58, and with the advent of television and jet service and all that, this was a different breed of cat that came into the Senate.

RITCHIE: You mentioned earlier about the introduction of jet airline service, people went home on weekends, and constituents came here more often. I get the sense that there was more socializing in the 1950s because people were here for longer stretches.

ELSON: Yes. Well, I always felt sorry for the senators and the congressmen who lived close by, because they were used to a constituent coming into the office unannounced, so their operations were entirely different than anyone west of the Mississippi, because getting back here was an all-day trip by plane when it was prop. When did jet service really start? Was it '57 or '58? Somewhere in there. I think National started it from New York to Miami. Starting with that, it was gradual. It didn't happen overnight that things changed.

But the reason I noticed it so much in 1961, after Kennedy was elected—I'm sure you're aware but that was the first time there had been a change from a Republican administration to a Democratic administration since 1933. So all the old New Dealers that were still around and in places they wanted their jobs back and they wanted to get back into positions, and a lot of them were still relatively young men and women. I remember that first year, my God, I remember getting ready to go back to Arizona on a trip and I had so many job files on my desk—I must have had four or five hundred—that I couldn't even see over the top of the desk, they were piled so high. I remember it took me that entire weekend just to dictate acknowledgments and answers before I could even leave town. You were just inundated with all this stuff.

It seems like it was that time when the lobbyists started getting better organized, in the late '50s, early '60s period, so combining that with the better transportation and the change in the media, it started to change the way you operated around here. We were forced to make changes and not do things quite the way we did, because we just couldn't keep up. I remember on two pieces of mail, one involved some railroad

legislation, an interstate commerce type thing, and there was one other issue, there were two that came out that you could tell—you could always spot lobbying correspondence, because it all said the same thing, they were all postcards—you could always spot those. They were the easiest thing in the world to spot. And we'd reply in kind for the most part. But I think in one month's time, from where our average correspondence might have been seven or eight hundred letters a week from home, this one month I think we received forty thousand pieces of mail from the state of Arizona. Well, with a staff of seven, and only four secretaries, and we didn't use robotypes and all those other things, we finally had to get staff from the Rules Committee and the Appropriations Committee, because the senator still insisted that every piece of mail be answered. We did but that took a little while and we couldn't live up to his twenty-four-hour response time. But those sort of changes started. For those west of the Mississippi, and I think every office experienced this sort of change.

Before that there was this camaraderie, closeness, and you had more time to visit, and think things out. You did have some time to think, you weren't always responding. And then that all changed in the early '60s. Of course there was a Democratic administration then, which changed a lot of things as far as our work was concerned. I pin the beginning of those changes to that '58 class that came in '59, of shaking up the place a little, not necessarily waiting to be heard, and building up their seniority, and following the traditions that were pretty strongly entrenched in many ways. You always had the mavericks, of course. One of my favorites was Bill Langer, whose offices were down the hall when he was around. He was wonderful.

RITCHIE: In what way?

ELSON: Oh, his background, everything about him. He was tall, and I thought a handsome man. He loved women, in fact all of his staff members were women, except for the guy who opened the mail and drove him. He had a great eye for the ladies, and they were all coming out of that Dakota country, and they were all attractive. But he was a maverick. He was one that you couldn't predict anything he was going to do. He and the senator, I know, got along real well.

When I look back—I was thinking last night about our meeting today, and I thought, boy, I've been a lucky son of a gun to have been around at this time in American

history, going back to being a Depression baby, going through that, being on the fringes of World War II, having brothers in there, but I was too young to be in the service, and then being here during the '50s, which was a fascinating period of time, and then during the '60s and all the Civil Rights stuff, and the H-bomb, and the Cold War, up through today, and still only being fifty-nine. I feel like I've had a really exciting, wonderful life, and I'm just glad I was around to see some of that. But then I'm brought to earth when I think about Carl Hayden's career, that I always like to point out covered seeing Geronimo's signal fires as a little boy out in the territory, to watching the first man land on the moon. Now that's a lot of American history. When you think about it, he had been elected to public office for a total of sixty-seven consecutive years, when you count his territorial days and his congressional service and Senate service. That's almost a quarter of the nation's history. Then you go back to his father, and that's about half the nation's history. So that brings me back to earth.

But the rapidity of the changes that took place starting with World War II and the acceleration of the pace of change just boggles the mind. The amount of information that's available today at your fingertips, I just think it's wonderful. I just regret that I don't have a mind big enough to assimilate it all. I don't see how anyone can be bored, is what I guess I'm driving at, with everything that has gone on, and is going on now. It's just a fascinating time to be alive.

RITCHIE: Well, you touched on a lot of major historical events, because you came here first during McCarthyism, and were here during a time when three future presidents of the United States were all training in the Senate as presiding officer, and majority leader, and backbencher, and a few members of the House who were also destined for the presidency.

ELSON: An interesting thing—did you see that article in the paper about the professor who kept that interview with LBJ?

RITCHIE: Oh, William Leuchtenburg. ["A Visit With LBJ," *American Heritage* (May/June 1990).]

ELSON: In that article he mentioned a guy by the name of Hayes Redmond, who was an assistant to Bill Moyers at the White House. Well, Hayes—we called him

Woody—I first met him when I was fighting in Korea, as I told you, so valiantly over in Germany and France. He was an Annapolis graduate, brighter than hell, came over and he was going to be my assistant adjutant. That's when I first met him, back in 1954, I guess. He had a tragic ending to his life. After he left the White House he went to work with Mr. Land at Polaroid-Land, as his number one executive. Woody, through whatever reasons—and I'd been in his wedding when he got married in New York—anyhow, he ended up committing suicide. He'd had to be institutionalized for a while for deep depression. I remember my last conversation shortly before he blew his brains out. I asked him, "What's depression like?" He said, "Roy, I don't think you have any comprehension what a real depression is. It's so deep, it's like a dark whirlpool that just sucks you down deeper and deeper and there's no hope."

Anyhow, the only reason I mention that article is that I sort of agree with what Lyndon was saying about Jack Kennedy, because he was really not very much interested in being a United States senator. Everyone knew that he was using the position as a stepping stone to run for the presidency of the United States. It was just a matter of when. He was just an extremely delightful human being, and could have been a good senator if he wanted to. Now, Ted of course has really become a very fine senator, but even his brother Bobby worked a little harder at it, but you also knew what he was doing. When you jump and all of a sudden become a citizen of the state of New York to run, that's nice and convenient. So I agreed with that. I don't know if any of Kennedy's people should take that critically. It would amaze me a little bit, but I'm sure some of them will. I'd like to read that interview with Lyndon sometime. I think that would be fascinating, particularly some of the things he said about Roosevelt. I never heard him say anything like that. Well, that was a digression! [laughs]

RITCHIE: I was going to ask you again about the earliest years you were here, back in '52. You mentioned the pall of McCarthyism that spread over the Senate. Can you tell me anything about Hayden's relations with McCarthy, what Hayden thought about McCarthy?

ELSON: Well, he thought he was a dangerous man. Carl Hayden, after McCarthy made that speech in Wheeling, West Virginia in 1950, I know when I got

back here, they already had underway an investigation by the Rules Committee into McCarthy. Carl Hayden was the one that initiated the mail cover.

RITCHIE: On McCarthy?

ELSON: On McCarthy. On the Greek ships, and on some of his investments in the market, and things like that. In fact, Carl Hayden went to Harry Truman to get two people he wanted. He wanted T. Coleman Andrews—you remember that name?—who was head of the IRS, a very arch conservative from Virginia was head of the Internal Revenue Service, or whatever it was called at the time. To get this one super accountant-investigator from the IRS he had to go to Truman to get him, to come up and work on the Rules Committee with another man by the name of Paul Cotter, who was around here for a long time later on the Appropriations Committee. The senator sort of kept him up here. They were the ones who did a lot of the work, and then there were, I think, two other investigators. This was before I arrived, but they were already investigating McCarthy. Was it [Robert C.] Hendrickson from New Jersey? There were a whole bunch on the Rules Committee who were concerned about what McCarthy was doing to the Senate in its image and just the respect for the Senate. Carl Hayden thought he was sort of a wild man out of control. He also knew that he spent a lot of time at the Carroll Arms and drank heavily. Of course, they had to eventually peel him off the walls out at Bethesda Naval Hospital.

I still remember to this day that soon after I got back here, and right after Eisenhower had been inaugurated, this would probably be in February, taking down to the Department of Justice and the White House something like seventeen or twenty boxes of documents involving this investigation. I don't know what was in them, because they were all sealed, but I was sort of the delivery boy. I think there were two of us that took the stuff down and delivered it. I always thought that the Eisenhower administration would take some action, because we did discover that there was a lot of questionable activities about Senator McCarthy's financial activities. But nothing ever came of all that, and I think Carl Hayden was very disappointed. At this very same time when this was going on, McCarthy attacked George Marshall as being practically a Communist and un-American, was selling us out, and Eisenhower—and Marshall made Eisenhower—but he didn't defend him.

Carl Hayden was very disappointed with him, one of the few criticisms I heard him make of Eisenhower, because Carl Hayden thought that George Marshall was probably the greatest man he had met this century, and went on and raved about how prior to World War II he would come up before the Appropriations Committee, not like they come now with twenty thousand aides and brief cases and computer print-outs and all this. He'd come up all by himself, just General Marshall, with maybe one colonel, and could tell the committee in these secret sessions of the Appropriations Committee getting ready for World War II, where everything was in the pipeline. Apparently he had such an incredible mind that he knew the geopolitical history of every country in the world, what was going on in the world, and then down to where munitions were, like shells for an M-1 or a Springfield .03, in the pipeline, how much, and when it was due there, and all these things. He thought it was just incredible, it was just the greatest display, and he thought he was such a man of integrity and honesty and such a huge public servant, he thought he was one of the great men of this century anywhere in the world, and he made that comment often.

So when McCarthy was around it was disturbing to the senator. But I would say that Carl Hayden had as much to do as anyone with the start of Joe McCarthy's downfall. Of course, my own feelings about him—see by the time I got back Joe McCarthy had been censured. He was censured in '54.

RITCHIE: In December '54.

ELSON: Yeah, later '54, and I didn't get back until June of '55 from my military service, but I had been keeping up with it. My feeling in talking and coming back, and being here before it all happened, was that everyone particularly in the press pats themselves on the back, saying they brought down Joe McCarthy and his threat. Well, it was the United States Senate internally that really brought down Joe McCarthy, and there's no doubt in my mind. The hearings helped, the confrontation and all that, but McCarthy brought that on himself. I don't think it was Edward R. Murrow and his things. It was the United States Senate, because the Senate when someone got out of hand they pretty much isolated him. And the worst thing you could do to a member, and still is I think, is censure them. When your colleagues turn on you, man it is not a pleasant place to be. It destroyed [Thomas] Dodd. I think if anything killed him it was censure more than anything else, and certainly with McCarthy. Then he started

hitting the bottle very, very heavily. Of course, Joe McCarthy was very close to the Kennedys, and especially Bob.

RITCHIE: Who worked for him.

ELSON: Yeah, though he was on the minority staff. But they used to meet over at his house, because McCarthy lived up here on the Hill, to drink together. I think Bob Kennedy at that time was certainly not a liberal, he was more like a fascist than he was a liberal. That all came later, when that was the direction to go. But you can understand that when you look back through Old Man Kennedy and all the other things in their relationship, the Catholicism and everything else, and understanding power.

As I said, I was young, and when I came back here in December of '52 I had just turned twenty-two and it was a very frightening, dark time in American history. I can't believe that one man could exploit the fears and the frustrations of the Cold War the way he did and get away with it. No one called him down on it at first, these wild accusations. But you had the Rosenbergs all during that time, and then you had our Beria—you remember who Beria was, don't you?

RITCHIE: Lavrenti Beria. . . .

ELSON: Who was head of the KGB, yeah. And we had our own in the form of J. Edgar [Hoover]. Now, that's another interesting story about J. Edgar, because I was in the best of all worlds from that standpoint. Carl Hayden always had a close relationship with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, mainly because back in 1927, when Hoover was really just a clerk down there, he talked to the senator, and the senator was the one that got the money to start the identification bureau, or the fingerprint bureau and all that. So from that time they were very close friends. Because when Carl Hayden was sheriff they were using the Bertillon system and phrenology and all sorts of things for identification. So from that time on, Hoover could get from the Appropriations Committee about anything he wanted. One of the reasons Carl Hayden got on the Appropriations Committee was because he had appropriating experience on the House side, because there the legislative committees were also the appropriating committees, before they changed all that.

When I came back here, I had an interesting relationship with the FBI because one of my brothers was an agent with the FBI, and later during the '60s was agent in charge in Nevada, and at one time knew more about organized crime than any single individual in the country. In the meantime, Hoover also was an elder in my other brother's church, the National Presbyterian Church. So between the combination I really thought I was pretty much invisible and could get away with most anything, and I was amazed that I could get from the Bureau about anything I wanted on anyone, even raw files, information. For instance, I could check out really quickly people I wanted to hire or anything like that. I had tremendous access. And I didn't think—being always suspicious from my own education, or just not liking governments particularly, and particularly secrets in government, this always bothered me that someone like myself, even though I was working for a very powerful man, that I had access to such material as easily as I did.

I remember that one of the assistant directors tried to get me to do something that I didn't want to do, and told me about some things they had on me, about some of my extracurricular activities. I said, "Well, do you want to go and talk to the senator about it now, and tell him? Because whatever you have"—and he sort of hinted what it was—I said, "I hope you will give me a couple of sets of photos because I'd like to show them to my wife before she finds them out!" Anyhow, despite this close relationship that the senator had with the Bureau, as well as having a brother in it—and I could tell you lots of stories about that—and Hoover being an elder in my brother's church, I still never trusted the [expletive].

But, I can also say that when I ran for the United States Senate, I am the only person that I know of that J. Edgar Hoover actually endorsed. I mean, wrote a letter. Now, I don't know whether that helped me very much, but it should have. That was mainly because of Carl Hayden. But he did write a letter endorsing me—you couldn't interpret the way it was written any other way than was an endorsement of my candidacy.

RITCHIE: Was that '64?

ELSON: I think that was '68. I don't think we had time to get that done in '64, because when I got in '64 it was late and too many things were happening, so it was

more in '68, which really didn't matter much. But I still have the letter somewhere. Now I've forgotten how we got on. . . .

RITCHIE: We were talking about McCarthyism.

ELSON: We were talking about McCarthyism, yeah. And of course McCarthy was close to the Bureau and J. Edgar, and J. Edgar fed him junk because of this great anti-Communism crusade. I think more sins were committed in the name of democracy and the fear of Communism. You always find governments going right when that happens, rather than ever succumbing to the threat of internal subversion. But it had its effect, the loyalty oaths, all those things, there was a big fight over loyalty oaths at the time. But there was some great debate on those issues too. You had some big men around here too that stood up to some of those things. All in all it was and still is my opinion that it was the United States Senate, the senators themselves that finally brought Joe McCarthy to his knees.

RITCHIE: You mentioned the last time that you used to see Cohn and Schine over at the Carroll Arms.

ELSON: Yeah, quite often. Oh, and then I started to tell you about a story later. As I mentioned to you the last time, Roy Cohn really scared the hell out of me. I mean, he was bright. You just knew that anything was fair from his standpoint. He didn't mind ruining a reputation or a person. He was just a frightening individual. So this would be not too long ago, five or six years ago. [George] Steinbrenner had put on a fundraiser for Peter Rodino at Yankee Stadium. We all went to the game, and sat in Steinbrenner's box, and used his office before and afterwards. They had a dinner reception before the game for this fundraiser. I was there with a whole lot of people. They had all the old-timers from the Yankees, Yogi Berra, [Mickey] Mantle, it was a hell of an affair.

But into this reception comes Roy Cohn. This has to be 1985, '84 or '85, somewhere in there. He comes in and I couldn't believe that he was arriving at this fundraiser for Rodino, but he was there. I had a couple of drinks and finally I went over. He was sort of getting an hors d'oeuvre, and he was alone at that moment, so I went over. I said, "Roy, I'm Roy. I don't know whether you remember me, but we used

to drink way back in the '50s at the Carroll Arms." And I told him I had been with Carl Hayden. He said, "Oh, yeah, I remember. God, weren't those great times!" I said, "Yes they were." I said, "I just wanted to tell you one thing. I thought you were a [expletive] then and my opinion hasn't changed." And he just laughed! It was like water off a duck's back. [laughs] He just laughed and someone else came up then and we just kept on talking. You couldn't insult him. But I had been wanting to say that to him ever since he left here, and I finally got my chance—but it didn't matter.

Then of course he denied he was gay. I had even heard stories back then that he was. Well, anyhow, he died of AIDS, which is sad. But he was some sort of character, in the sense of ruthlessness and brilliance.

RITCHIE: Did you ever have the sense that he was what drove McCarthy at that stage?

ELSON: Oh, there was no question in my mind that he was using McCarthy as much as McCarthy was using him, in fact, more so. He was really the brains behind the whole thing. He was taking it in a certain direction. I never had any doubt about that. McCarthy wasn't that swift, just sort of a nice guy that told good stories, liked to drink, and was really pleasant to be around. So I never had any doubt even then that Cohn was the brains behind McCarthy. And then you wondered who was behind that. You know, you wondered what the agenda of the right was. Of course, you had the Hiss case in '48, and then there was the Lattimore thing, and all the other stuff going on, then Nixon with his race in 1950. So there was this beginning of the Republican party going right. You always wondered who was really behind the Cohn and McCarthy thing. But it certainly scared everyone. I think if you talk to a lot of people who were around here they would have the same reaction.

I know the other people who worked on that investigation, they were those two women that I told you about, Grace Johnson and Mary Frances Halloway. They were up in the Rules Committee, of course Darrell St. Claire was up there in the Rules Committee too, but the two chief investigators were Paul Cotter and Harvey Fosner from the Internal Revenue Service. T. Coleman Anderson was head of it, and I know that the senator went to Truman to get that one, because he apparently was really good. I met him a number of times, and he looked the part. He almost had implanted

in his head a green visor, you know. [laughs] But God he was good! They did some yeoman work that staff doing the background stuff. And there were a number of senators who stood up on the floor, and I personally think some of that was orchestrated behind the scenes, of who would take the lead. I can't really say for sure, but I certainly get the impression from some remarks that the senator made that when Mrs. [Margaret Chase] Smith and some of the others stood up along the line—because a lot of it started out on the Republican side, and there were some good members on the Rules Committee and other Republicans who were very much concerned about what Joe McCarthy was doing to the Senate and knew that some way, somehow they had to put him in his place.

RITCHIE: On the other hand, apparently there were a lot of senators who were afraid of him.

ELSON: That's exactly right, who were scared to take a stand. But this is where I always marveled at Carl Hayden because he was so good behind the scenes. He could size up people, knew how far they would go with something, and keep his mouth shut. You never knew for sure unless he wanted you to know, but I know just damn well there were a lot of things that took place behind the scenes. You've got to remember that the Republicans took over the Congress in 1953, so that switched and you had [William] Knowland as the majority leader, and of course Ernest McFarland had lost to [Barry] Goldwater that election of '52, and he had been majority leader and had gotten clobbered for not spending enough time at home, and with Truman, and the unpopular Korean war, and being soft on Communism.

Of course in Arizona, getting back to McFarland, we had three or five of the founders of the John Birch Society in Arizona, and the John Birch Society was starting to become a thing to reckon with starting about that time. I think they probably reached their peak about 1962 or the early '60s of their influence. Talk about a wonderfully revised view of history! They were very good at it, and very clever. But we had a supreme court justice, a professor still at Arizona State University, an old Arizonan by the name of Brophy, they were three founding members of the John Birch Society. But the whole climate at that time was frightening. As I mentioned, Eisenhower not calling McCarthy down and defending George Marshall was a very disappointing thing. You can say a lot of things about Eisenhower, but that's one that

I would be critical of. Most people who knew anything about George Marshall felt that he let the man down that really made him, gave him all the opportunities and selected him from those '39 military maneuvers down in Louisiana. You know Eisenhower jumped over everyone, and Marshall also selected [Douglas] MacArthur for the Pacific. But a lot of that came out of those maneuvers that they started down in 1939 in Louisiana in the swamps.

RITCHIE: You mentioned the other day that you once caught Grace Johnson in Hayden's office when you came in one morning, or on a Saturday I guess it was.

ELSON: Actually, it was a Sunday.

RITCHIE: Sunday. Did you get the sense that there was that sort of spying going on in the Senate?

ELSON: Well, because she had been on the Rules Committee and things were a lot looser then than they are today by far, it turns out she kept the keys when she was fired. She had kept the Rules Committee passkeys to every damn office in the building. They didn't realize it, they didn't take the security precautions probably that they should have, but she had been fired by the senator, as I think I related to you, I don't see it in the transcript.

RITCHIE: We didn't talk about that on the tape.

ELSON: We didn't get into that. She had been fired by Carl Hayden for a trip that she made, that Grace Johnson and Mary Frances Holloway made, supposedly looking into the USIA's activities. Anyhow, these were two ladies who were really an embarrassment. We kept getting these reports from the State Department and the USIA about what havoc they were wreaking. They were like the "Ugly American" only two female ones who were hot to trot. Just horrible reports we would get back, but they had strong connections because they were close to some very powerful senior members in the Senate both on the Republican and Democratic side, mainly Democratic. Both of them had a drinking problem, but they were both smarter than hell. Like Roy Cohn, they scared the hell out of me.

They lived together out in northwest, and I remember once going to borrow something from Grace. This was way back in the '50s, it was much later that the other thing took place, where she got into the office. But when I first met Grace Johnson and Mary Frances they were on the Rules Committee at that time. It was the first time that I thought that I might get raped by two ladies. Man was I eager to get out of there! I think I told you, but not on the record, that Grace Johnson was probably a very, very attractive woman when she was young, but she looked very hard. She had a huge bust, but she had these skinny little spindly legs. She reminded you of sort of a hen, or what the cartoons that Herblock used to do of the DAR with their ribbons. But she must have been a very attractive lady in her younger days. Mary Frances married later, one of McCarthy's people, I'll have to refresh my memory, but I'm getting off the subject.

They made this trip, and Joe Stewart, who is now the Secretary of the Senate, was assigned because he was over on the floor, to go along to sort of carry their bags on the trip. I think the senator must have said something to him, that he wanted Joe to report back to him, or maybe he didn't, but I know that the senator warned Grace Johnson because he had all these other reports from their trips. [Allen] Ellender was sort of the one that was after the USIA and had sent them on these investigative trips. But the senator warned them before they ever left that if he had any further reports about their drinking or doing what they did best—there were some very wild stories about what they did in Bangkok and what they did in Iceland, running around propositioning people, . . . just all sorts of delightful things. They had great sexual appetites. Maybe that's the more polite way of putting it.

Anyhow, Carl Hayden had warned them that if he had any more reports they were through and there was no coming back. Well, when they came back, we had the reports. This was when they were in Keflavik, I don't know whether they had gone around the world on that trip or not, that we had some really wonderful, delightful, sensational reports about what they did on this trip. I remember the senator calling Joe in and asking him, since I was outside the room and I could hear the conversation, and Joe told him the truth, and confirmed the reports pretty much. The senators who were supporting Grace and Mary Frances, and Grace and Mary Frances themselves, were denying it and saying that the State Department was out to get them because they

were too tough on their investigation. Well, that was total [expletive]. And the senator fired them right then and there.

There had been a report in *Time* magazine about this, not a big article, but a couple of columns, about these escapades. Anyhow, they were fired. After that there were attempts by Grace and Mary Frances to get back on the payroll. They filed a lawsuit against *Time* for libel and defamation of character and all that. They wanted to be vindicated by being put back on the committee and that they were not fired for these reason, mainly to help their lawsuit, but also to get back at the USIA I'm sure. But the senator would not do it. I can't tell you how many senior members, leadership, Lyndon, Mike Mansfield, Allen Ellender particular, supported them. Allen Ellender almost begged the senator on his knees. I again overheard this conversation. I remember the senator saying, "Allen, you know and I know what happened. I warned them, not only once but twice, and I'm just not going to do it. I refuse to do it." He was saying, "But Carl, we've been friends for years, please, I beg you to do this." And the senator said, "Allen, I can't. Now you're the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and if you want to put them on your committee, that's certainly on your prerogative, but they'll never go back on the Appropriations Committee." It was a pathetic, sad conversation.

It was begging for both of them, but mainly for Grace Johnson because I know for a fact that Ellender, who for a little guy was well-endowed, really was pleading for Grace Johnson. They had this long relationship. Of course, Ellender was a bachelor, but she must have been something special because she certainly had him—either that or she had enough information that would have been embarrassing to these senior senators, the leadership on both sides of the aisle, that came to try to defend both of them. But that was an internal thing, there was very little publicity about it. But they were an episode.

The general counsel for the USIA at the time, I remember we used to have lots of conversations about it. He was very good. He's still here with the law firm of Cohen and Marks, a guy by the name of Dick Schmidt, who is a very fine attorney. Today we laugh about some of the stuff. I think I mentioned to you that one of the regrets I have was when Carl Hayden left the Senate and retired, the last night before we closed down the office and walked out, I was burning what stuff remained in the safe that we had,

and the last documents that we had were all these reports that we had gotten from various overseas posts about the behavior of these two ladies. I regret to this day that I didn't keep those, because I could have written a beautiful novel. I don't know whether anyone would have believed it, it was so—unusual. And again, they learned their trade well, knowing how to intimidate people, put them in embarrassing positions. That goes back again I think to the McCarthy era, because this would have been in the '60s then.

Getting back to answer your question, Grace Johnson hated my guts after a number of things. She used to try to see the senator and sometimes I'd let her and sometimes I wouldn't. I think she knew that I—well, between Tom Scott who was the clerk of the Appropriations Committee and others, the senator was really mad because we didn't tell him early enough, and was mad at a number of staff people because we had earlier reports about their activities and we didn't bring them to his attention right away, and could have avoided maybe the second trip, there were a couple of trips. But Grace didn't care much for me after that. So later, this would be in the '60s, after Kennedy was assassinated and Johnson was president, was when I caught her coming into the senator's office. I'm a little vague on these dates.

I couldn't believe she was there, and she ran out the door when I said, "my God!" And she was over near the safe, and fortunately it was locked. I think she was trying old codes that she might have had from being on the Rules Committee. She knew that we had all these reports that the senator had been receiving. Well, she ran out of the office, and when I finally looked around to see if the senator was there, or anyone else was in the office, then I called down to police at the Delaware and C [Street] entrance and said, "If you see Grace Johnson, stop her, because she was in this office illegally." He said, "Well, she just left." I reported it to the senator and we checked everything and it was all there. I don't know, she disappeared, she left town, because we tried to reach her. But immediately the senator had the Rules Committee change all the locks in the entire Senate Office Building, and in the Capitol, any Senate office.

It was months and months, it might even have been a year later, I was getting out of the elevator and there was this mob of constituents, I mean people who were obviously from out of town and visiting, and there was Grace. She had either fallen down or had an operation on her hip and she was using a cane. I came out of there,

and I said, "Well, hello Grace, where have you been?" And she picks up this cane, "You [expletive]! I'm going to kill you!" And she started waving this and these people were all scattering. I said, "Maybe I'd better call the police again." She said, "You [expletive] . . ." oh and the language she used! It went on and she called me all sorts of things. I just sort of laughed. These people were just scattering all over the place because they didn't know what the hell was going to happen. Finally, I said, "Grace maybe we'd better have a talk with the police," and then she went running again and disappeared again. She was something. Both of those women are dead now. They certainly behind the scenes had some very powerful people either frightened, or they were good at something else. But they were very bright, both of them. And at one time they had done some very good work—I meant, for the Senate [laughs] and not on their backs, I mean really good work.

RITCHIE: In a sense you've described the case of Roy Cohn and the case of Grace Johnson, as staff members who. . .

ELSON: Wielded tremendous power.

RITCHIE: And got away with things in the name of the senators and the committees that they worked for.

ELSON: Yeah, and mainly because the members—see, where the Senate's always gotten into trouble, I think, is that the members themselves haven't clamped down or they have let someone get away with something. Either they didn't know about it, or they had an excuse, or whatever. Of course, I think this is what happened in Bobby Baker's situation, that they weren't watching what other things they were doing.

In those days you've got to remember that Senate staff people, for instance, if my name ever showed up in a newspaper, you know, you could get fired for something like that. It was always in the senator's name. Any calls that you made, you're calling for Senator Hayden, and a lot of people became very skilled at that and didn't bother to tell the senator, didn't let him know what was happening. So a lot of staff people caused their sponsors and members of the United States Senate some problems. It was really the senators' responsibility to keep a tighter reign not only on their personal staffs but on their committee staffs. A lot of the problems that eventually came out,

particularly of staff members getting power, was because they weren't watched closely enough in the sense of their extracurricular activities. I don't think that's changed a hell of a lot. In fact, it's gotten worse in many ways, but back then it was rare for a staff member to get a lot of publicity. You didn't make policy statements, you didn't speak out. In fact, if your name appeared, as I said, you weren't doing your job right. Now, if you got your boss' name in the paper the right way, or on a news broadcast, that was fine, but yours better not show up. It was just not done, and in very few offices did that happen.

There were a lot of powerful staff members around here, but again they knew who they were working for and they respected that. And it was smaller. It was easier to handle a smaller staff. Gee, I remember the Finance Committee when [Harry] Byrd was chairman, way back in those days. Christ, I think they only had seven staff men, including a chief economist and all that, writing tax legislation and dealing with House Ways and Means, maybe they had a few more, but not many. And there weren't that many on the Senate Appropriations Committee when I first got back here, I think maybe twenty-five or something like that. It was very small. So it was easier for a member to keep track. One of the things I thought I'd never see compared to when I left Capitol Hill as a staff member, after running my two times and Carl Hayden's retirement, I never thought I'd live to see the day that there was a bureaucracy on Capitol Hill. It just boggles my mind that staffs are about four times what they were in 1969, 1970, in just twenty years time.

I never thought I'd live to see the day that would develop. Some of it I'm sure has been good, but for the most part I'm not sure that members are being better served than they were back then. A lot of professionalism was coming along, particularly after World War II around here on staffs, but everyone who came here, just like the way I arrived, it was all politics. It was all political patronage. And I used to get mad at the people on the Appropriations Committee staff over there, because the senator turned them into professionals and they forgot how they got here sometimes. You know, when you were trying to get them to do something that was political, or more political than they thought was the professionalism, you had to remind them sometimes that they came there the same way you did. And of course the committee staffs for the most part were a lot different than a senator's staff. You got all the heat in the senator's personal office. You had to respond to the political realities at home, and also try to

get the work done, and also work with the committee and committee staffs. For the most part we had very good arrangements, and got along pretty well in most every area. But—[laughs]

RITCHIE: There's a story you're thinking but not telling.

ELSON: Yeah.

RITCHIE: Well, I have a lot of questions about Hayden and Lyndon Johnson, but maybe this might be a good point to stop.

ELSON: Yeah, I think so, I'd better go back to work.

RITCHIE: Because if we start now I don't want to have to cut you off in the middle.

ELSON: Well, that whole history of Lyndon, going from his becoming minority leader and all the way through his presidency, they were very close. The old man had great respect for his abilities and his talents, particularly when he was leader.

RITCHIE: That's the period that I'm definitely interested in talking to you about. Well, thank you again.

End of Interview #2

LYNDON JOHNSON AS MAJORITY LEADER

Interview #3

Thursday, May 10, 1990

ELSON: Well, where do you want to start?

RITCHIE: I thought we'd start today with Lyndon Johnson, and I wondered if you would give me your impression of Lyndon Johnson when he was majority leader of the Senate?

ELSON: Well, you know he was minority leader first. He really was bigger than life when he was up here both as minority leader and majority leader. When the Democrats took over, as I recall the margin was only a couple of votes, maybe two. It was very close, so he had to put together coalitions to move any legislation along. He had the distinct advantage, of course, in working in the leadership position because Rayburn was Speaker of the House so they had a good coordination.

I always thought he surrounded himself with good staff people, too. For instance, Walter Jenkins was more his AA and personal assistant. Poor Walter, he'd work twenty-four hours a day for Lyndon and another twelve hour a day for Lady Bird. I don't know how he did it, and what a gentleman he was. He was really a fine guy. Then I thought one of the ablest men over there, who was on the Policy Committee, was old Harry McPherson, a very fine man and a very able guy, very bright and loyal. He was exceptional, I thought. And of course, over there in the Policy Committee, does the name Pauline Moore ring any bells with you? She was over there, she sort of ran it. Of course, in those days the Policy Committee wasn't that much. I think there was only a couple up there, but Pauline sort of kept track of everything, she was exceptional. Her husband was assistant secretary of the Interior, I think, or head of oil and gas leasing. I know he was down there during the Kennedy days. But quite frankly I didn't think that much of [Jack] Valenti or [Bill] Moyers.

But Lyndon had some pretty good people around him. Of course, Bobby Baker was over there as his floor man. Bobby as secretary [of the majority] was an exceptionally

good vote counter, and he worked at his job pretty damn well. I mean, he was good, there's no question about his doing his official duties. Well, he grew up in the Senate. He came as a page and loved politics, and always wanted to run to be governor of South Carolina, but then got into his difficulties.

I was always impressed with Johnson's tremendous abilities to analyze personalities, their needs and shortcomings, and keep this in his head, and master the art of the possible. He was just an exceptional leader. He could bully, he could be persuasive. He knew how to caress you when that was necessary, and also threaten you, the people around him. But he in any political fight, particularly on the Democratic side, he always knew that he was working from a position of strength, that for the most part he could rely on men who carried a lot of weight in the Senate. For instance, Dick Russell, and Carl Hayden, and Bob Kerr, and people like that, members who were big and powerful. They normally were always in his corner, so he had this strength to work with when he went into any really hairy legislative battles. And he was exceptional at working with the minority, with [William] Knowland, and then was it [Everett] Dirksen who followed Knowland?

RITCHIE: Yes, in 1959.

ELSON: They got along well, and knew each other, and they respected each other, and they got a lot done. I think there were problems there with Knowland, when he was leader—this of course was still during that period of McCarthyism, and the Cold War era—but I was always amazed at how well he ran things. But of course, you have to remember in those days too, when you came out of committee, and we didn't have the Sunshine laws in those days where every mark-up had to be in public, so when you came out of committee the chairman and ranking minority member pretty much agreed on everything, both on the legislative and appropriating committees. So when you hit the floor you didn't have the type of writing of legislation as you do today, actually on the floor. Of course, I blame a lot of that because they couldn't sit down together in private.

I don't know how many, not that many, but a lot of times, going into mark-ups particularly of the Appropriations Committee, or the Rules Committee, or some of the others, where I'd see Carl Hayden—again I'm digressing, but in a mark-up session a

senator would have a real problem. He'd say, "I've got to have this amendment, or this money." And Senator Hayden would say, "Now, we can't do it in this bill, but when the Supplemental comes along I'll take care of your problem." Well, it gave the senator who had the problem a chance to save some face, and there wasn't embarrassment, you didn't get into a big fight. So when you came out of committee, except for maybe a few amendments that you knew were going to come up on the floor, things moved along pretty well. That was, in a way, helpful to any leader who was operating in those days, where today, man, I don't envy any of them when they get out there because you never know what someone's going to offer!

From that standpoint, the rules and the procedure I think facilitated a lot of Lyndon's being able to maneuver, and he knew how to handle that. But as I said, to me he always had this base of strength. Though again, in '59 when that big group of senators came in, it was a little harder to do the same type of things because that particular crowd started not wanting to play the game the way it had been played. But I think he was an incredibly good leader. He looked out for individual members. He knew what their needs were, and what he could do. He was great at sizing up people's strengths and weaknesses. He just loved the game, he relished it. It was all consuming. He worked at it twenty-four hours a day. The damn man was on the phone night and day. You never knew when you'd get a call from him.

RITCHIE: What types of calls would you get from Johnson?

ELSON: Well, he'd call the Senator at home, or at the office. I never received personally that many calls, because I always pretty much went through his staff, or to Bobby on the floor when it was a legislative matter. I'd talk mainly to Baker or to Walter Jenkins or someone like that on his personal staff. But I think Lyndon had the feeling that the entire Senate belonged to him, that all staff members should be working for him, and a lot of people did things that I'm sure they wouldn't normally do because of that attitude. He just felt that by God they're here to serve him as leader. And he got away with a lot of that. That doesn't mean I liked the son of gun particularly, because I think he at times took shortcuts that were unnecessary, and he, I think, felt that the ends justified the means on too many—not too many occasions but on a number of occasions.

I remember there was a two-volume work on the rules of the Senate, it was up through 1939 or '40, and I picked it up at some used book store. What was the author's name? Anyhow, it was a classic I know in talking to a couple of parliamentarians, they were well aware of it. But I was reading it this one week, just was curious about it because I had just picked it up. It so happened that Lyndon was trying to pull some legislative maneuver that just wasn't right. I know Carl Hayden didn't like it. We were talking about it this one morning—as I told you, we would meet every morning, the senator and I—about whatever this little legislative maneuver Lyndon wanted to pull. I said, "Well, you know, it's really against the rules." He said, "How do you know that?" I said, "Well, I just read about it in this book." He said, "Show me that." I brought the volumes in with me and I pointed to this, and he grabbed the book and went over and saw old [Charles] Watkins, who was the parliamentarian at the time. He said, "Hey, is this right?" He checked it out and sure enough it was accurate and still the reigning rule at the time. So Carl Hayden went to Lyndon and said to him, "Lyndon, you cannot do that. You're not going to get away with it." Lyndon got really irritated and pissed at the senator. He said, "Why can't I?" And then he quoted the rules from this precedent.

I think Carl Hayden got a great deal of delight out of that one little incident, because Lyndon had a way of not liking to be stopped in his legislative maneuvers, particularly when he thought he had it all put together, and this came up at the last minute. The only way he could have won that would have been to have appealed to the Senate and overruled that precedent, but then that would have exposed him to what he was trying to do. I know the senator felt good about it, and I felt good about it at the time. [laughs] This would have been in the late '50s, probably, '58, '59, somewhere in there. And Lyndon would not—because Carl Hayden knew the rules as much as anyone, he was around here long enough to know them damn well, and I think Lyndon had a great deal of respect for him and didn't want to get into a fight, because he knew that probably in something like that Dick Russell and Kerr and some of the others would have supported the senator rather than the leadership. It was a minor thing, but I know that in that one instance the senator got a big charge out of slowing down Lyndon's high-pressure type activities.

You look back to the stuff that was going on during the Eisenhower administration, I would say that prevalent at that time was a lot of criticism of the Eisenhower

administration, particularly on domestic affairs, that they wouldn't make a decision, everything was being studied. We would go round and round. In defense of Eisenhower and his administration, I would say probably Eisenhower had a sense of the mood of the country better than anyone that they had retired from the war. We sort of needed a rest from all the activity that was going on. He had a good sense, and maybe he was right that way, although it did have its drawbacks. For instance in capital investments in your country's resources, the lead-time in building dams or highways are considerable, so you had to make some decisions, because from the time you made one in those days to the time you could get on line with a power dam or something like that was about seven years. Now it's about fifteen. So there was a lot of criticism of the administration for this. I think because of Lyndon being in his leadership position, and with Rayburn on the House side, both of them though they worked with the administration still articulated a Democratic policy on issues that was quite good. It kept them in the forefront. I mean, there was an opposition party, where sometimes today you feel like the Democrats are acting like good Republicans. It's hard to distinguish the difference sometimes.

During those years, didn't they pass the interstate highway act in 1956? Well, there were a lot of things happening in the '50s that you sort of forget about, or I forgot them, but that moved along. The only reason I remember that one was because really Carl Hayden was the father of the interstate system. The Hayden-Cartwright Act sort of set up some of the initial formulas back in the '30s, which later went into the interstate highway system.

Well, to answer your question, I just think he was one hell of a majority leader. Some of the tragedy came—well, Bobby hadn't gotten into trouble at that time, if we're still talking about the '50s. But they started some of the civil rights legislation back in the '50s. Of course, you had *Brown vs. the Board of Education* come down, and "all deliberate speed" came the following year by the court. So even then he was starting laying the groundwork. We did pass a civil rights act. . . .

RITCHIE: In 1957.

ELSON: '57 was it? You've got to give him a great deal of credit for moving that along, particularly when the southern senators were still very, very powerful. For

instance, I still believe that if Dick Russell hadn't been from Georgia he'd have been president of the United States—in any other time, or now. But to take on the [James] Eastland's and some of those that you had around here, you didn't have too much room to maneuver politically with the way the feelings were running at that time. I think it was sort of miraculous that they even moved that early on something like the civil rights bill. You've got to give Lyndon lots of credit for sensing the mood, knowing how far he could go in getting compromises and at least making some progress without losing the battle, which I used to criticize a lot of the so-called liberal Democratic senators around who'd rather lose the fight and go down on principle than make a half-step or take a little gain. I can give a number of senators along that line who seemed that they would rather lose than make a little progress.

RITCHIE: Did you have anybody particularly in mind?

ELSON: Oh, I was thinking of [Paul] Douglas, and even [Hubert] Humphrey, though they certainly supported what was enacted and helped get it enacted. But on other occasions they liked to make the issue and fail. Lyndon knew that art of compromising and what he had to work with, and what he could get done. He had a great sense for this body. And of course, I think Bobby Baker who was his assistant at that time had that same feeling for the body and was really very helpful to Lyndon in moving legislation on the floor. So all in all during that period I'd give him exceptionally high marks, seeing it from a staff position and working with people around him, and watching him operate. When we get into the '60s and my own personal experiences with him—I think I told you the story before, do we have that one tape? Yeah, we do.

RITCHIE: About the dinner in Arizona?

ELSON: Yeah, about the dinner for Carl Hayden and all that. He came out and campaigned for me too in '64, when I was running against Paul Fannin, who was then a three-term Republican governor of Arizona. He came in on a Sunday to go to church with me. Well, I didn't belong to any particular church out there at that time. [laughs] I remember he was flying from Cleveland or somewhere, and called from the airplane. I guess it was Moyers on the line. He said, "The President wants to come, but he wants to go to church with you on Sunday morning." I said, "Jesus, Sunday's a lousy day to

be campaigning. That's no time to be campaigning." He said, "Well, don't you want him to come." I said, "Well, Christ, if it's the eighth day or whatever, yeah, sure." But as a result of his coming out on Sunday, Paul Fannin got as much exposure as I did, because as governor he sort of greeted him and we both—well, I rode in the car with him, but Fannin was also there, and we all went to church together. It was just—ah, you know, ridiculous. [laughs] But he was quite a man.

Of course, he too liked the ladies. In fact, after Kennedy was elected and Johnson became vice president, we had a hell of a time. Lyndon wouldn't give up his space up here that he had when he was majority leader. Poor Mike Mansfield. Johnson gave up some of it, but he kept an awful lot of it. Down in the terraces he had seven or eight rooms down there. He thought he was still running the Senate, and I felt sorry for poor old Mike Mansfield as a result, because he still had a whole bunch of Johnson's people around here. After President Kennedy was assassinated, Carl Hayden as president pro tem, after [John] McCormack, was in line of succession. Well, we inherited not only the entire payroll that the vice president had, but all of Johnson's people and all the offices. I got the blame for kicking all of them off the payroll eventually, because he thought he was going to keep the payroll and the president's too, and everything else. We finally forced a change, but for a long time we had a lot of people who were down at the White House on that payroll.

I then took over all their space, too, for the senator. We were going to keep that supposedly for the next vice president, whoever that was going to be after the '64 election. I remember we had inherited this beautiful seven-room suite of offices overlooking the Mall, over in the terrace in the Capitol. I kept for myself the room, I think it was ST-15, that Johnson had fixed up, with a couch that opened into a bed, a bar, and all the other stuff. I kept that for my room, because . . . I thought if it's good enough for him it's certainly good enough for me! [laughs]

When we included his space plus all the space that Carl Hayden had hidden around—then I had a lot of people on the vice president's payroll for that eighteen-month period, from November '63 until January '65—I think we had forty rooms. I couldn't even get around to them in one day to see what was going on. I had a personal hideaway in the Old Senate Office Building, one over next to the Judiciary Committee

in what was then the New Senate Office Building, which is now the Dirksen Building, and then I kept this one in the Capitol for myself, and we used the others. But that didn't make me too popular with them when I kept saying, "Get off the payroll." Like we had Johnson's cook, what was her name? [Zephyr Wright] The black lady and her husband. Both of them were nice people, but we kept them on the payroll for a long time. Typical of Lyndon Johnson, he thought he'd just keep that payroll too! [laughs] It didn't go on for that long, but longer than it probably should have. But that was a sad period in American history. Anyhow, where were we?

RITCHIE: What would you say were Hayden's relations with Johnson?

ELSON: Oh, very good.

RITCHIE: Close?

ELSON: Yeah, close. Interesting thing about it, I sort of noticed this about a lot of effective members of the Senate, Carl Hayden really did remind me of Kipling's "If," because I don't think he let anyone get really that close to him. He was friends with Lyndon Johnson, with Dick Russell, with [John] Stennis, with Rayburn, all of them, but only up to a point. I don't know whether it was never letting yourself get vulnerable, or showing any weakness, or what it was. But a lot of them were that way, that were not only effective but had a longer sense of history, and a sense of the Senate and tradition. I found that true of a lot of them.

But their relationship I would say was very close. I know the senator thought Lyndon was one hell of a leader of all the leaders that he had seen—and he had certainly been around long enough to see a lot of them.

RITCHIE: He'd been in the Senate for twenty years before Johnson even arrived.

ELSON: Yeah, he came over in March of '27. And I think he liked Lyndon. First of all, he was a Texan from the West. They had a lot in common that way. And Lyndon was also fighting some of the same battles that Carl Hayden fought over the years developing Arizona from a territory into a state, with the utilities versus the public utilities and things like that, schools, and roads, and all those things for his

district in Texas. So I think there was a lot of identification and understanding and appreciation for each other. I feel very certain from everything that I saw that Lyndon also respected Carl Hayden the same way, and knew that—there was something about Carl Hayden, he was totally fearless. No one frightened him. He didn't mind picking up the phone and calling the president. In those days they had telephone operators, and you'd say, "Get me so and so." He talked to anyone at anytime. So from that standpoint I think that there was a great deal of respect for each other and a real warmth. And of course, Carl Hayden was very fond of Sam Rayburn because he met Sam back in 1913 when Rayburn came to the House of Representatives. They became friends then and all through.

Carl Hayden in those days was really behind the scenes—he was president pro tem for a long time—with anything involving the Capitol, the buildings, the grounds, and all the things that went on. The comity between the two houses, it was normally between Carl Hayden and Sam Rayburn. They sort of worked that out. I used to like to tell the story about how here were two men who were hardly sick a day in their whole lives, until the very end of their careers, and they were the ones who kept the Capitol physician, who mainly was an aspirin dispenser for the most part. This goes back to the '40s and '50s, this was Admiral [George] Calver. I used to marvel because I swear the only reason that office at that time ran well was because Calver was at least smart enough to get some very, very bright young naval officers who were doing their term in the military as his assistants over there. A doctor here in town was there at one time, Warren Brill, who is still around; Dr. Weintraub, who is a cardiologist; and then a world-famous doctor who I grew up with, actually, in Arizona, and one of my closest friends, a guy by the name of Roman DeSanctis, he was over there as assistant Capitol physician, doing his term in the navy.

I used to say, Calver probably killed more members than he saved. The only reason that he stayed there was that the guy really understood power and politics, and he kissed both Rayburn's and Hayden's [expletive]. And Calver used to go over there and see Mrs. Hayden after she had had her stroke in the late '40s, and sort of hold her hand. Oh, he was fabulous at that sort of thing. But Rayburn and Hayden pretty much ran those sort of things, with the Architect of the Capitol. On matters like extending the East Front, the West Front, and all that, that was more Hayden and Rayburn than the leadership particularly.

But, to answer your question, I think there was a genuine liking of each other, and I know the senator liked and supported for the most part the way Johnson ran the Senate. He also supported him on practically every piece of social legislation that was ever enacted into law while he was majority leader, and in his way helped bring whatever support he could.

RITCHIE: Was Johnson generally deferential towards Hayden?

ELSON: I would say so. He had respect for his elders, and I think he probably put him in that category. Not in the same relationship as Sam Rayburn, because they were almost like father-son in many ways, but certainly in the great respect that everyone held Carl Hayden in those days and all through his career. He knew how able he was, and how honest he was. I never saw Johnson ever try to directly approach the senator on anything that would be questionable. But again, Hayden was such a closed man, had such a tight mouth, I mean tight in revealing anything. And of course you've got to remember, back in those days, all during the 1950s' that say for instance on the CIA watchdog committee, there was only the chairman and ranking minority members of the Appropriations and Armed Services Committees, there were about six or seven members on the watchdog committee, so Carl Hayden of course was a member with the leadership. So there were all those sort of meetings going on, and they were very close in knowing what the hell was going on, not only in the country but internationally. For the most part, there was some bipartisan foreign policy, and unless there was a real question the leadership pretty much supported Eisenhower on the things that he wanted to do. But I would say, yeah, he was a little deferential to him.

RITCHIE: People always talk about the "Johnson treatment," and I always get the sense that that was reserved for senators who weren't powerful chairmen of committees.

ELSON: Well, I think that's probably true, because as I mentioned earlier, he always had the power. Like Denny Chavez, for instance, who was head of the Armed Services Committee, I think, at that time, or [Harry] Byrd, for instance, on Finance. Though sometimes Byrd thought that the leadership were spendthrifts, if he had his way he wouldn't have spent money on anything. But at the same time the chairmen of the committees, like Russell and Stennis and Kerr, he knew for the most part that

he would always have their support. When you had the committee chairmen behind you, you had a lot to work with, and he knew how to use that. So his "treatment" for the most part would fall on the younger members and those that he had to persuade. But God, he could really lay it on! He could twist. I don't know how he kept it all in his head, so much of knowing who their supporters were, who their financial people were, what the issues were, how they got there, but he did.

He spent so much time at it. On both sides of the aisles he could give the treatment, it wasn't just the Democratic side. He'd work his magic on some Republicans, and he sort of knew how to get certain Republicans' support. Again, back in the mid-50's the majority until that big class change in 1959, he didn't have that much to work with in just the Democrats, and a lot of those he couldn't rely on say on civil rights, so he had to work coalitions with the Republicans. And he managed to do it, because he just studied everyone and then he would use whatever he thought it took to persuade that person. It was not unusual for him to call one of their supporters back home, or their financial people, or lobbies downtown and say, "You'd better get so and so in shape," "get him on the right track," "get him on board." He could threaten retaliation, he used every trick that there was, and he was a master at it. And he knew the system of government so well, where to go, how to get things done. He was always trying to place people in positions too, move them on where he could call on them later, which was a real good trait to have, and not all of them have done that as well as he did.

RITCHIE: One of the nice things you can do for somebody is get them an appropriation for something that they want. I assume he must have come to Hayden as chairman of the Appropriations Committee. . . .

ELSON: Oh, no question about it, on many, many occasions. And of course the great thing about Carl Hayden, he had a very broad view, particularly for the West, on hydropower and reclamation and all those things. It wasn't a selfish interest just limited to Arizona, but the entire West. He believed in building the country in multiple uses of its resources, and handling the growth. Gee, I could tell you about some of the projects with Lyndon. The senator only in his later days when we were fighting over the Central Arizona Project, he would always accommodate him, particularly if it was something that needed resources to build. Hayden did it in such a way that he was

always laying the foundations in an appropriations bill for having good hearings, laying the record, getting the bureau to make the studies, or whatever the agency was. And Lyndon knew how to ask properly. He looked after Texas, of course, really well, for instance in getting the space center for down there in Houston, and getting—what was it, the big fight we had with General Dynamics on TFX. Lyndon, on things like that, he'd lobby the Defense Department and use some things I could never get Carl Hayden to do to look out for the interests of Arizona. He just didn't think they were proper.

RITCHIE: What kind of things?

ELSON: Well, I meant Johnson threatened to cut off, or made trades on legislation, or patronage, or all sorts of maneuvers to convince them. And he used his position very well as leader to help the state of Texas and get things done. He was good at bringing the heat on lobbyists, or people that had other interests or other legislative interest, suggesting that something may not happen, it may be buried in file thirteen if they didn't help. He was good at working with administrative bureaucrats—he could frighten the hell out of them. I could never get Carl Hayden to do that, though he wasn't fearful particularly of talking to anyone. I just couldn't get him to use the type of threats that Johnson was certainly capable of using, and accomplishing some things.

I remember when they set up the space committee, Aeronautics and Space Committee, back in '57 or '58. My memory's not too bad. I tried to get Carl Hayden to go on the space committee, mainly because here was Arizona in between southern California and Texas, where this new industry was developing. I said, "Senator, just get on the committee and I'll guarantee you Arizona gets a lot of subcontracts and work in the aerospace committee." He said, "I don't know anything about aerospace and I'm not going to get on there." I said, "Well, we could really do a lot of things, and you wouldn't have to do any work—I'll do it." But I couldn't convince him to go on the committee, and of course Johnson became chairman of that.

RITCHIE: While he was majority leader.

ELSON: Yeah, while he was majority leader [laughs], which was a little unusual to say the least. And he used that position, of course. But I remember at that time

Carl Hayden told me while I was begging him to go on that committee, and with his seniority and everything else he could have very easily if he had wanted it, he said, "Look, Roy, I'm chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and sooner or later everything gets down to money. Secondly, I'm on the Rules Committee and there isn't a senator or a committee that doesn't have to come before the Rules Committee to get their expenditures approved, space locations, all those little things. Third, you should know, since you're the clerk, that I'm also chairman of the Democratic Patronage Committee. Now, between patronage, space, resolution control, and money, why do I need to be on the Aerospace Committee?" And I didn't have much of an argument to counter that. Then he said, "No, I don't think I'll go on it." But as an aside he said, "But you still work at getting Arizona its fair share." I said, "Thanks."

So that's what I sort of meant about Lyndon, as majority leader and then taking over that new committee. Of course, at that time you remember, the Democrats made that change of giving major committee assignments to the new members, where the Republicans were still—in fact it took them a couple of Congresses to catch up in that respect—because their junior members still had to serve their terms in limbo. At the same time, that was a typical Johnson practical maneuver, particularly with that new group that came in.

RITCHIE: You mentioned patronage again. Did you have any dealings with Johnson when you were clerk of the Democratic Patronage Committee? How did he use that committee?

ELSON: Well, he didn't.

RITCHIE: He didn't?

ELSON: I mean, that wasn't his.

RITCHIE: That was Hayden's.

ELSON: That was Hayden's. That was controlled—well, actually, between the Secretary of the Senate's office and the Sergeant at Arms and I was the clerk, but Hayden really controlled that. We gave something to every senator, and Johnson had

certainly his own patronage as majority leader and through his committees, and he was good at building little empires and bringing people in. But he really had no control, in fact, I don't think that the leader really got control of the Patronage Committee until Carl Hayden retired and left in '69, when we turned over the patronage books to Mike Mansfield. Then things changed. Johnson got more than his fair share, I would say, of patronage from us, but he had no control over that whatsoever. Of course, the Sergeant at Arms was a big Lyndon man, that was Joe Duke at the time, and Skeeter Johnston was close to him, so Lyndon got a lot more than most members. I'm sure that they bypassed me a number of times in temporary assignments or these sort of things. Of course, having the Secretary of the Majority under him, that's sort of patronage.

When I'm talking about patronage I'm talking about those positions which were the mail carriers and the elevator operators, police privates. But as I said, from the time I took over the patronage books from Darrell St. Claire, and I think Darrell has confirmed this, the Secretary's office we pretty much started moving out of patronage, and by the 1960's most all of that was out of the patronage system and turned into professional staff. So Lyndon really didn't have it, but he certainly found a way to use committees, the Policy Committee and others, to take care of his needs and his staff arrangements. I don't think he missed a trick in that book. I don't think we ever had any quarrel with him over the way we handled the rest of the patronage thing.

I don't think he was ever satisfied, there were never enough people that should have been working for him, and he wanted them working for him twenty-four hours a day. He expected them to work as hard as he did. For some, it was an impossible task. I felt so sorry for poor Walter. I saw him down at the White House just before that thing broke, and Walter had become a total nervous wreck from working so many long hours. I remember those yellow pads and sheets and sheets of notes. He was supposed to do everything. What a gentleman, though, what a polite and good man. I don't see why he didn't break sooner than he did from all the pressures that Lyndon put on him, and I don't know—it seemed like, and this was also true of Carl Hayden, the more you did, the more they expected of you. And they wouldn't necessarily pat you on the head when you needed it. They just expected it. If you did a good job, well you're supposed to have done a good job. I sometimes wonder if they ever thought about it. They were, I think, alike that way, Carl Hayden and Lyndon, because I know

for the longest time with Carl Hayden you were just expected to do good work. He'd let you know if you weren't, but very rarely did he commend you on something that he thought you might have done particularly well.

For Lyndon, I don't think anything but a total commitment, total loyalty would do. Though he could be very kind, yet he could be so mean too. I sometimes wonder if he thought anyone had a family life. I don't know where he thought people were supposed to get together to produce these kids and make a marriage, feed them, and do all that. I'm still impressed today with the blind loyalty of some of his former staff people. They're really making a god out of him. But of course, I think old George Reedy, his book about the presidency sort of sums up what we've done to the presidency of the United States, we've made a king out of the office. We have to have our royalty now. But Lyndon Johnson knew how to use power, loved power, and I think for the most part his intentions and the use of that power were good, and good for the country.

RITCHIE: Do you think it was the fact that he knew how to use power that attracted other people to him? That they saw him as a conduit to power?

ELSON: Oh, sure. In fact, that's what politics is all about. That's why you get interested in it. It amazed me when I first came back here, and all during this time that you're talking about, for instance we talked about Roy Cohn, and how I thought I was dumber than hell when I found out that people were making exceptionally good notes and I thought my memory wasn't too good, but I found that politics, and when you're around powerful people, and the Senate being the institution that it is with its tradition, mystique and everything else, I found that it's attracted some of the brightest, ablest people you'll ever meet, and it's also attracted the [worst], I mean some really bad people. Power does that.

It's just like with women. Kennedy was known as a womanizer, certainly Lyndon was, and George Smathers, Christ, they couldn't keep their eyes off any good looking thing that was up in the gallery. But women are attracted to it, outside the system, but even those in it. It's almost hypnotic what power does to people. So, yeah, that's what politics is all about: power and the use of it. And I'm sure the continued use of it in accomplishing things, meeting your goals, or getting something through, that's how they get their kicks. It's almost an orgasmic sort of thing. That's what makes it

difficult for people to leave it, and why a lot of them never return home, and why ex-members stay in town, because they miss that thrill and excitement of being part of the action. And when you think that there's only a hundred of them here at a time—and of course some are more equal than others, an Orwellian statement, but it's got to be heady to them and to anyone around them.

I know it had that effect on me, but as I say it was unusual the way I came back, because most members did not select their staff members the way Carl Hayden did, by going to the university. I wasn't in his campaigns, or didn't have a wealthy relative or someone like that. I was selected after being interviewed and being recommended. That was a little unusual because most everyone else had either been attracted to it, or had been part of a political machine, or had come up through the system. But I know once I got here I recognized real quickly what power was all about, and who had it, and who could use it, and who was very good at it. It's just hypnotic, and it's fun, exciting. To know that you're involved with some of the big events that are making history, and the fights that go on to bring about our system of government, it's really a wonderful experience. It's hard to get it out of your system.

RITCHIE: Who had the power in the '50s when you were there. Who would you say were the real power centers in the Senate?

ELSON: Well, when I first came McFarland had already been defeated. Certainly there was Russell, Bob Kerr, Stennis—I'm thinking about Democrats right now, then I'll go to Republicans—of course Lyndon, Magnuson, Jackson, what a one-two punch that was. They were something, they were good. Let's see [John] Pastore in his way. Gee, I'd have to look at the list to refresh my memory, but some of those stand out. Of course, there was such a big turnover in the late '50s, so I'm thinking of pre-'58 and then afterwards.

RITCHIE: Some of those people you mentioned were chairmen, and some weren't. I mean, Jackson hadn't become a chairman yet, Kerr hadn't become a chairman yet. Was it more their personalities?

ELSON: Yeah, their personalities, the issues they selected, and the way they played the game. As I say, what impressed me in those days particularly was if a

member gave his word to someone, that was it. You didn't have to get it in writing, or trap him into embarrassment or anything, if they made a commitment to you on a legislative matter or something like that, they would honor it. So you had this closeness that way and you got respect that way. As a result, they build up over a period of time the respect of their peers, and there was a lot of back-scratching that went on, of course. And then some although they might not have been a committee chairman they might have been a subcommittee chairman and the issues just so happened to come about at that time. Then of course you've got to include in there Eastland, who was always a power in the South. I'll have to refresh my memory.

RITCHIE: What about Clinton Anderson?

ELSON: Oh, yeah, Clinton Anderson for lots of different reasons was respected. He could be a [expletive], though, he was almost as bad as Lyndon.

RITCHIE: In what way?

ELSON: Oh, just that he could be very petty. Of course, he made much of his reputation over the [Lewis] Strauss nomination as anything, that was what, '56?

RITCHIE: 1959.

ELSON: Was it that late? He really started that and talked it long enough until they got enough members to reject him. Of course, he used his position well on the Atomic Energy and all that. But I know Clinton Anderson was a power. Of course, he had already been Secretary of Agriculture. You realize that he was born in South Dakota and went out to die in New Mexico, just like my mother was sent to Arizona. They went out there and got well and moved on from there. But yeah, he was very powerful. He was on the leading edge on a lot of issues, but that Strauss thing really made him a force to be reckoned with. He also was in on the early Medicare legislation and took the lead on a lot of that, even when it was defeated the first time. When did we pass that, '58 or '59.

RITCHIE: No, later.

ELSON: That would be '62, you're right. But there had been the fight all along. And then he was on the Interior Committee. Very definitely I'd put Clint Anderson up there.

RITCHIE: You haven't mentioned any Republicans. I was wondering what your impression was of Styles Bridges who was ranking on Appropriations?

ELSON: And he had also been chairman and president pro tem, not that that matters. The Republicans I think feared him a lot because he ran a tight ship. He treated all Republican patronage like it was his own personal patronage. He didn't give it out like Carl Hayden did, everyone got assigned something. When he granted it, it was his, and he dispensed it at his whim. He either withheld or gave to keep members in line. He was powerful man, but I wouldn't have trusted the [expletive] as far as you could throw him left handed. I knew a lot of his people, he had some good staff members. Bridges reminded you a little bit of Lyndon, except he wasn't as persuasive and he wasn't as good at doing it. He could be mean.

RITCHIE: He was more of a backroom man than out front.

ELSON: Yeah, he wasn't very particularly articulate, but he was behind the scenes. He was a tough customer. I don't know that members quite trusted him the way they should have for the position he was in.

RITCHIE: What were his relations with Hayden?

ELSON: Quite good. We got along famously, and our staffs did too. His AA, what the hell was his name—got killed in an airplane crash, he was down at the Interstate Commerce Commission, on that Piedmont crash in New York. His staff and our staff, even on the Appropriations Committee, got along pretty well. Our personal staffs did, I know that. Oh, like on Inaugural Committee activities, all sorts of things, we got along quite well. But you just sort of had the feeling about Styles Bridges that he might be a little crooked. That's not kind, but you just had the feeling that he might be willing to take something under the table, or something like that. You just had that feeling about him.

I blame a number of things on him. For instance, the [Lester] Hunt suicide. He and Knowland, I think, they were threatening to expose Hunt's son as a homosexual, to force him out of the race. Finally he announced he wasn't going to run again, but he still blew his brains out. As I remember the time period, you sort of knew what was going on behind the scenes, and later some of it was confirmed. You could never really put your finger on it, but I think that the pressures that were put on him, particularly by those two gentlemen, caused him to break.

RITCHIE: Did you say that Mike Manatos told you that story?

ELSON: Mike told me, and then some other people were around at the time. Mike was here and then he came back with [Joseph] O'Mahoney. Mike had been with O'Mahoney when he was here the first time, and then when he came back to take Hunt's seat, Mike came back with him then. I'm trying to think who else told me some of the background on that. Oh, Wiggins, Chet Wiggins was Bridge's administrative assistant. I think Chet one drunken—I mean one day when we had a few drinks—made some comments that sort of confirmed the politics that were involved at that time. I think it was Chet, anyhow, Chet was the one who got killed in the airplane crash. Bridges died after Chet got an appointment down at the ICC, but he was friend of the office, and Tom Shannon who was with Bridges as a staff member, and was on the Judiciary Committee too, so we knew a lot of his people. Off the top of my head, that's my reaction to Styles Bridges.

RITCHIE: The newspapers used to write about the "Inner Club" of the Senate in the '50s. Was that a reasonable description of the way the Senate operated?

ELSON: I think there was an "Inner Club." I guess that's what I'm talking about when I said that there was this circle that Lyndon knew he could rely on, and some on the Republican side. Some because of their personalities and friendships, and others because of their position, but there was a feeling, nothing formal of course about it, but there was this sort of thing that ran the Senate, and ran it pretty damn well, I thought, made things get done.

RITCHIE: You hear from administration people later on, in the Nixon administration and afterwards: "In the old days you could call up one or two people on Capitol Hill and get things done." Was that really the way things worked?

ELSON: I think that was quite true. And I know people have told me, have said how powerful I was, and I really didn't realize it. They'd call from the administration and they'd want something done, and unless there was some big objection, yeah, and you tell the senator and it would be done. You didn't have to check with nine thousand different places. I think very definitely that's changed. There were people that you could go to, say it was a defense matter, if it was funds or a project, and if you checked it with the senior members of the Armed Services Committee, the chairman, or the subcommittee chairman, if it was military construction or appropriation, Christ you only had to talk to less than a half dozen people, and most of them for the most part were staff people that you would call. Then they'd either get it, or if there was a problem you'd get the members together and the secretary or whatever, and things went pretty fast.

A lot of it you didn't need a lot of paperwork and memoranda and all this, so much of it you could rely on the verbal responses. Then you'd put through the paperwork and draft the legislation and whatever was needed, but you didn't get twenty memoranda justifying what you were trying to do. So, yes, there's no doubt in my mind. That's all changed, where you could pretty much check with the chairman and the ranking member and move things along pretty well. Now, if it was real controversial, no. Then you had to put together your coalition and you could still have your legislative fights, but you didn't have these Sunshine laws where you had to do so much out in the open. You could still maneuver behind the scenes and get some things done without having to get into a lot of the battles. It seems like today they're out there fighting the wrong wars. I mean, it's over inconsequential matters that are part of a piece of legislation, which you would never have gotten into if it had been sent out there and you were concentrating on what the real problem is. So, yeah, that definitely has changed. It's true that you could do that in the '50s and '60s.

RITCHIE: One thing I get a sense from looking at the way Johnson operated was that he moved a lot of the action off of the Senate floor into the cloakrooms, into the committee rooms. He didn't want the fight to be fought out in public.

ELSON: Exactly. No, he was very good at that, and of course he could do that a lot easier in the '50s, again until that new class came in which made it more difficult. But that period when he was minority leader and then became majority leader and up through the early '60s you could still do that. No, in fact, probably only when you really didn't have the votes, or when you needed to make a record did you ever want to get into a fight on the floor. So much of it was done in the cloakroom or in committee or behind the scenes. From the standpoint of moving things, I know so many times you just wouldn't get anything to the floor, it wouldn't get cleared by the Policy Committee or you wouldn't get there because you didn't want to have a big fight there when you weren't sure of the votes. But this is where he was a master at counting, and had a lot help from Bobby Baker, who was very good.

RITCHIE: Tell me about Bobby Baker. He's another fascinating person, but not one I have a clear grasp of.

ELSON: Well, I think we ought to take that up the next time. This is probably a good place to stop.

RITCHIE: All right.

ELSON: I certainly have strong impressions, and I still consider Bobby a friend, but I certainly didn't condone some of the things that he did while he was Secretary of the Majority. But I'll tell you about that when we get to it.

RITCHIE: Okay. Thank you.

End of Interview #3

BOBBY BAKER AND THE SENATE

Interview #4

Thursday, June 7, 1990

RITCHIE: I wanted to follow up on the conference on Senate leadership that we held about two weeks ago. I wondered if, having listened to those papers on Johnson and Mansfield, you had any thoughts about the effectiveness of their leadership, or the way that historians are beginning to look at them, years later?

ELSON: Well, actually, I thought that Howard Shuman did a better job than I thought he would. I thought he did a fairly accurate job of portraying Johnson and describing his personality. [Howard E. Shuman, "Lyndon B. Johnson: The Senate's Powerful Persuader," in Richard A. Baker and Roger H. Davidson, eds., *First Among Equals: Outstanding Senate Leaders of the Twentieth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1991).] I was pleasantly surprised. He, of course, thinks that Johnson was a better president than he was leader. I would disagree. I thought he was an extremely fine leader, when you consider the balances, and the changes that were taking place. Where he became an unusually good president was because of the momentum he received as a result of Kennedy's assassination, because all those programs in some form or fashion had been introduced by the Kennedys, in the Kennedy administration for the most part, and they languished and weren't going many places because there was that reluctance to help him along. Then, after the assassination, Johnson was smart enough to exploit all the feeling in the country, and moved all his legislation as well as the Kennedy legislation through, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and all the Great Society programs, but a lot of that legislation was already there.

As opposed to his successor, Mansfield, who is such a decent human being. And of course, we always have to go back to that Class of '58, that huge new group of senators who came in, and the different majorities that probably forced Mansfield to do things a little differently. Maybe he had to, but I—well, let me put it this way: any senator is a very powerful human being politically, and depending on how he uses that, he becomes more equal than others. I've always said, if you give me six senators I could

tie up this country until they'd go berserk. Mansfield, in sort of letting everyone have their head, I don't know whether he really needed to do that. I think he could have been more forceful in carrying on, or bringing things along. He was a man of consensus. I think he gave too much leeway to individual members. To pass legislation, with some of the rules changes, I thought that he could have still used some of Johnson's forcefulness. Though he could be tough, I mean he certainly was not fearful of anyone. I think it was just his whole philosophy. Of course, you also have to remember he bent over backwards as a result of Johnson having been his predecessor. And then you had the Bobby Baker affair and some things like that that changed the make-up of the operation of the Senate chamber. You know, [Frank] Valeo went in. He was certainly no Bobby Baker. And Mansfield didn't let him. He wanted to have someone there that was "clean as a hound's tooth"—someone else said that.

But I thought all in all I really enjoyed that conference. I was there the entire time, and I thought most everyone did well, except for that last panel. I disagreed with some of the things that they were saying. What in the hell were they talking about? Well, I'll have to look at my notes, I made some notes on that. But between Mansfield and Johnson, their styles were so different, and I guess the circumstances were too, but I thought Mansfield could have been a stronger leader than he actually was.

RITCHIE: One theme that ran through some of those papers, the way I heard them at least, was that the office of majority leader doesn't carry with it a lot of intrinsic power. It depends on what each individual person holding that position does with the responsibility and whatever authorities there are. Actually, it seems to vary considerably, and it's not as if becoming majority leader means that you are. . .

ELSON: Automatically powerful. Well, I think we're seeing that probably true today with [George] Mitchell. It does depend on the person. Of course, Johnson used everything to accumulate power. Every committee, he put people in the Policy Committee, expanded it. He felt that he should have as many people as his little heart desired to do anything, all he wanted. So when he left to become vice president, I didn't see for instance that Mansfield wanted to give up any of the space [laughs] or turn anything back particularly, but he certainly wasn't grabbing for things like Lyndon did to expand his power.

When you go into that, first of all to get elected they go through their own little in-house voting process which is probably just as hard a campaign as some of your own political campaigns. To want the leadership you have to be a unique character, an individual, because as lots of members came out, and it came out in the conference in some of the remarks that were made during that sessions, that being the leader was not necessarily an advantage, particularly if you were a southerner who in those days had political problems with desegregation and all the other things. And if the same party is in power in the White House and you have to defend them, and you have your own political problems, it's not necessarily a blessing. So it has to be sort of a unique individual to play that. It can be really tough, and we've seen some majority leaders like Lucas and McFarland who have been defeated, and we saw what happened to Russell Long when he was whip and got blindsided. It's not a blessing, and it does depend on the individual.

I guess I can say I go back to McFarland days. I was here before he closed his office, but I had known all about him of course from being from Arizona. Then watching the rest of them operate, they all had their distinct styles. I think that Gorbachev would be one hell of a leader in this body because of his personality, and his persuasion, and his understanding of the use of power. He's relaxed with it. And I think Lyndon was definitely relaxed with it in the sense that he loved it. He did work at it twenty-four hours a day, and had such driving ambition. No question, he wanted the top spot in the world, being president of the United States. It was limitless what he wanted to do.

Mansfield was an entirely different personality, the professor type. And coming from a state like Montana I think that's why he was there so long—you didn't have some of the problems that someone else might have from a different region of the country. I just thought in little things, he—Mansfield I'm talking about—could have exercised more leadership, not necessarily in the Johnson style. People respected him and he could have used his reservoir of good will and respect to move things along a little more forcefully.

RITCHIE: Let me ask you one question about Hayden as chairman of Appropriations under both of those men. Would the Senate Majority Leader, like Johnson or Mansfield, defer to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee to

handle the appropriations bill when they came up, or would they handle it themselves? Or was there a difference between Johnson and Mansfield on that?

ELSON: Well, I don't think we ever had any trouble with the appropriations bill because when they came out of committee the majority and minority worked very well together. It was very professional. Normally the subcommittee chairman would handle it on the floor. When they took them out they had no difficulty moving those along. Of course they had some priorities. I didn't see where the leadership got involved, outside of scheduling.

The one bill that always came up last, in every damn Congress, was always the foreign aid bill. That would be the one that everyone wanted to attack. The interesting thing, if you'd look at the minutes of the Senate Appropriations Committee, never were the votes very strong for the foreign aid bill in that committee. If they had voted their convictions, foreign aid would have been in more trouble than it was even in those days, and it was always a problem. It would always get down and hold up the sine die adjournment of the Congress, and there would always be a conference early in the morning. It would be Ellender, Hayden, and old Otto Passman fighting. The senator was sort of the one moderating it between the two of them from Louisiana. Neither one really had his heart in foreign aid. But if you look at those minutes, which I did once. The votes would be 14-11. How that happened was when they were marking up those bills in those days, you did it in executive session. So Carl Hayden would get his southern friends on the committees to give him their proxies, so he would vote them and would always have two or three votes to get the majority to get the damn bill out and pass it. Then they'd keep their mouths shut pretty well when it got to the floor, except for some of those who were making issues. That's how that used to happen.

Anyhow, if I understood your question about whether there was any leadership will exerted in trying to do something outside of Carl Hayden when he was chairman—the thing about Carl Hayden, as I look back on him, he had this incredible memory for detail and members' request, and most of those things were all taken care of before the bill ever came to the floor. The senator had pretty much greased, or taken away any potential opposition in most cases in the committee when they were marking it up—from the subcommittee to the full committee before they reported it. So I don't recall

any real problems. Oh, there might have been in their leadership meetings, saying we need more money for the space program, he'd put it in. I just can't recall any real difficulty there with the leadership at all, either under Johnson or Mansfield.

RITCHIE: You mentioned in passing that Hayden could count on his southern friends. It strikes me that the southwestern senators had particularly good ties with the southern senators at that stage.

ELSON: Well, for lots of reasons, particularly in the senator's case. My God, the length of time he was around here, he knew them all. He'd been here longer than most of them. When they first came to the Senate he always tried to be helpful to them, not only in their assignments, but showing them the ropes and how things happen. So he was very close to them that way. But also for instance I'd say from the time I was with him up until about 1965 I would say that our office and [James] Eastland, and [John] Stennis' office pretty much wrote all the cotton legislation from the farm bill.

Something that I think is fascinating about that is that our cotton farmers in Arizona were getting all this cheap water and reclamation, and they could get yields twice that what you could in the South, except maybe for the Delta, and fine-quality cotton, both upland and long staple. We produced it, and also in Texas along the Rio Grande. All our farmers, of course, wanted to wipe out all those poor southern farmers, and Carl Hayden, when he met with the cotton growers, or our own farmers, he would say, "There's no way that I'm going to be a party to harming our southern friends. This has been their tradition, they've got their allotments." He'd come right out. So we never had any—oh, we had some problems, anytime you try to handle regional issues like that—but he always went out of his way, particularly for the small cotton farmers in the South. The Delta farmers down the Mississippi Delta could pretty much handle themselves, they could compete worldwide as well as nationally. Farmers are awfully difficult to deal with. You can hardly get them to agree on the time of day, but because of the way he handled himself, and took them into consideration, he was always close to them.

Also I found it fascinating that say on civil rights, or on invoking cloture, Carl Hayden believed in unlimited debate. I think only once did he vote for cloture, and that

was on some space program, I forget what it was. I think I told you why that was the case, because when they wanted to bring in the Arizona-New Mexico territory back in 1905 or '06, someone got up and filibustered so that the territories could decide whether they wanted to come in separately or alone. So it delayed Arizona's admission into the States for another six years, but at the same time he probably would never have been in Congress or a United States Senator if it had not been for that delay. So he had real practical reasons for being in favor of unlimited debate.

But what I started to say about what was fascinating to me, I could see him cast votes—talk about a good vote counter, Carl Hayden was one of the best. When he knew that a piece of social legislation didn't have the votes, he'd occasionally vote with his southern friends. So he looked a little like a conservative, and he might be even a little prejudiced on a Civil Rights issue for instance, but he knew it wasn't going anywhere, so he would vote along and build up brownie points that way. It used to frustrate a lot of my Republican friends out in Arizona—here was this man who probably voted for every aggressive piece of social legislation that was ever enacted into law, and then he had this reputation of being a conservative. One of the reasons is that over the years, because he was such a good vote counter, and knew that it wasn't timely even if they were making a little progress, he would vote with his southern friends. It was also politically good for him at home in the West, but also built up a good rapport with the southerners, and in those days of course there was pretty much a one-party South. It was all Democratic, so when they got up here they rose up through the ranks of seniority and stayed there for a long time, as we all know. But I thought it was very skillful and good politics and also built up great relationships.

RITCHIE: In the '50s the measurement that southern senators used was how you stood on cloture, and Carl Hayden stood with them on that.

ELSON: Yeah.

RITCHIE: Was there any quid pro quo? Did they support issues like oil and gas and water programs that he wanted, in return?

ELSON: Yeah, but I don't think it was in his case a quid pro quo as much as a lot of the programs that the senator was interested in were also programs that the

South and others were interested in: roads, farming legislation, minerals, and all that. We had an awful lot in common with the South. In the way Carl Hayden worked, by the time he had something that he was really interested in, the groundwork had been laid so well, years before, either in hearings in the Appropriations Committee when they were coming up, seed money he'd put in, you know, a little fifty thousand dollars here, a hundred thousand dollars there for a study. It could be on anything. He would stick it in there as a study, and then the next go-around he'd say, "Okay, what do you need to finish this study? Or when do we go to the next stage?"

We even did this on private bills, immigration bills for instance, when it became a racket to keep someone who was illegally in the country, everyone was throwing in private bills until they changed all that. He wouldn't do that. In fact, every immigration bill that he ever put in—this is insignificant, but I think it shows what sort of a man he was--we would have done so much work on that thing. We wouldn't even put in the bill, or we might have put it in to hold up until we could get all the work, but every private relief bill he ever put in was enacted, because of that very same approach. We had so much information, checked it all out, and by the time we went to the committee with it, the work had all been done.

That's the way he approached everything. It was just beautiful to watch. That's when I think I said before he'd be willing to take that half-step, or quarter-step, looking down the line maybe five, ten years. Talk about looking at lead-times! Of course maybe it was because of the time it took to develop projects for the West, reclamation projects. But he took advantage of all sorts of things, like during World War II, I know we have a couple of irrigation projects and one in particular down near Yuma that wouldn't exist, but he tied it in with the military because the winds blew sand onto the fields, and it was causing safety problems, so they irrigated. Now it's some of the wealthiest land in the country, all citrus, and it was built around the base to protect it from the sands. You know, he'd do things like that. For instance, I remember that the Grand Coulee Dam was never authorized. You know how that was authorized? It wasn't even a whole sentence, he stuck it into one of the appropriations bills for the Pacific northwest. That huge facility went in and was authorized that way.

Carl Hayden was a builder, with all the regions of the country, and of course in the South you had all the channelization of the Mississippi and all the rivers and harbors

stuff in the midwest. And he was always helping [Robert] Kerr on all his big projects that revolutionized that part of the world—a seaport in the middle of the country! [laughs] So his position on cloture I think really did help him with his southern friends. But as I say, it was more a matter of principle with him, and I don't think he expected a quid pro quo. He really believed in protecting minorities, and had seen too often how easy it was to get a majority to run over people. He felt there were always ways of working out in time, reasonable men could work out their differences, as it eventually happened in Civil Rights. The southerners finally saw the writing on the wall. In fact, in my opinion the South's made more progress in that area than the North and the major cities in the country. I used to get a kick out of our friends from Illinois and New York and some of the other places who gerrymandered school districts. You know, you looked at New York and you'd see these funny fingers going here and there. They didn't handle their race problems very well. I think the South has come a long way since I first came back here, in those areas.

RITCHIE: Hayden was one of those who let the majority leader know he could have his vote on cloture in '64 if they needed it, but he preferred not to.

ELSON: Well, he voted for the Civil Rights Act of '64.

RITCHIE: But he held off on the cloture vote.

ELSON: On cloture, right.

RITCHIE: Until it really got down to whether they really needed his vote.

ELSON: Yeah, and he would have gone again on that. The other time that he voted for cloture, which surprised the hell out of me, because it caught me by surprise, I don't even think they needed his vote on whatever it was. It seemed to me it had something to do with the space program, but I could be wrong. I'll have to check that out.

RITCHIE: One of the reasons why I raised the question about the quid pro quo, was that I remember when Howard Shuman told me about Senator Douglas' frustrations of trying to get on the Finance Committee. He said that Richard Russell

as chairman of the Steering Committee basically wanted to know how anybody was going to stand on cloture, and on oil and gas depletion allowance. Those were the two criteria. If you voted right on those issues you got on the Finance Committee. If you didn't go along with it, they found all sorts of excuses to keep you off the Finance Committee.

ELSON: Well, that's pretty true. Now, Carl Hayden, as long as I can remember, was always on the Steering Committee. But of course, Lyndon was on there too, and he was the one who was more interested in the oil and gas thing. The southerners were interested in the cloture issue. It was a mixture not only of the temperament of the South, but also I think they knew they were a minority in a lot of things, and that they also believed in it in principle as well as for practical reasons. So, yeah, that was typical. But I think under Johnson the rules changed to give new senators major committee assignments—they used to have to serve their time on the District of Columbia Committee or some other minor committee—they did change that. The Steering Committee tried to make committee assignments geographically, to balance it out so it wasn't totally weighed in one area of the country's favor. But there's no question that that was one of the considerations, those subjects were very big to the people who were serving on the Steering Committee, particularly for new members.

So I'm sure it was frustrating to someone like Senator Douglas, who had the background, the expertise, and all that, being frustrated because he didn't believe in cloture and wasn't so sure he liked oil depletion. Of course, it wasn't just oil depletion. The reason also that Carl Hayden felt along those lines was that we had a lot of depletion allowances in the mining area. We had them for years and years, so we sort of had an interest in how people felt about certain depletion allowances. Christ, when you start studying depletion, you found out that practically everyone in the country had some form of allowance, running from three percent to whatever it was in oil, which I guess was the highest. I know for the mines it was fifteen percent or something like that. And there were some good arguments for it, on both sides. There's no question in my mind that those sort of intangibles were considered when it came to making committee assignments. People who were protecting their interests did.

RITCHIE: Well, you mentioned also about Hayden being such a good head counter. Head counting seems to be the greatest skill you can have, I guess, on the

Senate floor, really knowing in advance what's going to happen. Which brings up the subject of Bobby Baker, who always gets credit for being one of the premier head counters.

ELSON: There's no question in my mind that Bobby was one of the best ever as a staff person, a non-elected person, better than most all the members. I mean, he was superb. Of course, Bobby was so consumed by politics. He started as a page, coming up from South Carolina, and I think his ambition—in fact, he told me this once—was to make a lot of money, not a Trump type, but enough money, and he wanted to be governor of South Carolina. Those were his goals, really that's where he wanted to end up. He went about trying to do both, but certainly to make some money. I think having been around, seeing the power, you know when Johnson picked him up as a young guy he even then had a reputation for knowing what the needs and wants of every senator were on both sides of the aisle, but certainly among the Democrats.

Bobby, being ambitious and very bright, and sitting there on the floor keeping track of everything, he had a very agile mind, and so when a member came on the floor, unless it got down to something the leadership really wanted to push through, he would tell a member, "You don't want to vote for this because of your interests back in your state," or something else. He, like Johnson, had an incredible memory for those little things that you wanted to try to help a member with, and letting him decide. He was very good. I know Carl Hayden was really impressed with his talents. And of course, Bobby went out of his way to court all that.

During the '50s my dealings with Bobby were pretty much official. Just checking on things, and sort of at a distance. It wasn't until later, in the late '50s, early '60s that I really became friends with him. We didn't socialize that much, occasionally. It was just before he got into trouble, and after he got into trouble, that I really became closer to him, up until this day. I just saw him not too long ago. Bobby's trouble, I think what got him into trouble a lot, was that being a very outgoing person, and sort of loud and flamboyant in his way, moving around, I think he talked too much—about what he could do, what money he was making, how he was going to do all these things. I know my own feeling at the time was that that's going to get you into some difficulty, particularly as a staff person around here.

In Bobby's defense, I think when you grew up as a sort of a child of the Senate, and with the power that he was around, and a man like Lyndon, and then of course his real mentor was Bob Kerr. In fact, I think if Kerr had lived there may not have been a Bobby Baker case, a court case and everything else. I just have a feeling that that might not have happened. But when you're around power like that you really do think that you might be invincible and above the normal laws that most people are supposed to take into consideration.

I think he felt that he could do most anything, and saw raw power at its best being exercised. So he courted the lobbyists. I remember, if you want to take an example, the Savings and Loan people. He became a very close friend of Glenn Troop, who was a lobbyist for the Savings and Loan people, and some of those in the defense thing. And he had no hesitation, and I think he got tips from Bob Kerr on business things, and he thought he could put deals together, and he had no compunctions about borrowing money, and using his power and position. But I really think how he got into difficulty was because he became so obvious. After a while they couldn't ignore some of his outside activities.

I'll tell you two stories about Bobby, leading up to his troubles. I met Bobby out in Beverly Hills on one trip. He had to raise some money, I guess this was for—it might have been for the senator's campaign. When did that all fall apart? Was it '62? So this might have been in '61.

RITCHIE: 1963 is actually when he got into real trouble, but in '62 it was beginning to brew.

ELSON: Yeah, but it was the fall of '62 as I recall when it began to break publicly, is that about right?

RITCHIE: Probably, yeah. The case really became public in '63. Kennedy was still alive and there was a question whether it would affect Johnson's place on the ticket.

ELSON: The next time, yes. Well, this would probably have been in '61 or might have been early '62. Anyhow, both of us were staying in the Beverly Rodeo

Hotel on Rodeo Drive, which is now the swank place in Beverly Hills. We met down in the bar. Bobby used to hang out at the Beverly Rodeo, there was, you know, lots of action there, [laughs] female action and other action. I met him downstairs and Wayne Bromley was with him. Wayne worked up here, he'd come up on patronage. I wanted to meet with Bobby, but I told him I didn't want to meet in Wayne's presence, because I never quite trusted Wayne. Well, I don't know what made me believe that, but I did. And so we went up alone to my suite. He had this money for me for the senator's campaign, probably. It turned out later, when the whole affair broke, was that they had turned Wayne and he was wired. Most of the stuff that they got him on came out of that wire that Wayne was wearing at the very time I was with Bobby. I've often looked back and thought, Oh, God! because we talked about a lot of things at that time.

The other thing was just before it broke. I had been out in Arizona, and all during the '60s my brother, Dean, was the agent in charge of the FBI in Nevada. At one time he probably knew more about organized crime than anyone in the country, and of course had that town wired like crazy—bugged, I should say. This was when Bobby Kennedy was Attorney General, and they had set up the special forces. But I flew up from Phoenix to Las Vegas to see my brother for the day, before I returned to Washington. It just so happened when I got up there that he said, "I've got to work tonight," because there was a middle-weight championship fight that night between Griffith and Martinez. So my brother said, "Why don't you come with me, because we're expecting all the hoods in from Chicago and Detroit and New York. I've got all my agents out and I have to be there. We'll go to see the fight and then we'll visit." Because I was catching the plane the next morning.

We're standing there at the entrance to the arena, the convention center where the fight was, and pretty soon here comes [Howard] Cannon, and Pete Williams, and [Alan] Bible, all of them, and then here comes [Fred] Black, Bobby Baker, and Carole Tyler. As they came through I'd say hello to them and I'd introduce my brother. When Bobby came through and I introduced him to Carole and the others, and Dean asked to be introduced to be some of these people. We watched the fight, and it was a good fight, and then we went to one of the hotels for breakfast, an early late-night breakfast. Anyhow, he said, "Roy, do you have any business dealings with Bobby Baker?" I said, "What do you mean business? I talk to him maybe once a day. He's the Secretary of the Majority." My brother said, "But I mean business." I said, "Do you mean am I in

business with him outside of my official duties for Senator Hayden?" I said, "You've got to be crazy, I wouldn't last two seconds with Carl Hayden if I had any outside business interests." I said, "No, I'm not." He said, "Well, keep it that way." I said, "Why? Is it over Fred Black?" Because I'd known about the stuff out here in Maryland and all that, because Bobby talked too much. I said, "You've got to tell me, you just can't leave me hanging like this." He said, "Just keep it totally official, believe me, because you just don't want to get involved." Well, this bothered me because I had loyalty to the Senate, and I knew the Bureau well enough, but I also knew my brother, that if he was on to something he's like a tenacious little bulldog and he just doesn't let go. He was good.

So when I came back to Washington, I thought, Oh, God, I know I told my brother I wouldn't say anything or indicate anything, but I finally called Bobby and said, "Can I come over and see you?" I went over went over to his office and said I wanted to see him alone. After everyone had left, I said, "Bobby, I don't know what the hell you're doing, although I think I have an idea about some, but if I were you whatever you're doing I would back off any outside business that you're into, I would back off as far as you can get." Then I told him why. He said, "Well, it's probably over Black and some income tax stuff." I said, "I don't know, I don't want to know. All I'm telling you is if I were you, and I was in your position—and knowing my brother—I would clean up my act." Well, I didn't think about it anymore. I felt better myself. And then the [expletive] hit the fan.

He told me later, it must have been a six months lapse, he said, "Roy, if I had only taken your advice at the time." There was time to distance and clean up some things. But he didn't, and it all went on. The only other thing I can say about that was that Carole Tyler was a very attractive lady, and I still have funny feelings about the way she died. I don't know that that was really an accident myself. At the time I had suspicions, and still do. But she's dead. But before that she was out of a job, so I talked to Carl Hayden. I said, "Can I hire her?" He said, "Yeah." Then I thought about it a little more, and here the old man is on the Rules Committee and they're looking into all this, and I thought, "I shouldn't put Carl Hayden into that position." But I almost hired Carole, because she was good, but I didn't on second thought—though the Bureau did tell me that they really didn't have anything against Carole, other than she was working for Bobby. Apparently she told the truth when she was subpoenaed.

But again, Bobby was an incredible Secretary to the Senate Majority. There haven't been too many people around here who were as good, and deliberately got involved. Sure there were the Les Biffles, and the Skeeters [Felton Johnston], and all those, but it was a little different then, particularly to be around a man like Lyndon who was into everything, and then to have someone as good as Bobby helping him. They were two of a kind, in many, many ways. They both had strong appetites, in both the flesh and other, and they just came along at the same time. And man that was a hell of a combination.

RITCHIE: Do you think that Bobby Baker was involved in outside financial dealings while Johnson was majority leader, or was this something that happened later?

ELSON: No, I think Bobby probably started under Lyndon. I really don't know, but I would suspect that it started when Lyndon was majority leader.

RITCHIE: In his memoir, Baker said it wasn't until Mansfield became majority leader and he had the time—that he was too busy when Johnson was leader.

ELSON: Oh, [expletive]! Baloney. No, I don't believe that at all. I'm almost positive. I'm trying to think about when he opened the Carousel [Motel]. That was about the time Senator Mansfield became leader, or right before, and putting all that together, hell, Lyndon was still there. I remember when he had that party and all the senators went down for the opening.

Well, talking about Bobby's book [*Wheeling and Dealing*], I was a little disappointed in reading it because here's a man who could tell you a lot about the inner workings of the Club, and certainly of the happenings of the floor, and the deals that were made in the cloakrooms and things like that. But he didn't say anything. I've told him this, that I was really disappointed, and his only explanation was: well, the lawyers, and he still had some law suits going involving Allen Frear, and the tax stuff and all that. But I was really disappointed. I hope that you do eventually get to have him put it on the record. He might be more willing now, now that he's back with his wife and everything, and is growing older, he might be willing. It would be a rich source of how that place worked.

RITCHIE: How would you describe him as an operator on the floor? Was he the type of person who would strong-arm a senator, or was he always a deferential person? What were the limits of his behavior?

ELSON: Well, he was a little more brazen than you would think that a staff member would be. It depended on who they were. And he was always taking care of some of their other needs too. I wouldn't say that he would "strong-arm" them because they were still United States senators, but he also became very friendly with them, almost an equal, and some more than others. If he felt could get a way with it, Bobby would. He sort of knew the limits he could go to. Now with Carl Hayden, for instance, he wouldn't try any of that. He treated him with a great deal of respect, but someone else that he might have been out drinking with, or having back to his office, or supplying him with something, he could be different. But he seemed to know how far he could go. And he was always very gregarious and an outgoing person, so they sort of accepted his personality that way, so he could probably get by with more than most. In telling stories and jokes and just the interplay that goes on between members, I think he shared a great deal of that same camaraderie with different ones, but with others, I don't think with a Russell or some others he would act that way.

What I must say, though, that he was very good at, was when Lyndon didn't want something to happen, Bobby could go around behind Mike Mansfield, when he was whip and trying to get something done, or thought that he was supposed to get something done, Bobby would sabotage the deal because Lyndon didn't want something done while he was out of town, wherever he was, down at the ranch or someplace else. Bobby was very good at cornering certain members and saying "We don't want this to happen." Certainly Senator Mansfield didn't quite trust him, for lots of reasons, but that was one of them, I'm sure. Bobby was carrying out Lyndon's work, and sometimes embarrassed Mike Mansfield. From that standpoint he could strong-arm, and did. But I put that more as loyalty to the leader, who may not have been perfectly candid with his assistant, meaning Mike Mansfield. In many ways Lyndon probably shared more information with the minority leader than he did with his own party people, on certain items. Bobby knew that.

But Bobby did everything, in the sense of running errands and cornering lobbyists. Bobby could read the riot act to some people, if they were outsiders. And I think a lot

of people resented it, so when he got into trouble, there wasn't the support that he might have had, had he treated people better, particularly other staff people. He could be very short with them. He was never that way with me that I can recall, ever, but I've seen him with other staff members who were in the same position I was, AA. You never quite felt sure that Bobby was always sincere. The one example I can give, I remember some function he had invited me to, I'll never forget it, there were a lot of members there as well as lobbyists and some foreign dignitaries, and I wanted to talk to Bobby. Anyhow, have you ever had the sensation when you're shaking hands with someone, he had a good firm handshake, but he was also—just like Lyndon used to do—pulling you by him and looking at the next person. You never quite felt it was anything more than he had to do it and good-bye, get out of my way.

A lot of staff people around here, I know, felt resentment for his flamboyance and his talking too much about his extracurricular activities. He'd brag about his prowess and things like that. You never knew how much of it was true and how much of it was b.s. He was a little high-handed with a number of staff people, and I know they didn't like it. A lot of people were always bitching about him, but he always had that protective power over there behind, particularly Bob Kerr.

RITCHIE: What about Kerr? How would you describe his role in all of this?

ELSON: In Bobby's thing?

RITCHIE: Yes.

ELSON: Well, Kerr generally liked Bobby and wanted to help him. He probably saw something in Bobby that he didn't see in his own family, that's just a personal theory of mine. He helped him in many ways, loaned him money, and showed him how to do things, and gave him lots of tips and insight. You know, Kerr spread some cash around to members, a little spending money here and there. He was also looking out for the interests of his state, but wasn't he who said, "If I'm not a part of the deal, I'm against it."

I loved Bob Kerr. I thought he was just fascinating to watch operate. He knew how to use money and power. But he had this admiration for Bobby, and liked him, and

really did help him. I feel very strongly that if he had lived, there might not have been any of that "Bobby Baker affair" coming up quite the way it did. He might have had to change some things, or move on, or something else, but it wouldn't have been the same.

RITCHIE: I'm struck by the number of business arrangements that Baker had that involved other senators, real estate and stocks and this and that. Was that a common practice for senators and staff to invest in the same things?

ELSON: If it was, I must have been in a total fog. I know that there were certain staff people who did have arrangements, or got involved with members. Of course, like Ernest McFarland got his television station being on that committee. So did Lyndon. So business and official duties did get mixed up on occasion. I can think of several staff people who did have outside interests, and interest with senators, but I don't think it was a common practice. I sure didn't know about that many at the time. In fact, I think there's probably more today than there perhaps was then. There were some, but Bobby was on a fast-track. He wanted to get there in a hurry.

Bobby in a way was a sort of amoral type. Not immoral, but amoral. If it worked, fine, if you could get away with it. I don't know that he consciously thought that he was above the law, but he certainly behaved like he was above it, and felt that with power that was the way you got ahead, and that's the way it was done in the business world. Maybe to some extent he was right. But I guess the reason why I wasn't looking that much—and as I say I know for certain of a number of individuals who had outside business, and also with members—but in my particular case it would have been unheard of to have outside interests of any kind with Carl Hayden. You could buy a house or something like that, just like any other normal human being. I'm sure that there were staff people who got stock tips and things like that, as members did, and inside information that way. Unfortunately, I never had those opportunities.

But Bobby was putting together deal after deal, and what amazed me, I thought I worked hard, but I just didn't know how in the hell he found the time for all these outside activities. He was always on the phone, always had a deal going on, always had someone in the office, he was always late or waiting for someone. He was like Lyndon in that way. He was going twenty-four hours a day. And he liked to drink and play, there were some wild, wild parties he put together, or was involved in. Anyone who

has that sort of stamina you have to admire. As I said, I thought I worked twenty hours a day, but he had lots of energy. He always had something going, but you also sort of felt—and I'm saying this all very friendly—but when he talked to you it was always like it was a big secret. Then the next thing you know you heard him telling the same thing to someone else, always whispering. I think he was acting more like Lyndon than Lyndon himself. He took on a lot of the mannerisms. But he had a lot of them to start with. He was a southerner and had some of that southern charm. But you always thought you were getting some of the inside information. He was also very good at giving you enough information that he felt you needed to maybe do your job officially, and also enough to manipulate you a little bit. He was skilled, still is. He was very good. And being that combination with Johnson, it was just awesome.

Every time I've seen him, this year I met with him for lunch, and he still has a very good mind, and he still has great insights into politics and how things happen, both nationally and internationally. He's quick at picking up trends. I think that's from those years of experience that he gained. He was good then, he had good political instincts.

RITCHIE: Do you have the sense that he misses politics?

ELSON: Yeah. I think going to prison was not an easy thing. On any man or any person that would take a lot out of him, but I think it hurt him a lot. I don't know that he's recovered from not only the humiliation, but just—though he was up here in Allenwood—[laughs] when I was out chasing the hoods I met some people who knew Bobby when he was there. I could tell you some interesting stories about that. I think that hurt him. He might have been a little cynical back then, but I think that though some cynicism has come into him he still has the flash. He's mellowed a lot, and he's had some difficult times financially, still very proud man. How can you not miss it if you've been in a position of power and around the type of power and the men that he was around?

He was involved in Johnson's attempt to get the nomination, playing all those games. And having grown up in this place, and your whole life has revolved around power politics, I don't see how anyone could not miss being at the top of the mountain. I would probably say, and I think it was old Wilson Meisner who said, "You'd better

remember the people on the way up, because you're going to be seeing them on the way down." In Bobby's case, he forgot some of that. So when he was on the way down, I think a lot of people turned on him. But hell, yeah, he still loves talking about it, and laughs about it. That's why I would urge you, if you can, to get him to talk. He's got a super memory for a lot of the names and faces and times and events. I know I've talked with him privately, but I've never seen him put anything in writing. He certainly would give you some great one-liners on each senator that served over there during his time, from the time he was a page until he left up here. Because he did know all their little idiosyncrasies.

RITCHIE: You described him at one point as amoral. I wondered how you would describe him in terms of ideology. Did he have one? Was he a liberal or a conservative? Or was he just a political operator?

ELSON: No, his own personal philosophy I would put in the liberal camp, really. But he was also an operator. Yeah, I think he had some convictions. I guess "amoral" would be too strong. He could submerge himself into doing things for other people. He was almost sycophantic that way, you might say, in finding out things and working for members. You had a tendency, I remember when I sat down when I was urged to run myself, and I had been thinking in Carl Hayden's terms for so damn long. All of a sudden when I finally sat down, I said, "Jesus, what do I believe in?" Because you have so totally submerged your own personality into your senator's. Particularly in those days, because outside of a guy like Bobby and some others, it was very rare for an AA to find his name in the paper. You were never out in front. In fact, that was a mark that you weren't doing your job well, if your name showed up in the paper instead of your member's. And it better be a favorable way.

I remember my own feeling was: "Jesus, I don't even know who I am anymore!" Then I started thinking: "My God, I don't agree with Carl Hayden on that!" In some cases I'd be more liberal, and in others I'd be more conservative, when I started thinking, "Well, what do I really believe?" I think in someone like Bobby's case, he had submerged himself and his personality into so many other people's thoughts and bodies, that he wasn't sure who in the hell he was, and moving as fast as he was. That's probably what I mean about being "amoral." I don't know how to describe it, because a lot of us certainly had our shortcomings when it came to morality. You know, it's

amazing all the things you're asked to do for a member, and do, that you probably wouldn't do under normal circumstances. That's what I think I mean by being amoral.

But in the private conversations I've had with him, he believed in Civil Rights legislation, and in social matters he had a social conscience. I think he would have been a hell of a governor and quite a good elected official, particularly in the executive branch, though he would also have been good in this body. He was very forward-looking and progressive. Occasionally you would find him identifying with something because of an upbringing where he didn't have any wealth. He really wanted that, because he saw wealth—not so much wealth in itself, though he liked the high life, I guess we all do to an extent—but I don't think it was money in itself. Like for instance, I don't think he wanted to make money for money's sake, or to be rich. It was always a means to his goal, which was always power. I think his real goal was he wanted to be governor of South Carolina and then who knows from there what he wanted to do.

I always enjoyed those occasions when we'd talk privately about politics and his own political philosophy. He was a good, progressive-looking Democrat. Yet he had submerged himself so many times on so many things, and he was an operator, the best. So, as a result, it's hard to say if you look at him from the outside how he'd come across. I think he'd come across as a wheeler-dealer, with no personal philosophy whatsoever. The expedient. But I think he had some deeply held convictions. I think still down deep always recognized though that he was still—like all of us—still just a staff man. We were not an elected United States senator.

RITCHIE: So perhaps what he was looking for, if he was thinking about becoming governor, was some status and standing?

ELSON: Right. I believe that. And enough money to go do it the right way, to make sure that he was going to win. So it was all part of an overall plan. The money and the outside interests were to promote that goal that he had. Though a lot of us took it all very seriously, we also had fun along the way, and he was a believer in that philosophy, so he had fun while he was doing all this, which was another amazing thing, that he had all this extracurricular activity going on and still played as much as he did. They sort of went hand-in-hand, together with being a good, loyal, hard working, and responsible staff member of the Senate. But I really do think that the

outside interests were really to get him where he wanted to go, and he wanted to get there as fast as he could. I think he had hoped to be governor by the time he was forty. He told me once, but I'm not sure, but he had a long-range plan. He was going to take advantage of the opportunities that came along, and tried to.

At the same time you could see these seeds of his own downfall: number one of talking too much, and drawing a lot of resentment to him because of the way he treated his fellow staff members. Staff members have a way of—they identify as members [laughs]—and I think he hurt a lot of feelings, maybe not deliberately, but a lot of them resented what he was doing, so they poisoned the mind of a lot of senators, particularly on the liberal side. And I'm talking about Democrats now. But I know most of my fellow AAs for the most part respected the job that Bobby did. Some worked with him a lot closer than others, and plainly a lot of it depended on the member you were with, what you could do and not do. But he was, and still is, a remarkable character. I just hope you can get him to talk.

RITCHIE: Could you tell me a little about his Quorum Club, at the Carroll Arms?

ELSON: Well, yeah [laughs], quite a bit. I remember when they set it up. They wanted me to join, and I said, "I don't want any part of it." I mean, I went there often, but I didn't want to be a member, mainly because I thought it was a conflict in a way. It was really all catering to lobbyists. It was going to be the little private place where they could meet with members. I just didn't like the way the whole thing was put together. I thought it was eventually going to backfire. Although, you know it went from the Quorum Club to the 116, and it's still the 116 although it's moved from [116] Shotts Alley [current site of the Hart Senate Office Building].

A lot of Senate staff members did join. You got a special rate, and discount. Lobbyists were the ones who got hit the hardest, but it was mainly for their benefit. And Bobby was using it to promote his own interests, and to some extent it has its value, in that it's a chance for members to meet, and bring members, and have private luncheons and things like that. But it was a little more than that. There were poker games, and girls, and other things.

RITCHIE: It was basically just a bar and dining room that was upstairs from the public rooms?

ELSON: It was upstairs. At the Carroll Arms hotel you went down some steps into the dining room and the bar, and then you went up a half flight of steps to a sort of mezzanine or second floor. When you came in off the corner there, it wasn't a full flight down or a full flight up. It was located up there on the second floor. It wasn't very big. It was mainly a room and a little bar, and I think he maybe had another little room. You could have lunches there, but it was all served from the dining room downstairs. And then they had the bar. In the evenings it would be mainly drinking and maybe a game. And sometimes if they wanted more privacy, they'd get a room over there. I guess I told you about them making the adult movie—did we put that on the record?

RITCHIE: You mentioned something about that. That was, I suppose, even uncommon for there!

ELSON: That was even uncommon for those days. It was the most incredible thing I'd ever seen in my life—no, not really, but it certainly was one of them. That was Bobby's. I'm sure if you talk to ten other guys who knew Bobby, you'll have different feelings, because he was into so many things. But it would be something like that which would give you that feeling that he maybe had questionable ethics and morals.

RITCHIE: But the Quorum Club was sort of a convenient place to get people off from the Senate proper.

ELSON: Yeah, and gave the lobbyists a chance, and all their friends that they dealt with, a place to be close that they could go without having to go down into the restaurant. It was one or the other. You went there, or down to the Plaza, or the Monocle—which started in 1960—they were the only three places that you could go close by.

RITCHIE: Were there a number of senators who went regularly?

ELSON: Oh, sure. I was trying to think of a few who would be over there, but there were always those that you knew liked to drink a little bit, and it was a great place to get a free drink, and a place to relax. And a lot of funny things were going on about that time. I told you about the whorehouse that was up the street. Oh, I didn't? Oh, yeah. Well, when we get around to talking about some of the intelligence stuff, I think I'll tell you about that.

The Quorum Club really benefited the lobbyists more than anyone else. They tried to promote it as an exclusive place, I think they limited the membership when it first started out to a hundred or something like that, and you were supposed to be the wheelers and dealers, and have a chance to meet with the lobbyists. So it was pretty good.

End of Interview #4

THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Interview #5

Thursday, June 14, 1990

ELSON: I guess you realize, for the record I should say, I'm really doing this right off of the seat of my pants. I wish I had an outline of events going chronologically. It might help my memory a little bit. Some things I remember real well, and others are sort of vague. I was talking to Mary [Frye] the other day, I let her read some of the interviews, and she reminded me of a couple of things. It's amazing how you forget certain things. I guess the great thing about particularly oral history, but history in general, is that your view of the world is probably as good as anyone else's. It's maybe a different opinion, but when you get enough people talking on the same subject, maybe you can see the truth come out somewhere. But, anyhow, that's enough of that. I don't know, where do you want to begin today?

RITCHIE: Last week you were talking about your suspicions about eavesdropping, wiretapping, and plants on Capitol Hill. Darrell St. Claire had mentioned some of that in his interview, but I wondered if you could elaborate on what your impressions and suspicions were about that?

ELSON: Well, it bothered me, going way back to when I first came back here. I think it started more with the FBI, having access to information that I didn't think we should have access to. I think I've told you why we were so close to the FBI, and I was particularly close to it, because of my two brothers, and then the senator and all that. I don't know when it was that I started figuring out—I think I told you about the incident when I first came back here of thinking that I wasn't prepared for this because when you called an executive branch department someone would be on the other line taking down in shorthand everything you said; I thought my memory was pretty good, but I realized that I didn't have total recall. I think it all started then. And of course you've got to remember it was all the period of McCarthyism too. I'm still haunted by that period, it was to me one of the most frightening periods in our history. McCarthy was just a no-good [expletive], a bum, and a liar—I don't have enough adjectives and adverbs to describe him. So I can't remember when I started thinking about it seriously.

We had a couple of incidents in our office, and we had the one that Darrell made reference to, but some point along the line it started dawning on me—and now it's gotten so bad—but when you start adding up all the people in this town that are involved in what you would call spying, or looking into intelligence activity, and you can start with the National Security Agency, they must have twenty-five thousand people out there. Even back then with the state of the art they could do broadband sweeps and pick up any telephone conversation with their computers, and do voice identification. Then you add to that the Central Intelligence Agency. Then you add to that all the service intelligence agencies, the State Department, the IRS, the FBI, you go down the whole list. I swear, you must have a couple of hundred thousand people in this town who are eavesdropping on people's activities, and they're mainly domestic. That doesn't count the embassies and the lobbyists and all the other things. I always went on the assumption, even back in the '50s, that there were no private conversations. If you wanted to have any you better make sure you're outside somewhere, and even that wasn't safe. Someone was listening to your conversation, if you were in any position of power.

I think where it also bothered me a lot was when you started seeing—and I really noticed it with the various branches of the service—when they started their liaison offices up here on the Hill. Probably one of the best lobbying groups of all was the Air Force lobbying activities that started under General Kelly, I think that was his name. This was during interservice rivalries, and they really were lobbying groups. They were supposedly constituent services, and providing information, and being helpful to senators. That even bothered the hell out me, mainly because each branch was doing this, but the Air Force was particularly good at it in the late '50s. They were getting a sizeable chunk of everything. But all three services were doing it.

There was a reserve outfit up here called the 99-99th. I don't know whether you ever heard about that reserve unit up here on the Senate side. What it was, they were AAs, and members even, that put in their reserve duty by fat assignments, going on trips, or over to the Pentagon, or somewhere else. I know I was offered by the Air Force, I had an ROTC commission out of the University of Arizona, but I had one of the last contracts. I was in the last class that had a five-year contract. Then they had the Universal Military Training Act, which made you two of active and six in reserve, a total of eight years I guess it was. I fell in that gap where I only signed up for five

years. I was offered a majority, and here I'm a young kid. What it was, they used the 99-99th as part of their lobbying activity. You also had Naval Reservists. You had members, and then they became spokesmen for that particular service. I always felt, and still do, because I turned that down, that anyone who worked on the Hill, particularly a member, should not still maintain their active reserve status. If they are an elected official, they've got to look at the whole picture and not just that particular service. But they all ended up being lobbyists for their particular service.

So, with that background, my own feeling was that there was, particularly by the Agency, the CIA, there was really penetration on the Hill, of not only subverting staff members that were professional staff members on the committee, you know, the "need to know" and all this other stuff. For instance, when you take the Church Committee, after everything blew up and they had the so-called Church Committee that was supposedly looking into all the clandestine operations of the Agency, well, half the people on the damn staff came out of the Company. I suspected that we had in our own office someone who was leaking information to some of their liaison people. I know we did on the committee.

Also in Carl Hayden's office we had a very difficult situation that developed where one of the senator's staff men, who was being handled by one of the Eastern bloc's top intelligence people. He would go to the embassy a lot and things like that. Not that he—I don't think that he knew that they were using him, but it's like everything else when you know what the big picture is in the puzzle, every little bit of information you get helps. We had a very difficult time because the senator and Mrs. Hayden were very fond of this man, and it was one of those things that you couldn't talk about particularly. We were approached by the FBI with what they had—and this is again where you knew that a lot of conversations were being listened to, because they had his conversations with this particular espionage agent, who supposedly at that time was one of the best in the Eastern bloc. You know they had conversations with him from our office, in the park, all over. Obviously, they were following the agent and just happened to pick up this individual. And the type of information, he didn't have access to any top secret information that I was aware of, but I think we got him a clearance at one time. I used to have the FBI run a clearance on everyone who used to work for the senator, particularly the men. But that became a difficult thing.

I remember sitting down with Senator [B. Everett] Jordan, who was chairman of the Rules Committee, because the FBI recommended that we take him out of any sensitive area, but they didn't want us to let him know that they had all this information. It really devastated the senator personally. He was very upset about it. I tried to work out a situation where I found him a very good lobbying job that was located out of town, but he turned it down, so instead we had a meeting—Senator Jordan, who was then chairman of the Rules Committee—the senator, and this assistant director and I, the four of us had a meeting about the situation—and we decided to move him to a position over in the Senate, where he was totally out of the loop of anything, and put him in a patronage position at a decent salary. I subsequently got criticized because he blamed it on me that I saw him as some sort of a threat to my position, and it hurt me politically back home, because he was very popular back home.

So between other governments and our own, you just knew that a lot of things were going on, even starting back with Allen Dulles and those people. Probably when they first set it up, I guess it was 1946 when they set up the Central Intelligence Agency, after the war, you had some men over there that originally, though they came out of World War II spy business, but they did trust members of Congress. And of course, Carl Hayden sat on the CIA watchdog committee, the informal one that I mentioned before. Notices of meetings would come to the office, but nothing was ever printed in the paper. But they sure in hell had meetings—and regularly. In many ways, [Richard] Russell controlled that committee, which was made up of sets of the Appropriations and Armed Services chairmen and ranking members. He probably dominated it all during that time. But the senator had the most closed mouth of anyone I ever met when it came to stuff like that. But they trusted some of those men early on. Now, when some of the professionals came along later, they'd only tell you what they wanted you to know. Unless you were really asking penetrating questions, there was no real oversight of what the hell they were doing.

Subsequently I had some experience with people "trying to come in out of the cold." They would have too much information, a lot of times, about what was going on up here. There was no way that they should have known some of the things that were going on, unless they had someone really telling them, or they had someone up here. I remember going once through the list of every major law firm in this town, trying to find someone that you could trust that wasn't connected in some way or didn't have

an alumnus of the Company or some other spy agency, and I couldn't find one, you know, senior partner who didn't come out of that group. They permeated the whole damn town. When I was trying to help this one senior official in the CIA come in out of the cold we just couldn't find anyone that he could go to that it wouldn't get back.

And I had some experiences of my own, with someone who used to come by our offices a lot, and with whom I subsequently officed with for awhile when I left the Hill. It was the strangest [expletive] operation I ever saw. He had a beautiful suite downtown, traveling all over the world, no files. You wondered what the hell was going on there. At the time it was great for me, but then later I found out, because I discussed some things with him about this other situation, asked him for advice about what I should do, because I respected the guy and had known him since the '50s. We were having lunch one day in the Mayflower, and he dropped some stuff that there was no way he could have known had he not also been working for the Company and been one of their front people, involving this individual, because he didn't get it from me, and he said something. From that moment on he knew that I knew that he had made a mistake. Either my face showed it, or something, but our relationship changed immediately from then on. I haven't seen too much of him since.

The thing that Darrell made reference to was more they were afraid of foreign intelligence, but at the same time, I didn't put it past our own people. There's no doubt in my mind that bugs were placed around here. It has always bothered me that our own government has engaged in that sort of thing. I guess you've got to keep in mind that there's only person you really elect in the entire executive branch, and that's the president of the United States. This is your last bastion, the legislative branch, the Congress, to keep the bastards honest, anywhere. So I guess what I mean is when you put all this together, between every department that developed a lobbying operation during the '50s and the '60s, all under the guise of liaison, but most of them were really lobbying, arms, or that particular governmental agency or department. And then you saw, as people left the Hill, some of the senior staff people left the Hill, and members who went to law firms, I've seen too many of my Democratic friends that went downtown to become lobbyists who have all of a sudden adopted the philosophy of conservative of the corporations or organizations they represent. I guess that's just human nature.

It's still the most frightening thing to me, because now with all the electronic sophistication that takes place, who knows what's going on? I don't for instance trust the telephone company. Where before you needed bugs, now you can do it right in the telephone banks downtown. And of course there isn't a telephone conversation that doesn't at some point go over the airways, and with NSA and all their wonderful equipment worldwide they can pick up any damn thing they want. It's scary, and I think it's difficult for members to believe that all the things that are going on, are going on.

I know when Hale Boggs was whip of the House, he was concerned about a lot of the eavesdropping that was taking place about him. And there's some question in that area. I know Tommy Boggs and I have had a number of conversations about it, about ten years ago, of what the Agency and the Bureau were doing, eavesdropping on Hale Boggs. But for instance—some of this laps over after I left the Hill—I know, or I'm pretty confident, I should say, I'm almost certain that during Watergate the CIA was running a call girl ring over at the Columbia Plaza. [Deleted] was one of the girls involved in that little operation, before she married [deleted]. And then you'd wonder who was operating this, when there was one right across the street from the new Senate Office Building, a cathouse. Those were mainly housewives over there, that needed extra money. The ones downtown at the Columbia Plaza were all young gals. When you get into that Watergate thing, a lot of things happened. There's no question that the military was spying on the White House. You had [Alexander] Haig involved in that, even Woodward was over there briefing, and Admiral Moyer, or whatever his name was. It's a known fact that they were stealing things out of garbage cans and everything else. It was a whole damn military operation.

And of course, information is power, and everyone wants that around this place. So I guess what I meant by saying the other day, I think it's one of the most serious problems that an elected official in the Congress faces. How do they handle and protect themselves in carrying on the nation's business? And I think the best thing is probably public exposure to all this.

See, our government lies so damn much. It's hard to find something you can believe is the truth. If they stumble over it they go on as if nothing happened—the truth I mean. And of course the excuse, like around here now, all the security that you have

up here in the Senate and in the Capitol. I was talking to Bob Dunphy, the former sergeant at arms, and a lot of it is unnecessary and overdone. But all you have to do to frighten these guys is to say there's been a threat. I'm not so sure that American citizens shouldn't have a right to threaten [laughs]. But it just seems to me that there is a secret government at work, and has been, and it's been used. What used to bother me, take all the coups. You'd get the party line from the State Department, and you'd be out there as a politician—I remember when I was running, I was mouthing what I thought was straight information from the departments, and the next thing you know, we were behind the [expletive] coup in some country, and you look like a damn [expletive] because you've been out there saying what a great thing we're doing for democracy and all that. And here we've helped to overthrow the government.

I remember Iran when Mossedegh was overthrown. Now we find out that our government staged that whole thing. That's where you get irritated, where I think there's a real weakness in the whole democratic process. There wasn't enough oversight, and these guys are rogues. They're running around making American foreign policy and domestic policy. Christ, it's known that the CIA had one of their major offices down in New Orleans. What the hell, they're doing more spying on American citizens than the guys in foreign intelligence. Then of course, there's always been the jealousies between all the agencies, Immigration Service and Treasury—I forgot to mention them, they're another bunch—and Drug and Alcohol. I don't know how many now we have on the War on Drugs, but the last count I had there must be eighty-nine agencies involved in supposedly fighting the War on Drugs. Anyhow.

RITCHIE: In that context, back in the '50s, a committee like Appropriations would often use staff from other agencies, from GAO, from IRS, from FBI. Didn't that put some of those people in a position of questionable loyalty? Supposedly they were there on limited terms, but many of them stayed.

ELSON: And a lot of them came up during the war, during the '40s, but certainly during the '50s. That's how Tom Scott, for instance, on the Senate Appropriations Committee came. He was chief clerk. Carl Hayden got him his first job. He's one of the few individuals that I've ever met who started out in government as a GS-1, right out of high school in Douglas, Arizona. He came back here and went to the Bureau. He was on loan from the FBI, for instance, and a lot of them from

GAO. They'd bring them up that way. But after a while they really became professional staff members, and they were fulltime, and the staffs were smaller then. I don't think that that posed a problem at that time, because they finally converted them fulltime to the Senate staff.

I know Carl Hayden resisted for a long, long time, fought the expansion of the staff. Maggie [Warren Magnuson] wanted to put a person on. They all thought they had a right to put a person on, and the senator kept the staff down quite low. But in those days I don't think that really posed a problem. These were more specialists in budgetary matters. For instance, a lot of person who worked the bills had been a budget officer say down in the Department of Interior. So they were more technocrats than they were policy makers in that sense. They knew the budget process and the appropriations process well. But now, with every member having the right to have a staff member on the committee, that's certainly a change. I don't know whether the members or the committees are better served that way, because as I've said before the proliferation of staff is something that concerns me. But to answer to your question, I don't think at that time it caused any real conflict. As they expanded some of it, I think in some cases, as they stayed on longer, some of the staff members started identifying more with the people they were working with than I think they did with the members.

RITCHIE: What do you mean, "the people they were working with?"

ELSON: The departments whose bills they were handling, like if it was Treasury or Post Office, they became sometimes more advocates for the departments than they were overseers of the process. But all in all, and I'm speaking mainly of the Appropriations Committee, I thought that during that period they did an incredible job. I think they could probably have done a lot better in defense. You never had enough clerks to handle that, to look into the weapons systems and really make the type of judgments that were necessary. And you found all the company lobbyists of the military-industrial relationship—getting back to the spying bit—because you knew when some lobbyist from one of the major defense contractors came in, Christ the day before already the military had come in with their pitch to you, seeing if you could get the senator to stick something in, and what a great weapons system this was. You knew damn well there was a lot of coordination going on between who would hit whom. And

there was always competition for the contracts among the states, since it was the growing industry. Eisenhower did warn us about all that. Now that peace has broken out, they sure as hell don't know what to do, do they? But this whole maze of intelligence gathering is really frightening to me, and I could see a situation where you could really have a "Big Brother" in this country. All you need is a charismatic leader and some scare and the "Seven Days in May" could happen.

RITCHIE: You talked a little bit about the Appropriations Committee, and of course the dollar and cents are the bottom line on everything. I was curious about Senator Hayden of that committee. He was chairman from '55 to '69.

ELSON: Yeah, and actually before that, because [Kenneth] McKellar, his predecessor, he came over in '27 too but got sworn in a few days ahead of the senator. In McKellar's last days he was not functioning too well, so the senator really was running the committee.

RITCHIE: He was somewhat senile?

ELSON: Yeah, and Senator Hayden was running the committee for a few years prior to his actually becoming the chairman. He was chairman of it except for that brief period when the Republicans controlled the Senate. What was that, the 84th Congress?

RITCHIE: The 83rd.

ELSON: 83rd Congress. And he was chairman up until he left.

RITCHIE: How did Carl Hayden operate? How would you describe him as chairman of that committee, and how he proceeded?

ELSON: I think he was a great chairman, and anyone who served with him would verify that. He moved things along pretty rapidly. He let members have their say, I mean, he wasn't any tyrant, but he at the same time could cut things off and move them along. He was sort of an ideal chairman, in my opinion. Where he was at his really best was when there was a mark-up, or in conference, because he was one of

the great traders, in knowing how to compromise. He knew the process so well, and the rules, that there are a lot of people who have said, "He mumbled more billions through the Senate than anyone in history." I thought he was a very fair chairman.

He would do things—for instance, Allen Ellender never did care for the foreign aid program too much. He'd make all these trips and make a big report to the Senate every time he'd come back, and take thousands of photographs, and all that. Well, when that class of '58 came in, Gale McGee went on the Appropriations Committee. The senator took Gale aside privately, and he said, "While you're on this committee, every place that Allen Ellender goes, you go. You follow along behind him, different trip, but see the same things, so that when this comes up in the committee, when there's something we've got to discuss, I'm going to turn to you and say, 'Gee, Gale, weren't you over there, too? What's your view?'" Well, he'd do things like that.

Now, he was a big believer in foreign travel for members, to see the world and what was going on, and for staff members. He didn't travel that much, but he did after Mrs. Hayden died, for instance, I talked him into once going to the Paris Air Show. I should tell you about that, because we ended up going to Pope John XXIII's funeral. Did I mention that?

RITCHIE: No.

ELSON: Remind me to come back to that, because it's an interesting story. But he really encouraged members of his committee to travel, to go and see first hand how the dollars were spent. And the staff, during the recesses, they were always traveling, looking at things. Just the same way, we did it when we went home. You went out there and you visited all the installations, all the projects, so you knew before you got back here pretty much all the problems.

Where Carl Hayden was also very good in running the committee, and in handling things, he was really good at putting in, and getting members to put in to build up the record for their project, to justify it, to have the studies made, looking down the line. There was never a rush job that way. A lot of people, particularly as he got older and his hearing went bad, thought he was getting senile. There was nothing senile about Carl Hayden. You'd think he was up there asleep, and then he'd ask the most

penetrating questions. He'd cut all the [expletive] out and get right to the heart of the matter. He was superb at doing that. I mean, people would marvel. I can't tell you how many witnesses I've seen just stutter and stammer and couldn't answer the question. Then he'd send them back to the drawing boards to come up with a good explanation.

He pretty much let the subcommittee chairmen handle their bill, bringing it out and putting it to the full committee. He always liked going to the floor with as many of the full Appropriations Committee supporting whatever the bill was. They went over it pretty damn carefully. They did it in subcommittee in mark-up, and then in the full committee. But when they hit the floor it was rare for them ever to get knocked over on anything, or any money knocked out. And it was always under the president's budget estimates, except in time of war.

RITCHIE: In the '50s, before the changes in the Democratic party's idea about putting members in, most of the members of that committee were chairmen of other committees. . . .

ELSON: Oh, yeah. It was an elite committee, even on the Republican side. You name all the powers in the Senate, they were all there. What I know did bother Carl Hayden, and it started in the '50s and really bothered him in the '60s, was the backdoor route to spending, you know, the authorizations that other committees were doing over Appropriations, the lending authority and all the other stuff. That really bothered him because things were starting to get out of hand. When they couldn't justify it on an annual basis, they'd come up with some sort of new lending arrangement, or bonds, or other ways to get around the financing of these projects. He was concerned because he saw the budget process was getting out of hand.

I remember during the Johnson administration, all the manipulation they did with figures to try to keep the budget under a hundred billion dollars. Remember? [laughs] You know, that wasn't that long ago, and now look at it! I know that disturbed him, starting in the late '50s and early '60s, it concerned him a great deal. But as a chairman, I think everyone respected him, mainly because even the members who weren't on the committee could go to him and say, "Carl, I've got this little project," and he'd tell them what to do, and he'd never forget. Somehow, it may not be exactly what

they wanted, but there would be something in there to start that project, particularly the capital investments. He was a big believer in capital investments in this country.

But, yeah, you're right, until they made the changes in the late '50s on the Democratic side, they were *all* powers.

RITCHIE: When you've got Richard Russell, who was chairman of the Armed Services Committee, as chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, did Hayden just turn that over to Russell?

ELSON: No, because he served on that subcommittee too. Of course, he was ex officio member of any, but he himself was an active member on the Defense Appropriation Subcommittee. But he and Russell were so close, they saw eye to eye on practically everything that was going on. But, yeah, you could go down the line. On the Republican side you had [Leverett] Saltonstall, and he'd be ranking member on . . .

RITCHIE: Armed Services.

ELSON: Yeah. It was almost like a ruffle in a bridge game, they could just run it through. So that's why they were able to go to the floor, and I think that's also why it was possible, for instance, for Lyndon as leader having only one and two vote majorities to put together a lot of things that he did, because of this club that was so powerful and intertwined. It was almost like an interlocking directory. So, yeah, when I look back and think of some of the people who served on the committee, like Ellender, who was chairman of Agriculture, and Lister Hill was Labor and Human Resources, or whatever we called it then, and Stennis, he was on Armed Services too, they were all wonderful.

RITCHIE: Sure, John McClellan, Warren Magnuson, they were all chairmen of other committees. It's remarkable.

ELSON: Let's see, the only person who was on it who wasn't a chairman I think was [J. William] Fulbright.

RITCHIE: Until 1959—but he had been chairman of the Banking Committee, actually, before Foreign Relations.

ELSON: Right. Well, I think that's what made the Senate work so well. They brought a lot of expertise from their committees to the appropriation process. But as I said, I know the one area that he was concerned with was when the committees like Banking and others, particularly in Banking, they were doing housing and other stuff where the government was getting big obligations.

RITCHIE: Now, this was in the days before there was a budget committee.

ELSON: Oh, yeah.

RITCHIE: So they were the budget committee as well as the Appropriations Committee.

ELSON: Exactly. And so that's why when the chairmen of the other committees brought something there, there was some continuity that you could see what they were authorizing, and had an overall picture, but it was always pretty loose. Now, of course, over on the House side, that's the only committee you served on if you were on the Appropriations Committee over there, so they got to be really experts. When you went to conference, the House was always better prepared than the Senate, because they worked harder at it, and had more members to work on it, and also more staff. And of course, they started all of them. You remember the fight between [Clarence] Cannon and Hayden? [laughs]

RITCHIE: I was going to ask you about that famous fight in 1962. What was the story behind that?

ELSON: Well, I remember Tom Scott and Bill Woodruff and a bunch of them were always having meetings on it. Everyone knows that revenue legislation is supposed to start, constitutionally, in the House of Representatives. Well, appropriations are not necessarily revenue, but by tradition it's always gone that way. It really got bad where the House was getting bills over later and later, because there would be all the changes from downtown, and everything, and they started not getting

bills over, so the Senate decided that it needed to move the thing along in a more orderly fashion, so you could get the major appropriation bills—what were they then, ten or twelve, thirteen? My recollection is that's how it started. And then it got out of hand because you had some very powerful members over there who took umbrage. And then the press sort of made it into a big issue, these two old men in their wheelchairs at thirty paces—I remember Herblock's cartoon in the *Post*. I know that Tom Scott, and Bill Woodruff, and the senator all wrote up a very good report, I must have it somewhere, in defense of the position the Senate had taken. All the legal experts were arguing the merits of who could start it. Then I'm trying to remember how it all came to an end, it ended about as fast as it started, or faster, when they finally broke the logjam.

RITCHIE: Part of it was agreeing where to meet.

ELSON: Well, yeah, that got to be an issue, but it was really much more than that. It was really the rights of the Senate to originate if they want to.

RITCHIE: But they still don't originate.

ELSON: No.

RITCHIE: They tried.

ELSON: They tried, and I think they made their point. It certainly after that accelerated. But the issue of where they were going to meet, that focused press attention. It was much bigger than where they were going to sit down and have a conference, but that's what the press made a lot out of.

RITCHIE: I gather that Clarence Cannon was a very different type of person than Carl Hayden, the way he ran that committee.

ELSON: Yeah, he had a mean streak in him. He sort of ran it with a strong hand, and didn't give his subcommittee chairmen as much leeway as certainly Carl Hayden did over here. Carl Hayden was a gentle but firm man. He was fearless and fair, tremendously fair in everything. I know I tried so hard, particularly during our

fight in getting the Central Arizona Project authorized to get him to be a lot meaner, and take shortcuts and make threats, but he never would.

But Cannon and Hayden got along well together. I didn't get to go to that many conferences, but man they could move things along and get things done in a hurry. I'm not sure that some of the members knew what was going on. They'd sit down ahead of time, pretty much, and staffs would, and see where there were going to be differences, and work them out. Even all the subcommittee chairmen from the House highly respected Hayden. Mike Kirwin, for instance, from Ohio, he loved the old man. This goes way back to when the senator tried to help him when he wanted to build that canal, and got him some money for the studies, and supported him. I know during the Central Arizona fight, when we were really taking a hard line against Wayne Aspinall, we went over, John Rhodes and Carl Hayden and I met with Mike Kirwin one day, and Mike Kirwin was going to turn on his own House members to support Carl Hayden on this issue. It was one of the most memorable little meetings I ever attended as long as I was around here. There was a lot of good rapport between the House and Senate appropriations committees under his leadership. I'm sure if you talked to Tommy Scott and some of those people they'd agree. Tom Scott, for instance, he took all the minutes. He took super shorthand, and he sat in them during all that time. But from my viewpoint, as his AA, I just marveled at the way he remembered things, had things done, kept all these things moving, and knew what was in every appropriations bill, and read every report that was filed. It was remarkable.

RITCHIE: What was the situation of being an AA to a senator who was also chairman of a committee? What's the relationship between a senator's office and the committee staff? And where is the line drawn?

ELSON: Well, with my predecessors, like Paul Eaton was my predecessor who later went over to the Appropriations Committee and handled the Interior bill, he pretty much stayed out of anything in the appropriations process unless it involved an Arizona project. We sort of were involved in that. And occasionally on some airline matters, like local carrier subsidies and stuff like that because of the relationships, but I think most of my predecessors stayed out of that lot. When I took over, I don't know why, but I seemed to get involved more than any of my predecessors. Part of it could have been as the senator got older he relied on me more for following-up on things.

And then more people were coming in to see me, because they knew I probably was more susceptible to their pleas to make to the chairman directly rather than going through some of the Appropriations staff.

Then, I must admit, also maybe in the early '60s, sometimes you get the feeling when you're on the firing line of the constituents and all the lobbyists and everything else that sometimes the professional staff on the committee forgot how they got there in the first place. Politics is still part of the legislative game, and that's what it's all about, and you're responding to that. I felt, not too often, but on some occasions that they were hiding behind their so-called professionalism and weren't responding to what really the chairman wanted, or the chairman had met with another member of the committee and they both wanted, the staff were dragging their feet and wouldn't get it done.

But Tom Scott and I got along extremely well. Most of the people on the committee were responsive, but every once in a while we'd have some arguments. I always knew that I had the last shot and the first shot at the senator, so on one or two occasions I made my point and won a couple of minor skirmishes with the committee staff, so in some ways some of them were concerned about me, that I might have too much influence over the chairman. But I felt that they weren't responding as quickly as they should. If I told you more, I'd have to name names. But for the most part I think it's very difficult for an AA when his boss is chairman of a committee, because the professional staff resent your interfering with their "professionalism," and they think you ought to stick to your own business and they'll take care of committee business. But of course you had smaller staffs then, sometimes you had to rely on them just for getting out correspondence and stuff like that when you're inundated, and most of the time we could talk out anything.

And then sometimes committee staff would want to get into your affairs, particularly if the committee staff member might be from your own state, that the chairman might have put over there. I know that's happened, not only in my case but also in others, where I've been told by other AAs where the senator has had someone on the committee staff from home and they've had some real heated political fights. It didn't happen that often, but I know in my case that I had one showdown with a professional staff member on the Appropriations Committee, well, two, but one in

particular. I made sure I won that battle, because he was getting into political affairs that I was responsible for in Arizona. I just wasn't going to let that happen.

Where I always felt I had strength with Carl Hayden—although in the later years I think he treated me more like a son he didn't have, but it was never articulated—but in the early years he tested me every way you could be tested, I think, and then he got to rely on me. I also found you could become very powerful if you're willing, after you've gotten all the facts together you can possibly get together, but if I had one strength it was I wasn't afraid to make a decision. I knew if I screwed up, or if I made the wrong decision, I expected to get fired, that day, you know, clean your desk and you're gone. So you did better work that way. You were really on your toes, though I don't know that it ever happened that way, but I sort of viewed it that way. I was always willing in a showdown, after I got into an argument, to say: "Let's go talk to the senator." Let him resolve this, if we couldn't agree on a policy matter or political matter. I found out that there were very few people around here who were willing to do that, because everyone has a weakness. They're afraid of losing their job, and they have family, all those things. As I think I mentioned maybe in our first interview, I was always pretty good at spotting where people were vulnerable. So I never hesitated to say that, and I don't think ever—I don't care whether it was a lobbyist or whoever—did they ever challenge me.

Oh, I had people always going around me, going over to the Methodist Building, even cabinet members going to see the senator over in the Methodist Building, telling him what a bastard I was because I wouldn't do this or that. And the senator would come over with a twinkle in his eye the next morning and say, "Guess who visited me last night?" [laughs] But I don't think anyone ever challenged me, they would all back off. I would say, "Well, if you really believe what you say you believe, because I disagree totally, and this is why, so let's go and let the senator decide, because I'm sure as hell not the senator and I don't think he wants to do what you're talking about." I don't think once in all those years did anyone ever challenge me. I challenged them on occasion, but they never really wanted to have a showdown. There was always a backing off. It's sort of interesting that way. But I had so much confidence in the senator, and I think he did in me, that I wasn't doing this willy-nilly or frivolously, because he wanted to hear all sides of the story.

I remember early on we were about to put in a bill that was really to scare the hell out of some people, because it was in the common carrier area, and of course we weren't on any of those committees, but we were still going to do it. We had discussed doing this, and we were about to put it in. This was what was so remarkable about him. He said, "Did you check how this might affect. . ." and he named two other groups. I said, "No, what would they have to do with?" And then he told me what they had to do with it. So I went back and checked, and we finally put it in, but not before he made me go check the rest of the facts. I gather it came from this long service and seeing it grow. He did not often surprise people, I mean do something behind their back. I don't know of anything he ever tried to do behind their back, it was always up front. They knew it was coming.

RITCHIE: Well, he didn't have to, given what his position was. There really wasn't a greater position of authority.

ELSON: And I think the combination of not only the position but the respect that he built up over the years, and his own integrity just added to that. So he didn't have to do things behind your back. I never heard him talk ill of too many members. I heard him talk about a few that he really disliked. Like [Herman] Welker, he didn't care much for Welker, and then he thought John Williams was a pantywaist, or his ideas of saving money were a little foolish. He did not like [Joseph] McCarthy—I think he might have felt as strongly as I did. But rarely did I ever hear him say anything bad about a member. If he felt those sort of things for the most part, he kept them to himself. As I said, he never forgot if a member asked him for help. He went out of his way to help other members, like the whole time he was held up, when we were in the Supreme Court on *Arizona v. California*, tied up for ten years, he helped California build half their reclamation projects in the Central Valley and you name it all. He was a builder, so members could rely on the fact that they were going to get a fair shake with him. And the [expletive] never forgot. If they'd corner him on the elevator, or it could be some little person with a little patronage problem, you know, someone needed a job, he'd come back and remember it.

RITCHIE: Did he remember slights as well? I mean, somebody who didn't support him, or voted against his projects?

ELSON: Oh, yeah, but I guess this goes back to his early career. Christ, as soon as the election was over, sometimes I thought we were doing more for his enemies or the people who opposed him than we did for the people who supported him. He always went out of his way to go see the man, and made him a friend. Those who held opposite views he went out of his way to bring them around. It was rare for him to hold slights or feel slights, he was bigger than that. Well, he would remember when people would try to do political things to him, but he was not vengeful like I wanted him to be. I tried to get him to cut some people off.

Did I tell you the story about early in the Kennedy administration when we had the guy who was assistant secretary of Agriculture lie to us? This assistant secretary was in charge of the local agriculture stabilization committees, or whatever they were. We had some people we wanted named to some of these, and he had promised he would, and we had commitments. I practically had it in writing, and then he reneged. Of course, this gets into another area where we had difficulties with then Secretary [of Interior Stewart] Udall, because he had become a cabinet member and he thought he was going to control all of that, because he had gotten the Arizona delegation to go for Kennedy in 1960. This would be in 1961, early on, and the guy's name was Dr. [James T.] Ralph. He eventually got into trouble anyhow, and I think eventually went to jail. But I had him dead to rights. I remember, because we were having difficulties with the White House on some patronage things, I wanted to string this guy up, because I found him lying, I had a tape, I had all sorts of stuff.

As I mentioned before, the best time to talk to the senator about sensitive problems or anything political was on Saturday or Sunday. I at that time lived right on Capitol Hill, so I was here practically as much as he was. I took this up with him this one Saturday. He had me outline the facts, and I went through it and told him what I wanted to do. He said, "Well, let me think about it." So, next week would come. This went on for two or three weeks. Finally, it was getting that if we were going to do anything about it, a decision had to be made one way or the other. [laughs] I still laugh when I think about it. I went in on this Saturday morning and he's sitting there smoking his corncob pipe, I sat across the desk from him, and I said, "Senator, I hate to bring this up again, but if you don't make a decision today, I wouldn't have time to put what I recommend what we do into action, because I need at least three days and we've got to do something by next Wednesday." He said, "Go over it again." I thought,

"Oh, Jesus," I went over it for about the fourth time, laying out the pros, the cons, what he had done, what I wanted to do, and then I made my recommendation. He puffed on his pipe awhile and after a long pause he said, "Okay, do it." Man, I closed my folder, I jumped up, and I was almost at the door to go into my office, right next to his, and he said, "Oh, Roy, by the way, you do realize, of course, if this doesn't work, I'm still going to be a United States senator." [laughs] I nearly broke up. I said, "Boy, do I understand that, yes sir!" [laughs] Now, how the hell did I get onto that?

RITCHIE: One other question about the '50s I wanted to ask about was Hayden's relationship with press. I was looking at a statistic about national news coverage around 1960, and it listed senators who appeared on the news broadcasts, or in the headlines, and Carl Hayden was almost last on the list of all the senators.

ELSON: Oh, yeah.

RITCHIE: Despite all of the influence and the power that he had in the Senate. How do you account for that? And was he closer to the Arizona press than he was to the national press? What was his relationship to the press?

ELSON: Well, he had no hesitancy, for instance, when they reported a bill out of Appropriations he'd tell them what they did, but he wouldn't speculate on what was going to happen on the floor. He'd never get into that game of predicting events. Until I came along he never had a press secretary. The way we handled at home, if something was a project we would wire them, not an official press release at all. He used to, for instance, send all the newspapers in Arizona free Congressional Records and send them the Congressional Directory and that sort of stuff, and then in turn they'd always send him copies of their papers, which he read. Around Washington, it always bothered me all during the '50s, when Goldwater came back in '53, he'd have worked on a project for years and Goldwater's office would get the advance notice from the Eisenhower administration. I remember Dean Burch [Goldwater's AA] used to call down to get the details of how this all came about. The senator would say, "Don't worry about it, the people who really count know who did the work. It doesn't really bother me." I know it bothered a lot of his staff people that he wouldn't take credit or blow his own horn the way he should have.

Then again when we had that Class of '58, man they knew how to use the press, but the senator just never courted the press. He was friendly with all of them. He would occasionally go up to the press gallery and things like that, but it was always amazing to me when he'd get a call from a reporter how little print or ink ever followed that conversation. He just never, until I convinced him in 1961, when we did a political survey that showed that forty percent of the people in Arizona didn't even know who Carl Hayden was, because of the growth of the state, and because he had not handled the press or the new media, television. The Arizona press, the *Arizona Republic* and *Gazette*, they had an office here in Washington, so they did cover his activities a little more. But still not that much. Barry was the one that was always getting the ink. He was more quotable. I finally talked the senator into getting some press people, and we started working at it a little bit, leading up until his '62 campaign.

That was one of the more unusual campaigns, I'm very proud of that one, because I really ran that one. He never went back to the state. In the last ten days of the election he was out at Bethesda [Naval Hospital] and we had to set up a meeting with Vice President Johnson and Dick Russell to prove that he was alive. I was being accused that he was really on ice and we were waiting until after the election for my political purposes. It was an interesting campaign. He was in the state, I think, four days that year. And of course, that was during the Cuban Missile Crisis, in October. It was an exciting time, a very interesting campaign.

RITCHIE: I want to talk about Arizona politics, but I thought we'd save that for next week. But before we wrap this up, you raised the question about Barry Goldwater. I was curious, in the 1950s, what was the relationship between Hayden's office and Goldwater's office?

ELSON: Oh, we always got along well. Of course you've got to remember that Barry's father and the senator were good friends, and he'd known Barry since he was a little boy. They were old pioneer Arizonans. He had known him forever. He thought his politics were a little crazy, but he liked Barry, and of course Barry loved Carl Hayden. He was one of the two men at the senator's funeral who eulogized him, Lyndon being the other one. There was always a good relationship, that wasn't particularly partisan.

Barry, for instance, when people would come back here, though there was a Republican administration, constituents would come in thinking here was this new big power, and he would say, "I can't do anything for you, but go down and see Carl, he's the one that will get it done." So Barry had the best of all worlds. He could say anything, he didn't have to work at it, because he knew Carl Hayden was going to do the job. And sure enough, he did. And that used to irritate the hell out of me and some of the others. But Barry made no bones about it. I mean, he'd publicly tell people, "Go see Carl Hayden." So they'd come marching down. Of course, they would do that anyhow, for the most part, but he didn't hesitate shifting the burden to Carl Hayden's office. Of course, when it came time for the press release to come out, they were very good at it, very good at it.

RITCHIE: He was in a situation of standing for small government everywhere else except for Arizona.

ELSON: Oh, yeah, [laughs]. See, that's what I've been saying. From World War II, and in the '50s up through the '60s, if it hadn't been for the federal government, Arizona wouldn't exist. It would still be desert. If it wasn't for the federal reclamation projects, Phoenix would still be a town of fifteen thousand wondering where in hell they were going to get their next drink. And all the air bases—I could go through that state and pretty much tell you how Carl Hayden built it, whether it's from mining to agriculture to highways to Indians to military bases, all these sort of things. And here we were lapping at the public trough, just wallowing in it, and then all of a sudden we did it all by ourselves, this rugged individualism. Man, we stand up strong and for small government, and as long as we have our hand in the pocket no one sees it. And all the new people coming in, they believed those myths.

That's another thing that bothers me about today's world, particularly with television, how we can believe in some of the myths. You get criticized for being critical of your government about some actions that they took that were really outrageous—you know, you're not patriotic. But Arizona, if there was any state in the union, I don't know of another one that got more from the federal government. Per capita, I would say Arizona had to rape the United States Treasury more than any other state in the Union. Good or bad, Carl Hayden was pretty much responsible for all that. But Barry knew the trend of the people coming into the state, and had a good feel for this

mythology, and played it like a maestro. It was wonderful to watch, but it sure in hell annoyed me.

The relationship between the two men was very warm, but Carl Hayden made no bones about saying that Barry's politics were a little shallow and not very consistent with anything. But that didn't keep them from being friends, their whole lives. When I ran against Barry, and against [Paul] Fannin, you know we had made the original plans in '63 and '64 to run against Barry, when I ran. But even in '68 the senator didn't hesitate to support me, because he liked my version of politics better than Barry's. He would not engage in anything nasty against any opponent really. So they had a good relationship.

RITCHIE: Well, I really do want to ask a lot of questions about Arizona politics, especially that '62 election, so I think this would be a good breaking point.

ELSON: This is a good time to stop.

End of Interview #5

SENATOR HAYDEN RUNS FOR REELECTION

Interview #6

Wednesday, June 20, 1990

RITCHIE: I thought today, to give Senator Hayden some background, and also some background to the work you were doing in his office, that we could talk about Arizona politics in the 1950s and 1960s. Looking at it, it seems to be a state that went from, up to 1950, being a pretty solidly Democratic state to today being a pretty solidly Republican state. Can you give me your characterization of Arizona politics, especially back in the 1950s?

ELSON: I think that's pretty accurate, I mean as far as the way it's ended up. But this all started as a result of World War II. They probably taught more men and women to get on and off the ground in the Army Air Corps in Arizona than in any other state in the union, because you had about 363 days of fine weather, so you had bases all over the place. The desert, I think there's something about the desert, the first time you're out there you sort of hate it, you don't see the beauty of the mountains, and the sand, and the soft pastels, and the life, it's difficult when you come from a wet area. You almost have to leave and go back to where your roots were, and then come back again to really appreciate what the West was like in the deserts, and the mountains and all that. So after the war a lot of men went back to school in Arizona at the university and moved back there. It was a good place to raise a family, and it was growing. Up until 1950, it was always a pretty heavily Democratic state, even in territorial days—contrary to what Darrell said—but after the war and starting about then, you had all these people coming in from all over the country, and a lot of them had been stationed there, like John Rhodes, who was the first Republican congressman elected in a long time, in 1950.

You had a new brand of people moving into the state, and they came from pretty conservative areas, the Midwest, Indiana, and places like that. Before they came out of Texas and Oklahoma and the Southern states more than the Midwest. They were coming from all over, and that's when the boom started. It definitely had a change in politics.

Carl Hayden was reelected in 1950. I wasn't even eligible to vote then, but I saw him around. I was still active as far as my interest in politics, and being around, but I wasn't really involved with anyone particular then. You had McFarland of course, who was here as majority leader at that time, at the tail end of that. And then, let's see, when did Eugene Pulliam come? He was the owner of the two big newspapers in Arizona, the *Arizona Republic* and the *Phoenix Gazette*, he moved in after the war and bought those papers. They were very, very conservative newspapers, and of course Eugene Pulliam was Dan Quayle's grandfather. He was also one of the men who talked me into running, but we can get to that later.

In the '40s and early '50s the fight for domination in politics was always pretty much in the Democratic party, though there were exceptions to that. You had what were called "pinto Democrats," sort of the conservative Democrats as opposed to the liberal Democrats, and the fight was always in the Democratic primary. After the war, I'm trying to remember when we became a "right to work" state, I think it was '48 or '50, somewhere in there, which is sort of a misnomer, but anyhow. But for a Democrat in the primary the unions were always after you to repeal 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act. They'd want you to get on the cross that way with them. So you'd try to walk a line between your conservative Democrats, your pinto Democrats, and the liberal Democrats to get the nomination. And the fights were normally then in those primaries. Well, all that started to change in the early '50s, when Rhodes first got elected, particularly in Maricopa County where the vast majority of the voting population was located. The two population centers were Pima County, Tucson, and Maricopa County in Phoenix, and the outlying counties, what you call the "cow counties," they were always sort of conservative, but Democratic.

Barry Goldwater got elected to the city council of Phoenix in 1949, and then of course the state though Democratic was a pretty conservative Democratic state, which always amazed me, because we fed at the federal trough. Any development in Arizona was a result of the federal government, and yet they all claimed it was because of rugged frontiersmen and rugged individualists. You know, between our cotton farmers, and citrus farmers, and our cattlemen, and the miners, they all thought they had done this all by themselves. They always wanted "peril points" on copper prices, or import quotas, or something like that to protect the mines. I always got a kick out of that too because—well, that's getting off the subject—between the mines playing their foreign

properties against the local properties. At one time, Carl Hayden was known as "Copper Carl," with the collar of the copper mines around his neck.

Anyhow, that started to change, and then Truman, for lots of reasons became unpopular. When the end of his term was coming, and Stevenson got the nomination, and Barry was running against Ernest McFarland who was then the majority leader of the Senate. Barry did to Mac what Mac had done to Ashurst in 1940. Henry Ashurst never went back home. He was sort of too big for a lot of that, he got "Washington fever." Carl Hayden used to tell Henry that he'd better get back home and mend his fences. So Mac beat him in 1940, and then Barry did to Mac what Mac had done to Ashurst, only as a Republican. And of course, he only won by four or five thousand votes, and Eisenhower was carrying the state by seventy percent to thirty. Barry came in literally on Eisenhower's coattails, or otherwise he wouldn't have made it then. Then of course, Mac didn't run a very good campaign that year. It was hard being majority leader and defending his position and the Truman administration. Of course the Korean War wasn't a very popular thing. Eisenhower was going to end that, just like Nixon was going to have a secret plan for Vietnam. But the Pulliam papers were also very helpful, because when he first started there, any Democrat was practically a Commie. He just ripped them, just tore them apart. He sort of helped make Barry Goldwater in the state of Arizona, Eugene Pulliam did. Pulliam was very conservative at that time, as were his papers and his editorials. That paper permeated, and even later became even more powerful throughout the state, but certainly in Maricopa County that's all you had to read. There weren't even many weeklies or anything in the area, and as the city grew, it grew and it got more and more powerful. So between Eisenhower's popularity and Pulliam's papers' all-out support for Goldwater, Barry managed to win. That changed the whole complexion. Arizona now really became a two-party state.

We had several Republican governors then. We had Howard Pyle, and then we had Jack Williams, "one-eyed Jack." At one time I used to call Arizona the "cyclops state," because we had a congressman, and a former ambassador to England, Lew Douglas, who had one eye, and then we had Mo Udall, who had one eye, and then we had the governor who had one eye, so I used to call Arizona the "cyclops state." In the interim, Mac went back and got elected governor, because he wanted to come back to the Senate.

In '56, when Senator Hayden was up again, I ran the office while they were out campaigning. He always had an opponent, both in the primary and general elections. I don't think he ever got a free ride. A guy by the name of Ross Jones ran against him in 1956, and he won that very handily. But again you could see the changes taking place. The state wasn't like it was in the old days, when the senator knew everyone. It was getting so you couldn't get home as often or spend as much time. That started to change in the late '50s. And with the advent of jet travel, and I think I mentioned how our whole office operation changed as a result of the growth of the state and everything that took place in the late '50s.

It was still pretty much a heavily Democratic state, even during the '50s, from the standpoint of registration. But people didn't vote that way. Most of them were conservative. So outside of down in southern Arizona, where the Udalls ran—first Stewart and then Mo when Stewart joined the cabinet in '61—it was not easy getting elected as a liberal of any sort. Anyone that the paper branded as a liberal was going to have problems. I think I mentioned how it used to irritate my Republican friends that the senator was seen as so conservative. Incidentally, a lot of those were really Democrats who then switched to the Republican party when they started becoming really respectable, and the thing to be. A lot of them I went to school with were Democrats, and then all of a sudden they got involved in Republican politics. I could go down a whole list of names that way. But you still had the fight in the Democratic party, this balancing act you had to do to get the nomination.

There was really never a strong party organization in Arizona. The Republicans started to build one under Barry and the right-wing. They started really going at it in the right way. They started using computers, and they got into the legislature and into redistricting fights. Where the Democrats would still be using their little calculators and adding machines, particularly in redistricting the state legislature, the Republicans were using computers. They really started working at it and building during the '50s, and became an organized party, where the Democratic party as far as I could ever tell was just sort of a loosely formed organization. Back in the old days, the senator used to tell me, there was a party organization, particularly controlled by the governor, who had lots of patronage. Any of the federal patronage, of course, was either the senator's or the congressman, whoever that might have been at the time.

During the '50s this all started to change. It became very difficult because you almost had to be on the liberal side to get the nomination, but then when you got into the general election you'd get crucified with that so-called liberalism. It was quite a balancing act, everyone had to try to get, so you wouldn't get labeled and the paper wouldn't start hitting you so hard. When you have well over half the vote in Maricopa County for a statewide election, and then in Tucson another 20-25% and then the rest of the state makes up the balance. So you would concentrate on those two counties, particularly Maricopa, but there was no real way to do it. Then with the advent of television and radio. . . .

Well, McFarland ran against Barry in '58. Actually, he should have won that election. A lot of people think Barry is a very popular figure in the state of Arizona, but Barry Goldwater has always been a controversial figure. He's really never won very big, well, if you consider 58%, I think that's what he beat McFarland by. He only beat me 57-43 in '68, in that wonderful year. But in that race and also in his first race it was very close. And then in his last race that unknown almost knocked him off. So Barry has always been controversial. Mac was ahead in that race, but a couple of things happened in that election. We had a gubernatorial candidate by the name of Morrison who was running. His real name happened to be Marsekian, and they tied him up with a record over in California and sort of wrapped it around him. There was some hanky-panky going on. They put the union label on Mac and a few other things. And then here Mac owned a television station, but some of his television spots in '58 were really horrible. I know he got the senator to do some, and geez I was embarrassed to even see the senator on the tube. They were just very shabbily done. In my opinion, Mac blew that race. He had it up until the last few weeks. And of course the paper was after him, and all these other things didn't help.

RITCHIE: Did you consider McFarland a liberal. . . .

ELSON: No.

RITCHIE: Or a conservative? Where did he stand?

ELSON: I always figured Mac was his own party. Mac was for Mac. He grew up down in Florence, that's where he had his farm, came out of Oklahoma. I'd say he

was more conservative, though he did support a number of pieces of social legislation. But of course after he lost to Barry that first time he never did get back. After he had been governor then he got on as chief justice of the Supreme Court in Arizona. So he had a very distinguished career. But I would certainly not call Mac a liberal. In the Democratic party, for instance, normally the governor, whoever the governor was, if he was a Democrat, he pretty much controlled whatever organization there was in the state, to the extent that we had an organization.

We never got involved in it—the senator never got involved in it. We sort of had our own organization of people he had known over the years and he relied on in every county in the state. So it was sort of part of the Democratic party but it wasn't any official organization. We worked with the party organization. Only once, maybe twice [laughs], did we get involved in the party politics. Once when we should have, perhaps, we didn't. That was leading up to the Democratic convention in 1960, when the liberal part of the party headed by Stewart Udall and his brother, they stole the delegation. They didn't steal the delegation, but they got the delegation to go for Kennedy. They beat the conservatives at their own game. We had what they called "unit rule" in our caucus, to give us more strength supposedly. Well, they turned around and used the unit rule against the conservatives and took over and got the delegation to go to Kennedy. It was sworn to Kennedy at least on the first ballot.

Well, before that happened, I know Lyndon was twisting the senator's arm to get him to work on the Arizona delegation and to come out publicly and endorse him. The senator hesitated for a long, long time. I remember early that year, Paul Eaton and I sat down with the senator, I don't know how many occasions, and said, "It's fine if you're going to stay out of it," because Mac and a lot of people wanted him to get in too, because McFarland and Lyndon were close friends. Lyndon for some reason always liked Mac. Anyhow, we tried to convince him that if he was going to get involved, or if he was going to take sides for Kennedy, or [Henry] Jackson, or any of them that he might want to support, that he should send us out to the state to lay down the law and get involved in the party struggle. He didn't, until very late when he finally made a public statement endorsing Lyndon for the nomination. Well, by then it was all over. We had had our convention.

So when I went to the 1960 convention, the only reason I was out there was in case it went beyond the first ballot, that we might then try to twist some arms and get the delegation to go for Lyndon. But of course I never had the opportunity to do anything. Because of the senator's reluctance, we never got involved, and the liberal side of the party took over the delegation and got it committed to Kennedy. They did a good job. Then of course, after they used the unit rule, they wanted one man, one vote, and they had proportion after that. We changed the rules against the unit rule, which I still think was a mistake for the party to go that way, as a little state.

Stewart headed up the liberal wing of the party, and then when he joined the cabinet, Mo was elected. He had been county attorney. Of course, they both came out of St. Johns, Arizona, up in the northeast corner, but having gone back to the university after the war, they made Tucson their home, and that was their headquarters. Again, this was a new crowd coming in, all the World War II veterans. One comment on that, Carl Hayden once told me that he thought that the greatest piece of social legislation ever enacted was the G.I. Bill of World War II, which he got involved in. He thought that was one of the best things this country ever did. And people took advantage of it, twelve or fifteen million men and women went to school under that program. It changed the whole nation.

And all this time, Arizona was still growing. I know, gee, between 1956 when the senator ran and 1962, his last race, my God, there must have been a fifty percent increase in the voting population. I think I mentioned that when I did a survey in early 1961, Christ, forty percent of the people in Arizona didn't even know who Carl Hayden was, because he didn't put out press releases. He was still doing it the old-fashioned way. This was about the same time that I took over as his A.A. and was getting ready for the '62 campaign. During all this time, the Republican party kept getting stronger and stronger in the state. They were better organized, better financed, and any Democrat statewide always had to take into consideration how Pulliam was going to play them.

Early in '61, getting ready for his reelection, Mrs. Hayden was still alive, I wrote a fifteen, twenty-page memorandum to the senator on what he had to do if he was going to win, because of this whole change in the demographics of the population, and what we had to do. I laid out this program, and how we couldn't rely anymore on his

old organization, we had to do more press, get things into the can, do television spots, you know, I just went through a whole litany of things. Every Saturday we'd have these conversations, and I gave this memorandum to him—I only made two copies, one for me and one for him. In the meantime, I had this survey underway, but I never let Carl Hayden see it until later that year—though the Udalls tried to steal the survey from the pollster, I remember that very well.

RITCHIE: How did they do that?

ELSON: Well, they knew the pollster and they tried to get it out of him, and then they thought that some of our people that they were friendly with might have a copy of it. They were trying every way to get their hands on it. But I made sure when I did that that I would have shot the pollster—it was John Kraft, he's dead now—had he leaked any of the information out of there.

RITCHIE: What was so damaging?

ELSON: Well, it showed how weak the senator was. Age was a factor—among those who knew him. And then you had this big unknown. But I helped write that questionnaire, though Kraft was a very fine pollster. He was a wonderful guy. His real strong point was interpreting data, and the intensity of people, you know, the reports he got back. But we spent a lot of time putting that together. I had taken a whole year in test and measurements, because I was going to be a shrink, I had majored in psychology, so I had a little experience in that sort of stuff. We worked very hard on this questionnaire. There wasn't any surprise to me in there about where the senator was, but I wanted to also sort of get a feel on where the state was going, and what were the real issues, and how intensely people thought about them. I managed to raise enough money to pay for that all on our own, without anyone riding it, or any union paying for it, or anything like that.

RITCHIE: But you didn't show it to Carl Hayden for a while?

ELSON: Not for a long while, in fact, until we were going back out that fall to Arizona. Well, Mrs. Hayden had died, though early on I had made him make a decision, and he initialed that memorandum. Because I said, "If you agree on this, I've

got to start to now." He initialed that once and I just took that as permission to do everything that was in there, whether he agreed with it or not. I started putting everything together. But I didn't show him the survey, because then Mrs. Hayden died and a lot of people thought he'd fold up in six months and drop dead himself and all that. He was just too strong a man both emotionally and physically for anything like that.

RITCHIE: Were you afraid that the statistics would scare him?

ELSON: Well, yeah, I thought it would upset him, and so much was going on then. There was a new administration and we had problems with them. We were always in fights with Stewart Udall over patronage, because he thought he was going to control all the federal patronage and he forgot that Carl Hayden had been a senator for a long, long time, and had his prerogatives. It was a silly fight, and it really got down to a nasty level, because Stewart blamed me for everything. You know, I didn't ever do a thing without telling Carl Hayden I was doing it. I wasn't that dumb. I wasn't going to get blindsided that way. Though everyone thought that I was running things, and that the senator didn't know what I was doing. That's just total rubbish. But we were always having fights. In fact, it got so bad once that the senator had to go to President Kennedy and tell him to control his Secretary of the Interior, and the senator would take care of me [laughs] as his AA, because it was getting really vicious.

But I hesitated showing him the poll because I wanted to get a lot of these things started, and there just wasn't a good time, with the session going on, and everything that was happening there with the new administration. Then we were putting on that dinner that the president came to in November '61. So it wasn't until we flew out after the session ended on the airplane, and I said, "Senator, you know I've had this." I'll never forget it because I've never seen a man more intently read a document. He said, "Everything in there is true." He said, "This is right on target. I don't question a thing that he's found." Then he asked me what I was doing about it! [laughs] Then I was sort of in a position to say, "this is how we're going to handle this, and that's why it's important while you are out here that we get around the state and get some video footage and all that." Which we did, we had all that stuff in the can before the year was out, getting ready for '62. Fortunately, because we never got out to the state in

'62 except for four days when he opened his campaign headquarters on a swing through the state.

What amazed me about him was that here I am, though I had been in campaigns and worked in one of his, and worked with others in other campaigns, when we tried to help Mac and other political campaigns, but I'm not yet thirty-two years old and he's putting his whole career in my hands, and he did. But he made that judgment and then he gave me total control. He backed me up on everything I wanted to do. When I put everything together, and the people who we got involved, though I tried to stay in the background and had other people who supposedly were the campaign managers, but we ran everything from Washington. He all of a sudden decided that his future was in my hands and he was going to run with it, and he did.

That fall we did a lot of traveling. We went to the Glen Canyon dam, and to defense bases all over at various places, getting footage as well as putting together all the stuff that I felt was necessary for the campaign in '62. Then of course the interesting person he ran against that year was Evan Mecham, later our wonderful governor of Arizona. That was his first time out, and he did to the Republican party what he did when he later got elected governor of Arizona, he blindsided them. He got his vote out, and of course in the late '50s and early '60s, particularly in Arizona, there was a real swing to the right. The John Birch Society was very prevalent all over the southwest, particularly in Arizona and southern California, in Orange County, and all that. And to some extent the papers there were mouthing a lot of this stuff too, you know, sell the national forests and privatize everything. I took Mecham very, very seriously because I just sort of had a feeling what he might do.

I never told Carl Hayden this, but I had someone planted in all our opponents' camps, that were really working for me. Because we have a late primary, it comes in September, and you only have sixty days to get ready for the general election, that doesn't give you much time to regroup, so I looked at all the Republicans who were in the race, and I had looked at Mecham and thought that he was the one that could get the nomination, and sure enough he did. One of his key advisors was really reporting to me, and about the only thing I didn't know about his campaign was where he was getting all of his money, and that didn't bother me so much, because I had plenty for Carl Hayden. But there were no surprises.

The bad thing that happened was that the Cuban Missile Crisis came to a head in October, they had the late session, and then Carl Hayden got sick. Now, the only time that Carl Hayden was ever sick in his life was in his later years. He had had some colds, and things like that, but here's a man, what a physical specimen. He still had his original teeth when he died, never had a filling—I think in his last years he had a filling and he lost two wisdom teeth—incredible. But on one of our trips back home, down in Nogales, he got a urinary infection. And then in 1962, just before the election, he got a urinary infection. They were devastating for an older person. He ended up in Bethesda [Naval Hospital]. For a long time he was over in the apartment, and we had people sitting in our office, some John Birchers, demanding to see the senator. I had an ambulance over at the Methodist building taking him out the backdoor and out to Bethesda. Well, he was out there the last thirteen days of the campaign. I don't know how many calls—they'd tell me at the hospital that they had hundreds of calls from Arizona accusing the hospital of withholding information that senator was really dead and we had him on ice and we were waiting until the election was over so someone could be appointed, and we were playing politics.

This rumor campaign became so prevalent and bad that I had to get Lyndon, who was vice president, and Dick Russell, to come out to the hospital on Saturday before the election to get a picture of him to show that he was alive, and got the press there for a live press conference. There wasn't time to stage anything. They were up there on the seventeenth floor, and there was Lyndon and Dick Russell out to brief the old man about the Cuban Missile situation. Then they had a beautiful press conference, and the front page of the *Republic*—well, I have to get back and tell you about Pulliam because that was a coup in Carl Hayden's behalf—but on Sunday morning the front page above the fold was this beautiful picture of Dick Russell, Lyndon Johnson, and Carl Hayden, although he was in a hospital gown and all that, but he didn't look too bad. But he was alive.

I remember the night of the election, he was still in Bethesda and he asked me what I thought was going to happen. I said, "I think you're going to win by twenty-six or twenty-seven thousand votes." I think he won by 25,800. I forget the exact figure, but I was only 800 votes off. He said, "That's okay, just so long as we don't have to have a recount." Then that night, before the polls closed, he got on the phone and called

some of our key people out there personally and thanked them for their help. Half of them were crying because they certainly didn't expect that.

But getting back to that, leading up to the election with Eugene Pulliam, I felt like a lot of Democrats that this was some sort of damn demon, right-wing fascist, that was running our state and abusing his power and all that. I had never met the man. The senator had, but he didn't pay too much attention. He just did his thing, Carl Hayden I mean. So this being '61, on one of my trips to Arizona I decided that I would go try to have a meeting with Mr. Pulliam, but before I did that I got together with some of the people in the Department of Justice and talked a lot about anti-trust problems and violations, they had a joint operating agreement there, the same as it was in Tucson with the two papers down there. So I had fortified myself with a lot of things that I thought we could make life unpleasant for Mr. Pulliam if he wasn't going to support the senator. I had a whole agenda worked out, not only with legislation but urging Justice Department action and all this other stuff.

I forget who set the appointment up, well, I know who it was, one of the men in Arizona set up this appointment and I went over to see him, all by myself. I had never met the man. I went into his office and was ushered in by his long-standing secretary, nice woman, and he had a crew cut, and of course I had a crew cut in those days. Everyone had a crew cut in those days, Rhodes, Udall, and Carl Hayden of course was bald. He invited me in, I sat down, he said, "Well, young man, what do you want to talk about?" I said, "Well, I'm here to talk about Carl Hayden, who is going to seek reelection, and I want to know where you're going to be on his . . . " that's as far as I got. He said, "I don't even know why you have to ask that question. Carl Hayden is one of the greatest men who has ever served his country. He will have the solid backing of this paper. Whatever we can do, we're going to do," and he went on and on. Well, I felt like a complete [expletive]! I'm sitting there with all this ammunition ready to threaten him, to go after his tail.

For some reason, starting right then and there, we developed this very close friendship. All he asked of me, I think, was to try to keep the senator out of some of the other races and only concentrate on his race. That's what I wanted to do anyhow, because I knew it was going to be a different campaign, and we couldn't get involved supporting whoever the gubernatorial candidate was going to be and others, that we

would have to concentrate on his race, mainly because of his age. He wasn't going to be able to run around like he did when he was younger. So that was not difficult to do, I could say that I was not going to get him involved in all these other races. From that point on, Mr. Pulliam and I had this very close relationship, and I think as a result of that I brought Carl Hayden into see him a lot after that, during the '60s, and he loved the old man. Where it really helped was particularly during the Central Arizona Project fight, because he thought Carl Hayden and I were the only two men that knew what the hell we were doing back here on the project, and he made no bones about that. I know Carl Hayden did, I'm not so sure I did, but certainly Carl Hayden did.

The reason I bring that up was because that picture that I got on the front page of the *Republic*, I had called Pulliam and told him I had to prove this guy was alive. He was a little concerned too, because some of their own surveys had shown that Mechem was a problem. Of course, Sam Goddard was running on the Democratic ticket and they were always trying to get the senator involved in their campaign and some of the others, so I was being maligned heavily for keeping the senator out. As it worked out, he wasn't out there anyhow, so we really didn't have to get him involved. But we wouldn't do joint statements or things like that, and as a result I personally got hurt politically in Democratic circles for just keeping Carl Hayden in his own campaign and not worrying about anyone else. It was tough to do because I really am, I think, a very good Democrat, and I felt bad about it. But also my first responsibility was to Carl Hayden.

This relationship that I developed, starting whenever it was in '61 when I first met Pulliam, really helped. He told me, "Just get the photo to me," and he had his people writing stories. His press people back here were at the press conference. So we got it there, and sure enough. The other thing in that campaign, I made a decision early on and committed—doesn't sound like a lot of money in today's elections—but I think I'm the first person on a statewide basis to use a computer to send a mailing to every registered voter, both Democrat and Republican, by using voter registration cards that I had access to. I made a commitment, we only had I think then maybe a total of 565,000 registered voters, but we put together a three paragraph letter. Computers weren't that personalized in those days, the ones I had access to, so the letter was a printed letter, but it looked pretty official. It was the fiftieth anniversary of statehood, so we used the Arizona commemorative state. I bought something like \$22,000 worth

of stamps, way back early in the year, and designed a special envelop that sort of looked official but not quite official, and then with this commemorative stamp and this message. We had them all ready to go and they hit every registered voter the Friday and Monday before the election, right into the house, first-class letter. I think I was the first one ever to try that on a statewide basis. I think the total project cost around \$35,000.

Then the other thing, we designed a tremendous brochure, I still have a copy of it for the senator. It was a fold-out, three-color thing. It was really well done. I had that printed back here, and then I got Flying Tigers to fly out fourteen tons of these brochures. All I could see was that damn plane going down somewhere over Kansas and you'd have those brochures all over the Midwest! We got that around to all the doctors' offices, and circulated by hand, so he was visible all over the damn place.

Then we did a documentary, and I don't think up to that time a documentary like this had been done. We did a thirty-minute documentary about Carl Hayden and what he had done for the state and the nation and all that. This guy who I hired was really good. It was beating all the prime time shows when we showed it, it was that well done. It appeared that Carl Hayden was all over the damn place, though he never got back to the state of Arizona, except for the opening of his office.

I nearly killed him on that trip. We had access to these various airplanes. I think we opened our headquarters in a swing during the July recess, over the 4th or something like that. But it was hotter than hell in Arizona. We flew out and we had set up the opening of the headquarters in Phoenix and we were going to make a swing of the state, in four days go around. And I got this damn B-25, an old World War II bomber that had been converted, and Carl Hayden was plugged into where the bomb bay was, they'd put the gunner on the sides. They had made that into an executive suite, and there was room for four people back there with a table in between, very comfortable, but you had to climb into it through the bottom hatch. Well, Christ, we left Phoenix and we headed for Page, and we found out that in a B-25 the brakes aren't that good. We flew from there to Page, Arizona, which is up in northern Arizona, and then we flew over to Kingman, down to Yuma, all in one day.

And the temperature—like when we approached Yuma, on the ground it was 117. In that damn airplane it must have been 130 degrees, and Carl Hayden is still in a damn suit with his coat on, and the rest of us are just soaking wet. I think I had my wife on that trip, and Mary Frye, who is working with me on this other project right now, she was with us, and old guy by the name of Jack Folsom Moore, "Fulsome Jack" Moore, who was editor of the *Brewery Gulch Gazette*, down in Bisbee, Arizona. But during the old days, during the '40s and '50s, was a lobbyist, the chief lobbyist for the mines, and sort of ran the state legislature in many ways back in the '40s and '50s. Most colorful, most wonderful politician I ever met in my life, just a super guy, and was he cagy!

We flew into Yuma, and in that heat we had an outdoor function at the airport, and then we got back in the airplane and headed for Fort Huachuca. Well—I don't know whether I should tell this story but I've never felt so sorry for a man in my life. We had gotten some bad food, we all had upset stomachs, but the old man got a sort of a case of the trots. Well, he had to go and they had a little john in the tail of the plane, but getting in there was really bad. He got back there and he got his suspenders caught on something, and before he could get his pants off he had to relieve himself, you know, he had diarrhea. Well, we tried cleaning up, and we're on our way between Yuma and Fort Huachuca, which is a base Carl Hayden built, and they were going to have an honor guard and all this stuff. I got the pilot on the phone and told him, "Call off the honor guard!" We just want to get in and get to the place so we could clean up because it was just a mess. You know, with that heat, and that odor, everyone was getting sick.

Well, we get to Fort Huachuca and Christ the general didn't pay any attention to our orders, he had an honor guard out there. So when we got out of the airplane we were all sort of standing behind him. He got himself together—it was just the one incident, he didn't have any more disasters. We did the best we could, and he did the best he could, but we had to wait there. But it was hotter than hell, it must have been 105 down there, middle of the afternoon, here all these troops are passing in review and the band's playing. And then—the flies came [laughs]. The poor guy's so embarrassed, and they're just hovering all around him. I don't know where they came from, just masses of flies, and we're trying to wave them away. And he only had the one suit

with him, because we were making this swing all in one day and then we're heading back to Tucson to spend the night and then go back to Phoenix the next day.

As I say, it was embarrassing to him. We finally got him over to the guest quarters, and then we had to send his suit out to the cleaners, so he had to sit around in his skivvies till we got it back, because we were going to a big dinner and all that. I remember going to that pilot, because these two pilots belonged to the people we borrowed the airplane from, and I said, "If I ever hear this story repeated anywhere, I'll have your goddamned license." In those days, I guess I could threaten. It was funny, we've laughed about it a lot of times, and so did he, after it was over. But this B-25, and here he's 85 years old and he's climbing in and out of this goddamned World War II airplane. We should have gotten a different airplane. Of course, campaigning in those days, cars were made available, airplanes. You didn't have to report all that. You could do things like that which you couldn't do under today's campaign rules. But that B-25 trip, I don't know that any plane in that weather when you're landing would have been very cool to begin with, even if it had the best air conditioning the world. But back in the B-25 it was hot!

By the time he finished the four days out there he was really tired, and then had to come back to Washington. And that was the last time he was in the state until after he got out of hospital after the election in November.

RITCHIE: Did that play a role in deciding not to go back to the state? I mean, did you decide that campaigning was going to be too strenuous for him?

ELSON: Oh, no. It was a long session that year, and he had lots of things going. It was early in the Kennedy administration and there was the appropriations bill. He wouldn't go back until his work was done. And then he had two episodes of urinary infections, and as I say, they knocked the hell out of him and it would take him a little while to recover. He just didn't respond as quickly as a young person would. But no, that was not the reason for not going back. I don't think the session ended until the middle of October or something like that.

RITCHIE: And they all went home and then Kennedy called them back to Washington after that.

ELSON: Yeah, and then he spent those thirteen days in Bethesda, where the infection really knocked him on his tail.

RITCHIE: Why was it, do you think, that Pulliam liked Hayden so much?

ELSON: Well, first of all, he knew he was just honest as hell, and he probably couldn't do the usual job on him, I mean bull him or anything else. And then everyone he talked to, from the [William] Jenners and all his Indiana connections, and through Lyndon, because Lyndon Johnson knew him well, and everyone he talked to, and he knew what this man had done to build the state. He was not unmindful of what the federal government can do to help a state develop. He saw what it was doing and what it had done. Every place he looked he saw old Carl Hayden's hand. And Barry told him, Barry Goldwater, and they were really close in those days, he and Pulliam. They later sort of grew apart on lots of things, but in those days Barry would tell him about what a man Carl Hayden was and what he had done for the state and the West. And I think he got it from his reporters too.

RITCHIE: On the surface, you would think Pulliam would get along great with Mecham, but I don't get the sense that they got along at all.

ELSON: Oh, God, not at all. He thought he was a crazy Mormon, and he [laughs] sort of was. But I think it shocked everyone when he beat Steve Shadegg in the Republican primary, who worked for Barry, and actually worked for McFarland too in one of his campaigns, and wrote some speeches in 1956 for Carl Hayden. Though he claims in one of his books that he was Carl Hayden's campaign manager, that's a little exaggeration. He got paid for writing some speeches, but that's all he did. That's when he was a Democrat, Steve Shadegg I mean. I don't think Pulliam took Mecham as seriously as we did. He thought Shadegg would win, and he made it very clear to everyone that he was supporting Carl Hayden, so the Republicans knew that. It probably discouraged a more formidable Republican from running. And I think Barry discouraged, and John Rhodes discouraged anyone from running against him once he had made up his mind that he was going to run. And of course, knowing that Pulliam was supporting him, it would have made him the front-runner, even at that age.

And overnight, when we put on that dinner in November '61, all of a sudden that forty percent of the population that never knew Carl Hayden, knew who Carl Hayden was. That sort of got the momentum started, and then when we got the brochures out and started doing our billboards and running the whole campaign, we just ran on that momentum all the way until November. Then with Pulliam always giving him favorable position on news reporting, and by this time I had a press secretary and we were pumping out all sorts of stuff. So overnight, our surveys showed, we educated the entire state, and all with a very, very high favorable rating. I still have all those surveys.

RITCHIE: Were you all afraid of the Udall faction of the Democratic party before that?

ELSON: Oh, you mean getting into the primary?

RITCHIE: Yes, the primaries.

ELSON: No, because they knew also that they'd get killed in Maricopa County, and Pulliam would have gone out of his way to really cut up either Stewart or Mo. Because when I ran in '64, two years later, before I could run, though Carl Hayden sat in on the meeting—and the three men who talked me into running in the fall of '63 were Eugene Pulliam, this Jack Moore that I have mentioned to you, and Carl Hayden, the youngest being probably Eugene Pulliam, who I think was seventy-five at the time, those three old men, and I'm still thirty-two when they talked about it. But before I could run, Carl Hayden insisted that I go and offer Carl Hayden's support to both Stewart Udall and Mo Udall, that he would support them because he thought they had a better chance of winning, even though Pulliam might oppose them. But Carl Hayden would have had me working for them, in effect, out there with all of his resources to help them. He told me to my face, "I think they have a better chance of winning than you do." And I admitted that, because no one in the state knew who the hell I was. I wouldn't even have showed up on a poll if someone asked at that time.

So I had to go to both, and that was not an easy thing to do, particularly when by this time Stewart and I had had so many fights. We were in the middle of the Central Arizona fight and we were disagreeing on all that. He had come out with the Pacific

Southwest Water Plan and that was screwing things up. It was really a bitter fight. First I had to go to Stewart and wait for him to give me an answer, and he said no. I'm sure that they thought that it wasn't timely for them. And then I had to go and see Mo and do the same thing with him. He finally said no, he was not going to seek it. So that's when I finally got into it. But that was really late.

RITCHIE: It strikes me as odd in a state where you have as many House members as you have senators—in those days it really wasn't until the early '60s that you had more than two House members.

ELSON: That's absolutely correct.

RITCHIE: So a House member had to run every two years over at least half the state.

ELSON: No, in Mo's case he ran in most of the state, everything but Maricopa county. He had the whole damn state. Well, Carl Hayden when he was the only congressman for fifteen years had the whole state. I'm sure that helped him later in the Senate race.

RITCHIE: But you would assume that they would naturally start to look at running for the Senate, with six year terms. It really wasn't that much more work to run for the Senate than it was to run for the House.

ELSON: And there's no question in my mind that both of them would have liked to have run for the Senate, but for some reason they never got along with Pulliam and they had seen what that press had done to too many others, they had labeled them as liberals. Pulliam was still mad because the Democrats didn't support Lyndon Johnson at the convention and blamed it all on the Udalls as head of that faction of the party, going back to 1960. He respected, I think, Mo particularly, Mr. Pulliam did, but I don't think he had any love for Stewart and there was not much Stewart could do about it. But Stewart hired some people that worked for the Pulliam presses, some very good people. Orren Beaty being one of them, who worked for the *Republic*. He was really an excellent reporter and was with him when he was Secretary. So there

was this "hate-Pulliam" crowd in the Democratic party around the state, blaming all our bad luck on the Pulliam press.

The tragedy, from my standpoint or the way I saw it, was I don't know why we couldn't work together. We all went to the university together. I was there at the same time they were there. Stewart and Mo were older. I'm going to be sixty come October, I think Mo's sixty-seven now, Stewart's a couple of years older. We were there at the same time, though they had been in World War II and I was just right out of high school. But to me the tragedy was—and I'm partly to blame for it, maybe mostly to blame for our not getting together, because we could have been a formidable force together, particularly with Carl Hayden.

We took care eventually of all the people who helped Jack Kennedy get the Arizona delegation, every one of them. Some we never even told Stewart. For instance, one he wanted to make a judge, we got him named an ambassador. But we took care of every Kennedy supporter that was really important in the state of Arizona, Carl Hayden took care of them. Maybe not exactly what they wanted. I remember he told one principal supporter who was very close to Mo and Stewart and who wanted to be a federal judge. Carl Hayden looked at him when he came in and said: "You'd make a [expletive] judge. You have no judicial temperament. But you would make a great ambassador." He got on the phone right then and said, "I want this man," Bill Mahoney was his name, "named ambassador." He called Kennedy on the phone right then and there. And of course, Stewart knew nothing about this, and that sort of pissed him off. Oh, that would be a whole new session talking about the fight, and to me the tragedy was that we were all young and we knew that eventually the senator wasn't going to be around.

At heart I think I was a better liberal in many ways than either one of the Udalls—well, at least I felt that way. As I told you, particularly when I started to run myself I realized that I had so submerged myself in Carl Hayden's personality that I didn't know who in the hell I was, except a clone of Carl Hayden. Then all of a sudden I started recognizing that I didn't agree with everything that Carl Hayden was doing, when I thought about it. So to me the tragedy is that we could have built the Democratic party into something like the Republicans did. Because I would have helped raise the money and do some of the other things, but we could never get together. Even in '68 when I ran again, we could never get together.

In fact, in my first race I still blame Stewart. First of all he was the one who got the man who was chief justice of the Supreme Court, a guy by the name of Ranz Jennings to run at the last moment. I think there were eight of us in the primary. And then, I should have come out of Tucson, as a Democratic, with a plurality in that first race of fifteen, sixteen thousand, like most everyone else, because that's where I grew up. They sat on their hands. They actually hurt me down there, and that cost me the election, because I lost by thirteen thousand votes, but of those thirteen almost 5500 were absentee ballots, which I knew I was going to lose those for sure, because we got into that race so late. If I had come out like every other Democrat came out of Tucson, my home county, my home town, I would have won. Probably some of that was also the result of the way I ran Carl Hayden's campaign in 1962, there was a lot of leftover hard feelings, because Sam Goddard lost his gubernatorial race, and then won in '64. He won not by very much, but he won.

They all came out of Tucson the way I should have come out of there. I came out with plurality, but I think I only had four or five thousand votes, when I should have had about fifteen, enough to make the difference. Then if had really gotten close, Gila County would have come in the right way [laughs]—our Duval County [laughs]. The Indians would have brought me in, but I could never get it that close. So all those things, and I think they resented my relationship with Pulliam, and things were heating up all the way along the line, not only because of the patronage problems and the fights and those sorts of things, but in the total disagreement on how to approach getting the Central Arizona Project authorized. It really got nasty, I mean, it got brutal.

RITCHIE: It seems as if the real ace that Carl Hayden had all that time was that he was chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

ELSON: Oh, yeah!

RITCHIE: It must have struck a lot of people that they would be crazy to defeat the chairman of the Appropriation Committee.

ELSON: And of course, Pulliam, gave him credit in his papers, they had to point it out. Well, we could point to anything, the military, the water, the irrigation projects,

everything in the state, the highways, the Indians, you name it, you could point to it and you could actually come up with the figures. In fact, I think on this brochure that we put out we had a map of the state as you opened this up and then running down the side was an explanation of all these projects that covered the whole damn state. It just really hit home. Of course, Pulliam and the other papers in Tucson, the *Star* and the *Citizen*, and old Bill Mathews who was down there running the *Star* at the time, and even Bill Small, they all knew which side their bread was buttered on. So, yeah, it was really a case of just selling the new people on who in the hell he was and how important he was to the state. Starting with that dinner in the fall of '61, in November, from then on it was just all uphill, and the approval rating was something spectacular.

RITCHIE: It had to have occurred to President Kennedy that everybody who was going to follow Hayden as chairman of that committee was much more conservative on federal funding than he was.

ELSON: Oh, you bet. He was looking right down that long line of southerners. There was Russell, there was Ellender.

RITCHIE: John McClellan.

ELSON: And McClellan, all before you got to Maggie [Warren Magnuson]. But it was amazing when you think about it how quickly all those people came and went as chairman. They died in a hurry. Christ, in a matter of six years the chairman changed hands. . . .

RITCHIE: A half a dozen times.

ELSON: Yeah, or it seemed like it. But I'm sure Kennedy looked at that lineup. And Kennedy liked Carl Hayden. As I said, I loved Jack Kennedy, I thought he was great. I liked everything about him, but the other thing I liked was his respect for elders was real and genuine. There wasn't anything phony about that. I mean he really did care. I don't know whether it was because of his own father or what, but there was no doubt in my mind that that was a sincere respect for elders, and for what people like Carl Hayden had done politically. They got along. Jack Kennedy could

have had, from an appropriations standpoint, almost anything he wanted out of Carl Hayden, because Carl Hayden would support his president, particularly if he was a Democrat. It doesn't mean he wouldn't fight if there was something wrong with it, but he would lean over to help him. Kennedy won the nomination fair and square and he was entitled to his support. Every meeting he went to down at the White House, he came right back getting whatever Kennedy wanted. And he was exceptional at that. He would talk his southern friends into going along with it, too.

His last campaign—I've spent a lot of time talking about it—the thing that I think that was unique about it was first of all never having a chance to get home to really campaign, the tremendous growth in the state from the last time he'd run, and then I'm really sort of proud of the way we put the campaign together, knowing all these and how we overcame what were weaknesses. The surveys, when we did them, as we went along, the last one was almost like we had orchestrated it, it went so well. A lot of people said Mecham wasn't a formidable opponent, but they don't, I think, recognize what was going on in the state at the time, particularly the growth, the right wing, the Birch Society and all those sort of things, some of them really being hysterical. And Mecham was one of those hidden little things that you just didn't dare underestimate, because you knew most of the Mormons were going to go for him.

RITCHIE: What was the influence of Mormons in the state of Arizona?

ELSON: What is it? Well, it's very big. For instance, you take out in the northeast, and down near Safford, and Mesa of course, you've got a huge Mormon population there, and for the most part, though a lot of them are registered Democrats, they're mainly conservative in their political views. At that time you had McKay and all those people in the Mormon Church. But even in that area, even though Mecham was a Mormon, we were able to offset a lot of that because Carl Hayden's father had befriended the Mormons when they came into the territory, back in the 1860's and 1870's. The head of the church was always letting the word be known that Carl Hayden was okay as far as they were concerned. That didn't mean they were out working for him, but Carl Hayden was okay. But it's a big influence, and there's no question in my mind that the way Mecham became governor was because he could count on that hard core. He may get the nomination this year for that very same reason, even after being kicked out of office. It's incredible.

The interesting thing, talk about the '50s and '60s, is that the Republican party became organized and grew, and then they started having the same problems that the Democrats used to have. They'd have some of these vicious primaries. That's how Dennis DeConcini got elected, because Sam Steiger and [James] Conlan tore themselves up—that was really a nasty primary. Again, when you only have sixty days to regroup, there was so much animosity that Dennis won his first election that way. If the Republicans had unified on someone, I don't think Dennis would have won. Even Dennis has said to me that he didn't think he would have gotten elected had it not been for the turmoil within the Republican party. Because of their successes, and the growth of the state and the conservatism, they've had their problems. This coming primary is really going to be fascinating because of that reason, between Sam Steiger and Mecham and there's a third one in there. But back then they were having success.

The way that the state is cut up among all our new districts, and we're supposed to pick up a new one, it's going to be fascinating to see how it all works out. This is Mo's last term. Back then, Duke Senner was a member [of the House] for a short while, and I guess you'd call him a liberal. He came out of Globe, Arizona, and had labor support and that sort of thing. But Mo has been our big liberal over the years.

RITCHIE: He's the only Democratic member . . .

ELSON: Right of the delegation now.

RITCHIE: Of the House delegation. One other question, back in '62, when you raised campaign funds for Hayden. In those days did they come primarily from the state, or did they come from outside the state?

ELSON: Well, some of the seed money we got back in '61 came from outside the state, back here mainly from groups that we knew. That was interesting, because we had never had a \$100-a-plate fundraiser in the history of Arizona, and everyone told me it couldn't be done. Well, we raised something like \$135,000. Again it doesn't sound like much money in today's terms, but in those days it was. I think I raised us out of that dinner \$130,000 or \$140,000 clear. Jesus, that's more than probably three or four campaigns. Though everyone thought we had enough money, I went out and

raised another \$100,000. A good part of that came from labor, then I went to New York and L.A. and raised some out of state money.

That was another phenomenon. I remember going to see, in New York, some heads of corporations, in a shipping company or an airline. Before I ever went to see them I'd get all the stuff, about their industry—like I went to see a gentleman who was then the head of a big shipping company, and I was going to tell him all of what Carl Hayden had done for American bottoms, and if he didn't help raise this money, I was one who didn't forget, I'd soon get his [expletive] [laughs]. And every place I went . . . and I remember going into this huge corporate office on the ninetieth floor wherever this was in New York, and being escorted into this office that looked like the Senate chamber [laughs]. I started making my spiel, and he said, "Son, let *me* tell you what Carl Hayden has done for American bottoms," the shipping industry, and he went back through the '20s and the '30s and the subsidies and everything else, and I just sat there. I said, "Will you help us out?" He said, "Here's a check right now, how much do you need? How about twenty five thousand dollars?" Christ, I didn't know what to ask for, probably should have asked for a hundred thousand. And everywhere I went, in these unrelated industries—we didn't have any seacoasts or ports or anything like that, the airline industry, all these places, I just made up a list and then I would pick out someone in the industry. I never had to open my mouth to threaten anyone. The trouble was, I wish I had raised a lot more.

Again, in those days you could get so much in kind. Like flying out the brochures, office space, typewriters, all that, cars, everyone had cars, and apartments. So when you put the in kind stuff as well as the cash, we obviously spent more money in that campaign than probably in all his previous campaigns for public office combined.

RITCHIE: Hayden must have been amazed at all this.

ELSON: Oh, yeah!

RITCHIE: He had done everything on such a small scale before.

ELSON: Oh, he couldn't believe it. But he had no conception of what some of these things cost, too. For instance, I don't know how much I spent on surveys, which

he had never done, ever. He just shook his head and just accepted it. Not that he didn't know what was going on, but I don't think he thought it could be done that well. I think he wasn't sure that I could do it that way. He was concerned that we were spending too much money, but I said, "Senator, it's your last damn term." Though, interestingly enough, I did a survey in '68, the last time I ran—well, maybe it was the fall of '67. It showed that he could have won at 91 and beaten Barry Goldwater, mainly because of the Central Arizona Project we were about to get, and everyone recognized that he was chairman of the Appropriations Committee and they needed the money to get that started. I tried talking him into it. He looked at me and said, "Roy, come on, you know I cannot do the job the way it should be done anymore. This is it." I guess that was in early '68, before I even filed. But I am convinced in my own mind that he could have won just on that issue because he had become "Mr. Water" and his name was in the paper every day, and he still seemed vigorous, though he certainly was slowing down. As I've always said, he had more sense in his behind than I ever did in my head. He'd forgotten more than I'd ever know. But he was very realistic about those things. But there's no question that his power, sitting on top of that Appropriations Committee, was just wonderful.

We always knew, for instance, anyone who came up, if we had problems with anyone—I remember with C.A.B. [Civil Aeronautics Board] we had a big fight with Alan Boyd. They wanted to discontinue some routings in Arizona. The senator wanted me to go down to one of the hearings and make a statement, that's all, just go down and participate. They were quoting rules that since we weren't out in the field hearings that a member of Congress couldn't come by. So there was a liaison officer at the time, a guy who was close to Scoop and Maggie, he came by and gave me this message. I said, "Well, you just go back and tell Mr. Boyd that that's fine with us, if you don't want to let me come down to represent the senator and make this statement, and you're going to hide behind your rules, well you tell Mr. Boyd that there's no reason for him to come and appear before the Appropriations Committee to make a reclaim on what they cut from him over in the House. We'll just take the rule on what the House sends over and that will be sufficient for our record. Tell Mr. Boyd that he doesn't have to appear, we'll just cancel that." Well, needless to say, not only did I get to make my statement for the senator, but we also didn't lose the route for service to Kingman, Arizona.

We always knew that if we had a problem, and I think everyone downtown knew, that "okay, you don't want to play, but you'd better be prepared to answer some very penetrating questions when you come up here for your hearings on your budget and your bill." It didn't matter what department it was. And we'd do that occasionally. When they got up there, we'd have some very interesting questions to be asked, and occasionally we'd cut a little, just to get their attention. Not very often.

RITCHIE: So, in other words, the real power of the Appropriations Committee is not having to exert the power. It's there, and people know it, and you don't have to flaunt it.

ELSON: No, and then if you do on occasion, at least in those days, it just emphasized the point. It was more the fear of having to give an explanation that might not look too good on the record, than it was necessarily having to do with the moneys involved. Where they might be able to say that to their legislative committee, but when you're up there talking about appropriations—the great thing about appropriations, you could ask questions about anything. You weren't limited to the interests of the legislative committee. You could ask them just anything. You weren't limited on any question you could ask. Or you could go anywhere to get information. It was very rare not to be able to get it.

The great thing about this town, I still marvel at it, it's the greatest city in the world when it comes to information. Somewhere, someplace in the guts of the government, some guy has been working on whatever remote thing you might be interested in, you know, the sex habits of some fly or something like that. If you find that guy, he's probably spent his whole life studying it, and when you find him you can't get him off the phone, he's supplying you will all this information, and it's all free. Finding that person, the expert, has always been to me the secret to Washington. They'll all talk. It's wonderful.

End of Interview #6

FIRST CAMPAIGN FOR THE SENATE

Interview #7

Thursday, June 21, 1990

RITCHIE: When did you decide to run for the Senate yourself?

ELSON: Well, how that all came about was that I went to a reception at Senator [Vance] Hartke's home. There were a number of members, and Eugene Pulliam was there. Of course, I had gotten to know him from Carl Hayden's campaign, and this would be some time in say September of '63. He took me aside, and he said, "Have you ever thought of running for the United States Senate yourself?" I said, "Yeah, my whole life." The reason I said that was that the first Boys' State they had in Arizona, when I was a senior at Tucson high school, I went to our first Boys' State and I was a senator there. I sort of always wanted to be a United States senator. That, I thought was one of the highest goals you could have. There were two things I wanted to be, either Secretary of State [laughs] or a United States senator—but really a United States senator.

I said, "Yes, but it's impossible"—I'm talking to Eugene Pulliam now at this reception. I said, "It's impossible from a staff position. No one in the state knows who I am, outside of the professionals and people that we deal with. I don't see how it can be done without going back home and working my way up and getting exposure some way. It just can't be done." He said, "I'm not so sure about that, let's talk about it." Pulliam then talked to Carl Hayden about it. Then that fall we had several meetings, and when we were out home we met again with Pulliam and this Jack Moore that I told you about.

I think the reason Pulliam was interested in finding a Democrat that he could support was that Kennedy had been assassinated, and Pulliam was a big supporter of Lyndon Johnson, and thought he was going to be a great president, and he knew he would carry the southwest and Arizona really big when he ran in '64. So he could see that Barry Goldwater, who was still in the Senate at the time and up for reelection, and I don't think he thought—no one did—that Barry would actually get the Republican nomination. He could see that whoever the Democrats nominated had a very good

chance of beating Barry because of the coattails Lyndon would bring to that race. Lyndon as it turned out didn't carry Arizona, but against anyone other than Barry he would have, I think, the same way Eisenhower had carried it in '52. I think—in fact, I'm positive that Pulliam's thinking was. "Well, here is someone I could support." He would be hedging his bet, and he would have a United States senator that he could work with.

This sort of accelerated during that fall. Then I wrote a very critical self-appraisal, the pros and cons of what I thought my chances would be, as I had done for Carl Hayden. I think it's probably one of the most honest things I ever did in my life. I laid out all my weaknesses, personal weaknesses, and strengths, and then pointed out how difficult I thought it would be to do from a staff position, getting in late. It wasn't finally decided until probably by the end of the year, say between Thanksgiving and Christmas, after discussions with Carl Hayden and Jack Moore, and Eugene Pulliam. We decided that we would start planning for my somehow making this race. I think Carl Hayden of the three was the one that I had less chance than any of the other two. He read that memorandum that I wrote and thought it was pretty candid. Yet he thought it was possible. I think Jack Moore influenced him more than Pulliam did in saying, "Yeah, it could be done," and there was really a good opportunity here. The senator urged me to go ahead and give it a try.

Well, a lot of things happened between that time and my announcement for the Senate that I think were very fascinating. I remember one meeting we had with Pulliam, this would have been in the fall of '63, just Carl Hayden, Eugene Pulliam and myself. At that meeting, where I think if anything coming from Pulliam influenced the senator was that Eugene Pulliam told Carl Hayden that for three years he had had Don Bolles—who was the reporter who got blown up, subsequently, out in Arizona—had him checking into all my background and everything about me. He said, "I probably know more about Roy Elson than he knows about himself." I'll never forget this comment he made, he said, "Since I left DePauw and founded Sigma Delta Chi, in my whole journalistic career I have never heard as many stories about any person in my life that were just incredible. If the stories that I have heard were true, this young man would have had by now to be a billionaire and to have screwed every woman west of the Mississippi. We know that's not true in either case." I know that Carl Hayden respected Don Bolles as a reporter, and when Pulliam told him that it impressed him.

It sort of surprised me because I didn't think anyone was checking on me. This had to be going on from the time I first became acquainted with him, that he had Bolles keeping an eye out and digging into my past and all that.

Why I say some of this background is because some things were happening during the Kennedy administration that led to an unusual campaign, which Pulliam said at the end of his campaign that he had never seen a dirtier one in all his career, going back to Indiana politics—which had some good ones themselves. Carl Hayden said the same thing to me later, and later I will mention what he told me the night I knew I had lost.

In the Kennedy administration there was a comptroller of the currency by the name of [James T.] Saxon. There had been no national bank charters issued in many years, I forget how many, twenty, thirty years or something, for new national banks. So they opened up the chartering of new national banks all over the country. Well, Arizona is a branch banking state. We only had three national banks at the time and they had branches all over the state. The senator, as well as I felt that we needed some more competition in the banking industry. There were two groups that were trying to get a charter in Arizona. I helped both of them. One in particular was headed up by a guy by the name of Joe Haldeman, the son of an old Arizona family. I never thought too much of him, but he had an interesting group of people that had put together this charter. So that fall when I was out there I met with them, told them how they should go about it, helped them every step along the way, both of these two groups, but this one in particular. Even through the regional office I told them how they should do the whole damn thing, and every step of the way I consulted with both groups, although again more with this group than the other because I knew most of the people in there.

That was going through sailing, and it came back to Washington for final approval and I was checking it back here. Well, on Christmas Eve I was out in Arizona and I had my family out there, and because I was running around I hadn't done any Christmas shopping. I was out finding a gift for my wife on Christmas Eve and I'm walking through this department store and I ran into an old friend I had known for years who was head of the securities division of the Arizona Corporation Commission, a guy by the name of Joe Sotello. Joe pulls me aside and he says: "Roy, what the hell are you doing back there in Washington on this Liberty National Bank charter?" I said, "I'm trying to help them get a charter." He said, "Don't you know who these people are?"

I said, "Well, yeah, what's wrong?" He said, "My God, we've had them under investigation for months." He said, "Do you know these other two men," who were not members but they were financial advisors, I thought. I had met them. He said, "My God, they're hoods, they're crooks, they're Mafia type." I said, "Joe, I know tomorrow's Christmas, but after you open your gifts do you suppose we can meet and you tell me what the hell is going on." He agreed, so on Christmas day we met and he laid out their investigation.

Well, I nearly had apoplexy, because I had Carl Hayden's name out there so far pushing this charter. What they had been doing, they had been taking the garbage out from under these two guys' place, and here they had copies of "twixes" from me saying this is being done, and that, and where things stood, and all this correspondence and junk like that that they had been picking out of the garbage. Then he told me that the corporation commission, because these were some pretty powerful people, they knew about the investigation and they were trying to suppress it. Well, this started a nightmare for me. Immediately I told the senator and I confronted the principal, who then denied everything and said that's not true. And I got lots of pressure from some of the people that were trying to put this bank together.

It turns out that to move money internationally you have to have a national bank, and the way this was going to operate was from here to Liechtenstein, from there to Tokyo. They were going to rape this damn bank as soon as they got it started and it was going to be a money laundering thing, according to what their investigation was revealing. Well, of course Joe Haldeman and the others denied it. Then I had, as I said, some real pressure put on me to not do anything, just let it go. I said, "Jesus, I can't do that." Then I started getting threats from Haldeman and these people saying that I was trying to shake them down for stock for the senator and myself, just ridiculous. But this went on quietly for a while, and I'm still making plans to run for the United States Senate.

Early in the next year, while things were still going, this charter kept moving through the system, it came back to Washington, and I finally was on a trip out in Arizona and met again with this Joe Sotello. He was concerned because his investigation was stalled. They had gotten to the commissioners and it wasn't going anywhere. So one night I got some of my lawyer friends and Joe Sotello and we went

to the vaults of the Arizona corporation commission and took all their records [laughs], sealed them, kept the chain of evidence, and I brought them back to Washington and then made copies. Then of course I was really getting heat from some of these people because no one knew where the records had gone. I turned that over to the comptroller of the currency's office, the FBI, and I think Internal Revenue, or the Justice Department in general.

The day I turned it over to the comptroller of the currency was the day they had planned a big press release because this charter was so well prepared they wanted to give it as an example of how a charter application should be handled and turned out and everything else. The only reason they didn't have the press release and Saxon sign the charter was because he was out of town and didn't get back on time, something came up that they had to delay it a day. Then I dumped all this stuff on them and the thing really hit the fan. Then there were all these charges and countercharges and the FBI was investigating me and all this other stuff. The reason I'm giving you this background is how it affected my campaign later.

There were all these charges, and about this time, or shortly thereafter—I can't remember the exact sequence—I announced that I was running for the Senate. Well, I hadn't announced publicly, it wasn't a week or ten days later that the first law suit hit, and it was by this Joe Haldeman against Carl Hayden and me, to the tune of something like fifteen million dollars. The charges were that we were trying to shake them down for stock. I sort of laughed about it at the time, but in the meantime as I was getting this campaign organized I was worried about how I was going to get name recognition. I had signed contracts for outdoor advertising and we were planning a lot of radio spots just mentioning the name: Elson, Elson, Elson. We had designed some great billboards and signed a big contract for billboards, and paint boards, and all the rest. Well, it turned out that name recognition was going to be the least of my problems.

When these law suits started hitting, a week later there was another one for seven million dollars or something like that was filed against the senator and me. I remember walking down the corridor in the old [Senate Office] building with the senator, I think the lawsuits had amounted to about twenty-seven million dollars by this time, two or three of them. It really troubled me, because I had gotten the senator

way out in front on trying to move this charter along. He knew what I had done, getting the records and turning all of that over, which was to say the least highly unusual, [laughs] stealing state records. Anyhow, I was walking down the hall with him and told the senator that I had gotten a lawyer and did he want me to get a lawyer for him separately or did he want to use the same lawyer, and that we just couldn't ignore these lawsuits, we had to answer them somehow. And of course there were headlines all over the state about this. He stopped and looked at me and said, "How much are the lawsuits totaling now?" I told him. He said, "Well, if you can't pay it, I'll pay it." [laughs] I knew from then on I didn't have to worry about what he was thinking. He said, "Well, why don't you get whoever you have for me." I had a very fine lawyer out there in a law firm that took on these things for us.

As a result of all this, there were some more law suits filed against me personally, not the senator, accusing me of all sorts of things. So overnight my name was well known all over the state. In fact, we had done our first survey and I went from zero recognition to almost 99.9% recognition, not that it was all very flattering! I should mention another survey that we found out. . . well, that comes up later because I also had another law suit against me, it was just a horrible campaign.

I might say about campaigning, it's one thing to be a campaign manager and to run campaigns and be involved in them, and then to be the candidate yourself. I made two errors that I knew better but there was not much I could do about it. The two worst mistakes that any candidate can make is to try to be his own campaign manager and his own financial chairman. That's one thing that I did for Carl Hayden, he believed in me and ran with me, and I got to make all the decisions. One person had to make those decisions. Well, I tried to get some talented people who knew how to run a campaign, and they were already committed to someone else, because I got in so late. I really didn't have a campaign manager that knew as much as I did about running it, and that's always a mistake. And then I couldn't find someone who knew really how to raise money both back here and at home, a financial chairman, which really caused me some great difficulties and I know helped contribute to my loss. We went with what we could put together at the time. And of course I was still working back here as the senator's AA on the Central Arizona Project and everything else that was going on, and still trying to be a candidate.

Now, I did resign from the senator's staff for those months after I announced. I left the staff and that's really tough when you don't have any money coming in and you're poor. I mean, I was just a salaried employee. Particularly maintaining two places, and I had small children and my wife. I had one person to get me started in the campaign, back in the fall of '63. When I told him, we had a meeting over in Joe Duke's office with him and a guy by the name of Keith Linden, who represented one of the aluminum companies at that time. Keith was a good Democrat and also a good fundraiser. When I said I was going to run, he said, "Okay, I'm going to give you right now five thousand dollars. If I catch you spending it on anything but renting yourself a place out in Arizona for you and your family, buying yourself some decent clothes—a wardrobe in other words—this money is for you to get yourself ready to be a candidate. The only thing else you can do with that is to get copies of your petitions printed. But if I hear that you've spent any of it for anything else than this I'll go out of my way to beat you." That's how I got started.

Raising money became a problem. I had a fundraiser, well, I borrowed some money from the then Arizona Democratic treasurer and two other wealthy individuals. I borrowed twenty-five thousand dollars from them with the understanding that if I had raised the money from a fundraiser in Washington I'd use that to help pay them back. Well, I didn't raise that much back there, and that ended up later in another law suit by the treasurer against me. We didn't have this agreement in writing and that got to be a mess too.

So the campaign starts and I'm out there, and when the filing date closes and we all file our petitions there were seven or eight of us in the race. There was a corporation commissioner and a supreme court chief justice by the name of Ranz Jennings. It turned out to be a race really between him and me in the Democratic primary. But as this went on all these law suits were going. It wasn't very flattering but the least of my problems was name recognition.

We had made all of our plans to run against Barry Goldwater, and as the summer wore on and the conventions came up—I didn't go to the '64 Democratic convention because I had this late primary and I was out campaigning. Then there was the Republican convention. I think I knew Barry backwards and forwards. We had so much information that we had taken from the Record. We were well organized, had

just really depth, notebook after notebook. Of course, I had been there so I knew most everything in there. We were really anticipating that this could be fun. We were going to do to Barry what he had done to Ernest McFarland. We knew Lyndon would be carrying the state, and the other thing I had as an ace in the hole was Eugene Pulliam told Carl Hayden and me at this same meeting—no, it was a subsequent meeting—that if I got the nomination that he would endorse me. Knowing that I would get decent treatment in the paper, we felt we really had a good chance.

It never dawned on me or any of us that Barry would get that damn nomination. When he got the nomination, then [Paul] Fannin became the Republican candidate. He announced that he was going to run for Barry's seat. Paul Fannin was then a three-term Republican governor. In those days we only had a two-year term, it's since gone to four years. He was sort of popular with motherhood, apple pie and the flag, and highway safety and those sort of things. It really screwed up all our campaign plans, because all of a sudden we had to make plans to run, if I won the nomination, against Fannin.

Well, it was a bloody campaign. My opponents all started picking on me, attacking me personally. They kept repeating all these charges that were filed in these law suits. So my name was in the paper all the time, but not very flatteringly. They were all running against me. The one advantage that I had over the others, I think, is that I was able to raise money, even though I had to do a lot of it myself, particularly in the primary. Because we had inherited the vice president's payroll, I had a lot of people that were on Carl Hayden's staff working for me in Arizona. In those days you could do those sort of things. What I did is, everyone who stayed in Washington was on the vice president's payroll and everyone that went out to Arizona to help in this campaign was on Carl Hayden's personal payroll. I think at one time I had fifteen staff members out there that were not only working officially but also involved in helping in the campaign. I was able to have automobiles and airplanes and all this stuff in kind, headquarters, and typewriters, and everything.

In fact, the issue of the staff became a big thing because they all attacked me, and the papers would list them. All the candidates would always bring up about all these people from Washington trying to help me. It got so bad that when Carl Hayden came out just before the primary to support me—because this was probably the only time that

Carl Hayden ever supported someone in a primary. There was no question that he was endorsing me. They would list the staff by name and their salaries—salaries that sounded pretty big to what salaries were in Arizona. I'll never forget, when the senator flew out I tried to get a hold of him before he left Washington to let him know that the first question he was probably going to be asked was about these staff people, because it was becoming quite an issue. But I couldn't get him before he got on airplane. Sure enough, here was a mob of reporters when he arrived in Phoenix. Coming down the steps they were shoving mikes in his face. The first question out of one of the reporters' mouths was: "Senator Hayden, is it true" and he went down the list of all these employees, "that they're all out here helping Roy Elson in his campaign for the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate?" The senator sort of looked quizzical at him, and he said, "Yeah, by Christ, they'd better be or I'll fire them!" [laughs] And that was the end of that! It never becomes an issue after that. He took care of that in a hurry.

But it was a nightmare of a campaign for the nomination. Trying to campaign, still trying, even though I was off the payroll I was still advising the senator on lots of stuff, we were still having meetings. I was running around the state and every place I went the other candidates were always attacking me. Then just before our primary another law suit hit me, which was really bad. I had heard that they might try bringing up this accusation against me. I had met a woman—and the reason I told you the story about the bank charges—through Joe Haldeman I had met a woman who had come over from Los Angeles, in the fall of '63, a gorgeous woman, God, something else. Anyhow, I met her at the bar at the hotel where I was staying and we got to know each other. She was there for about a week and I never thought anything about it other than she was. . . . well, I did think a lot about it, because of what she was and who she was. Anyhow, it turned out that originally she had come over specifically because they were trying to set me up so they would have something to keep me in line if things didn't go right, I found out later.

I received a rumble through some of my sources that they were going to bring this woman into Arizona and hold a press conference and accuse me of all sorts of things publicly. I got wind of it, and I remember getting laryngitis real quick with this one day and canceling my speaking appointments for that day. My brother, who at that time was head of the FBI in Nevada was on vacation over in La Jolla, California, where

Hoover and Tolson used to stay. I got one of the airplanes that were available to the campaign and my wife and I flew over there. Of course, I didn't tell my wife what I'd found out. So my brother and I took a long walk on the beach. I told him what this group who had been frustrated in all their law suits—because I had either got judgments on the pleadings or they were dismissed with prejudice—I told him what I had heard they were going to do. He said, "Well, you go back and relax."

I had learned just before I went over to see him that the actual woman that I had met refused to come in and they beat the holy hell out of her. I remember talking to her on the phone, she said, "Please, don't call me again. I'm not going to come in, I'm not going to do anything, but I'm not very pretty now." They had beaten the holy hell out of her, in fact, I'm not so sure that subsequently she didn't end up somewhere bad. They were playing some mean ball. When I went over to see my brother I had heard that since she refused to cooperate they were going to bring in a showgirl from Las Vegas. I was flattered by all that. My brother told me, "Don't worry about it, Roy, go on back and continue campaigning and I'll take care of that." He put the word down through his sources that if something like that should happen someone was going to go to jail for either perjury or the Mann Act or both. He would go on the warpath. So then I heard that had been scuttled. I went on campaigning and thought I had had handled that situation quietly.

We were campaigning in southern Arizona and coming back after a three-day swing into Sky Harbor, to the transient terminal there, and it was dusk. We were on an Aerocommander, which is a high-wing, two-engine aircraft, aboard the airplane was the pilot, a photographer, my P.R. man, my wife, myself and I think my campaign manager. We're taxiing up to the transient terminal and we look over there and there are all the cameras and lights and a mob of reporters. I thought, "Ooooh, what has happened?" We get out of the airplane and my wife and I are shoulder to shoulder. We had just barely gotten out from under the wing of the airplane and all the cameras and lights come on. It was Don Bolles again. It wasn't the *Arizona Republic* that was handed to me, but it was another paper that went defunct later but was a liberal paper at the time. He put in front of me this headline, as big as you can print them in a newspaper, in red letters, front page, and they had found a picture of me with a cigarette was sort of dangling out of my mouth and I was pointing at someone. I looked capable of doing

a lot of things. The headline read: "Elson Sued On Call Girl." My wife was standing there and I could just feel the beads of perspiration start dripping down my face.

Don said, "Say, Roy, what's your reaction to this latest accusation?" I remember thoughts racing through my mind. What do you say? Because this did catch me by surprise because I thought I had taken care of this issue. I looked at that, and I said, "Christ, Don, I didn't even know I could get it on credit!" Well, the cameras are rolling away. Then the next question was, "Well, it says here in this complaint that you engaged in unnatural sexual perversion." I said, "What?" He said, "Yeah, unnatural sexual perversion." I said, "Gee, that sounds like a contradiction in terms. I must have been in the missionary position." And the cameras are going. Of course, on the television and radio that night, those were great lines. The worse part of—nothing came of it, I got that law suit dismissed—but it did cause a strain, it started the beginning of the end probably of my marriage.

The interesting thing about that, we were doing a survey at this same time, and it was right before the primary, the timing was beautiful. We saw all of a sudden that my popularity with the women went up incredibly, just went shooting skyrocketing. With the men, now, I don't know what the reason for that, it sort of went down a little bit. Even with the little old ladies in tennis shoes my popularity went up, and with the middle-aged housewife I guess I came through on television pretty well. Maybe it was some sort of secret romance or whatever. But it was incredible. With the little old ladies, they must have said, this can't possibly be true because Carl Hayden would never have a person like that around him. But my popularity among women went skyrocketing.

But it was just a nightmarish campaign. I'd be off campaigning and would come back in on Friday and my P.R. man would say, "If we don't come up with x thousands of dollars by Monday at five o'clock we go off the air." That was not so much true in the primary as it was in the general, because of the lateness of our primary date. Well, I ended up winning the primary against all those other opponents. It ended up being a race against Ranz Jennings, this justice of our Supreme Court, and I beat him by almost the same number of votes that I lost the general election. I think it was close to 13,500 I beat him out of the whole group. After the primary, the big problem was then preparing for a race against Paul Fannin, who obtained the Republican

nomination without any difficulty. I don't even think he had an opponent. Now we didn't know how the state would go since Barry got the nomination and we weren't going to have these coattails that we were relying on.

It was this time that we had another meeting with Eugene Pulliam, who made a commitment to Carl Hayden and to me, just the three of us again present, that he would publicly endorse me only the Sunday before the election. I sort of had that ace in the hole, I thought. Well, both Carl Hayden and I relied on it. I didn't tell any of my campaign people this, we just went as if we had to run a hard race.

I spent the rest of September and well into October trying to heal wounds in the Democratic party because there was so much bitterness over all the charges and countercharges. I wasted a lot of time meeting with my opponents. I might say about Ranz Jennings, he was never the same after that. I know his son still to this day blames me for his demise, because he sort of became something else, he was never quite the guy he was prior to that. But I met with every one of my opponents and party leaders trying to heal wounds. Sam Goddard was running for governor again on the Democratic ticket, and he subsequently won that year. But it was a nightmare of frantic activity. When I look back on it, I don't know how I did everything I did. I'd be out on the campaign trail all week, get back and then have to spend the weekend raising money, getting on the phone, calling people, begging. That to me is the worst part of campaigning, particularly as the candidate. That's where you really need a guy who knows how to raise money, a good financial person. Because of the time element, and because I just didn't have anyone really good to do that for me, I ended having to do that myself. And I was exhausted. But somehow, say I needed fifteen thousand dollars, I'd come up by Monday at four o'clock with fifteen thousand four hundred dollars and we'd be good for another week. That went on right up to the general election.

Fannin and I had a couple of debates, I don't know that you want to hear about those. It was really strange because Pulliam in his papers and others—I had endorsements in the primary from the major papers in the state, both in Tucson and in Phoenix, and pretty much around the state I had support. It was no question that Carl Hayden's endorsement of me helped with a lot of that. Again these charges would come up about this bank thing and the call girl, but one of the best campaign ploys I'd

ever seen pulled happened to me—the timing was perfect, it was about ten days before the general election. A black man in turban and robe, flew into Phoenix from Chicago. He must have weighed 300 pounds. God, he was big, black, with this turban. From some religious sect that no one had ever heard of. He came in and called a press conference at the Phoenix Press Club. He claimed he had come out there to publicly endorse my candidacy for the United States Senate because Roy Elson was a man of vision and courage, and he was going to use the bonds from this bank, or this Pinal County Development bonds—Pinal County is the country just south of Maricopa County, more farming type county—but he was going to use these Pinal County Development bonds, which were part of the way this bank was going to be chartered originally, way back the year before, but since they still existed, he was going to use them to make a home for all the disadvantaged blacks from Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and New York. There would be a home for 300,000 blacks in Pinal County. Well, everyone sort of laughed, on the surface, but at the same time this guy was having his press conference, in every black precinct, every Mexican-American precinct, Chicano precinct, and on all the Indian reservation, fliers were being distributed saying I was going to do this.

You've got to understand a little bit about Arizona minorities. Three percent of our population is black. We have many Spanish surnames, about a third of the population has Spanish surnames or can trace their ancestors to Mexico or Spain. And then you have the largest Indian population in the country in Arizona on our reservations. None of them get along very well together. All they could see, the disadvantaged blacks, and the Chicanos, and the Indians could see that any employment opportunities would be gone. The population of the state at this time was only about 1.7 million, and we were going to have 300,000 disadvantaged blacks coming into the state of Arizona! Well, when I heard about this, I was not at the press conference but I had someone there, and I got this report. I said, "We just lost the election, because there is no way I can say I'm going to denounce all the poor people." I said I had nothing to do with these bonds, but the message would never get out to all these poor precincts.

That very same day I called up a well-known, high-powered senior partner in a law firm there who was a good Republican. I called him up, got him on the phone, and said, "I want to congratulate you. It was one of the shrewdest moves I've ever seen." He said, "Why are you calling me, young man? Have you lost your mind?" I said, "No, honestly I'm calling you to congratulate you. I know you're responsible." He said,

"You've got to be out of your mind. Has this campaign gotten to you." I said, "No." After about the third time he denied any involvement, I said, "Look, the only reason I really know it was you is that back in 1927, in a mayoral race in the city of Phoenix, you and Jack Moore"—the same Jack Moore that I've been talking about—"pulled the identical thing in this mayor's race." I said, "It's going to be the election, I just have that feeling, it's all over." Finally, after a long pause, he said, "Well, I'll pass that on, son." [laughs]

It did, all our spot surveys near the end showed it was neck and neck and I had closed the gap rapidly between Fannin and myself. Sometimes when I look back on it, if I had spent another \$50,000, or if Eugene Pulliam, who had made this commitment to me and Carl Hayden had kept his word and endorsed only me in that Sunday edition before the election, I think I probably would have won that election. What he did do, he didn't endorse just me, he endorsed both of us, in a front page editorial, which was not the agreement. And Carl Hayden was really pissed. So was I, of course, because we were anticipating that as our final little trick that would have done the election. But I think if I had borrowed maybe another \$50,000 for some last minute spots, because we had momentum, we had everything going.

Then Lyndon came into the state—I mentioned this before—we went to church on Sunday. Both Fannin and I went to my so-called church. Then we tried to get Lyndon to come back into the state at the tail end, but he I think didn't want to embarrass Barry because he overflowed and went to New Mexico and then out to Las Vegas for Howard Cannon's race, and bypassed me where he could have stopped in. But I think he didn't want to embarrass Barry by losing his own home state. I can't prove that, but I know he didn't come in, though he sort of indicated to Carl Hayden that he would come in, and Carl Hayden tried to get him to come back in. That could have made the difference. But as it turns out, Barry didn't win the state by very much, and Fannin ended up beating me by thirteen thousand, about the same amount that I had won the Democratic primary. I knew I was going to lose the absentee ballots, I predicted that within a hundred votes of the way that would come out. If we had been ahead by five thousand votes when the campaign was over, instead of behind by five before absentees were counted, I think maybe I would have won a very close election [laughs], but instead I lost. We didn't get close enough.

Pulliam and his wife came by to see me and Minor that next day at the apartment where we were living, and told me, "If it's the last thing I do, I'll see you in the United States Senate as a senator." And I remember saying to him, "Mr. Pulliam, you just had your chance, and you didn't keep your agreement." I subsequently learned how Fannin and his group of Republicans were able to get to Pulliam to endorse both of us rather than just me. It turns out Mrs. Fannin, Mrs. Claire Booth Luce, and Nina Pulliam all went to Main Chance together, you know they all go there for whatever, and Mrs. Fannin got to Mrs. Luce who got to Nina, and Mrs. Luce got to Henry, I guess, and they all got to Pulliam. I verified this pretty much again through Jack Moore, who also knew about the commitment. So he reneged on his commitment, but he did endorse both of us. I did better than any other Democrat had ever done in year and years with Pulliam.

When I look back on it—and as you know I ran again in '68—but the trouble with losing a close race like that, and I think any politician would probably tell you this, is that you are haunted by all the things that you might have done, or should have done, the mistakes you made. See, I had never really run for any public office. I had never made speeches. I remember when we went out to make my announcement. We flew out, I had my kids and my wife and we must have had a thousand at the airport. I remember getting up to say something and I froze. It seemed like an eternity, but for a whole minute or longer I couldn't say a damn thing, and people were getting antsy. Finally it came and then it just poured out. From then on I had no problem, in fact, I loved campaigning. It was just so much fun.

Where I was really at my best was probably answering and fielding questions, because when you had worked as long as I had back here, and you're into everything, you knew it. And most reporters don't know how to ask the second question. And you can always spot an expert out there who wants to make his point, and you get away from him in a hurry—you learn how to do that. But I loved the give and take, and that's probably where I was best.

I was only thirty-three, I had a crew cut, I looked too young probably, but when you lose a close one like that, I really went through a deep—not a deep depression, but I was rather depressed because I came so close but yet so far. There's only payoff one way that way. I went back over it and thought if I had handled this differently, or if I had

gambled in borrowing some more money, if that black hadn't come in. You know, you just go back over any one thing that could have made the difference. I think any other politician who's run more than once will tell you, if you're going to lose, you just as soon have it substantial, so there's no doubt and you don't have that nightmarish reaction to what might have been. It certainly affected me that way.

RITCHIE: I'd like to ask a couple of question to follow up some of this. You were the first Senate staff member, that I know of, who ran for the Senate. Now it's become more commonplace, about ten of the hundred senators today started out on the staff. But you were the first. What was the reaction of everyone else here on Capitol Hill when you let it be known you were planning to run for the Senate?

ELSON: Well, that was what impressed me. I don't think I realized how much power, or what a powerful position I was in. But I had great support from a lot of fellow AAs. They all gave me money, it wasn't much, fifty, a hundred dollars, but a lot of it. There was also some envy, because every one of them—I don't know of anyone that's around here that doesn't want to be one of them, a United States senator. Anyone—you must feel the same, if you're here you think you ought to be one of them. You know you can do the job as well.

I was going to get to that, because when I first announced and ran there was all this enthusiasm. In fact, to this day a lot of them think that I blew it. And I did, I guess. But I had a lot of support. I had a couple of fundraisers back here and a lot of advice. They were all hoping that I was going to be successful, because I believe I was the first one to try it and maybe that would inspire some of them to go ahead and give it a go. Where the difficulty came was the senator wanted me to come back on his staff and I did, mainly because of the Central Arizona Project. And I was in debt, again it doesn't sound like a lot of money, but I think I was about ninety thousand dollars in debt and had to pay off twenty-five thousand of it real quick.

Did I mention the story about learning to play golf and raising the money? Well, the day before Thanksgiving, in 1964, I'm still moping around and trying to clean up things and raise money to pay off this debt. To get my friends off the hook, I had to come up with twenty-five thousand dollars within sixty days. So the Monday before Thanksgiving I had a call from Joe Walton, who was former state Democratic chairman.

He said, "Roy, I want to have lunch with you and talk about your political future." I said, "Joe, I don't want to talk to anyone, I got these problems." He said, "That's what I want to talk about and I think it will be important if you just meet with me. It won't take long, let's have lunch. Let's meet on Friday, day after Thanksgiving." So I agreed to it. We went out to Mountain Shadows, which is a resort there in Scottsdale and has a little executive golf course. We ate over in the golf restaurant. We had a couple of Margaritas and we're sitting around and had lunch. I kept waiting for him to start telling me what he had in mind. We talked about the campaign and things in general. After a while I was getting irritated, because I really didn't want to listen again to what might have been. Finally we finished lunch and got up, he paid, signed the check, and we start to leave. Now by this time I'm really burning. I'm not saying much, but I'm burning.

We were walking back through the pro shop, and he said, "Roy, this is your new set of golf clubs. You are now a member of this country club. You have a golf lesson in fifteen minutes, now pick out a pair of shoes and get your [expletive] out there." Well, it's probably the nicest thing that ever happened to me in my life. I never played golf, always wanted to, I wanted to learn. I took the lesson, and from that day until two days before Christmas I played golf. Most of the people that stayed at Mountain Shadows were from out of state, particularly from Illinois, the Chicago area, and the east. They had all been out there during the campaign, but not one of them a registered voter in the state of Arizona. Well, I'd take my lesson—he'd paid for ten lessons—and then I'd go play this executive course with someone who was staying there, I met them there.

Within that month I raised twenty-five thousand, eight hundred and some dollars, learning how to play golf. We'd go in there for a drink afterwards, and they'd seen me on tv and all that. The largest I got, I remember, one guy wrote me a check for five thousand dollars. I took it, and I said "I'm sure this is probably all rubber, but I'm going to take it." Every one of them was good as gold. Anyhow, I got that initial debt paid off real quickly. It just boggled my mind. I thought, God, why didn't someone tell me about this game of golf, I'd have taken it up a lot sooner! Anyhow, that was one of the nicest things that anyone had ever done to me. I've loved golf ever since.

To answer your question about the reaction of my friends, I know that they would tell me, or they would tell the senator's staff back here, because apparently when all these charges were coming out, and that call girl law suit came out, and all this was coming back here, they were all reading it over on the ticker on the floor, coming in on the wire services. There would be some new charge, it was sort of crazy. In raising the money during that campaign, I would indicate to some people, "Look, I don't care what money you may be giving to Paul Fannin, but I think you ought to consider giving me some money, too, because you're either going to have me back there as a United States senator, or I'm going to be back with Carl Hayden, and I'm going to have a long memory either way it goes." So I was successful in raising money—I guess that almost sounds like extortion [laughs].

The difficulty came when I came back on the senator's staff and we came back to Washington. I became the staff director again, or AA, whatever we called myself then. There was an entirely different relationship almost. It was extremely difficult. I felt very isolated because senators treated me with a great deal of respect, but I wasn't one of them. Staff members sort of thought of me a little differently and thought I was getting ready to run again. Now, this caused some problems for Carl Hayden, because everything I did for him others thought I was really doing it to line myself up for running again, which the senator wanted me to do, and so did a lot of other people, but that was a long way down the line. It was very, very strange, and strained, my relationships. Then as we got into this fight on the Central Arizona Project and all that, I really became suspect.

By this time I was well-known, and all these stories had circulated around. I'm not sure what the image was. I think I at least had an image of having some talent and being a good AA and all that, and still powerful because of Carl Hayden and his position. And then I had made the race. When you ask about other staff members, I think they were probably secretly, some of them, glad that I didn't make it. Others I think were genuinely disappointed, but I know there was a lot of probably sighs of relief that I didn't win.

But I always look back, having been trained by Carl Hayden, and his being on the Steering Committee, you know damn well that I would have had good committee assignments. I'd also been clerk of the Patronage Committee, so I knew where a lot of

bodies were. And I was a creature of the Senate to that extent too, so as a freshman, had I won that election, I would have been a very, very powerful freshman, particularly with Carl Hayden still being here. What a one-two punch that would have been! I think.

RITCHIE: You mentioned how the Senate staff reacted. I was curious about how the senators reacted. I'm sure that some of them must have to look over their shoulder at other staff members.

ELSON: I never thought of that at the time, but I did later after others have tried it. But see this was a little different because I had the total endorsement of the man I was working for. It wasn't as if I was going against my boss or running against him or anything like that. I thought about that later, that there could have been some thoughts along that line. I don't know how to answer that other than it occurred to me that that could be true.

I know my relationship with a lot of senators was much different than it had been. I felt like I was in limbo. I was not really any more a staff person and recognized as a competent staff person, but now a politician, almost one of them. It was a strange sensation, and I could feel it. I really felt isolated in many ways. Then I was still trying to do a staff job for Carl Hayden. And as those years went on up until his retirement, the senator gave me more and more responsibility, more and more that I was speaking in his name. He would send me to committee meetings which in those days staff people didn't speak up at a committee meeting or anything like that. That was really awkward. I remember going to the Rules Committee a couple of times when he had one of his urinary infections and he had to be out at Bethesda for a few days, oh on the reorganization, remember when [Mike] Monroney had a reorganization plan. Carl Hayden wanted me to kill some of that for a while. I went over and I was sitting there with the members, but speaking for Carl Hayden. Well, you just didn't do that in those days.

I remember once going to another meeting when they were talking about setting up a separate Veterans Committee, and Carl Hayden was always opposed to that. Again, I had to go over there and I'm fighting with Howard Cannon, who's the chairman of the damn committee. That was awkward. And then sitting in with him on all the stuff

on the Central Arizona Project, with members of the Interior Committee. Well, no staff member in those days was permitted to do that. So it was awkward. But everyone so respected the senator that they permitted it. Scoop Jackson was wonderful that way. And yet, I knew that I'm just a staff member and I'm back where I was. I went out there and got my [expletive] shot off, and now I'm back trying to do the same job I did before, but it wasn't the same, it was very strange.

RITCHIE: When you first announced, what was the reaction in Goldwater's office, and from his staff people?

ELSON: Well, I think initially there was probably some concern. His AA, and his people and the senator always, I think, had respect for the work that I was doing for Carl Hayden. I think they knew what we were trying to do. I mean, it didn't take any genius to figure out what was going on. I'm sure they also heard that Pulliam had helped get me into the ballgame, so they knew that that might be a real problem, because Barry was older and we could make him into an old man. So I think there was some genuine concern, particularly with Johnson running—this was all of course after Kennedy was assassinated. Then, of course, Barry was so busy running for the nomination, and I don't think they ever thought for sure they'd make it.

I used to run into [Richard] Kleindienst and [Dean] Burch and all of them. It seemed like every trip I made to Arizona, either they were going west or I was coming east, and we always met in Chicago at the airport. I don't know how many times. A couple of times I met them over in L.A. I ran into them when I was taking the "red-eye" back. We were always running into each other, have a few drinks. But this was before the Republican Convention.

As I say, we had made no plans at all to run against Fannin. We just were sure that Barry was not going to be able to get the nomination. Well, it just came as a real jolt when he did. That changed everything. I knew then that it was going to be a real toss-up. I felt very confident had he not gotten the election, that man, because I would have had no problem debating Barry on anything. I knew him and his record backwards and forwards. It would have been fun—whether or not he would have debated me. He never did when I ran against him in '68, I couldn't get him into a debate. If I was in his position I wouldn't have debated me either. With Johnson and

with Pulliam and the whole thing, and I think the Democrats would have gotten behind me, even the Udalls would have really gotten behind if they knew it was against Barry. A lot of things might have been different and there's no question that Lyndon would have carried Arizona by huge numbers.

RITCHIE: The other question is what was your relationship with Paul Fannin, after he came to the Senate as a senator and you came back here as a staff member?

ELSON: Well, because of some of some of the things that happened in the campaign—in one debate in particular I found out he was sort of petty. He tried grabbing the microphone out of my hand. I think we were in the Jewish Community Center, and we were on water, and he was talking about the Arizona Power Authority and going it alone, and I was saying it would never work. Someone had asked a question from the audience, the place was packed with a couple of thousand people, and here was the governor of Arizona and me fighting for the microphone. You know, we're pulling it back and forth [laughs]. And he said something to me while we were on the platform, while Sam Goddard and the gubernatorial candidates were debating, and he said to me personally, "Who in the hell do you think you are, running for the United States Senate? You're just a little staff person. What right do you have to run for the United States Senate?" That really got under my skin.

He was a likeable sort of person, but not particularly swift. And it was a little difficult when we came back, because he still resented my almost beating him. And then there were tremendous disagreements on approaching the Central Arizona Project. I think he found it more difficult than I did. I don't know how many times we sort of ran over him on the way it was going to happen. He was always pleasant, but the relationship was always pretty strained, when it came to personal relations, though I got along fairly well with all his staff. But with Fannin, I didn't particularly respect him, and I'm sure he didn't like me. So it was strained.

RITCHIE: When you ran in that campaign, especially in the primary, did you run as the conservative candidate? Did you use the judge as the liberal candidate? Where did you try to steer your course through that campaign?

ELSON: Mainly as the most qualified and most experienced, but I look back on the speeches that I made in both campaigns and I've got to say, I think I was way ahead of my time on a lot of things that I was talking about. Then the water issue had been so critical. Thanks to Pulliam's help and the senator's, and being thrust into it, I certainly had that image of being an expert—which I don't think I was—but I certainly had the image that I knew what was going on back here.

I personally felt I was very progressive, but no one listened to a lot of speeches I made, where I thought I was outlining something new and innovative. I would say they were pretty progressive. But I didn't really have to. No one questioned my Democratic credentials, but they all were attacking me personally, so there weren't that many discussions of the issues. I was able to take the high road. I just let them blast away at me. It was hard at times, being there taking some of the cheap shots that were being made. It was more of a personal attack on me, trying to make me out to be something evil. I was able to talk about the things that I wanted to talk to, and no one else was, so from that standpoint I felt like I was progressive. I wouldn't call it conservative.

This was when, early on, where in a couple of places I knew that I was going in a different direction than Carl Hayden was. I was not a clone of Carl Hayden. And I always told the senator, "I'm going this direction." He said, "Do what you think you have to do. We can disagree." It bothered me because I had worked with him so closely, but I knew that I didn't feel quite the same way. On most issues we weren't that far apart, because I think he was one of the most progressive men that ever served in the Senate. As far as the image, I think some papers called me a liberal, others called me a middle-of-the-road, but they judged me more on my experience.

I think my opponents really made a mistake in attacking me personally, because I got a lot of sympathy. And my wife, though she never made a speech, she was an incredible campaigner. Everyone loved her, everywhere she went, all the little coffees in the outlining counties. With that little southern drawl, she was just wonderful with people. I don't know how many votes she obviously got for me.

RITCHIE: What's interesting about your campaign is that usually when the fresh young face appears, the one thing that he doesn't have is experience. He's going to

challenge the old-time politician. You were coming in with the old-time politician's experience, but you were the new young candidate. You really reversed all of the traditional roles.

ELSON: Well, one of the things in that memo that I told you I wrote, and in the discussions with Jack Moore and the senator and Eugene Pulliam, was that very thing. I thought that would be a very strong asset, and they all thought so too. They said, "Harp on it." What we were trying to do, particularly when we thought we were going to be running against Barry, was showing that I probably knew more about how the Senate operated than Barry did, though he had been here for two terms. I had the experience, and yet I was younger. I would be there to carry on in the Carl Hayden tradition, to fight for all those things that made it. We had really put together a beautiful campaign to go against Barry. And I was so eager. I had the enthusiasm, I had the youth, and I could claim—by this time I had gotten that image—of having the experience. So we had eliminated Barry's advantage of being a two-term senator, because a lot of people knew that he sort of played it haphazardly. He was not a hard-working senator as such, and he was interested in other issues rather than looking after the state. We definitely wanted to take advantage of that, and I think we were able to sell that.

Even later when I ran against Barry, everyone gave me credit for having the experience. I had been trained to be a senator, you might say, and trained by a master. That doesn't get you elected, but it was fun.

End of Interview #7

THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

Interview #8

Wednesday, June 27, 1990

RITCHIE: I wanted to talk today about the 1960s. In January 1961 the Kennedy administration took over, and many of the people who took high positions in the administration had been on Capitol Hill just months earlier on Kennedy's staff and associated with his senatorial career. I wondered what was the relationship between the Kennedy administration and the Hill, given the fact that so many of these people had just left Capitol Hill?

ELSON: I thought it was very good, among staff people, because we knew a lot of them that went downtown, and went to various departments, and were number one people for cabinet members, and assistants. Actually, I think Kennedy deliberately tried doing that, because he knew his problems were going to be with a Congress that he was going to have difficulties with. They set up one of the best liaison operations that any president probably had up until that time. I thought it was very beneficial. At least you were talking in the same language.

Down in the White House, I think I mentioned before, my favorite White House staff person was Kenny O'Donnell. The reason I thought he was so good was first of all he was so close to the president, he was part of the "Irish Mafia" who had come up with him and were extremely close. But he could make decisions, he knew the president so well, and he would give you a yes and a no, it was none of this "I'll get back to you." He would make the decision and you knew it was final, there was no point trying to go over his head or around him, because he guarded the palace door.

Now, some of Kennedy's cabinet members came out of the ivy league, guys like [Robert] McNamara, who I think were totally overrated, and some of the whiz-kids. Speaking of the ivy league crowd whom he surrounded himself with, I'm always reminded of [Dean] Acheson's book, *Present at the Creation*. I'm not even sure you have to read the book. All you have to do is open it to all the pictures in the middle, and you'll find going back to Roosevelt and before Roosevelt the same damn people, they're just changing hats. There's Dulles and Rostow, you know you can name them

all. When it's a Republican administration it's the same, they just change hats, they all came from the ivy league. Maybe Barry Goldwater was right, we should have cut off the northeast and floated it out into the Atlantic.

But getting back to your question, Kennedy did have problems with the Congress, the way it was set up, and winning a very close election that was questionable. So I think it was very helpful to have a lot of people that had Hill experience as liaisons, because they didn't have to get broken in. They had to learn a little about the bureaucracy down there, and how it worked, and ferreting out who within there they could work with themselves. Up until recently I always had a very high regard for the civil service and the type of talent we've had in our government. I think we've been very fortunate over the years to have some real dedicated public servants. They weren't using it as stepping stones. Thought I also felt that a president was entitled to name as many people as possible in positions of policy-making. At one time I even thought they ought to be able to go down to GS-15 and make changes at that level, just to get control of the government and put it in the direction they're going. There are so few Schedule Cs or presidential appointments anymore, in the vastness of our government, that it's hard for any president to get a handle on it coming in new.

I thought all in all it was very beneficial for him in getting a good start. I personally liked working with them. I'm trying to remember when Mike Manatos went down there. He covered the Senate for the White House. Mike was very good. Larry O'Brien, of course, headed up the operation. Larry, everyone liked him and felt he was honest, straightforward, but very politically savvy too. I know Senator Hayden was very high on him.

But again, people forget that that was the first time there was a change from a Republican administration to a Democratic administration since 1933. In that whole first year of 1961, the great thing that I loved about President Kennedy and all of them, they moved their people into these positions whether they were qualified or not. They made changes rapidly. I think that was very wise on their part to make these moves, move people in quickly. Unlike Nixon, he took forever to make changes. It was a smart move from lots of standpoints. It made it easier on getting control of the government. It also made it easier on not having these hassles where they let incumbents start positioning themselves to stay on, and go to their friends in Congress

that they'd been working with during the Eisenhower years. So I give them a great deal of credit for moving rapidly in those early months of 1961, and taking care of the people who supported them during the campaign.

President Kennedy, at least so far as I could see from the Senate in those early days, knew he was going to have difficulty with the Congress just because of the issues, the close election, and then he really wasn't one of the club, in the sense that he did anything up here. Everyone always knew he was running for the presidency and he really didn't take the Senate that seriously as an end in itself. I think he would have been a great senator if he had wanted to stay around. But you knew that that was not where he wanted to be [laughs].

So I give them high marks for moving quickly. I would recommend highly to any president, Republican or Democrat, that during that transitional phase they get ready to move as quickly as they can, and put people in and get this thing under control. If they have to move them later, which the Kennedy administration did, because they were the wrong pegs in the wrong holes, they eventually got around to it. But they had their thing pretty much in place by summer, as I recall. Of course, there were always other things coming up, ambassadorial positions, and there were a lot more patronage positions than in the states, there were customs collectors, and Internal Revenue, some of those were still that way, and your agriculture stabilization committees, you had them all through the government. I remember looking at the "plumb" book—the first thing you do is look at that. But I know in Senator Hayden's case, eventually we took care of everyone on the Arizona delegation who helped Kennedy get the Democratic nomination.

Then I mentioned Kennedy's respect for his elders, and the Maggie-Hayden dinner we put on that fall in his first year. Those were the only fundraisers that he went to that year, mainly because it was the 25th and 50th anniversaries. So that first year, nothing was really happening. I can't recall any real important legislation that first year that moved anywhere. We had the appropriations and we had a lot of foreign affairs and things going on. But I thought they did a good job in getting themselves set up that first year.

RITCHIE: You had mentioned Kennedy's respect for his elders, and I was reading Ted Sorenson's book, *Kennedy*, where he attributed Kennedy's problems in Congress to a generational one, that there were two generations of politicians, an older group in Congress and the younger group in the administration. He thought that there was some sort of generational conflict there.

ELSON: I don't agree. Maybe when you looked at both sides of the Hill, the House and the Senate, and of course in those days the South was pretty much dominated by the Democratic party, and you had chairmen through the seniority system rising up through the ranks. But I really don't feel that way, and I don't think that was quite true.

For instance, I think at that time I was the oldest staff member by age on Senator Hayden's staff, except for one person. He surrounded himself with young people because he liked young ideas (though he had seen most everything already). He liked having young ideas and you could go in and argue with him. If you had just walked into Carl Hayden's office during those early '60s, and during the Kennedy administration particularly, you would hear shouting, yelling, screaming of staff members arguing with each other. They could in—they didn't yell at the senator, of course—but he loved having ideas thrown off of him. And he always penetrated through all our BS and got right down to the heart of the matter. Most of the time our ideas weren't so off the wall, they'd been tested before, and they weren't as original as we thought they were.

But when I look at what you would call the older men around, I don't think there was such a generational gap. I think there was a lot of times a false knock of some of our southern friends. For instance, Judge [Howard] Smith over on the House Rules Committee. Everyone used to malign him about no civil rights bill, no liberal legislation, and then you'd find out that half the people—you know, a chairman of some committee who might be a liberal, I don't care who it was, who would report out a bill out of the committee with big fanfare, knowing that the Judge and the Rules Committee were going to kill it. In fact they'd go behind the scenes and say, "Jesus, don't let this thing go anywhere!" And poor Judge Smith took all of that heat, I think a lot of it unfairly, although he certainly had his strong southern views too. But there were a lot of things you knew were going to die and never move out of committee, and

over here if the Policy Committee didn't schedule it, or if Lyndon didn't want it to move, it wouldn't go anywhere.

I didn't feel that there was a generation gap, particularly after that class of '58 came in. I just don't feel there was that big a gap. I think there was a good overall range. Just take Carl Hayden, who had been in Congress since 1912. That's a lot of time.

RITCHIE: He'd been in Congress longer than Kennedy had been alive.

ELSON: Yeah. But maybe it's because of the man I was working for at the time that I didn't feel that way, because he had such young ideas. Of course there were some old timers among the AAs. I was always younger than most AAs, but after a while age didn't mean a hell of a lot. I found that most of the senior members around here, a lot of their staff people were young. They surrounded themselves with young people, or brought them in, and they went back home and got involved in politics. I watched Maggie and Scoop—Scoop Jackson and Magnuson—my God, particularly Scoop. I don't know how many people he ran through his office that went back and ran for Congress and were elected. Now you've got the Speaker of the House who started there. In fact I remember working with Tom [Foley] when he was just a lawyer working for Scoop around the corner from our office. So you had a lot of young people. I guess I'm the wrong person to talk to about that, because though I think the average age of an A was at least ten years older than I was, probably. I never felt it.

The thing that I felt then, that might not be true today as much, was that the staff people who came up here and worked here, they really did believe in public service. They were here because they believed in the system, in the legislative branch. They weren't here necessarily using it as a stepping stone or to make more money. They really believed in the governmental process, so you really met some able guys who were around as staff members, and because it was a smaller group, you got to know them a lot better, who you could trust and whose word was good. Of course, in my mind, the only thing you have in politics is your word. If that's no good, you can get all the signed written documents you want but it's not worth the paper it's written on if you haven't given your word on something. That was how I learned politics, and that was

certainly the most important thing in Carl Hayden's career. If you ever got his word, you could not jar him loose, even though I tried.

RITCHIE: What was your impression of Lyndon Johnson during the period that he was vice president. Did he have a real function in that administration?

ELSON: Yeah, I think he did with the president. I know that Bobby had his terrible dislike for him, and would like to keep him out. So did a lot of their inner circle, some of the Irish Mafia. But I know that with Lyndon's great knowledge of how things worked, that the president relied a lot on his advice and the way he could deal with some of the older members. But you could feel the tension between the Johnson people and the Kennedy people, which wasn't necessarily unexpected or unnatural after their fight for the nomination. I just don't see how a majority leader can run for the office of the presidency from that position. It's almost an impossible task, particularly the rules have changed in the Democratic party as far as the primaries and all. When you had a convention that meant something, where you could get by the first ballot and get really into a convention where the delegates were making some selections, that might have been possible. But in today's world I just don't see how a leader in this body, even a minority leader, could do it. I think it's just impossible to expend the time and effort to do it.

But Lyndon as vice president, knowing what I think I know about that man, I'm sure that being number two was never his idea of a comfortable place to be. I wonder what would have happened if Kennedy had lived and there had been a second term, and then after that what would have happened, because Lyndon still had a lot of friends who had a lot of great respect for his talents and abilities. How that would have all worked out, it would have been interesting to see. But [Lee Harvey] Oswald took care of that.

RITCHIE: Did Johnson intervene with Hayden at all during the Kennedy years? Did he try to lobby for the administration?

ELSON: Oh, I think on some appropriations matters, some defense things like that during '62, I'm trying to think what the hell that was. But not really. They saw each other all the time, but outside of some national security matters, or on some

projects that he still might have been interested in, it was all very quiet. But I don't recall any big lobbying that he did on the senator for their programs. On a lot of those things the timing was all wrong, it wasn't the right time for moving some of the things that Kennedy wanted to move, some of the programs that they had in mind. For instance, like on the Peace Corps, the senator supported it anyhow. He was a believer in that sort of thing, so I don't know that they needed to lobby Carl Hayden very hard on too much to begin with.

From his position as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and representing the nation more than his state or region, he really, regardless of whoever the president was, unless it was an issue he felt very strongly about and disagreed with the president, he would support his president, certainly in foreign policy on most all matters, and did during the Eisenhower administration, and the Truman administration before that.

RITCHIE: I was going to ask you about foreign policy, because it seemed as if the real thrust of the Kennedy administration was in foreign policy. How did Hayden relate to foreign policy issues? Did they interest him and at and did he get involved in them?

ELSON: I may have indirectly referred to his interest. He had always been interested in foreign policy. He was never out in front because he never served on any of those legislative committees, though he was on the subcommittees that handled all those appropriations. For instance, he was a strong believer in the foreign aid program. As I think I mentioned, he always rallied the votes in his own committee to get that bill out, from the inception of the foreign aid program, even for Eisenhower. P.L. 480 ["Food for Peace"] and all the other programs, he had a great interest in. This was why he believed in having his staff members and his committee members travel. Of course, in those days the counterpart funds were available, which made it pretty inexpensive, really, because they were funds that we couldn't use anyhow except in the host country.

He always had these views. For instance, going back—the Philippine government—it was his study back in the '20s that led to their independence, so they always thought that he was a great man. He didn't travel much, though I did get him to travel after his reelection in '62. In '63 we went to the Paris Air Show and ended up going to Pope John XXIII's funeral, which I could tell a story about that. He was an internationalists

really. He believed in free trade. I think I mentioned too about how the mining interests would play Arizona. If the price was not right here, or the unions got too strong, they'd start exploring their foreign holdings in South America or Africa. Then they would want "peril point" protection and all that. But he was really a free trader at heart. He had a big interest in international affairs and was also strong on defense. So they never had any problems with him there, even going back prior to World War II when Marshall was getting ready for war. He knew World War II was coming along, from his trips to Manchuria and Japan back in the early '30s. He could see that coming. When they had the secret hearings before the Appropriations Committee he was doing all he could to get the money to get us ready.

It's that part of Carl Hayden that no one knows about, because he never made big issues out of them. Take the Bricker Amendment. You remember all that? Well, he took a strong lead in fighting that. I remember when I first came back I spent lots of time working on that. Behind the scenes he really took a big interest in beating the Bricker Amendment. Again, never with any fanfare or headlines. But I would say he always had this big interest. He was a big man. He had big visions and foresaw a lot of things coming, but recognized also the limitations of what you could do in a nuclear age.

But President Kennedy had no problem whatsoever in getting his help on appropriations matters in the foreign policy area. I can't think of a thing where he didn't support him.

RITCHIE: What was the story on the trip to the pope's funeral?

ELSON: Well, I talked him into going to Paris. Mrs. Hayden had died back in '61, so after his election I said, "Senator, there's no reason why you couldn't go. You haven't been to Europe for a long time." So we went to the Paris Air Show, and we used Air Force Two. It was the senator, myself, an escort officer, from the Senate side—he was the only senator. From the House side, Eddie Hebert, who was chairman of the Armed Services Committee headed up the delegation, and there must have been ten or twelve members besides Eddie Hebert going.

We went to Paris, and he hadn't been to Paris in God knows how long. I'll never forget when we checked in. We arrived in Paris and the weather was bad. We checked into the hotel, it's the one near the American embassy, it wasn't the Georges Cinq, an old, beautiful hotel, and we had a suite together, the senator and I. Well, I was getting him checked in, and the senator excused himself. I remember going upstairs, and looking down into the lobby and all of a sudden I see Carl Hayden going out the door of the hotel. The escort officer wasn't with him, no one's with him, he just goes. He's eighty-five years old, and he disappears! We couldn't find him—well, he didn't come back till almost dinnertime. It was late, and I had the escort officer looking all over. He just disappeared in Paris, and here the guy probably hadn't been there in fifty years, or I don't know when it was. Well, it turns out the old son of a gun had an old girl friend over there [laughs], and he went off the first thing to see her. I didn't find that out until later.

The next day we were supposed to go out for the fly over and the air show. Well, the next day it was socked in again. Europe can really get socked in with weather. So we got some briefings and then we went out to dinner that next night, at a place over on the Left Bank I used to know, because I fought Korea so valiantly over there. There was only three of us there, the senator, the escort officer, and of course me. About nine or ten o'clock, because we were always eating late, the senator would say to the escort officer, "Why don't you go check on the weather for tomorrow, because I don't want to sit around on my tail." The escort officer went and checked, he was a guy by the name of Bill Reynolds, and he came back and said, "Senator the weather report is they're going to have to cancel the fly over again."

The senator said, "Well, can we lay on a trip to Berlin? I'd like to go get briefed on the situation in Berlin." So here when the escort officer and I thought we could go out and have some fun, at ten o'clock at night we're laying on a trip to go to Berlin. At eight o'clock the next morning, Hebert and a bunch of the other members went along with us to Berlin. We got a briefing on the situation there, went to the Wall, did all that, and came back to Paris late that evening. And again went out to dinner, and sitting in another little restaurant, Carl Hayden suggested to the colonel that he go check on the weather again. Sure enough, he came back with the same report.

The senator said, "You know what I'd really like to do? I think we just ought forget this damn air show. I don't know that they'll ever have a fly over," which turned out to be pretty much true. He said, "I'd like to go to Spain, to Madrid, and check out the SAC base down there." So the next morning we left. On this trip there was only the senator, the escort officer, and myself, the rest of the members stayed in Paris. About the time we arrived in Madrid, Pope John XXIII died. The senator thought about it, and when we learned who the delegation was, coming over to represent the United States, led by the vice president, and the president of Notre Dame, and the former postmaster general during Roosevelt's administration. . . .

RITCHIE: Farley?

ELSON: Jim Farley was coming over. There were four including Lyndon Johnson. So the senator called Lyndon and said, "Well, we're here and we need a ride back to the United States, so we'll meet you in Rome at the pope's funeral." We arranged to stay at the same hotel. We tooled over about the same time Lyndon and the delegation were arriving, and we were all staying at this hotel on top of mountain, the Vatican owned the hotel, a beautiful place. The next day is the funeral.

The senator and I went as part of the unofficial delegation. I'd been to Rome a number of times prior to that, but I had never seen Rome that way. They obviously loved that man. There was total silence, and that's a city where everyone just sits on the horn and traffic's just crazy. But there was such reverence for him it was just quiet as hell. Really unusual.

When they picked us up in the limousine to take us to the Vatican, where they were having the high mass, when we driving into the back there were two or three black limousines. I remember, and so does the senator, that as we were driving into the courtyard behind St. Peters, the most beautiful woman I've ever seen was walking across that courtyard. There was almost a collision of all these limousines when we saw this gorgeous woman, black hair, all dressed in black, best-built woman I've ever seen. Everyone just drooling, and here we were going to the pope's funeral! [laughs] And she walks down there with the tight outfit on, and everyone just stopped, the whole [expletive] procession of crazy Americans. Anyhow, she disappears, thank God, and we're taken into the church.

Here's Pope John laid out in the middle, tilted up. The College of Cardinals are on both sides of the nave, first row, and we're sitting right behind them. I don't know whether you recall, but this was the first live satellite television broadcast that was being carried all over the damn world. Well, a high mass is a pretty long event, and it's going on, and on, and I could see the cameras way up high, one up there and one over there. And pretty soon Carl Hayden, because we had covered all this distance and hadn't had a lot of sleep, he starts dozing. His head falls down. Every time I'd see his chin drop, I'd punch him in the rib with my elbow. He'd straighten up. I did it about three times I guess, and the ceremony was still droning on. About the fourth time it happened, he really got upset. What I was concerned about, of course, was this was being broadcast all over the world and there's Carl Hayden sound asleep, and the image that would have, here's this senile old man or something like that.

This last time when I punched him he put his hand across his mouth and leaned over to me and spoke rather loudly, even though they were chanting and all this other stuff is going on. I always knew I was in some sort of trouble with him when he called me "son" instead of Roy. He said, "Son, if you do that one more time, I'm not sure there's any way you'll ever get back to the United States. And secondly, if you were as bright and observant as you think you are you, you would notice that half the College of Cardinals are also sleeping." [laughs] And I looked around, and sure enough "z's" all over the place! I said, oh, the hell with it. I think the average age of the cardinals then was something like seventy-six, and they were all asleep. And I guess those early cameras really weren't focusing in, they were just catching the whole scene, so you wouldn't have caught it anyhow. I quit worrying about it.

After that, we flew back with Lyndon and the rest of them, stopping in Ireland on the way back. I think we covered something like six or seven countries in seven days. I think we were only gone a week, but it was a hell of a trip, and a very historical one. I was really impressed. Then right after that, I think that's when I started reading a lot of Pope John's writings. I took a big interest in him then because I was really impressed with the way Rome, which is such a great city, reacted to him. Anyhow, that's the story about Carl Hayden and the College of Cardinals.

RITCHIE: That's great! One other question about the Kennedy administration. That was when Mansfield took over as leader, and there was a lot of criticism of

Mansfield, especially by 1963. Senators were complaining that he just wasn't providing enough leadership. What was your impression, and what was Senator Hayden's impression of Mike Mansfield as majority leader at that time?

ELSON: Carl Hayden was very fond of Mike Mansfield. He thought he was a very fine man and supported him for the leadership position. I think, as we discussed earlier, Mansfield encountered an entirely different situation than Lyndon had up until 1960. That new class had come in, and I think we picked up some others in '60, so there was this younger group who were the first real television generation. And his whole philosophy was different. But I never heard Carl Hayden criticize his leadership. Privately, on a couple of occasions he did indicate that he thought that he was giving members too much room to do their thing. Of course, Mansfield was on the Appropriations Committee with him and they had worked together and he had a great respect for him, but he heard all the criticism. I think he shared some of it, but also recognized that it was a different environment, and also knew that probably not much was going to happen domestically, outside of certain programs nothing really big.

I'm trying to make sure I'm speaking about him and not about my own reactions, because I thought a lot of time it was frustrating because committees were sort of running away with things. I'm trying to think whether that was more me or part of that was the senator. I think he felt that there was Lyndon overlooking Mansfield's shoulder, being vice president and still playing some of his game. Of course, about that time didn't we have the Bobby Baker affair?

RITCHIE: In 1963.

ELSON: And that caused a lot of changes as a result of that. I think the senator felt that in time Mansfield would exert his leadership in a more forceful way, but with the way conditions were, and of course after the Baker incident and the changes that were made, then that played the opposite way because no one then wanted to ever have a Lyndon-Bobby type of arrangement again. So instead of letting him exert more leadership, circumstances and the majorities that he had to work with forced him to take maybe a little different position. I think they pointed that out in the leadership conference, the political circumstances sort of make the leader. He doesn't have unlimited power—he has a lot of power, but it depends on how he uses that to

determine what he can get done. Though Mansfield could be tough, he was not one who intimidated you or used all the wiles that Lyndon Johnson did to get things done. He was more of the persuasive type and wanted to "reason together." So he took a much more esoteric approach to the job than probably the circumstances might have warranted.

But I know Carl Hayden thought, particularly up until the Baker thing exploded, that it might take a little while for Mike to put his own stamp on the job. He also knew he had these nineteen, twenty some new members running around. It was a transitional period. It was a different period in the '60s.

RITCHIE: I get the sense, looking at those first couple of years from '61 to '63 that everybody felt that things were going slowly but they were going to pick up, that the administration would get its act together and Kennedy's second term would be different. And of course his term ended abruptly in '63. What impact did the assassination have at that stage?

ELSON: It had a tremendous impact. Kennedy had great political sense. He knew that he needed a second term for a lot of things, because he was gaining more and more support as time went on, and a more sympathetic Congress. People were saying that some of his programs, like the tax program in '62, spurred the economy again, they knew that he was really working at the job. But he also knew that he could have a tough reelection, it wasn't a foregone conclusion, and so he was gearing up for that.

When the assassination took place, everyone knows where they were on that day, November 22, I remember we were—and I should tell you, because I think this is historically important, the way Carl Hayden looked at that. We were down in the little cafeteria downstairs in the Russell Office Building having lunch, just a quick sandwich. He wanted to talk to me so I was down there with him when we got the word, so we went back to the office. Early on they were concerned that it might be a conspiracy, that the vice president might be next, and then the Speaker. Being in the chain of command to be president of the United States, eventually the Secret Service and all that came running around to Hayden's office. For a while they didn't know what the hell was happening, there was all that confusion.

Carl Hayden was an amazing man. Though it was a great shock, he remained calm, introspective you might say. When everyone was running around he was a center of calm. He didn't think that he was in any danger, though he went along with some of the security precautions. They installed telephones and put policemen outside the door and walked him home, and all that crap that came later. It probably was the next day after they knew that Oswald had done it and had used a rifle, there was this thing about the three shots. How could you possibly have pulled off three with a bolt-action gun in nine point seven seconds, or whatever it was. We were talking about it, and Carl Hayden said, "Christ, any decent marksman could do that, particularly at a target going away from him at just a couple of hundred yards. No doubt in my mind if a guy was halfway good he could do that without any trouble." Which I thought was rather fascinating. Then it dawned on me that Carl Hayden in open competition back in 1911 at Camp Perry had set a record by firing fifteen consecutive bulls-eyes with an open sight at nine hundred yards using a Springfield .03!

Also during those early days, I did ask him, I remember this conversation vividly, because it was in his office. I said, "Senator, what would you do if history propelled you into the presidency, because of [John] McCormack's death, and Lyndon had been shot, and you would have ended up being next in line?" He didn't hesitate one second. He said, "I would be sworn in. I would call a special session of the Congress. They would elect a new Speaker, and I would turn over the presidency to the new Speaker of the House of Representatives." Without hesitation. All I can remember saying to him was: "Christ, senator, at least give me a couple of days down there to get you into a style of living to which you want to become accustomed—or at least I do!" And he laughed, but he knew it was more serious than that. I think I wasn't quite that facetious. I said, "Don't bring it all to an end that quickly." But he knew exactly what he would do. I asked him why. He said, "First of all, I'm not up to it. I do not have the physical stamina to do that. And secondly, it should be the Speaker because at least it would have been an election of the House and he's closer to the people." I think that was the succession law at the time and he could have done that. He didn't hesitate one bit if that circumstance had visited him. That to me just showed what a great mind that was. And these conversations all happened within twenty-four to forty-eight hours after the assassination.

Then there was all the transition to Johnson, and some of the bitterness there. Actually, in death Kennedy probably got more done than he possibly could have staying alive as president, because Johnson utilized the momentum that the tragedy brought to bring about some great programs that really were needed. They weren't particularly new. I think if it had not been for the Vietnam War—and of course Kennedy did not help there, I think he helped accelerate the thing a great deal. I think he got conned by the Catholic Church on that one. They were always dominant, and I think he had a cardinal friend who was quite close to saying we ought to be sending boys over there.

But Johnson, only as Johnson could, utilized that and it became a Johnson-Kennedy program of great magnitude. It really made Kennedy—that's not the right thing to say, but the whole tragedy certainly made Kennedy into a martyr but it also left him a historic legacy of great proportion, as a result of what Lyndon did in following him, and the cooperation he got out of the Congress. It was amazing the things that happened after that. Jesus, things were going on all the time. The only thing I could think of that would be equivalent would be Roosevelt's First Hundred Days. Things were really moving around here in all fronts, just everywhere you turned, civil rights, domestic legislation. Things were popping. And it sort of revitalized everything, even in the tragedy. It really changed the whole complexion of things, from being sort of a lethargic time in a way, though you had the Cuban Missile Crisis and things like that, but things really started perking. And of course the tragedy was Lyndon's preoccupation with the war.

See, and Lyndon didn't do what Kennedy had done when he went into office. Of course, he came in a different way under changed circumstances. He didn't put in his people like he should have, after a reasonable period of time. He kept on a lot of the Kennedy people, and there was still a lot of resentment against Lyndon, still a lot of suspicion about what happened in Texas. I personally feel that though we had a member from Arizona on the Warren Commission, Wally Craig who was president of the American Bar Association at the time, and later we made a federal judge out there, I personally believe there was more to it than just Oswald and Ruby. That's my personal opinion. I've read a lot of the books, but I guess I don't quite trust our government, with all the funny things that happened. A great tragedy, but it made Lyndon Johnson and it made Kennedy, when you think about it.

And when you think about the two men, except for their affinity for women [laughs], they were quite different in many ways. Their upbringings were certainly different. But they were certainly men who enjoyed the finer things of life. Maybe we better stop there. [laughs]

End of Interview #8

THE CENTRAL ARIZONA PROJECT

Interview #9

Friday, July 6, 1990

RITCHIE: I thought today we could talk about the Central Arizona Project, which has to be one of the longest running legislative battles probably in the history of the institution. At least from 1947 to 1968, but even before 1947, it was an issue. I wondered if you could give me some of the background to it, and also your own role in the CAP?

ELSON: Well, to put it into perspective, from my standpoint, I heard about the Central Arizona Project when I was growing up, particularly during the '40s, and certainly when I came back with Carl Hayden. When I got back here, of course, we had been forced into the Supreme Court by California to determine the rights of Arizona diverting its share of the water under the compact, and under the Bolder Canyon Act and all the other things. So there wasn't much to do, other than the senator, because of his position, every time the Bureau of Reclamation came up for appropriations he always kept the studies alive and kept the thing going that way, getting ready for his day, when he'd be able to move on it. We had huge files going way, way back. Of course, Carl Hayden had probably forgotten more about the Colorado River than most people ever knew. He certainly was equal to Northcut Ely, Mike Ely who represented all of the southern California water districts, and who was a real shrewd, bright, and capable opponent, who actually was a native of Arizona. But I'm getting off the point.

We had I don't know how many file cabinets, it was just a continuation over the years. And the great thing about Carl Hayden, which came in very handy from my standpoint later, was the way he broke in his staff. You worked on everything, and when I came back in '55 and was released from active duty from the air force, almost immediately I started working on a combination flood control and another small reclamation project. So I got in on the ground floor to learn some of that. Of course, some of the job was you were supposed to read a lot of these files when you had spare time, just to get yourself acquainted with all that, which I really didn't have a chance to do because so much else was going on for our small staff.

I was always interested in water politics, mainly out West in those days—now it affects the country everywhere and they're getting a taste of what the West has always been like. But fights over water involve every segment of the community. It's just fascinating what people will do, and how life is spent fighting over the limited supply of water, which determine the destiny of regions and states. Up in the Interior Committee at that time there was a former reclamation official by the name of Goodrich Lineweaver, who used to give me a lot of background information, just from conversations, and I went out of my way to try to talk to some people like that. Also there was another man who was manager of the Welton-Mohawk Project that we brought back in a special capacity and had him up in the committee, a guy by the name of Gene Eaton, who was really knowledgeable on water. He was sort of scientific, very contemplative, deliberate, but a guy that I spent a lot of time with, as often as I could.

But in those early '50s I didn't really know that much, other than what I gathered indirectly as I worked on these other things, and from these various sources, and just because I was interested in the subject. Of course, we were always working on reclamation matters because of other projects in California and the West that we had an interest in just because they were regional matters and their affect on the Colorado River basin, the Upper Basin and Lower Basin. It seemed like half our time was spent with all the reclamation projects down around Yuma, the Welton-Mohawk always had problems, and the Yuma Mesa, and the Yuma Valley irrigation district. It was always on-going and you spent a lot of time with others, with the Indians, and up and down the Gila. What always amazed me was the incredible knowledge the senator had of all this, as well as any project anywhere in the country, mainly because of his position on the Appropriations Committee and his interest in developing water resources and power.

As the court case went on, we followed that. People would come in from our Interstate Stream Commission, and Central Arizona Project Association as they followed the law suit in San Francisco before Judge [Simon] Rifkind, who was the master in the case. We'd get briefings and I'd sit in on some of those, of how things were going. Of course, Arizona sort of reversed itself in the middle of the case, went to a different theory, and that caused a lot of consternation, but we weren't really directly involved in any of that. The state was fighting that through their legal counsels and the Stream Commission people. But after all the filings and when Judge

Rifkind's findings came down, findings of facts and conclusions of law, things started heating up. This was in the early '60s.

The senator was reelected in '62, and one of the reasons that he ran again—and probably the principal reason—was that he still very much wanted that Central Arizona Project authorized. He figured he had one more shot at it, and this was going to be it. I think that was the compelling reason, because he had done everything else. The only real reason for his seeking that last term was that he wanted to see Arizona prevail. He felt very confident that we were going to win the suit—no one knew how it would turn out.

My education really came about when Rifkind came down with his report. It was one of the most interesting documents that I ever read. I was really so well done, and thought out and tightly written, and in English language that you could understand. It was a masterful job. Arizona did win the suit, but the report explained all the conflicting water rights between the Indians, the Upper and Lower Basin under the compact, and went through all the history. It was just an incredible document, how he sorted out all the conflicting claims. It was one of the best basis, for someone like myself who was not an engineer, not a lawyer, to get a feel for all the competing forces, though I had been exposed to them internally on intrastate matters, working on reclamation particularly in the Yuma area, and I certainly had a working knowledge of all the people involved down in the Bureau of Reclamation in the Department of the Interior. That document did more to help me sort of see the big picture.

Some of the projects were authorized in the mid-'50s while I was around, particularly the California projects, because the senator was the type of man who would not use his power to hold up things until he got his. He was always a big believer in the development of the West and any region of the country. He was a resources developer of natural resources. And also an environmentalist, I might say, despite what might have been thought. But he did believe in multiple use, that theory. He was very practical and knew how to work out those solutions on environmental type matters. But starting with that document I really got heavily involved in trying to educate myself, because I knew his was going to be the biggest fight probably of Carl Hayden's whole career, certainly the one that he really wanted to see before he left the Senate.

Looking back on it, that was probably one of the best self-educating documents I've ever used to fit in everything else that I had learned. I would talk to these other gentlemen and the people in the Bureau and others, and got better acquainted with the people on our Interstate Stream Commission and the project association. Of course, we were elated when the decision came down, but we also knew that California and Northcut Ely would try some way to stop this through the legislative process, even though they had lost in the Supreme Court. What they couldn't accomplish in the court they would try to do the field of politics.

Once Rifkind's report came down, we were pretty sure the Supreme Court was going to buy his report. They weren't going to open it up and redo the whole situation. That's why he was appointed as a master. They had masters in many interstate disputes, and very rarely that I know of did the Court overturn or reverse something that a master had put together. So we were very confident, and when the final court decree came down it cleared the way for Arizona to go claim the use of its 2.8 million acre feet of water. Starting at that time I really got involved in working with some of our state people on strategies and what to do. Then, almost immediately it got tangled up in controversy.

As I look back, Carl Hayden knew exactly what he wanted to do. He felt that Arizona had proven its case, did everything that everyone had asked them to do, both in the Upper and Lower Basin, and we now had reached the point where he was entitled to move ahead with his project. And of course it was based on a High Bridge Canyon dam as the cash register—of course, in '56 you had Glen Canyon dam, which was the cash register for the Upper Basin and their projects, which was really built in Arizona at Glen Canyon. I was very much involved in that one, by the way, in that legislative fight. Also, we got the construction site located in Arizona at Page. When they had the coffer dams, the senator went down in a chopper even before the dam was built. We saw it and followed it all through. Then you had Hoover Dam and other dams on the Lower Colorado River.

Carl Hayden wanted to go with a simple Central Arizona Project. Well, Stewart Udall had become Secretary of Interior from Arizona in '61, during Kennedy's administration. As this thing proceeded from '62 into '63, we heard these rumbles that everyone was complaining again, California was complaining whether there was enough

water in the river, and immediately we got into the numbers game and hydrology, what was coming down, and the water that was passing through Glen Canyon, and the run-offs from the Upper Basin to the Lower Basin, and Mexican Water Treaty obligations. You had everything involved in this, international, interstate, the West. Then there was the suggestion that this ought to fit into a broader program, which really irritated the hell out of Carl Hayden, mainly because there was nothing incompatible with a simple Central Arizona Project to any regional plan. For California, though, it all became an argument over what to do about shortages in the river, and of course California who had been wasting so much water in the Imperial Valley and everywhere else wanted to guarantee in perpetuity for their 4.4 million acre feet out of the 7.5 that was to go to the Lower Basin. Arizona had 2.8 million acre feet and that was her fair share. I forget what New Mexico and Nevada had. Anyhow, we got into these early difficulties mainly over the shortage issues.

I remember, I think it was after the Rifkind's report and before the decree, we were working with two people at that time that the senator trusted very much. One was our state water engineer, who was also with the Interstate State Stream Commission, by the name of Bill Gookin. The other was at that time counsel, and was really the brains that turned Arizona's case around, in San Francisco, a guy by the name of Charlie Reed. On one of my trips to Arizona I met with them, because the senator wanted a whole bunch of strategy laid out for him. Charlie Reed was doing all the legal stuff in this outline that the senator wanted. Gookin was doing all the engineering and water supply and hydrology. And I was doing the politics. We had worked all this weekend, I don't know how long I was out there, and then we were coming back to Washington to brief the senator. We had all been up many, many hours, working late. I think we were all taking amphetamines, because we were really cramming to get this done, rewriting. But we pretty much outlined a program, which as I look back on it, even with the way the thing changed and everything else, it was pretty much the way it turned out. I know from my standpoint, the politics of it, I think I predicted pretty accurately and laid out what Carl Hayden pretty much pursued, and what he had explained to me what he wanted to do, and how he wanted to do it.

We came back to Washington—and the only reason I'm bringing this up is because there's a story that still sends chills up and down my spine. Did I mention this to you? We came back from Arizona, and Gookin and Reid were staying down at the Jefferson

Hotel. This would be 1963, I think. We got everything done, we briefed the senator but we were still having meeting and seeing people, and lots was going on, introducing the bill that the senator wanted. Gookin had finally gone back to Arizona, Charlie Reed stayed over a little longer, and I was meeting this particular afternoon with him at the Jefferson hotel. He was acting a little strangely. We were all tired, and I knew he had been on the wagon. He was a little wiry guy, cowboy, big thick glasses, wasn't very tall, 5'6 or 5'7, bowlegged, talked like a cowboy, his grammar, but had a mind like a steel-trap, just a brilliant attorney. He had these eyes, because of the Coke-bottle lenses, that made him seem like he was looking right through you. He was a tough little hombre. At one time he was a heavy drinker, so I guess you'd call him an alcoholic. But I was really fond of him, and had great respect for him, so did the senator.

We were meeting this afternoon, and he was really pissed off, or irritated with Stewart Udall, because he had come up with saying that Central Arizona had to be part of a regional plan. We all sort of felt that Stewart had sort of forgotten what he was when he was a Congressman and where he came from, and what we had all talked about long before he became Secretary of Interior. I've never seen it in print, or anyone mention this, I'm digressing I guess, the ulterior motive of why Stewart went along with some broader regional concept, even to finally what became what they called the Pacific Southwest Water Plan, which contemplated diversions from the Pacific Northwest into California or the Upper Basin, from different water exchanges, a very ambitious project but no engineering studies. It had been in the minds of the dreamers for years.

I felt, and I think Senator Hayden did, though we didn't discuss it much, that Stewart when he became a cabinet member, I think there was an understanding with President Kennedy: "Let's not rock the boat with anything that's going to cause a big problem with California, particularly southern California, at least until after the '64 elections." He didn't want Udall taking sides with his state of Arizona as opposed to California with their big electoral vote and Arizona with its tiny little one. I can't prove that, but it makes a lot of sense to me in retrospect. But it changed a lot of things, and I personally feel that there was something to that, and so did some other people whom I talked to.

I've never talked too much about the Central Arizona Project to anyone because it was such a traumatic experience for me personally. I caught a lot of hell from everyone when I was carrying out the senator's orders. I became a very, very controversial figure, not only in Arizona but back here among the delegation, in the Senate, in the Upper Basin—I think I got more press in Colorado than I ever received in Arizona over the years. This was mainly because everyone thought I was manipulating Carl Hayden, that he was getting older—and there's no question that as he grew older he gave me more and more authority, and he trusted me totally. And it put a big burden on me, because I had really no expertise in all this, other than what I had acquired through practical experience up here in the political field and what I learned as I went along. I used to spend nights reading, and coming over on weekends, and sitting in the office going over files, and meeting with people, getting educated as I was going along and as everything was coming up. But thanks to the senator and some of these people, I think I really had a good overall feel for what had to be done, what could be done, and where the old man wanted to go—meaning Carl Hayden—and who our opponents were and how they were going to play the game.

Anyhow, back to Charlie Reed.

RITCHIE: Right, you had started that "chilling story."

ELSON: Well, we were down at the Jefferson Hotel, had a suite there that faced out onto Sixteenth Street, and across the way was the Hotel 1500. I think I was talking to some woman across the street, but he was so mad at Stewart that he wanted to go have a meeting with him and let him know how he felt about a lot of matters, and particularly about his plan and why Stewart wouldn't issue a report on a simple Central Arizona Project, or get the Bureau to issue their feasibility study, which Stewart from the beginning refused to do, giving all sorts of reason.

This was late in the afternoon, and he finally got an appointment through Orren Beaty, who was Stewart Udall's number one man at the time, to see the Secretary about five o'clock, something like that. He went in and put on his best cowboy suit and boots, and got all spruced up. I was on the telephone when he came out. We had agreed that after he got back he would brief me on what happened, and I would wait for him to return, and then we'd have dinner, because he was leaving the next morning

to go back to Arizona. I think he was getting married again, he had gone through a whole horrible divorce, but he was marrying this other woman that week when he got back to Arizona. He came out of the bedroom and into the living room of the suite and went to the door and stopped. He said, "Roy," in a loud voice, "I am going to Nineteenth and F, aren't I?" I was talking on the phone, I knew he was saying something but I didn't pay too much attention. He repeated it at least two more times, same thing. Finally, he said, "[Expletive], Roy, I am going to Nineteenth and F, aren't I?" I put my hand over the receiver and I said, "Yeah, Charlie, yeah, I'll see you later." So he left. Shortly after that my conversation came to an end, and I hung up the phone and said, "Nineteenth and F? Christ, he's not even close to the Department of Interior. That's at Nineteenth and C." I didn't think too much more about that, because he had been there a thousand times probably during his career, and certainly he knew where the secretary's office was.

Well, he came back, and he was still fuming. Apparently they had a real shouting match and it was not very friendly. He briefed me on everything. When he briefed me we went downstairs in the Jefferson and sat at a little table, just as you go in the entrance. It was lovely place, and it still is. We were sitting at a table for two. We both order steak, salad, baked potato, all that, and he's briefing me. Our steaks come and we're eating, he's briefing me, and he's still mad. I looked up from cutting my food, and all of a sudden Charlie goes plop, his face falls right in his plate. I thought, "Oh, my God!" My first reaction was he was having a heart attack. So I called the waiter and said, "Get a doctor, I think my friend's having a heart attack." The waiter comes over, big black man, I had known him from before, he said, "There's nothing wrong with him, he's just drunk." I said, "What do you mean? The guy's been on the wagon for years." He said, "Nah, you should have seen him in here last night." So I went over and felt his pulse. He was out, but his pulse was steady and regular. After awhile I asked the waiter, "Will you help me get him up to the suite?" Here's this little guy, wiry as hell but he couldn't have weighed more than a hundred and twenty-five, thirty pounds soaking wet. We carried him up to the suite, or dragged him up, it was like carrying a sack of cement and took him in.

In the living room there was a couch, sort of an extra bed, and we put him on that. The waiter left. I rolled him over, took off his tie, shoes and all that, and checked his pulse every few minutes. Finally I rolled him over on his stomach, after I got his coat

off, checked for dentures, all this other stuff, and put his hand under his face so if he did get sick and threw up he wasn't going to smother in his own vomit. I checked everything and called my wife. I said, "Would you come get me?" We had just moved over to Virginia. She drove in. I said, "I'll meet you downstairs in fifteen or twenty minutes." So I sat there with him and he was just breathing so well, I checked his pulse at least every two, three minutes, finally lowered the lights, but I left a lamp on near him in case he woke up and had to go to the bathroom or something like. The last thing I did was check his pulse one more time, looked at him real carefully. Left, went downstairs, told the guy at the desk, whom I had known for years, that he had to get this guy up by six o'clock in the morning. I said, "I don't care if you have to go up and open his door, he's got to catch this airplane because he's getting married." And I go to leave.

My wife drives up and I get in the car. I quickly said why I was detained a little bit. We hadn't gone a block before she said, "Wouldn't you feel better if you went back and checked on him for sure?" We hadn't gotten to K Street from the Jefferson. We turned around and went back up Connecticut, we had to come around to get in front of the Jefferson coming back down from the north, and pulled in. I went to the desk, and I said, "Give me the key, I just want to go check on the guy one more time." I went back upstairs. As soon as I opened the door I knew the guy was dead. I went over, same position I had left him in, hand under his face, not a sign of anything, but no pulse, nothing. I grabbed the phone right away and called the desk and said, "Get a rescue squad and an ambulance here right away." They were there within two or three minutes. It was about as fast as I had every seen a response. They came up and they worked on him for awhile, put oxygen and all that. I kept standing there and I said, "Is he still alive?" They kept saying yeah, but then they said, "We've got to get him to the hospital." They put him on a stretcher and started to wheel him out, but they took off the oxygen. I said, "Why did you take the oxygen off if he's still alive?" They said, "We've got to get him to the hospital," and they went wheeling out and said, "We're going to Washington Hospital Center."

They took off and my wife and I followed. By the time we got to the hospital, homicide was already there, because under D.C. law if there's a death in a hotel and all that you've got to go through all this stuff. Immediately I was being question about what happened, I went through the whole story, what happened during the afternoon

and evening. We were all going on the theory that it was a heart attack, and this detective said there would be an autopsy. After I left the hospital, I went back to the office and then I had to call the fiancée and all the people in Arizona that we had lost one of our key people in this whole Central Arizona fight. It was a horrible night, I don't know what time I got to bed, but I only had about an hour or so of sleep and came back in the office and was there early in the morning, answering phones and trying to explain to everyone what had happened.

About noon this same detective calls. The reception said that this detective was on the line. He said, "The autopsy ought to be finished, but do you suppose you could come out and identify the body? By that time we'll have the result of the autopsy." I said, "Of course." He said, "Do you know where the D.C. morgue is?" I said, "I don't think so." He said, "It's at Nineteenth and F, Southeast." I dropped the damn phone! Even as I tell it now, I still get chills going up and down my spine. He knew where he was going all right, because the Department of Interior is at Nineteenth and C, Northwest. It's one of those stories I think I ought to write up for *Readers' Digest* or *One Step Beyond*. But he was deadlier than hell.

When I went out to identify the body I went out in the senator's limousine. One of the senator's assistants went out with me. When we got out there we went to the wrong morgue, there's one out there for the hospital, and then there's the D.C. morgue, but we got there and identified the body. The assistant coroner was there. I said, "It was, of course, a heart attack, wasn't it?" He said, "Oh, no, he choked to death on a small piece of steak." That really killed me, because I did everything I knew how to do to prevent anything like that from happening. They theorized because there was no sputum, no moisture, nothing, no mark on the bedspread or anything, that he had started to get sick and it just came up and caught in his windpipe and that was it. I guess he had been hitting the booze and he was drunk enough that he just died. It made a nervous wreck out of me. So, we lost Charlie.

Anyhow, at that time Goldwater was on the Interior Committee and the senator was not. Then, I think it was about this time that they had another reorganization in the Senate. I forget which committee Barry went on, it might have been Armed Services, from Interior to Armed Services—wasn't there a major reorganization going then? This was about the same time that I had urged the senator to get on the Space

Committee. But Barry left the Interior. That really sort of upset the senator. It forced Carl Hayden to go on the Interior Committee. Now he sat on the Interior Committee, as a junior member of course, as well as the Appropriations chairman. He was a little disappointed in Barry that he would leave the committee right at that particular moment, but never said anything about it.

Senator Hayden's plan was to move this ahead as a simple project, because he thought he had earned over the years by helping everyone else that there was no reason why now he should not have his project. We did encounter California's opposition, which was mainly masterminded by Northcut Ely. They wanted these guarantees. Then the question of water supply came up. Then the Secretary and the Department of Interior had their own plans for a regional development. This played into the hands of Wayne Aspinall, who was chairman of the House Interior Committee. Then everyone started questioning the amount of water in the river that could be utilized. We had hearings, the senator forced some hearings even though we didn't even have the Bureau of the Budget report, or a Bureau of Reclamation report on the feasibility of the project. It should have been all done, they had done the studies, the state had contributed money.

Stewart and the Department for whatever their reason came up with this regional plan, and that delayed things and everyone started exploiting that. Then they came up with this Pacific Southwest Water Plan, with all its ramifications. Of course, this just irritated the hell out of Jackson, who was chairman of the Interior Committee and Maggie in the Pacific Northwest, because we were going to take their water in this five billion dollar scheme to move all this water down there, which you knew wasn't going to happen. And Carl Hayden looked at that as another delaying tactic. Of course California exploited all that, and the Upper Basin didn't want to see this develop either.

Then came the controversy over the dams, and Stewart and some of the other people were afraid of the environmentalists, led by [David] Brower and the Sierra Club, and the National Park Association, and the Arboretum, and all this, about the Bridge and Marble Canyon dams. We only originally went with the Bridge Canyon because that's all we really needed for that, but then everyone wanted to put in Marble for more cash revenues to develop a development fund. The senator was irritated very much about the so-called environmentalists because he was the father of the Grand Canyon

National Park and the Monument. I think I mentioned how he deliberately drew the boundaries of the Monument and also preserved these sites, knowing that someday this would be one of the best dam sites along the Colorado River, particularly Bridge, that it might buy some water into the lower reaches of the Grand Canyon National Park, about twelve miles, and the Park is about a hundred and forty miles from east to west. He had always contemplated that dam, and got irritated at some of the PR-type of actions that were taken particularly by the Sierra Club, who used pictures of the Grand Canyon that weren't even near Bridge Canyon dam to show how it was going to be destroyed.

Most people in the East and other places, everyone always said, "We're for the Central Arizona Project, *but*. . ." It was "but this," "but that." You don't need the dams, you can use a coal-firing plant, because we had fossil fuels in Arizona, low-grade coal, and then you went to nuclear energy and all these various alternatives. All of it meaning: "We like the Central Arizona Project, but we really don't want you to build it." That's what it narrowed down to. As things progressed, they got lots of allies along this way. Oh, God, it seemed like we were always fighting!

Then you had the salinity problem with Mexico, under the '44 treaty. Let me stop right there—I want to say something about the Rifkind report that I didn't when we were talking about that. If you read that, or you read any of the history, the legislative history that Rifkind used to justify his position was the record that Carl Hayden had made, about the Compact, and about the Boulder Canyon Act, and everything else. I mean, he just quoted him all over the place. Carl Hayden had preserved and laid down this beautiful legislative history, which was sort of the swing that Rifkind tied everything together with. He had such a clear concept of it. If you never looked at it, it's one document that's really worth reading if you want to know about what the fight was all about.

Then at the same time, because of these delays and other actions, there was tension between our power authority and the Arizona Interstate State Stream Commission, and the Central Arizona Project Association. The state wanted to finance Marble Canyon dam and bridge alone, you know, we're going to do it alone. Well, Carl Hayden said and knew that the odds of that happening on a river that flowed through so many states and was divided by interstate compact, it's a federal river, that for one state to

stick their own little project in the middle there, the odds weren't too good for that. But our power authority for whatever reasons were pursuing part of that, so there was not the unanimity that we wanted to have. They hired some engineers, did some studies, they were going to finance it by revenue bonds.

It caused some real problems, in fact, it was part of the strategy that I put in this memorandum way back, but Carl Hayden shocked everyone when he put in a bill taking away from the Federal Power Commission any authority to grant a license at Marble Canyon Dam. This was early on, back in '63. Well, that really just—Jesus, I never had so many irate calls, and so did the senator, about taking away from his own state the right to pursue their rightful things. We didn't press it, not at that time, eventually later in the '60s I think it passed and took the authority away. But we hoped it was enough signal to the Federal Power Commission, because California had also, after the Arizona Power Authority had filed for it, they also had filed an application. They wanted the power too, because southern California's power needs were growing so rapidly and of course they wanted the cheap power. They had an application down there too, and we didn't want either one of them to get a license. California could have afforded it a hell of a lot better than Arizona could, if they wanted to go it alone. So that caused consternation.

As I look back on it, even then there was never this unanimity that Aspinall and others insisted you have to have. We had to make peace with California and everyone else. The senator was really upset that he didn't get a chance to move it along and take his chances. If we had to make compromises to expand it, which we eventually did, into a broader regional bill, or for instance to take on the environmentalists, we never had a chance to fight an early battle. We were sort of convinced, the senator was, that we could have won if we had started out early enough, because they weren't that well organized, though they had been successful up in Echo Park and things like that. But he felt that he had a lot of Brownie chips that both sides owed him, even from California and the Upper Basin. That's why I give credence to this idea that nothing was supposed to happen until after '64 to begin with, because they had no plans, the Bureau didn't, the Department of Interior.

Then at the same time came along the salinity question. The State Department wanted to bypass sharing this water that was coming down from the Welton-Mohawk

down there in Yuma and the salinity content was very high. We had a big fight with the White House and the State Department on that. The guy who was ramrodding that was a guy by the name of Bob Sayre in the State Department, he later became an ambassador. He was pushing this and wanted to kiss Mexico's [expletive] at any cost and not make a big issue. Johnson was going down there to have meetings. The interesting thing about that, if you read the '44 treaty, and again Carl Hayden and Earnest McFarland made quite a record that the Mexican government would take water from any and all sources, whatever the content was, they never got into quality. The thing that was happening, even with the water that was being delivered to Mexico under the treaty, even though the salt content was high, they were irrigating more acres than they could rightfully use—not rightfully, but I mean could have successfully irrigated with that quantity of water. Something like 440,000 acres. The interesting thing about that: a lot of those lands, although they were operated supposedly by Mexicans, it was really Anderson-Clayton that had the biggest interest in all that and financed most of it. They were irrigating more 125,000 more acres and they weren't using enough water to leach, you know, to get the salts to drain through, so yeah they were salting that, but not so much as a result of our project. So we got into arguments over that. Then who was going to pay for it. Seems like we were fighting the whole world.

Then in our own delegation relationships were strained. I got the blame for a lot of that because they thought I was unduly influencing the senator to take such a hard stand. Part of the problem was aggravated because of the quarrels that our office, Senator Hayden's office, got into with Secretary of the Interior over patronage matters after he became a member of the cabinet. So there was a lot of resentments and political undercurrents there that added to this. Now, Mo, his brother, was on the Interior Committee. We had John Rhodes over there on the Appropriations Committee. I didn't, and I'm not sure the senator did, although he always respected Stewart, but we didn't quite trust Stewart as secretary because he was supposedly Secretary of the Interior for the whole nation, and he was taking the high road while we were down there trying to look out for the interests of Arizona. I sort of felt, though it never really came up, that when we had some of these conferences that they next thing I'd know Stewart would know everything that had happened at the meeting, from either his brother telling him or something like that. So a lot of things, particularly on some strategy that the senator had in mind, we didn't feel that we could share as openly as we should have been able to, had there been a greater sense of trust—and I'll take my

fair share of the blame for that because I really didn't trust what was going on. All the senator could see, and I could see, was just further and further delay if we were going to have these studies. And everyone was trying to blackmail us, from the Upper Basin, it was just a nightmare going on all the time.

I know that some of the early memoranda that we did got to people. I had been too candid, I know, on the politics of some of mine. But I think as it turned out in the long run it might have been beneficial because in that memorandum on the politics of what should be done I had made all sorts of recommendations about what projects he could cut, on what justification there would be for him, in the Upper Basin and in California, it just went through all through a list of retaliatory actions that he could take in the Appropriations Committee and other places if we didn't get the type of cooperation he felt entitled to. And I'd sort of documented it with how he had helped bring these projects about, and where they were, and all the other things. The information was there, what we were going to do, but we were frustrated in a lot of it because of the getting into this bigger plan. I've always wondered what would have happened had the old man had had a chance to just pursue—because there was other ways that we could have brought pressure on Aspinall in the House. Carl Hayden always knew that he could get the bill through the Senate at will, anytime he wanted to. Scoop was just wonderful in all this. Of course, he was looking out for his interests, but he also wanted to see that Carl Hayden got his long-sought project, just because of the respect he had for him. We always were outnumbered in the House by the California delegation and others, so we always knew the battle was going to be over there.

Then they started playing games with us, both California and Aspinall, about "you've got to do this," "you've got to do that." Then we started getting heat from our own delegation and people at home, "Carl Hayden, use your power, let's move this along." We did move it along. Then Aspinall announced he wasn't going to hold any more hearings, and nothing was going to happen. In the meantime, Kennedy had been assassinated, Johnson was now president—that's when we worked out some of the salinity problems at that time. I should tell you about the call from the president over the salinity problem, which is sort of funny, but that's for later.

The senator got lots of pressure to move it along, even though the House wasn't doing it. We were successful in putting the monkey on the House's back. We wouldn't

do anything until they reported out a bill, because eventually we agreed to giving California some sort of guarantee in times of shortages for their 4.4. But as the price for giving that, the senator insisted that the House had to send a bill over to the Senate, and that was incorporated in a bunch of legislation.

Well, as I say, the battles that went on within our own delegation, and then of course in '64 I ran. The senator trusted me totally, but I always felt at a disadvantage. You were dealing with people who were experts, supposedly, in this area, and I knew the trust that the senator had in me. I was sort of his chief negotiator in all these things. During that whole time of the '60s, only once having anything to do with the Central Arizona Project did Senator Hayden and I get at cross-purposes, where I was taking a different direction that he was. In one meeting that he was attending, and I was taking the position which he had told me to take at this other meeting, and was very successful at mine, and here he was meeting with [Thomas] Kuchel or Scoop or someone and he gave away some things that put me in just a horrible position with everyone else. So when he told me what he had done, I said, "Jesus Christ, you can't do that. All your strategy has worked so far." He thought about it a little while and said, "You're right." And instead of his bringing me around to his position, he went back and said, "No, I can't. You're going to have to release from that. I can't do that, at least not now."

Out of all these wild sessions that went on, and meetings with the governor of California and his people and our own governor, anything that I did, I did in his name, which is where a lot of people made mistakes. Stewart Udall would have Floyd Dominy, who was then head of the Reclamation Service to go over to see the senator. The senator really liked Floyd Dominy, and thought he was a hell of a commissioner. A big [expletive], womanizer and all that, but he was a hell of a commissioner of Reclamation. But he used to go over and see the senator at Stewart's orders, because they thought I had too much influence on the senator, to bring him around the other way. Well, what they didn't know was that the next morning Carl Hayden would come in and tell me the whole story. There wasn't a thing that I did during all that time that wasn't with the approval of the senator, or he didn't know about.

All I was doing was assuming a lot of the details. I was his hatchet man, I was his negotiator, and caught a lot of hell for it because they didn't think this was what the

senator really wanted. We had so many conversations about it, and before we'd take any steps affecting anyone in any state, we had pretty much gone over it pretty bit and had lengthy discussions about it, particularly on the weekends when it was quiet and you had time to sit down and map the next strategy. I caused some people some real harm, like Bill Gookin, the state water engineer. The senator really thought he was very fine, and when the set up a task force back there and brought all these people back to help with it, Bill Gookin was one of the ones that we relied very heavily on for engineering stuff, and then we worked with the other attorneys, but we had our own internal stuff. I say it was just such a nightmare of stuff going on.

Aspinall was a tough hombre. He wanted some of his projects eventually included the in the regional plan. But we always found, though I admired his talent and he was always a gentleman, but Northcut Ely—Mike Ely—was really the thorn. We could see his hand, which he of course would deny, but you could spot Mike's stuff all the time. He was going to win that way what he couldn't win in the court. We went through I don't know how many battles, but the senator did trust governor [Edmund] Brown, Senior. We even got into trouble, having discussions with him, with our own delegation. I particularly got into some real difficulties with him, working with two of his people, [Russell] Sprague who was California's representative here in Washington at the time and later became the head of the FDIC, and another person who interestingly the state of Arizona hired, a guy we were working with from California by the name of Wes Steiner. We hired him as our state water engineer after the project was authorized, which I thought very strange. Another guy, who was a classy individual, by the name of Abbott Goldberg, who was one of the assistant state attorneys for California. A gentleman, a man of his word, a very bright guy. The senator trusted him.

He also trusted Governor Brown, but again Brown only had limited room to maneuver too. We had some very good negotiations with him, although we were criticized by our own state and our own people. Actually, I was pulled out of dental appointment once where they ordered me not to even have discussions anymore with Brown. Of course, these were unofficial meetings. As far as Senator Hayden was concerned, they were going to be official if we worked out some things that he could live with. So he really didn't give a damn at that point what the Stream Commission said, or our own governor or anyone else, at some of these junctures. That's how bad

it had gotten. When they pulled me out this one time and ordered me, I said, "Look, I don't give a [expletive] what you say. I'm not working for you. I'm working for Carl Hayden, and what Carl Hayden wants me to do, I'm going to do." I think I walked out of the goddamned place. Oh, then they took Bill Gookin away from us and sent him home—well, no, I think we prevented him from being taken away, the senator got on the phone, but it was a nasty, tense time.

I should tell a story about Governor Brown when I ran in '64. We had had some negotiations with Governor Brown and his two people. In fact, I think I made a trip to Sacramento with Bill Gookin and one of the senator's other aides that I brought back here, a guy by the name of Ed Davis, who was an attorney and my chief assistant. I remember when we went on that trip to Sacramento, in one of the early negotiations with Governor Brown's people, they had just completed their Natural Resources Building in Sacramento. It must have been nineteen floors. They had three floors of computers. This was for their state water plan and all the other stuff. They'd come out with all these flow charts and computer print-outs of all the water flows from every dam and reservoir, and we were up there, myself and Ed David, and our water engineer who had a circular sliderule. This was how we were doing our calculations! I looked at that and said, "This is a little overwhelming to say the least." [laughs]

But back to Brown coming over in '64 when I was running. When I heard that he was coming into the state, I had already won the Democratic nomination, and he was coming in to campaign for the Democratic ticket. I found out about it and I called the state chairman, and Goddard who was the gubernatorial candidate, and Mo Udall, and I said, "What the [expletive] are you guys thinking about? Here we have been fighting California for forty years and you're bringing in the governor to campaign for us? You've got to be out of your gourd!" But they had already invited him and it was too late to withdraw the invitation. So we did the next best thing from my standpoint in the campaign, we got him to put into his speech some nice things about me, and how we had worked together negotiating, and hoped that we would get this all worked out. I couldn't have written it any better if I wanted an endorsement.

So he comes to Phoenix for a luncheon. All the press is there, the place is packed. I'm sitting at the head table next to him. Now, mindful by this time I had all these law suits against me, the call girl law suit filed against me and everything else. Well, he

gets up to make his speech and he starts ad libbing. He says, "When Roy picked me up at the airport this morning and we were driving into downtown Phoenix, I noticed one of his billboards. It's a nice striking billboard and I liked it, but I said, 'Roy, why don't you try the slogan that I used when I ran to be attorney general of California,' and if any of you are familiar with California political history you'll know that I was the only Democrat that won on a statewide basis that year, and from that position I went on to become governor of the largest state of the union." He went on, "Roy said to me, 'Governor, what slogan was that?'" And there was this long pause, and he said, "Roy, use: Women of Arizona, Wake Up With Roy Elson!" Well, you could have heard a pin drop in the place [laughs].

Here my wife was sitting at the head table with me, and all of a sudden I couldn't hold it any longer, I just broke up with great laughter and the whole place came apart, just a roar came up of laughter. Well, he thought he was just funnier than hell. He went on and gave his speech, and later that afternoon we flew down on his private airplane to Tuscon, where he was going to make an evening speech. I said, "Governor, you probably know that I didn't want you in this state in the first place. I'm the only one of the Democrats that really objected to your being here. And now I know why. I hope you don't repeat the same story." And then I told him what had happened. He said, "Oh, God, why didn't some one tell me?" [laughs] And years later I saw him, this was in the '70s when I was a lobbyist for the broadcasters, I ran into him out in LA somewhere, in some restaurant, and we were talking about it. We both laughed about it then, but it wasn't so damn funny at the time. Anyhow, where were we?

RITCHIE: We were back when Brown was still governor and you were engaged in negotiations. This would have been around 1966.

ELSON: Actually, they started back before that and then they went on. Both his people, Steiner and particularly Abbott Goldberg, he's now—I think he made him a state judge later—but he was just a really fine man, and very, very, very bright. We worked pretty well with him, but still our fight was with southern California and the irrigation districts there, in the Imperial Valley and the metropolitan water districts and all that. But we knew we had to get the House to move something. Things started hitting me—and now I'm confused of when some of the time events were, when these things happened.

The critical period of really moving and finally getting off was from the '65 to '68. We eventually had to guarantee California their right in times of shortages, which the senator only very reluctantly did. Then all the pressure started building up for not using the Bridge Canyon or Marble Canyon as the cash register for the project, or the development fund, deferring that. A lot of it was due to the pressures that were building up from the groups that I mentioned, the so-called environmentalists. And what just boggled my mind, outside of using a bunch of phony statistics and propaganda, was their advocating these steam plants as one source on the Navajo Reservation, and then nuclear energy later. Of course, you realize that hydropower is the cleanest, cheapest power, because you can turn those generators off and on and it's not a pollutant.

I remember going to a meeting in Stewart Udall's office where they were seriously talking about abandoning the dams and using this coal-fired plant on the Navajo Reservation, and how it was going to benefit the Indians. I said, "I don't understand. You're supposed to be one the great environmentalists"—there were only three of us in the office, maybe four, maybe Dominy and Eddy Weinberg who was then with the Department solicitor's office, maybe Orren Beaty, and Secretary Udall, maybe it was a bigger meeting than that, but I just remember saying, "I just do not understand your position at all as an environmentalist, or any of the other groups, because you're advocating putting a huge steam plant on this reservation that's going to pollute the entire [expletive] southwest. And you're supposedly an environmentalist? And the few jobs that the Navajos are going to get, you know they're going to get screwed with the type of contract you're going to have with them. It's not going to amount to that much. And they're going to be tearing up the countryside, because they're just shoveling the coal with bulldozers, it's lowgrade ore." And sure enough, that's what's happened. Christ, that's what they're bitching about now. The smoke from that powerplant is corrupting the Grand Canyon, and the whole damn thing.

But eventually we had to use that approach, and again the senator was really, really bitter, though he never said too much openly about it, about losing particularly Bridge Canyon dam, and Marble. He already had Glen Canyon on the upper reaches of the Grand Canyon, and you had Hoover down at the lower end, and Bridge was only going to block the waters for a few miles in between. The power that they could have generated, and clean power—if he were alive today I'm sure he'd still be irritated with

them. Then of course, now we do have nuclear power, one of the biggest plants in the country at Palo Verde, that hasn't been working yet, and it's only about seventy-five miles upwind from Phoenix!

RITCHIE: The Sierra Club lost its non-profit status with the IRS about that time because of their lobbying.

ELSON: Yeah, I think it was a little later, wasn't it?

RITCHIE: About '67. But it was directly from their lobbying about the Grand Canyon. Did Hayden have anything to do with that?

ELSON: No, we did not. I thought about it. I know I suggested it internally in our own office and to the senator, but he'd have no part of that. I think a lot of people in their various working groups back here—I forget exactly how that came about—but certainly the senator wasn't involved, though he didn't like their tactics, and we did urge something to counteract them, getting a publicity campaign going of our own. I know the taskforce agreed with that, so did John Rhodes and Mo Udall. I'm probably the one in our delegation at the time—because we even had trouble with first Duke Senner from northern Arizona and then later with Sam Steiger. But the guy who was probably the most moderating person in our delegation, from the senator's standpoint, and the one that he trusted, was John Rhodes. I worked well with him. I had more tensions with Mo and some of the others. I always felt, particularly after I had lost the election, Fannin was back here and it was very difficult to work with him. He made it sort of difficult. Fannin really didn't know that much about water, even though he had been governor and was on the Interior Committee.

See, what the taskforce and everyone else in the delegation knew back home, as I mentioned in our last interview, I think, was that Eugene Pulliam, who ran those two big newspapers that permeated the entire state by this time, that he really believed, and no one could convince him otherwise, that Carl Hayden was the man who should call all the shots, and that he knew more about the Colorado River than all of them combined. And he put me in the same category. It wasn't justified, but he felt that way. So they all knew that we had this sort of hand, that if anyone got out of line that we could get an editorial written or some pressure brought to bear, if people were going

in different directions. I can't really think, except maybe at the bill signing, that there was ever a lot of unity among the Arizonans, where we were supposed to be unified. Fortunately, in a water fight, every other state's the same way. They're fighting among themselves and then they're fighting everywhere.

So, though on the surface we looked like we were all getting along fairly well, there was always this tension underneath, because you had a Secretary of the Interior who was from Arizona, who felt he should be leading it, though he was also supposed to be secretary and giving an equal hand to all the other principles, and felt that he was in a better position than Carl Hayden. It always bothered me that here Carl Hayden sat on top of the Appropriations Committee, was chairman of the subcommittee on Interior matters of the Appropriations Committee, was on the Interior Committee, had all this respect up here in the Senate, and Stewart had to come up and beg for everything that he wanted from him, that why we couldn't ever get that report out initially. That gets back to my own theory on why we weren't going to get one early on, it was for political reasons rather than the disharmony in the Upper and Lower Basins and Arizona versus California.

Everyone had said that Carl Hayden couldn't be tough. Well, I think everyone found out later that he could be very tough and could be vindictive. When I look again back on that whole '60s period, from '62 on, again the senator had this long view, he could be patient, but he also knew he had only one term. Of course, any day he could have dropped dead, so he was playing a pretty risky game, but he still felt that he knew what he had to do. So everyone accused me of getting him to be mean, or threaten, but I didn't. I know I helped draft a lot of letters that he wrote that were sort of out-of-character from what people were used to getting. But he read every word, and made some beautiful changes, and signed them all. It was never my signing his name on any of those letters that went either to the Secretary of the Interior or anyone else. When we got into '67 and cutting off funds for the Frying Pan-Arkansas, to get Aspinall's attention, or even attaching the entire Central Arizona Project and a small regional plan to the Senate Appropriations bill. And we had done our headcount. We had the votes and we could have passed that. John Rhodes and the senator and I went to see old Mike Kirwan, I think I mentioned that meeting, during that later period, to set up the stage if we wanted to run it by on the appropriations way. And under the rules, when we were checking out how we would handle that, we could have gotten a vote on

the House floor and bypassed the Interior Committee. So as the time got shorter and shorter, he played some very, very tough games.

RITCHIE: That was late '67, when Aspinall wasn't going to hold hearings anymore.

ELSON: Right, he called them back. But again when you think of that whole history—I call it the CAP, but you had a lot of other projects authorized in that whole thing—it's probably the last big, major, huge reclamation project that Congress will ever enact and pass into law. When I look back through the whole history of the Central Arizona Project, and from what I knew about it, and then being so much involved in leading up to its enactment, it was one of the most exciting, interesting, all-encompassing events. And what it made it unique for me, and I can understand why people didn't trust me, because the senator wanted me to run again, and I did run again in '68 while all this was going on. It almost made it impossible.

When I look back, I don't know how I got through it because I was physically always exhausted. I'd be going to Arizona and coming back, going again. In some of that period in '68 when I was out trying to campaign and get ready, and of course Barry was not in the Senate at that time and knew he was running. The senator wanted me out in Arizona campaigning and everything seemed to be going all right. I'd be back here for a week and then go back to Arizona. Every time a problem would come up, I'd get a call from Ed Davis or someone, "The senator wants to see you." Though he would say, "Go," I'd just get out in Arizona, and he'd say, "Get Roy, I want him back here." By then, I had been involved in every piece of stuff that he had wanted done and helped put it together, so it was an extremely difficult time. I'm sure it was difficult for other members of the Arizona delegation as everyone else, because I was suspect, they knew I was campaigning—no more than they should have been as members of United States Congress, but being a staff member it was a little different. So that whole period was extremely difficult for me, and a lot of people thought I was doing it all for the publicity and for political purposes, some of the things that the senator did.

I'll take a lot of credit for urging very strong actions, and he'd been urged a lot of times, but he was the one that made the judgment of when the timing was right to

do it, when he thought it was right. But it still bothered him that he had to give up more than he wanted to give up, because he never really had a chance, because of other external politics that didn't make it possible for him to move it along the way he wanted to move it along. I don't know whether we would have gotten it enacted any faster, but I don't think we would have had to give up as much as we had to give up eventually, because I think all along he knew that some point along the line he might have to take some actions that were out of character for his reputation, the way people knew him. But people tell me who have seen some of those letters that some of them were really tough, [laughs] they were nasty.

And Aspinall kept—I remember on the Frying Pan-Arkansas, we were talking about shortages, how much water was going to flow to the Lower Basin, so it got very simply, if there's not enough water to come to the Lower Basin, there sure as [expletive] isn't enough water to go through the turbines at Glen Canyon Dam, and there sure in hell isn't enough money to pay it off, so why keep continuing to build this project? Eventually, I felt Aspinall put himself on his own petard, so we had something to work there. There's no question that the senator was prepared to go to war then. He would have pulled out all the stops, from the fall of '67 through '68 when his term was over, he was going to cash in every Brownie point he had. I think everyone knew that there were a lot of people who were going to help him do that. Certainly Scoop did.

But we had problems with—you mentioned Clint Anderson, who was a power in his own right. I don't know how many times we bought New Mexico and Utah and were giving them little things here. It was a difficult time for me with Senator Anderson because he thought I was Paul Eaton, and Paul Eaton he thought had done something in the Appropriations Committee that affected New Mexico adversely and he was blaming me because Eaton and Elson, I guess, aren't too far apart. And Clint was very close to Stewart Udall, and there's no question that Stewart was painting bad stories about me and how I was unduly manipulating Carl Hayden, which was a myth that they were actually believing. To this day, I don't know whether they understand that Carl Hayden knew everything that was going on. He wasn't this senile old man that they wanted to make him out to be, and so did California, a lot of people tried to do that.

But even Clint Anderson and others, the whole West, and on his own committee, Ellender and the people from the South, they were all prepared to see that Carl Hayden—I'm convinced of this—that after all these years there was that much feeling, and you know this place as well as I do, there's not a lot of really genuine feeling about really wanting to help someone. They'll do it if it's in their own self-interest to. But I'm convinced that there was this outpouring that you could feel almost, that before Carl Hayden walked out of this Senate he was going to have that damn project, if it was the last thing everyone up here did. Even Tom Kuchel, who could put on the best damn show for home that I've ever seen, he wanted Carl Hayden to get his project. I think he even probably resented the fact that we had to give up so much to get it. I don't think he would have felt hurt had we won it without all the concessions that we ended up making to California and the Upper Basin.

It was the most exciting, fascinating period of time that I've ever been around. I'm sure there's a lot of things that I've forgotten, because as I mentioned at the beginning, after it was all over and I was down with the senator at the signing at the White House, when Johnson signed the bill, I felt that I had as much right as anyone standing in that room to say that I had a lot to do with helping get that project, mainly because of what I was able to do for the senator. But so many careers were ruined, people were in fights, friendships lost, that when it was all over and I lost the election to Barry, and that next year when I came back and figured out what I was going doing, I almost deliberately went out of my way to try to forget all the war that went on for that period of time. Just thinking about it, when you mentioned that you wanted to talk about it, I could feel the scars start opening up, and I feel bad about some of the things that were said and done, and the knife cutting, back stabbing, and all the other things that went on, and the people that got hurt in the process. Even now I'm still shaking a little bit, thinking about some of them. And I really admired a lot of the people who were involved, and had a great deal of respect for a lot of them. But, as I say, I can't think of one subject that brings together, outside of war, more emotions, more controversy, more things affecting every part of a civilized society than a fight over a bucket of water.

RITCHIE: Well, I notice that the tape is about to end. It's twelve o'clock, you have a lunch. And I have a lot of questions I'd like to follow up on this. But as a case study this is spectacular insight into all the things that go on up here.

ELSON: Oh, really?

RITCHIE: I always think about those political science flow-charts that say this is the way a law is passed, which bear no relation to reality. And here we're discussing decades of fighting and all the complications that go into it. It's a fascinating story.

ELSON: And when I thought about it last night, because it came up with this reporter who is staying with me, I said that what from my standpoint made it so wonderful, outside of also having the chance to run for the United States Senate twice, was the interplay of all the human events and the people, because it always gets down to making judgments about people and their motivations, and analyzing their strengths and weaknesses, and trying to manipulate that to achieve your goal.

End of Interview #9

SECOND CAMPAIGN FOR THE SENATE

Interview #10

Thursday, July 12, 1990

RITCHIE: Last week you gave me an overview of the whole Central Arizona Project and took it up to Johnson's signing the bill. That raised a question for me: what was Lyndon Johnson's role in all this? You had talked about Kennedy, but Johnson was president during that whole period when CAP was coming to gestation, and I wondered whether he took an active interest in the CAP?

ELSON: Oh, yeah, he did. At one point near the end he came out with a big endorsement of the Lower Colorado River, whatever the project was called, but it was mainly the CAP. But we had problems with the Bureau of the Budget all the time—there was a great guy down there, [Elmer] Staats—mainly because they wanted to change some of the criteria in the memorandum that they used for analyzing Bureau of Reclamation and Public Works Projects. We always had fights over that. Then of course he was working through the Secretary of the Interior, it was really his responsibility, so Johnson was listening to a lot of that. But I couldn't say that he really played a big role. At the right time he did the right things that were asked of him. His endorsement wasn't totally the way we would have liked it, but he did come through when we needed him the most, in urging the quick enactment of the project. That was either in '67 or '68. But we had difficulties with him on the Mexican treaty.

RITCHIE: You said there was a telephone call from the president.

ELSON: Yeah. Of course, the senator was here when that whole treaty was negotiated and again he had laid quite a record about that whole subject way back. The Welton-Mohawk Project in Arizona was being blamed for all the salinity that was going down river. There was no question that it was contributing to it. Of course, Mexico is on the tail end of the river. Anyone on the tail end of the river gets the worst of everything. As I mentioned, our claim was that they were over-irrigating and not using the water for leaching as they should. They were cultivating well over a hundred thousand acres, and a lot of those so-called small Mexican farms were really being financed by Anderson-Clayton. So you had that mix of interests.

Then there was this guy in the State Department who headed up the Mexican desk, who was very ambitious (you would have thought he was representing Mexico more than he was the United States) by the name of Bob Sayre. He later became an ambassador to somewhere. A very bright guy.

We took a very strong position on that, particularly when they wanted to bypass Morales Dam (that's the last dam on the Colorado) and cut a channel and get all this water. We were saying they took it from any and all sources. Then they talked about a salinity plant and all the other things that were doing it. But it got to be a hassle. I know on this one occasion Carl Hayden was at the White House discussing this subject. In between his leaving the White House and returning to the office, Lyndon called and told me that Carl Hayden had made an agreement with him on the salinity question and hoped I wasn't going to cause any problems [laughs]. I said, "Well, Mr. President, if Carl Hayden's made an agreement with you, that certainly takes care of it. I'm hardly one to cause any problems." I thought it was rather unusual. When the senator got back, I told him about it. He said, "Bull." We didn't make any agreement. He's pulling one of his tricks." Later on we got it all worked out before the project was authorized, and got it charged to the general taxpayer—I mean the cost of doing all the work, and the bypass channel.

But it seemed to me that there was always a problem. There was never unity. There was always a very delicate balance with the Upper Basin states, and of course Scoop and Maggie, particularly Scoop, they weren't going to let anything happen. You could hardly study the transmountain diversions from the Columbia Basin into the Upper Basin or Northern California. And then with California, because of Northcut "Mike" Ely, we were always suspicious. When I look back on it, I'm just continually amazed that the damn thing was ever done.

Through that period, from the time we got the Supreme Court decision to eventually its enactment and signing at the end of September in '68, I'm pretty proud of the way the senator handled it. He was attacked at home, though no one would really openly attack him very much. He still knew the direction he wanted to go. We were forced to give up more than he certainly wanted to, particularly the dams, also the guarantee to California in times of shortage. But as he played it out against the changing scene during those years, you can look back and see that he made some very

good decisions in not moving things when the pressure was on for him to move them in the Senate. He always knew the battle was in the House and trying to force the House, and Wayne Aspinall, and the Californians, and the Upper Basin, to move something along that we could all live with. He made some very critical decisions and we caught a lot of hell for it.

And of course during all that time there was always this undercurrent of rumors about the senator's health and his frailty, that I was really manipulating him, and this sort of thing. They were always worried in Arizona that he was going to drop dead any day and wouldn't be around, and they'd lose that opportunity. They said he wasn't using his power the way he should, and everyone was second-guessing him. Particularly from '65, after I had lost the election and come back, through '68, was just a nightmarish time for him and for me. I'm surprised that we kept our sanity through it all. But at the critical times he did exercise that power.

You know, he was on the Interior Committee, and when it came time for mark-up, we marked everything up and passed it out for the last time, I was in with him in all the executive sessions. We had our notebooks, and as we were marking it up, out in the hearing room was some of our taskforce and attorneys. When we got in a critical situation I'd go out and talk to them about what we were going to do and not do—"anyone have any objections?"—and go back into the mark-up. Again, that was an awkward position, because when you had people around like Clint Anderson, and Tom Kuchel, and Jackson, and all that—but Jackson was really the one who made sure that I was there to help the senator. Where I could almost participate in it, even though there were other staff members in the executive session, but they only responded when they were called on. But I was almost included like one of the senators, which really is, I'm sure you can appreciate it, an awkward position to be in when you know you're just a damn clerk. But I did it.

The senator had forgotten more about the damn river than most of the men in that room ever heard. Some of the men on that committee could really be nasty [expletive], particularly Clint Anderson. He could be a mean [expletive], and was. But a smart son-of-a-gun too. I would give Scoop Jackson great credit for not only going out of his way to look out for the interests of Carl Hayden and Arizona but trying to resolve all the differences and work well with his staff, and some of the people on the committee,

and then his personal staff. His office was right around the corner from ours so we were always meeting in the hallway, and when Scoop would call and say he wanted to come around, the senator would say, "No, I'll come around to your office." The senator was always good at that, he'd go to the other person's office. But Scoop would come around to ours and we'd have these conferences going on, and most of the time I was always included in all those, and so was his AA at the time, a guy by the name of Sterling Monroe. We really worked well together, and they kept up fully apprised of what was going on, and what Stewart Udall, the Secretary, was telling them, and what Anderson was telling them, and what the Upper Basin, [Frank] Moss and some of the others, because you had practically all the western states represented on that committee, both from the Upper and Lower Basin. So I give Jackson very high marks.

When the mark-up came, Carl Hayden had some proxies—either the senator had them or Scoop had them—and so poor Tom Kuchel knew he was outvoted. He would rant and rave and say this was unconstitutional, or "I thought this was a democracy." I think that was his theme. The senator said, "Well, that's what we're exercising right now. You're watching democracy at work." As he voted these proxies [laughs]. It was exciting, gee, you couldn't help but be excited about all of it, but it was always tense. Here we were talking about serious, long-range problems. I felt uniquely honored to be there with them and part of all that, watching and participating in it.

RITCHIE: It must have shocked a lot of people when Hayden, who had this image of being so genial, really did use the power of appropriations. I can think of at least three times in that period when he threatened. One was the cutting off of funds to the Federal Power Commission if they approved a dam, another was threatening Aspinall. . . .

ELSON: With Frying Pan-Arkansas.

RITCHIE: And then also threatening Ronald Reagan, the governor of California, with cutting off some funds for northern California water projects.

ELSON: Oh, yeah.

RITCHIE: And Reagan backed down like everyone else did in the face of that.

ELSON: Well, though he was not known for anything like that, I think everyone respected the fact that he had that power, if he wanted to exercise it. And of course the senator had that long, long record of helping every other state in the west—in the Union, for that matter—but helping everyone else with their's. When his time came he sort of expected a little reciprocity. I don't know how much responsibility or credit I should take, but early on—I mentioned that memorandum that we drafted when Charlie Reed died, and Bill Gookin and I were putting together all those figures, way back—I had gone through and identified every project, what their weaknesses were, and when their appropriation was, and the additional authorizations needed, and then had outlined where the senator could bring some pressure to bear if he wanted to as things moved along. Pretty much outlined it.

The senator was really reluctant to take all those actions but could also see that it was needed, so we had some pretty sharp exchanges and letter writing. If you see his files, there are some unusually forceful letters that are not quite like Carl Hayden. A lot of those I helped draft, but there wasn't one of them that he didn't add to, or make better, or rewrite in such a way that it said what we wanted to say and more forceful, and yet in very tactful language. But you couldn't miss the message in some of those exchanges, whether it was with the Department of Interior or to whoever we might have directed them. And then in the Appropriations Committee there is no question he had the support, even though again in the committee there were a lot of westerners there. But he had their total support.

There's no question in my mind had he decided to attach CAP as a simple thing or a part of a minimal regional program on the public works appropriations bill which had passed that he probably could have done it. That's when we had seen Mike Kirwan with John Rhodes and the senator, and I was at that meeting, where if they had had to go to conference and we would have bypassed the House Interior Committee completely. Then we had a strategy, had the conferees not agreed to it, we had a back-up position. He was prepared, and I think we could have not had a public works appropriations bill that year. Or it would have been a lot different one than had reached that point. It was sort of a game of chicken in many ways.

He was not one to abuse the power that he had. I never saw him abuse his power, because he would rather persuade and work with people, in the long run. Again, it was

that long view, and yet he knew that he was running rapidly out of time. So I think for that reason he was willing to take some extra measures that were not like him. He knew with his long-term view of the world that he wasn't going to be around to help and it was coming to an end. So when he had to use power, he used it. He was criticized for not using it earlier, sooner, but the way the entire thing unfolded and with the lack of unanimity not only in our own state but in the whole region, it's just amazing to me that you got all these parties agreeing to anything, even the time of day. I'm sure we had meetings like that where we couldn't agree on the time of day or even where to meet.

As I say, until we reach some really critical situations, it's probably the last big public works reclamation project that will be enacted. He was very disappointed about losing the Bridge Canyon dam, because over those forty years he had gone to great lengths to make sure that those sites were available, and listened to all those environmentalists and "tree-huggers" that some people call them, I don't. I told you about building the steam plant. It didn't, in my opinion, help the Indians that much. It's the biggest damn open-pit operation in the country now. And it's polluting everything. Then they wanted us to use nuclear energy, and what a disaster that has been. The one big nuclear plant they do have in Arizona now is a mess. No one really said there wasn't a need for the Central Arizona Project. After awhile everyone was saying "Yeah, you ought to have it, *but*." And that included those who were opposed to the dams. So we had to go along with using the steam plant as the vehicle for financing the thing. As I say, there were a lot of bodies along the way.

RITCHIE: One person I wanted to ask more about was Wayne Aspinall, who really in the end became the chief stumbling block to the project. What was it about him that Hayden couldn't cut a deal with him, somehow? Why did he become such an obstacle?

ELSON: Well, I think he definitely was looking out for the Upper Basin. That was his first priority, and certainly for the state of Colorado. He also knew that a lot of his projects that he wanted authorized were questionable under any criteria. Some of them were really questionable. I think he saw the Central Arizona Project as a vehicle to get his projects authorized, where if he had to do them on his own, or as part

of an Upper Basin thing, it might not be possible and certainly extremely difficult. I think he latched onto this as his vehicle.

He was a man who worked at his job. He was a chairman, he ran a very good committee, he had some very talented staff people working for him. He knew the subject well. He was a crusty old guy, but I always sort of liked him because he was a tough hombre too. He spent a lot of time on it. And he had his own home situation to always worry about. I think that until he could line up his things, he didn't want to see the CAP go moving along on its own, or something else with some vague reference to development in the Upper Basin, because some of his projects weren't in order. There were a lot of studies that had to be made, and needed to be put all together and make them ready. I think that was one reason why we could never sit down. Of course, he took pride in his superior knowledge of the river.

The way he ran his committee was: the Senate does its thing and we do our thing. They always sort of threw that up in your face. There weren't any of the informal meetings that we should have had, probably, but didn't have. I think he deliberately didn't want to have some of them, so I don't think you can blame it on us for not trying on occasion. Then he was playing all the cards, too, and he distrusted California also. I think those are some of the reasons why it was difficult to get him to move. I'm saying that when the senator said, "I'll go along with certain things if you get the House to report out a bill, then we'll see what happens." That was early on, '64 or '65 somewhere in there. Then we took other actions.

I don't think that Wayne ever thought that the senator would ever do anything like that. But I think he got the message loud and clear, particularly when he threatened to cut off eleven million, or whatever it was, for Frying Pan-Arkansas, which was really something very important to him. And we had the votes. There's no question, had he pursued that that would have been knocked out. That got his attention. But he was a difficult man to work with, and of course you had Floyd Dominy, who was the Commissioner of Reclamation, was telling him one thing. Stewart was telling him another hand. Everyone was always feeding him. But he had a very good staff that filtered out some of this. His chief guy was really very good. But Aspinall was quite a guy, and he certainly looked out for the Upper Basin. Without him, there probably wouldn't have been any project, in putting all the pieces together. He certainly

deserves great credit. With John Saylor [R-PA] over there sort of mouthing not only the coal interests but the environmental interests, and everyone making an emotional thing. John Saylor was a real character, he was really something else. But Wayne Aspinall was a good chairman. He ran a tight committee, a very tight one [laughs].

RITCHIE: One of the people you've mentioned a lot is Northcut Ely, who was the California lobbyist.

ELSON: Right.

RITCHIE: And Arizona had a lobbyist, Morley Fox.

ELSON: Oh, well, Morley wasn't really a lobbyist, no. Mike Ely of course was a very good lawyer, who always represented those irrigation districts and metropolitan water district, and southern California water interests. He was very bright, and still is, still goes to the office. He had a very agile and devious mind, and was involved in the law suit all along. He knew the river very well. He was born in Arizona. And he worked at it, it seemed like twenty-four hours a day. He was good, but after awhile people were suspicious of his motives and you weren't sure when you cut a deal with him that it would stick, or something wouldn't come up, or you'd be blindsided from something.

He probably got more credit for doing things that he probably didn't do, but maybe encouraged them, that would put roadblocks in the way, because they had the aqueduct and as long as the water was flowing down the river they kept using it, until we eventually got the diversion works bill. Of course, with the way southern California was growing there was no question they would need water, but they were wasting so much water, in the Imperial Valley and all over. They just deliberately diverted it and used it to build up a record. But all of southern California, you would never have had that development without the Colorado River. San Diego wouldn't be there today, the city it is, if it hadn't been for the Colorado. But then all the farming interests were just using great amounts. Did you see the movie "Chinatown?"

RITCHIE: Yeah.

ELSON: That sort is a small little play of what the water wars were about. They'd do all sorts of devious things in the name of securing water rights. So Northcut Ely was just a very formidable foe who was a good legal talent.

But when you ask about Morley Fox, he was not a lobbyist as such. He played it very low key and just sort of attended hearings, tried to keep everyone informed, pass on information, and report, but I don't think he ever really lobbied anyone as such. That was done by members of our taskforce or the Stream Commission and the members themselves, the House members, Rhodes and Udall principally, and then over here ourselves. But Mike was a big, big part of this whole southwest picture. That would be a good source of a book or two, tracing his games.

RITCHIE: The reason I asked was because here were the states sending lobbyists on issues like this, and yet you would think that the members of Congress are really the lobbyists for their states.

ELSON: Yeah, right.

RITCHIE: How does a member of Congress work with this other representative of the state. Does this complicate matters?

ELSON: Well, for instance, to this day one of the persons who got damaged the most, that helped us a lot, that the senator had great confidence in, was Bill Gookin, who was at one time with the Stream Commission and state water engineer, and had gone through the law suit. You needed those experts to counter all the stuff that was being thrown at you, particularly in hydrology, and in engineering, and dam studies, and proposals. We put Bill in a very awkward position at home, with people that he had to work with. I'm sure the people on the Arizona Power Authority and some other interests at home really got him. Later, they almost ruined his career and business, when he set up his own business. I really felt bad about it, but we needed experts like him.

We would use some of the lawyers that were available to us who were with the Stream Commission and Central Arizona Project Association, but they really didn't have them, it was more this taskforce that was formed. We used a number of lawyers,

some were good and some were bad. We had one who was a drunk—I'm not talking about Charlie Reed, either. But we had some very fine legal talent of our own. And for instance for the Yuma area there was one lawyer that pretty much represented not only the city of Yuma but a lot of the irrigation districts there, by the name of Joe Mansfield, who was in the law suit. We worked very closely with him, he was very good. But again, that was almost like an intrastate battle, trying to protect their interests as opposed to the metropolitan area of Maricopa County and Phoenix against those who already had some usage. Again, the Indians, you'd work with those lawyers.

As I said, we had some very good help ourselves, but the one person that stands out that we really relied on during that heavy time, particularly on the engineering side, was Bill Gookin. The senator would also rely on, and had a lot of faith in, Floyd Dominy, though Dominy was put in some awkward positions by the Secretary. Floyd was one of the more agile people on his feet, but he always was helpful to us, and so was his department, a number of people down there that we received some information from. And California had their lobbyist as well as their lawyers, so there were meetings always going on, all the time, between various representatives of the states and different irrigation districts. You were sorting out all these people. We sort of narrowed it down to a few that the senator decided we would run with them and with his knowledge of the river, and all the southwest, and all the water projects.

He wasn't going to get into a lot of meetings and battles and things like that, though we had many of them. Like he sent me, when Brown was governor, to deal with the state water engineers and their legal department. There you had the northern California interests against the southern California interests. It was a good lesson in political reality because of having to know what was motivating a lot of members to do the things that they were doing, or what was going on in their states, and the status. That's where I think a lot of the background work that we did early on paid off, picking out vulnerabilities of individuals, and how you might reach them, and get their attention, and get them to be reasonable gentlemen. It was just a lot of hard work. It would seem like you would be making progress and then the next thing you'd know something would come unglued. It sort of reminded you of dealing with a big bowl of Jello. You'd press here and something would come up over there, and you could never quite get control of the bowl. I don't know what your question was about—Northcut?

RITCHIE: I was wondering about the relationships of these lobbyists and the members.

ELSON: I always said, if I couldn't have the money that was spent on postage for all this, I'd take the money that the lawyers, and engineers, and studies that were made on this whole thing. My God, I'd hate to think of the millions, and millions, and millions of dollars it must have amounted to. We probably spent as much on that as we did on the project [laughs].

RITCHIE: One of the reasons I raised the question is because Senator [Robert C.] Byrd, who is chairman of Appropriations now, was outraged last year when it turned out that West Virginia University had hired a lobbyist to try to get a federal appropriations. His attitude was: I'm your lobbyist, you come to me if you want money for West Virginia. And he pushed through an amendment. . .

ELSON: Right, I'm aware of that.

RITCHIE: That from now on you've got to publicly state who was your lobbyist to try to get an appropriation.

ELSON: But of course, as you recall, during those days you didn't have any lobbying acts. In fact, you still don't have to register if you don't want to, unless you're spending over half your time with a member of Congress on one specific subject.

You can talk about all your reporting requirements and everything else, but in fact, we urged on occasion some people be hired to do a specific job. You asked for help because you knew you just didn't have the resources, the manpower, to track down everything, counter all the opposition. Of course, I've always thought lobbyists were an essential part of the whole government operation. You found out who you could trust. I think the worst thing a lobbyist could do—having been one for a long time, at one time—the worst thing you could do is give a member bad information. You expect it to be partisan in a way, but at least you expect that it can be defended in some way, and any good lobbyist, at least the ones that I've respected in the past always gave you both sides. They'd tell you the weakness in their own position, or tell you what their opponents were saying, and face that head on up front.

So in my opinion to make this system work you need lobbyists. Not just to get the information, but how things affect them. I don't think without all the lobbyists who were involved in this particular project that you would have ever had one, without having all these individuals working at it, to bring about the type of climate that was necessary to bring all these elements together. I have nothing, for the most part, nothing but good things to say about all the people. Now, a lot of these people that we were using were actually paid by the state of Arizona, were officials of the state, appointed, and so they were helping with our lobbying. And then some were lent by the power companies, and the Salt River project, they made people available. And always lurking in the background you had this public versus private power fight during all this time too.

Without having those resources available we would have never gotten anything done. You just didn't have it internally to put it together, and answer all the questions, and do the leg work that was essential. I think you could say that was true of every state that was involved in any major project of this nature. But as I also said, you really spotted who might be playing games with you, and then you wouldn't use them again. That's the way Carl Hayden was. You could lie to him once, but not a second time. You were questioned very closely after that.

RITCHIE: In the end, when you look at the size of the state of Arizona, in terms of its population back then in the '60s, versus California, and Colorado, and New Mexico, and all the rest of it, do you think it's possible that Arizona could have gotten what it got if it hadn't had the chairman of the Appropriations Committee representing it?

ELSON: No. Or the whole tenure of Carl Hayden. I do not believe it, no. There's no question in my mind that we would never have had it. Not only because of his position, but because of all the groundwork he had laid over the years and the things that he had done for other states, and the record that he had developed as a builder. There wasn't anyone else around who had the power—was in a position of power—or had this long legacy. I don't care if it's Barry or anyone else in Arizona. You couldn't have done it with just Stewart Udall and his brother in the House, though John Rhodes was in a very powerful position, but they were outnumbered and we always knew they were outnumbered in the House. If California had wanted to drag

their feet there was nothing they could do about it. I just can't believe they could have done it; there wouldn't have been too many outside forces at work.

I don't think Carl Hayden could have done it alone, don't get me wrong. But I look at him as the core that made it all possible. Everything revolved around his being there and being able to have that strength, and that position, and that whole background, having done his homework all the way along the line. He was the rock that we could hold onto that made it all possible. Without the others we probably couldn't have done it either, but without him I doubt if there would have ever been a Central Arizona Project. I just don't see how it could have been done.

See, after he left, and I ran against Barry, and Barry came back, well, Barry couldn't do it. He couldn't swing it. He wasn't even interested in it, really, to tell you the truth. I mean, sure he was interested, but he wasn't going to spend the rest of his life trying to get the Central Arizona Project. I think the state would have probably then tried to go it alone, and that would have been all fouled up. I don't think the state could have built it, still don't, that's my opinion now and it was certainly then. It's just pretty hard to stick a state project in the middle of a federal river, and have it operate and work and pay off those bonds that they would have had to sell. Then Stewart, who was the Secretary of the Interior all those eight years, he was supposedly the secretary of all the nation. He couldn't have done it alone. And Mo—we had a chairman over there in [John] Murdock, way back before we went to the Supreme Court—and he got blindsided. With California's numerical strength, there were just so many ways that they could have delayed it indefinitely.

As I look back on it, there was this giant of a man sitting there. And though he was getting older, and didn't have the stamina that he had before, people were still a little reluctant to want to take him on, head on, particularly when it finally dawned on them that he was willing to play some games that other people were not for playing, and that's taking some retaliatory action, which was totally against his career and his tradition. But he wanted it pretty badly.

RITCHIE: The CAP finally got passed in the fall of '68. Johnson signed it, and called it "Carl Hayden Day."

ELSON: September 30, 1968.

RITCHIE: That was right at the time when you were running your second campaign for the Senate. How important was the CAP to your campaign in '68?

ELSON: Well, it was probably more important in '64. But in '68 it was important because I had been a great part of it. Of course, I had made a lot of enemies in the process too, because everyone accused me of being high-handed, and there were interests in the state that were nervous about me because I was always so opposed to the state and the Arizona Power Authority going it alone. But by the time this was enacted, you've got to remember what an awful year 1968 was, and to campaign as a Democrat in the state of Arizona.

I remember it started off, this would be January, I was down at the White House seeing President Johnson, in the Oval Office. Just the two of us there and that Japanese photographer that he had, Okimoto. We were mainly talking about politics, and the Arizona delegation and my campaign, because again I was going to run, and was urged to run. This was on a Tuesday, I think, and I was taking a group of campaign advisors down to Acapulco. The Immigration and Naturalization Service had arranged a spot for me down there where I could have a quiet meeting for a week with my advisors to decide how we were going to run this campaign, how much money we would need, and all the other things. My wife was out in Arizona, my family had been out there since the fall before. My wife was over in LA, having a minor operation, and I came back from my meeting with Lyndon Johnson, came back and told the senator about the conversation, and I was leaving the next day.

After that conversation with Lyndon Johnson, I would have wagered that Lyndon Johnson was going to be running again. Of course, from my standpoint, having Lyndon at the top of the ticket in Arizona was better than any alternative. We talked about the Arizona delegation. Well, I think I first went to Phoenix and then left to meet my wife in California, and then I was leaving from there to go to Mexico. I remember walking into see my wife at this hotel. She said, "My God, what are you doing here. Haven't you heard?" I thought, "Oh, [expletive], Carl Hayden's dropped dead and it's all over anyhow, and there goes the CAP, there goes the campaign, there goes everything." She said, "No, didn't you hear that the President's announced that he's not running?" This was

what, on a Friday? Something like that. I said, "Oh, my God!" Anyhow, that's the way it all started!

I nevertheless went on down to Acapulco. While I was in Mexico I remember there was no phone in this beautiful place where we were staying. I had to go a neighbor's to use the phone. I had a call from Hubert Humphrey and all that about all the political maneuvering. But that's the way it started. At that meeting when I finally got everyone together—because it was a fun as well as business, political trip—I think to a man they all were urging me that it probably wasn't a good time to be running, particularly in view of what happened. But by that time I had already moved people around, I had already spent money that I had raised. Then you've got to remember, later that year you had Martin Luther King's assassination. I was here, over at the Carroll Arms when that all happened, and then you saw the city in flames. Again, people thought it was a conspiracy. Well, that didn't help anything. Then in June, Bobby Kennedy got assassinated. Then you had that great convention in Chicago. As a Democrat I could just see everything going to hell. But by this time I was committed to the campaign.

RITCHIE: Were you at the convention?

ELSON: No, I didn't go to either convention in '64 or '68, and the reason is that both conventions were late and we have a late primary, which comes in September, sixty days before the general election. So I was out campaigning. You don't get any votes at a convention, unless I could have arranged somehow to get myself as a speaker, nationally, but I wasn't about to do that. It wouldn't have mattered anyhow. But I didn't go to either convention. In '64 there was no need to go because it was going to be a coronation with Lyndon. It would have been just a fun time, but who wanted to go to Atlantic City? No, I was out campaigning both times.

But when I look back on that year, you had all this CAP stuff going on. It was just a nightmare for me. By that time I had filed and won the nomination big, and Barry, who had been out of office for four years, I think he must have talked to every high school class in the state of Arizona during those four years, and every Rotary group and everything else. I was at a tremendous disadvantage. So the CAP, though it was an advantage to me—and when you talked about merits, there was no question that Eugene

Pulliam, who was still there, felt that I was as knowledgeable as anyone when it came to water and public policy matters. I know during that campaign, when I was actually campaigning, I got to say about everything I always wanted to say, but no one was paying any attention. It was just a media blitz.

RITCHIE: You almost would have been better if it hadn't passed, because then they would have really needed to have somebody there to push it through.

ELSON: Yeah, of course that might have helped from my standpoint, but that wouldn't have mattered. I felt so much a part of Carl Hayden's strong desire to have that thing authorized, I felt as proud as he did that day when the president signed it into law. It was a big moment in my life, and probably always will be. But there were too many other factors on the outside that made the race against Barry almost impossible. Of course, in any election, you always think that you might get a break. For instance, Barry might have dropped dead [laughs]. You just never know, some other incident might have turned things around a little bit. You always have hope. You don't do this just for fun, I found that out, though I enjoyed campaigning and I loved politicking. I think I was a much better candidate in '68 than I was in '64, in my first time out of the chute. I was more relaxed and I think I presented myself much better. But Barry was such an overwhelming figure, but always controversial. It was a respectable race, but it was a losing race.

I tried all sorts of tricks to get him into debates. We had some great ads, I thought. This is jumping around, but I should tell you, the day after I lost to Barry the press wanted an interview with me at the Press Club. I reluctantly went to it. It was all over. I think the difference was 57 to 43, so it was a respectable race, I felt. And as I mentioned before, I'd rather lose that way than in a close one like I lost to Fannin. I remember going to that, I was sort of irritated. I forget who asked me the question, but it was at the Phoenix Press Club. One of the reporters said, "Well, Roy, how does it feel to have run against an old pioneer family name, a two-term United States senator, the Republican standard-bearer in 1964, and a very popular, handsome figure of a man?" I said, "I only have two things to say, and this is my last press conference. I now know what overkill is all about. And secondly, I feel a little like the guy who had spent five thousand dollars attempting to clear up a bad case of halitosis, only to find

out people didn't like him anyhow." [laughs] I said, "Thank you gentlemen, I'm going to bed." And I left. That was my last press conference.

It was difficult because the man that I was going to rely on, who I had brought back here originally, a guy by the name of Ed Davis, to do for me that year what I had done for Carl Hayden in '61 and '62 and all along. We made him U.S. Attorney, so I think in the fall of '67 he was gone. So I really didn't have anyone. And by this time the senator had grown to trust him too, and rely on him. So he went back to Arizona. He subsequently became a bankruptcy judge. That left me in a horrible position, because I knew how much the senator relied on me. When he wanted me, he'd call, and I'd come back. It was that simple, regardless of what else was going on. And with the way the Central Arizona Project was going I had to keep coming back. Originally, I was going to spend most of my time out in the state, and it just didn't work out that way, particularly during the fall of '67 and most of '68. I would be returning to Washington, and it's a hell of a way to run a campaign. But nothing I ever did would have been possible without Carl Hayden, so I certainly owed him that whenever he wanted me, I just came back. It was that simple. Thinking you might be here for one or two days, and then you might be here for a week or ten days or two weeks, and then go out and maybe be there a week and come back again. It was another one of those nightmarish situations.

When all these other events took place, it was hard to keep up a good front when you know the odds were very much against you. Except, I loved to campaign. I really enjoyed that campaign. And of course I knew so much about Barry, because we had made all our plans in '63 and '64 to run against him, so I was better prepared to run against him. But he had these great big Marlboro ads [laughs] with the canyons in the backgrounds, and this open shirt, and good tan, and cowboy hat on, these beautiful paint billboards all over the place. He had unlimited money, and I had a hard time that year raising money. I again didn't have a financial chairman that was good at raising money, so it was really another tough job. I look back on it now and all I feel is tired [laughs].

RITCHIE: There was a great article that appeared in the *New York Times*, by Sidney Schaumburg, the guy who later wrote *The Killing Fields*, comparing you to Eugene McCarthy, sort of a populist candidate up against the big gun.

ELSON: Gee, I don't know that I saw that. I must have.

RITCHIE: It's got your picture with it. I thought that must have at least raised some money from New York after they ran that.

ELSON: Well, a little because I knew some people in New York, and I got some from out of state, and from back here. Again, I got some money from staff people. It made me feel good because even then when they knew it was sort of hopeless, I still had a lot of support from fellow staff people. It really made me feel good, to this day it does.

But I remember getting frustrated when Barry would get television because he had been a presidential candidate. He would get on one of the Sunday morning shows, like "Face the Nation" or something like that, right in the middle of the campaign. He's getting all this free publicity, and then you ask for some equal time and they say it's not an equal time situation. You get all the runaround that way. So it was frustrating every time you try to do something to make it a local, state race and about state issues, it was almost impossible because of his prominence and mouthing off on all international events, whether they were accurate or not, and on national defense.

I couldn't get him into any debates. The closest, I was told later, where he really got irritated—and I guess you would call this negative advertising—was over my radio advertising [laughs], I loved them too. The same guy I used in '64 also worked with me in '68, and in the senator's campaign, was also my PR guy, a guy by the name of Al Rau. He was really talented. We were trying to do something, and short of money we were doing a lot of radio ads. He found this one guy in this one studio to do our radio spots, and came up with some really ingenious stuff. This guy could change his voice. To give you an example, we had a series of ads, one on defense, one on education, one on social security, all these things that Barry mainly was opposed to, or said we could do without.

One I remember so well, a voice would start out—and these would be actual quotes of Barry's [drops voice]: "On March 31, 1961, Barry Goldwater said in Miami, Florida, 'A child has no right to an education. In most cases he can get along perfectly well without one.'" Then his voice would change. Now, I have to interject here, Barry's

slogan up to this point on his billboards and everything he did was: "Senator Barry Goldwater, Doesn't That Sound Great!" Just on everything. Then on our ad, after quoting one of his ridiculous quotes, the votes would change [voice rises]: "Doesn't *that* sound great!" [laughs] We started playing that and it wasn't ten days later before the whole state was laughing. Barry, I was told by [Dean] Burch later, it was all they could do to keep him from attacking me, and that's exactly what I wanted him to do. Immediately, they changed all their boards, they changed their whole slogan. "Doesn't that sound great" disappeared from the whole campaign. These were super ads. I don't know whether you'd call that advertising or not, but they certainly were effective, and they were one of the fun things that were going on. And it got to Barry, apparently, and he was really mad at me [laughs].

RITCHIE: I don't know whether you can call it negative to quote a man's words back to him.

ELSON: But this guy had a wonderful radio voice, and these ads were great. We had a series of them, and they'd always end up the same way, with this sort of sarcasm. They were wonderful.

RITCHIE: You had just spent four years working, constantly, for a major project that was going to affect Arizona like nothing else ever did, and yet the average citizen of the state of Arizona probably didn't have the slightest idea what was going on back in Washington.

ELSON: No. Well, first of all we did do political surveys where they always said it was very important, but they knew nothing about it, none of the history. And of course you had this growth that was continuing all this time. They were coming from the midwest, they knew nothing about the desert, or reclamation, and water projects, and probably cared less. So it was not really a good political issue. It would have been in the case of Carl Hayden, say if he had run in '68 again, he would have in my opinion beaten Barry. We had a survey that showed that. Mainly just on the theory of getting money for it, because we could have mustered all the resources to make that the only issue: "We've got to finish the job. Now that we've got it authorized, we've got to have that money to get that thing started right away."

The CAP could have been an issue for him in his campaign, but for someone like myself who was really a staff person, there's no question in my mind that a lot of not only my Democratic friends, I mean members of Congress, and Republicans, sure in hell didn't want to give me credit for anything because I was a potential source of party politics and state politics. And quite frankly, I don't think I've ever gotten credit for some of the work that I did in behalf of this project, but I don't think it was something that people really cared about, other than they knew that there was an internal fight, and the arguments about the state going it alone. It was too complicated for the average person. Anytime we talked about it publicly, all these times that I would go out and spout off about it in the senator's name, every time I went home I was always asked about it, I'd try to keep it very simple and make it hard hitting and almost arbitrary, I guess, in that the senator was right and everyone else was wrong [laughs]. That sort of thing. Of course, having the cooperation of the press, I would never let any of the reporters get to a second question, or a technical one that might question what I was saying. After awhile as a politician you learn how to do those sort of things.

It was not a good issue, really, with the growth of the state at the time and the people who were coming in, they still had their pools, their communities were growing and they didn't see any water shortage. The farmers down in Pinal County, south of Phoenix, they were pumping deeper and deeper for their water. I think Tucson is the largest city in the world that doesn't have a reservoir for its city water supply. It all comes from wells. I don't think the people really cared, because of its complexity. The fight might have been good reading at breakfast, but by the time they got to work I don't think they thought much about it.

RITCHIE: Looking back on the CAP now, twenty years after it passed, did the project turn out the way you anticipated?

ELSON: No. Originally it was conceived as a project to supplement irrigation water, mainly for our farmers. We knew, and the senator always knew, that municipal needs would eventually overwhelm the agricultural needs. We were always going under that theory, but we didn't expect it. As I look back on right now, with all the environmental issues and other things, I have mixed emotions. I don't know whether

it's been good or bad. Mainly, if you look at it in a long perspective, the desert will eventually win, because it only can take so much.

I think Carl Hayden would be twitching a little bit to see our pollution problems, and Phoenix growing like Los Angeles did back when we were fighting all these battles. It has the sprawl and smog. Tucson is getting the same way with urban sprawl. I don't think it's what we quite envisioned, to make it into the Garden of Eden that you thought you were going to have as a result of it. But in the long pull, if there are ever going to be diversions, if there is ever desalinization so there can be water transfers, exchanges of legal rights and all that, having the aqueduct will give Arizona an advantage. I remember having lots of discussions with Carl Hayden, particularly when we got into these arguments about hydrology and what water was in the river, and shortages, he would finally say, "As long as there's enough water to keep the thing wet so that it will be ready when we do work out some of these other long-range problems. We need that aqueduct because the growth is in the center of the state and Tucson." And now we have the aqueduct going down to Tucson, so from that standpoint, just having the aqueduct was probably worth all the effort in the long pull, if people are going to remain in the southwest, in Arizona or southern California or anywhere else.

I don't know in history where there have been too many deliberate migrations of masses of people from wet areas to dry areas, or semi-arid areas. It's a real phenomenon. Now that the whole country is facing water problems because of pollution and everything else, you're getting a nation that is beginning to understand a little bit about it. If whatever has been built out there is going to continue to exist, we certainly needed the diversion works. Just from that standpoint alone I think it was probably worth all the effort. Though a lot of people can make arguments that you should have used it along the river and other places like that and it wouldn't have been so costly. But I think for the future, the people that might remain there or even to grow, you need that water. I sort of feel confident that southern California is going to work out their problems, they've got to do something with desalinization, with water exchanges, and better utilization, and all those things, conservation, or you're going to see a collapse of that economy. As I say, I'm confident, that somewhere down the line, whether it's a hundred years or two hundred, three hundred, the desert will reclaim.

RITCHIE: I was wondering what your reaction was when Jimmy Carter tried to veto all those water project out there? Wasn't CAP one of those on his list?

ELSON: Yeah. Well, I was pissed. I thought the little [expletive] didn't understand anything about the West or water. You can always make an argument about cost, and it wasn't very far-reaching. I think it was probably the Bureau of the Budget again—Management and the Budget—where reclamation projects weren't that popular. At that time, when he was advocating cutting them off, CAP had a long way to go to finish building it. It had just barely got started. I personally thought he had something up his [expletive]. If he wanted to get into arguments about subsidies, well we could certainly talk about Georgia and the military-industrial complex, and a few rivers and harbors things, lots of things we could talk about.

I wasn't in a position to do much about it then, but it irritated me because I thought it was very shortsighted. Having Mo there, and John Rhodes, really did help, and we won that war without having some people in a position of real power left over here. It could have been just a pyrrhic victory, getting it authorized. Fortunately it had momentum. But Carter just irritated the hell out of me.

RITCHIE: It's an odd thing when you look at the '50s and '60s and there were all these influential Western Democrats, Jackson, and Magnuson, and Hayden, and even including Lyndon Johnson, who were doing everything imaginable to build up the southwest and the Pacific northwest. And the heritage has been that most of those states are now Republican states.

ELSON: Yeah, isn't that fascinating! Even take Kerr in Oklahoma and all the things he did there. You look at the west, and I think a lot of it has to do with this mythology that we live on. The tremendous growth and this migration from conservative areas of the country, the midwest, and New England, and places like that, and a lot of propaganda, they start believing all this junk about "we did it all on our own." The whole shift in politics—just take a look at the South, it's not just the southwest, but that whole shift going on at the same time. It's always been amazing to me, this rugged individualism when we did everything in our power to steal everything we could out of the federal trough. We were nudging everybody out of the way. Talk about being pigs! Oink, oink, oink, we were there.

When you look back at Carl Hayden's long career, he deliberately positioned himself to develop that territory, and he was going to use the federal treasury. At the same time, he was also helping other regions of the country—you can just take the highway act and his belief in highways. There were major fallouts from all that. But he knew he had a territory to build. And yet then when all these people came in from other places they brought with them their own ethnic backgrounds and religious feelings and it became a conservative trend. Starting in the '50s, after the war, when people started pouring into the state, it started this very conservative trend. Of course, even before that, when it was totally a Democratic state, it was still pretty much a conservative state, again this belief in their own mythology, about how they really did it, frontiersmen and all that. It was wonderful. It's still going on. It's crazy.

RITCHIE: Well, I'd like to talk more about the 1960s, about Johnson when he was president, and to talk some more about your campaign in '68, and also about what you've done since you left the Senate. You brought up lobbying today, and I'd like to know about your activities there as well. But I think this might be a good place to break.

ELSON: Oh, God, yes. It's time to break.

End of Interview #10

LBJ AND THE GREAT SOCIETY

Interview #11

Thursday, July 19, 1990

RITCHIE: We talked about the 1960s, but only from the perspective of the Central Arizona Project. I wondered if we could go back today and talk about the Great Society and Johnson as president. You had worked with Johnson when he was a senator, and had seen him as a vice president. Could you give me your impressions of him when he became president of the United States?

ELSON: Well, my impression of him, coming in under the circumstances that he did, I really thought he handled himself beautifully under the circumstances—and also very calculatingly exploited the situation to advance a lot of legislation. When you look back at that period, his timing was perfect. He knew what he wanted to get done and he put all of his persuasive powers behind that, and moved things that could not have been moved without the assassination. That made possible a lot of legislation, I think, that would probably have difficulty running. But using the momentum of the assassination, and the feeling for Kennedy, it moved things right along. I think part of the tragedy, though, was with the administration of some of the programs, like always. As Carl Hayden used to say, you can make a law that is "horse-high and hog-tight," but unless you have good administrators, who are good at carrying out the legislative intent, it's not worth the piece of paper it's written on. Some of the programs I don't think were funded adequately. That happens all the time.

But I felt that Johnson succeeded. Look at the civil rights legislation and some of the other Great Society legislation. I had a lot of personal experience with community action programs—what did they call that? They would fund local projects. I helped a couple of communities, and I'm still known in some of these little Mexican communities out home, and in one Indian community, a Yaqui village in Guadalupe, near Phoenix. I worked with them in a lot of programs under some of the legislation that was enacted during the mid-'60s. They tried to dismantle all those programs now, but what the hell was its name?

RITCHIE: There was the Office of Economic Opportunity, there were the regional authorities, but there was a community action program.

ELSON: Yeah, it wasn't VISTA. Gosh, that's awful that I can't remember. Anyhow, my impressions of Johnson; I think I was critical in one of my earlier interviews that I think he might have done better had he moved on some of the Kennedy people that were not necessarily loyal to him. You can understand that, but I think that he would have probably been better off and had better advice, particularly as Vietnam kept unfolding, had he had some of his own advisors around who might have cautioned him about the drawbacks of getting us deeper and deeper involved. As everyone knows, that's the thing that will probably prevent him from being one of the great presidents, in the sense of being blind to what was going on over there. You could get into a lot of history when you talk about who started all that. Of course, it goes all the way back to Eisenhower, back to '54 as I recall, when we first sent advisers over there.

I think I said he was a better leader than president, but they're two different things altogether. I marveled at his skill as a leader, but I also thought he was a hell of a president.

RITCHIE: Would you say in some respects that he was sort of the ultimate majority leader as president? Was he still trying to run the Senate from the White House?

ELSON: In a sense I think he was. Of course, you had Mansfield here as leader, and with his different approach to things Lyndon got away with a lot of things that I think he might not have under a different type of leadership. But, yeah, he didn't forget what he had learned up here. Again, he could rely on a lot of those old chairmen. He knew them as well as anyone. I think he had a great advantage, just knowing the Hill made it much easier for him as a president to get things done, because he knew the game as well as anyone on Capitol Hill, and he used those skills. I think that whole background of being the leader really helped him accomplish the many things that he did accomplish in the legislative field. Then, together with exploiting the feelings for Jack Kennedy, and in a good way—I'm not speaking derogatorily at all,

about either one of them. He just knew the emotion of the country and how to use that to help him move along his program.

For instance, he knew he could always go to Carl Hayden, or Dick Russell, and some of those, and Maggie, and Scoop and all of them. He could put together quite a little combination. Of course, [Everett] Dirksen was around. He was probably in the best position of any president, certainly since Truman, to move things along. When you think about the two, it didn't dawn on me until now thinking about the two, the way they both got in the White House, it's sort of interesting the way they became very strong presidents and used their legislative skills very well. Lyndon was a master. He was exceptional. And I think a hell of a president, except for Vietnam.

I remember getting so irritated, because we would get all the briefings, the senator would get all the briefings on the progress of the war. He was on the watchdog committee and all that. And you'd hear Dean Rusk give you the same old treatment, and from the State Department and the Department of Defense, about how everything was going well. Then you'd talk to others and you knew that wasn't quite right. And yet when you raised the issue, you were overwhelmed with statistics, and figures, and body counts, and all the other things. Then you were never quite sure of the cost, what was all going into it. But Lyndon knew that he could get the type of support from an appropriations standpoint that he needed. I remember well the juggling they did to try to keep the budget under a hundred billion dollars, that was about '65 or '66, and then of course the next year they broke that. They did some "original" bookkeeping to stay under the hundred billion, and, Jesus, what is it today? It's incredible.

The way Carl Hayden always looked at his president, whether he was a Democrat or a Republican, he was the president of the United States. Unless he felt the president was really wrong, he would give him the benefit of the doubt practically all of the time. He would support him particularly in foreign policy matters. So a president pretty much knew he could rely on Carl Hayden's support for initiatives that he wanted to undertake and funding that was needed in the international field. It was rare for him to take exception.

I remember one particular incidence, the Six Day War in the Middle East. Christ, the war hadn't been going on two days or three days, when all the Zionist organizations

were in town, from every state in the Union. There were nineteen of them from Arizona, led by a young Jewish rabbi from Tucson. The senator was smart enough to meet them in my office, so if he had to leave and go vote or something they wouldn't be in his office. The meeting later turned out to hurt me pretty much the following year in my own campaign. Everyone in the Arizona delegation had signed this letter that was being circulated to go to the president of the United States saying that the Israelis were really attacked and were just defending themselves. Carl Hayden was the only one who refused in the Arizona delegation to sign a letter like that, for several reasons. He never signed a joint letter unless it was on a regional matter. Most always he would write his own letter, maybe send it at the same time, but it was very rare for him to ever sign a letter like that. And of course, he was always going to the White House and could talk to the president personally. The senator explained to the group the reasons why he didn't want to sign a letter like that. He said, "I support the president. He has more information than I do on the whole subject. He's in instant communication around the world. I have confidence that he'll make the right decisions in this matter." He said, "I can do more by picking up the phone and letting him know my sentiments that way, or writing my own letter, but I don't like signing letters that might be used for different purposes than what they're intended." He politely explained it to them, and then the bells rang for a vote.

He excused himself and said, "Roy here knows my position as well as I know it. He'll answer any questions you want, and I'll try to get back as soon as I can." So this young rabbi jumped all over me. This was partly a result of the rumors that Carl Hayden was getting senile and I was really pulling the strings behind the scene. They figured that I could talk him into signing this letter. Well, I went through just like he did, explaining maybe in a little more detail, and giving examples where we didn't do this, and on things a lot closer to home. That didn't satisfy them. Then he started quoting President Johnson's Gulf of Aquiba speech that he had made in March of that year. It just so happened that before they came in for the meeting I had reread that speech and I had underlined all the important, salient points, and this rabbi was misquoting the president, whether deliberate or he hadn't read it, whatever, but it was not what the president had said. I listened as long as I could, and I said, "Now, wait a minute, that is not what the president of the United States said. This is what he said." And I pulled out the speech and read it to them. Well, that didn't help. He really got ticked off then at me.

I made the stupid mistake of saying, "Look, we're in the third day of the war, it's going to be over before the weekend. They sort of remind me of a bunch of piranha, they're chewing up the cow, there's not going to be anything left but bones. You're making a big issue out of something that's going to be over before you get the letter down there." Something like that is what I said. That really teed them off. Carl Hayden never did sign the letter, but he did talk to the president about the whole thing.

Well, it wasn't thirty minutes after they left our office when I got a call from our office in Tucson. Running our Tucson office was a friend of mine who I had hired, who I went to school with at the university, and he was of the Jewish faith, great guy. Name of Dave Garber. He called and said, "Roy, what have you done? What have you and the senator done? If you ever thought of running for the United States Senate again, you've wiped out any chance!" He went on and on, and I said, "Well, Dave, what did you hear?" He said, "You were rude to them, you were impolite, you insulted them." I said, "First of all, Dave, you weren't here. I don't know what they told you, but that's an inaccurate report on what actually happened at the meeting with Carl Hayden or with me." I told him what I just told you what I had done. He said, "Well, you just ruined it. What are you going to do about it?" I said, "I know what I'm going to have you do. I'm going to have you call whoever called you back and tell them if the price of their support is my blind allegiance to the state of Israel, I guess that's too bad and they can go shove it up their you know what." He said, "I can't do that!" I said, "You've got one of two choices: you can either return the phone call and do that, or you're no longer working for Carl Hayden."

Well, I saw him last summer and we laughed about that incident, but I faced a very hostile crowd both in Phoenix and Tucson the next year when I went out there, at the Jewish community center. Standing room only, and I thought I was going to get tarred and feathered at both places. But when I got through giving my explanation, about what I thought about the state of Israel and American foreign policy and our relationship, I got a standing ovation at both places. But I never got any money! [laughs]

How did we start on that? I guess I was using that as an example of the way Carl Hayden would support a president, whether he was a Republican or a Democrat. I

remember he supported Eisenhower in going into Lebanon, in the Suez, and all those things back in the '50s.

RITCHIE: Did you get any sense about Hayden felt about Vietnam, other than that he supported Johnson because he was president?

ELSON: We went over—we were supposed to go to Vietnam on one of these trips. I forget what broke out, but they said it wouldn't be such a good idea to go into Saigon at that time, so we ended up only getting briefings in Hawaii, where the headquarters were actually for fighting the war. He thought it was a mistake, as he did in Korea, I mean what [Douglas] MacArthur wanted to do, get into China, he thought that was crazy. He was concerned about the war, but he pretty much supported the president's position, I would say probably until he left. He started to have reservations, like everyone did. What changed me a lot on the war was that I brought a person in who was an expert on high level nuclear fallout, who was analyzing the B-52 bombings in Vietnam, the aerial reconnaissance and all that.

We had staff people on our personal staff as well. One fellow was working for the senator at the time, I hired him at the request of [J. William] Fulbright and [John] McClellan, because he came from Arkansas, and his father was a well-known lawyer and quite a man himself. But he was sort of wild. In fact, I let him go on a trip to Vietnam, but I didn't know he was also reporting for some radio stations back in Arkansas. He wrote a letter to Fulbright about what he saw over there that really turned Fulbright around on the war.

RITCHIE: What was this fellow's name?

ELSON: Clyde Pettit. He's the one who also wrote the book, *The Experts* [Secaucus, N.J.: 1975] about Vietnam, with all the quotations. We would always have these arguments. Like when I first ran in '64, I was pretty much a supporter of the war, and by the time '68 came around I had serious reservations about it. Of course, everyone else did too. But the arguments in our own office, and then beginning to question all the statistical information that was coming out of there, and the reports, and realizing that it was really more of a civil war. Everyone was so hung up on fighting Communism, which had been going on since the Cold War started.

I think the senator started changing his mind maybe in '65, '66, but he still helped Johnson and for the most part went along with what McNamara and Rusk and all of them were saying was going on. I never did believe [General William] Westmoreland. I first met him in '61, right after Kennedy was elected. I think it was in March of that year I went down to Puerto Rico where he was commander of the 82nd Airborne, or something. They had an operation called Porto Pine Big Slam, which was to see how rapidly they could deploy troops and move them. They brought them from all over the country down to Puerto Rico, this mass movement of troops and equipment. He was spick and polish and all that, but I didn't think he was very bright. And my opinion hasn't changed.

But I can't recall the senator not supporting the requests for funds that were needed, and the new weapons systems and everything else. But I think he had doubts, mainly because we had these arguments going on all the time in the office over the war, because of all these young people, and then the families at home who had lost sons. And you could see the war taking away from the domestic programs, because Lyndon was trying to do both without the nation going on a war footing. And the cost were astronomically high. Then I got disgusted watching some of the same people make fortunes that always make fortunes out of war, some of the construction companies and others that were really ripping off the country, building all the so-called war effort for Vietnam.

When I ran the second the time, it wasn't really much of an issue in my campaign with Barry. Of course, he had the high ground there, because he said we should have gone out to "win" and it would have all been over. Well, hindsight's wonderful.

RITCHIE: In the '60s, there was pressure for guns and butter, and the Appropriations Committee was really on the firing line, because it was supposed to appropriate money beyond everybody's expectation on both ends. You had all these social programs, but you also had the war.

ELSON: Well, and then of course with the social programs you started getting a lot of the backdoor financing of the programs, where they bypassed the Appropriations Committee. It was tough, but with the way the economy was booming as a result of the war effort, the revenues were coming in. They weren't balancing the

budget, but at least the project was we were borrowing from ourselves, not like we're doing now from the rest of the world.

RITCHIE: Johnson did impose a ten percent surcharge.

ELSON: Yeah. And I think it really became a great concern, because the social programs that had been enacted, as I said earlier, weren't getting the funding that they needed to carry out what they really hoped to accomplish, you know, Head Start and all of them, which really would have had a profound affect had they been funded properly, and would still be doing good things had they received the proper funding. Particularly when Johnson was there and had that legacy of the Kennedy-Johnson feeling, I think you would have seen the Great Society be a success, rather than a partial one. That is a result of the damn war and his misjudgment and miscalculations on that.

RITCHIE: It's pretty remarkable, looking back, that the Senate gave Johnson just about everything that he wanted during that period, both the programs and the money.

ELSON: And the money, yeah. I'm trying to think where they turned him down.

RITCHIE: The only thing was "right to work," 14 (b).

ELSON: Well, yeah, 14 (b). I don't think he put all his talents to work on that one. Did I tell you how 14 (b) got into Taft-Hartley? Like a number of things there were no hearings on that. It came out of the conference. There was no legislative history. It can only be found in the conference report. I remember doing research on that for the senator's '56 campaign, because Arizona is a "right to work" state, and how it actually got in there. They didn't even have a vote on it in the conference, it was just sort of written in by whoever was writing the conference report. The senator had seen that happen before on some other pieces of legislation, where some staff person wrote in some things that no one had known about, including the Indian Claims Commission, with aboriginal titles, he still thinks that in that case one of the law firms here in town got to one of the clerks.

But 14 (b) would be one. He was doing that for labor, but I don't think he cared that much about it.

RITCHIE: In the House, on the other hand, he had more trouble. In '67 the House tried to cut appropriations significantly, ten percent, and there was a big fight between the House and Senate over the continuing resolution. But the Senate gave him just about anything he wanted.

ELSON: Oh, yeah. I give Carl Hayden a lot of credit for that. I don't say it was just because of Lyndon. I think he would have done it if it had been Kennedy, or Eisenhower, or any of the others.

RITCHIE: How frequently did Hayden deal with Johnson in those days?

ELSON: Oh, see the senator would never socialize very much. When he was invited to the White House he would put on his tuxedo and go there occasionally for dinners, a state dinner or something like that. Most of the time he'd be invited down as part of the leadership, so he'd go on a regular basis. Then, when he wanted to see him if it was something that was really important, he would pick up the phone and say, "I want to see you, Lyndon."

Of course, the White House had good liaison. I think old Mike Manatos covered our office practically on a daily basis, or every other day. So I would say at least once a week he would see the president. And if it was anything else he would just pick up the phone and say, "I want to see the president." I never knew him to be turned down, but that wasn't that often. If he had to see him he would pick up the phone or just go down there, jump in his limousine and go trotting down. That would be particularly true from after the assassination up through '66—and up to the end, meaning his retirement.

But the other committee members, like Russell, the senator listened to Russell a lot on military stuff, without question. There was such a closeness there between the two men. They thought pretty much alike, so Johnson knew he didn't have any real problems there. He probably wasn't going down there as much as he should have.

RITCHIE: Or as much as you would have liked him to have gone.

ELSON: Yeah.

RITCHIE: Other than the Central Arizona Project, were there things that Hayden was looking to get from Johnson at that stage?

ELSON: Well, at that stage. . . .

RITCHIE: Had you settled your patronage disputes with Udall?

ELSON: Certainly by that time, because we had not only taken care of all the Kennedy supporters in Arizona, that were key members of the Arizona delegation that went for Kennedy, but we also then were able to do some things like. . . for instance, the senator never had a judicial nomination up until Kennedy. That was the first one. We caught a lot of hell on that one. There was a vacancy, a judge had retired, and we named Arthur Davis, who was actually a distant cousin of the senator, I think to the seventh degree of sanguinity, or whatever you call it. Stewart Udall raised so much hell with me because he wanted someone else, or his brother, Mo, or any number of people other than the one we named. He knew that Arthur Davis was a very fine attorney, but he looked at him as really a Pinto Democrat, a very conservative Democrat. What Stewart didn't understand, and I couldn't tell him—he didn't know, and he didn't [expletive] to Carl Hayden, he [expletive] directly to me, he really chewed me out—was that Arthur Davis was terminal. He only had about a year to live. He had cancer. He became a judge, and was a good judge, but only for a year. Then we got another judgeship in Arizona, so there were actually two vacancies coming up.

This is where again I had to marvel at Carl Hayden. We named the former head of the American Bar Association as the next judge, and I caught hell on that again. Not the senator, but I was blamed for it, for this new vacancy. Stewart at that time was supporting Bill Mahoney, who was a good Kennedy man, a good Irishman and all that. The senator had known his father, and knew Bill, but when Bill came in to see him, the senator told him to his face, he said, "Bill, you'd make a [expletive] judge. You have a lousy judicial temperament." But he said, "You would make a superb ambassador," and he picked up the phone and called Kennedy and Bill went to Ghana. We didn't tell Stewart

that, and Stewart really got irritated because we had taken care of Bill, but not the way he wanted him taken care of. Wally Craig was that second judgeship that he named. He also served on the Warren Commission, Wally Craig did when he was president of the American Bar Association. We didn't think we could be criticized too much for putting him on, though we did among the liberal, or the Udall faction.

Then all of a sudden we had two more judgeships come up. One in which he called up Jim Eastland, because he was a labor lawyer. And then another Kennedy appointment. Anyhow, getting back to your question, we had pretty much taken care of all the patronage problems at that time. The senator still had his interests in all sorts of Interior matters, parks and forests and agriculture matters. I think I told you that from the early '50s to 1965 we helped write most of the cotton legislation, with [John] Stennis' office and Eastland's. So he still had all these other interests, highways were always dear to his heart. He was always interested in the military.

I think he was more interested in the troops and the welfare of the troops than he was in the actual weapons systems. I would watch him when we went out to look over Arizona bases, or any other places we went, he was always more interested in their facilities and how the men were being taken care of than in the equipment. He was more interested in their well-being than in their weapon systems, particularly as they got more and more sophisticated. He was concerned about the training required to operate the stuff. But he was also very supportive of the space program, fascinated by it. You know for an old man he had these incredibly young ideas, and could visualize, and knew how much time it took until it would eventually get there. He had all this faith in our being able to do it. But I can't think of anything that he really wanted badly at that time, in the late '60s, outside of getting the Central Arizona Project.

RITCHIE: One bill that he did introduce at that point was about newspapers

ELSON: Oh, God, yes! The Newspaper Preservation Act? Well, we started that whole thing. That's pretty funny. That happened after the '62 election. The Justice Department had gone and used as a test case Tucson, Arizona, in the *Arizona Star* and *Citizen* because they had a joint operating agreement. The *Citizen* was really concerned. Bill Small, the old man, and his son, were very much concerned, but they

were also very big Republicans and they thought that since they never quite supported Carl Hayden that he wouldn't talk to them about their problems. So Pulliam, who also owned two papers there, it was joint operating but not quite the same operation—and by this time I had become quite friendly with Mr. Pulliam—he called me and said, "Would you come out and look into this situation, and see if the senator would consider dealing with it?" I said, "Sure." So on one of my trips out there I met with Mr. Pulliam and he explained it, and then I went down to Tucson and met with the owners of both of those newspapers. Then we met with the attorneys for a number of the groups.

It was the most frustrating experience I think I have ever had on legislation, working with them trying to come up with the language. We had the Legislative Counsel draft some language initially. It took us thirteen months to get some of these people to agree, and I remember at one big meeting down at, what's the club next to the Russian embassy, on Sixteenth?

RITCHIE: The University Club.

ELSON: The University Club, big meeting there. Old General Hansen represented National Geographic. His father was quite a guy, but the son was a little short guy, was a Marine Corps brigadier general, and thought his [expletive] smelled good. I had more problems with him. We argued over just the name of the bill. Finally I said, "We're just going to put in a bill and try to get something moving." Finally we did. The old senator, after I explained it to it, he thought that they had a good case, not the way it eventually worked out, which they've used for tax gimmicks and everything else, and some of them weren't really family newspapers like in the Tucson situation.

I remember going around the country, and I sent some staff people around the country, a guy by the name of Chuck Zuver who was working for us then, I assigned him almost totally to that piece of legislation. Then we took one of the staff people, Bloom, who used to be on the antitrust subcommittee, practices law now downtown. We took him out to Arizona to meet with Pulliam and the people out there. Then we went to the various other operating places, San Francisco, Denver, I forget all the cities involved, Detroit. We went and looked at every operating place. I didn't go on all those, I went on a couple of them. Certainly I took him out to Arizona. I went to Phil

Hart, of course, who was chairman of that antitrust subcommittee. As you knew around here, nothing ever happened on the antitrust committee. They just held lots of hearings, but I can't recall very much legislation ever coming out of there the time I was around here. Of course, Phil Hart was such a gentleman.

But it was just frustrating as hell working with all the owners. Finally, we got Hart to hold some hearings. I guess it was '68 we almost got the bill out of committee. I had never seen Senator Hayden, or heard of any senator doing this, it just shocked the hell out of me. I'm glad you reminded me of Failing Newspaper Act which became the Newspaper Preservation Act. But I remember they were supposed to mark-up the bill. Christ, we were working. I had that one staff person working full time on it. And every time there was supposedly going to be a mark-up of the subcommittee, I think there were only five senators on the subcommittee, they could never get a quorum. This got very frustrating, and every time we'd think they were going to mark-up the bill, someone wasn't there, or they couldn't get there. This went on for a long time. Finally, one was scheduled. Carl Hayden went there and made them get a quorum [laughs]. If anyone had tried doing that to him in his committee! And Phil Hart got a quorum [laughs]. I had never seen anything like it. He just sat there, "You played around with me long enough, I want this bill marked-up." And he sat there while they worked on the bill. I think they reported it out of the subcommittee, but it sort of died there because he could never get it through the full committee, as I recall.

That was the beginning of it, and then other people took over. We had worked on it for a couple of years. As I said, it took thirteen months just working on getting a draft that people could live with. Then we pretty much went back to the one the Legislative Counsel drafted, for the most part. We must have argued for a month over the name of the damn bill. I was criticized heavily because we called it the Failing Newspaper Act, when we first put it in. Who the hell gives a [expletive] about the title of a bill? Eventually it was changed to the Newspaper Preservation Act. But what it was, or what we thought we were trying to do, was really prevent these multiple ownerships and retain local ownership, which hasn't turned out to be the case. They've used the act a lot differently than we ever envisioned, and even Mr. Pulliam envisioned. He never saw it as a way for groups to play games. I haven't seen it preserve too many newspapers, tragically.

RITCHIE: There are far fewer now, especially the afternoon papers.

ELSON: Oh, yeah, so it never served the purpose that we originally thought it would. The senator—it was interesting, I thought I was going to have a hell of a time convincing him of whether this was worthy of his putting in the effort. After I had explained the pros and cons to him he didn't hesitate one bit, and I know it didn't have anything to do with Mr. Pulliam. He knew Bill Small, because we always went in to see the editor of the paper, and Bill Matthews who had been a journalist for many, many years. He wrote on everything and thought he was an international expert. Bill was sort of getting senile at that point, and I think had sold out at that point, that was the morning paper, the *Arizona Daily Star*. But when Carl Hayden got behind it, he really got interested in it. I was amazed. He was always asking, "What progress have you made?" He'd lobby the Judiciary Committee, he'd talk to everyone on there, and he made that unprecedented visit to the mark-up. Have you ever heard of someone doing anything like that? [laughs] I couldn't believe it. But I know he would have been very disappointed the way it developed. He thought we could write something that would preserve some local ownership, but now outside of the Pulliam-owned papers in Phoenix, they're all owned by chains. It's sad, really sad.

RITCHIE: Given Hayden's power and position by that stage, did you have problems with people coming to you constantly wanting Hayden's support for this or that?

ELSON: Oh, yeah, sure.

RITCHIE: I would think if they could get him on their bandwagon, that would be a tremendous asset.

ELSON: That happened the whole time I was with him, because when I first came he had oodles of power. But he was very reluctant to cosponsor a bill. He might add his support to it, but he would do it in his way. He wouldn't necessarily cosponsor it. Let me put it this way, if he cosponsored a piece of legislation, you knew damn well he was going to get behind it, if his name was on it. Except, for instance, I remember he used to put in every Congress a resolution which went to the Rules Committee, and I wish he had pushed it, that before you could name any public place, structure,

anything, the person for whom you were naming it had to be dead for at least fifty years, so history could get a better perspective on them. Then we cut it back to twenty-five years, but I still think to this day I wish he had put his weight behind it, because he did believe in that, that we would have enacted something like that, that no public facility or land could be named after any one single person until they had been dead for at least fifty years. I think that would have helped a lot. It would certainly have made your business a lot more interesting.

But, yes, they came around a lot, and we would go on certain pieces of legislation surprisingly, in various areas. Or someone else might be the head sponsor of the legislation and he would then get behind it, write letters, bring it up in various ways, testify, there were a lot of things. There was something when the John Birchers were in evident in the early '60s, we got involved in it. What was that constitutional amendment—they wanted to sell all the government property—what the hell was it? I know we put out a pamphlet on it, and I appeared on a couple of radio shows in the Mid-West, taking on John Birchers. Well, let me think about that one.

But we had lobbyists coming in all the time. People used to tell me that they'd come into the office and they'd see generals and subcabinet members sitting around waiting to see me. Apparently I didn't give them quite the attention they thought they deserved. I don't think I did it deliberately, but you're so damn busy and so many people wanted to see the senator. The interesting thing about Carl Hayden was that anyone could see him. He was probably the easiest person in the world to talk to. They could go in, reporters the same way, but it was amazing the lack of print that ever followed those visits. But anyone could get in to see him, there was a pretty open door. Of course, it depended on time constraints, and when there was anything that had to be decided, and they wanted to appeal to him personally, he always had time for them, and we'd make sure they got in to see him. Lobbyists, it didn't matter who they were. I've seen him on some occasions throw out some lobbyists that were asking for ridiculous things, that he thought were not only a little improper but a little unethical.

RITCHIE: I was going to ask if you had any criteria, or you just worked with everybody on an individual basis?

ELSON: Normally it would be related to something in which he had an interest, or that he should have an interest, and it would cover a broad economic spectrum. I know we got involved in some communication matters. That would be about 1956, '57, we lost to Bob Kerr who was helping the cable people. Again the test case was Yuma, Arizona, where there was only one television station and they were getting wiped out because all the programming was coming in on cable from Phoenix and LA. It was just wiping out that little station. I remember [John] Pastore pointing his finger up at the lobbyists—I think we lost by two votes, but I know we really got involved in that because it was home, and this one particular little station was being wiped out—and Pastore looking up at the gallery and pointing at the lobbyists for the cable people said, "You'll rue the day you won this battle. You'll come begging on your knees to be regulated!" Oh, it was a fun fight.

I was thinking about that when we talked about this earlier, about that incident, because right after that fight one of the guys who was working for Bob Kerr was a guy by the name of Bill Reynolds, so we were always exchanging our vote count. He said, "I got you by two." I said, "No, you don't"—but I knew he did [laughs]. The truth of the matter is, neither one of us knew for sure. But I was pretty sure we weren't going to win it. It was not because we didn't work on it. But after that we were over at the Carroll Arms drinking together and sort of going over all the various strategies we had used and where we fell apart, or where they won it, and how. That's the type of camaraderie that I was referring to back in one of our early interviews. We'd get involved in things like that. It seemed to me we were into every possible subject there was, or anything that was going on Capitol Hill, we were involved in some way, not just voting or anything like that. Of course, the senator really believed in the committee system, and seniority, and would back a chairman when he reported out a bill, and he would listen pretty much to the chairman or the sponsor of the bill. Then, for instance, things that you don't know about him, we'd get involved in all the Capitol stuff, the extension of the east and the west fronts, you name it.

RITCHIE: I wanted to ask you about that. He was president pro tempore, he was chairman of the Appropriations Committee, he was on the Rules Committee, and you had mentioned earlier that he had a lot to do with even the shape of the building.

ELSON: Oh, yeah, and he and Sam Rayburn were such close buddies that the two of them decided what the hell was going to happen with the building and that was it. I remember the great debate with Paul Douglas, one of the funnier things. The great debate was on the extension of the east front. Douglas had been going on for a day, and he had all his charts about what a damage and sacrilege this was, and he was going on and on, and the galleries were full. Carl Hayden always sat in the back, though he was entitled to sit up next to the majority leader by seniority, but he always sat in that second-to-back row so he could get in and out, and right there in the center. And Douglas was in the back there with all his charts, making this great speech summing up his opposition to all this.

About this time the senator walks in, and he's got a cigar in his mouth. He's down below Douglas and he's watching him, and pretty soon Douglas is speaking to him, in a sense just looking at him. Douglas was saying, "When did we authorize this? When did we do this? When was any of this authorized in any piece of legislation?"—so it must have been on an appropriations bill. Then Douglas paused and looked right at the senator. I remember the gallery being packed and everyone listening intently, and the senator pulls the cigar out of his mouth and said, "Paul, we're doing it right now." [laughs] And the bells rang and it was all over. Oh, it was funny.

But of course, being on the Rules Committee and being chairman of that, he knew every nook and cranny. He was always seeing the Architect of the Capitol. In fact, I'm not particularly proud of it, but I'm probably responsible for more height variances in this city than I want to admit. George Stewart, who was the Architect of the Capitol at that time, was quite a guy, but I don't think I ever really personally sat down across the table from him, we always talked on the phone. He was on the Capital Planning Commission, and he was always the swing vote. He just never went to the meetings if he didn't want something done. I know some developer would get hold of me, or see the senator, mainly me, and would tell me something was coming up on the agenda and try to make their point. I'd listen to them, and if we thought it was meritorious. I'd talk to the senator about it, and then I'd call George. All I'd ask George to do, I never asked him once to vote any way, or anything like that, I said, "George, will you just go to the meeting and make a decision on this case, one way or the other." Well, he always made the right decision [laughs] and he always went to those meetings. So half

of downtown was affected, between the [Dominick] Anotonellis and the Doggetts and all the crowd, they were something else.

So we were involved in everything, it seemed like, and it was all fun. But he loved the Capitol. He just loved the whole institution of the Congress. I know when I would make some derogatory comment about the House, trotting down from our lofty position over here in the Senate, he would bring me up so short, because he had a great respect for the House as an institution. Of course, he spent fifteen years there. Man, then he'd give me a lecture on the importance of the House of Representatives. I remember the lectures quite well, and they certainly changed my views. I had never worked in the House, except with the delegations, and with the members, but I had never actually worked over there. But boy, you said anything derogatory about that body, and he'd call me on it. I didn't do it after awhile.

RITCHIE: I gather that he supported all the expansions of the building in any direction, and also the office buildings.

ELSON: Certainly, because when he first came here there was only the old building, when did they build that damn old building?

RITCHIE: In 1909.

ELSON: Yeah, and it was only three-sided then. I used to love walking with him around here, because he'd take you down some corridors and places that no one knew were there. I got to know the Capitol pretty well, all the little hideaways, little tunnels. The whole Capitol, underneath here, is nothing but tunnels. So, yes, he supported expansion, but on the basis that he really thought there was danger to the Capitol. I don't think he did it so much, as some of the critics accused, of making more space necessarily. But I think it's amazing that the Capitol has retained its dignity, even with the expansions. The one great thing about the Capitol, unlike St. Peter's or St. Paul's, in Rome and London, you can see our dome. The only place you can't see it from is from either end of the Capitol if you're up close to the building. It still thrills me every time I drive up to the Hill to see that dome. Of course, when I first came back here you could go up there, and I've been up to the top of the dome many times.

I'm surprised more people haven't jumped or fallen off of there when they did have it open.

He just loved the whole building and the institution, so, yeah, he supported a lot of the expansion. I don't know that he was too happy with some of the designs. I remember things like the new FBI Building, that monstrosity, he never really cared for the design, but he got the money for it. I remember sitting in on the Appropriations Committee, that would be about 1961, when we were putting the money in for that. We had the whole committee there and I had a cameraman come in and we televised it, and used it in his campaign the next year. Margaret Chase [Smith] was there, we had the whole crew, and I had them all saying something about Carl Hayden, which was hardly what the mark-up was all about. So, yeah, he supported the expansion. I don't think he liked the new Senate Office Building, which is now the Dirksen Building. He refused to move there. He had a choice of anything he wanted, anywhere, and he said, "No, you can have that place." And of course when they completed it they had to remove all the doors and do them all over again, because the carpets were too thick and the doors wouldn't open.

I remember saying to the Architect, "Any new building you build, make sure you put more elevators on the Capitol side than you do on the other, because when the bells ring that's where the traffic is going to be. Sure enough, they did them the same, and then they had to stick in new elevators. But he loved that Old Senate Building. When he first came the fireplaces worked, and you had those great chandeliers. Oh, they were lovely offices.

RITCHIE: When they opened the Dirksen building, most of the committees that were in the Capitol moved out, but the Appropriations stayed. Was there any question about them moving?

ELSON: No, they moved over.

RITCHIE: But they kept that suite on the ground floor of the Capitol.

ELSON: Oh, they kept that suite, yeah. They still have it.

RITCHIE: Was he responsible for them keeping that?

ELSON: Oh, sure. Damn right. He wasn't going to give that up. Mainly because it was convenient for the House when he had conferences. There was no question that he made sure that they weren't going to give that up. Of course, Foreign Relations also kept their committee room over there.

RITCHIE: That was Senator Theodore Francis Green at that time, the two oldest senators had the two ends of the corridor. Green refused to move out of that space, I wondered if Hayden had felt the same?

ELSON: Oh, yeah, he very definitely did. You wouldn't have gotten him out of there. And of course he got the biggest suite over in the new building at that time. I think the largest committee room was the Appropriations Committee room. That's where he made his retirement speech, and that was the largest room I think in the whole Capitol, on this side. On the first floor of the Capitol we had that suite that went practically all the way around for the Appropriations Committee. Then you didn't have as many staff people as you do now. Then he had a chairman's room when he went over to the Dirksen Building. He kept an office next to the hearing room, as the chairman's office. He would sign mail there. I used to use it occasionally—not for signing mail [laughs]. Well, he was something else that way.

RITCHIE: I thought that next time we could talk some more about your campaign in '68 and some of the things that you've done since then, but you've taken us up through the '60s now.

ELSON: Yeah. I'm glad that you mentioned the Newspaper Preservation Act because that was so frustrating, I mean working with the attorneys. I thought, boy, if I ever get into lobbying and act like some of these characters, I hope someone kicks me in the butt. It was awful. But I'll have to think before our next session about some of the other little things that we got into that you wouldn't have thought we'd get into, like the Newspaper Preservation Act, and like the fight over cable regulation. It seemed like there was always some project that he was interested in, or we had going all the time. There were certainly more than just appropriations matters, but of course everything sooner or later got down to money, so you had everyone from the executive

branch coming around, trying to get by the Bureau of the Budget and get some more help, and from aviation, you name it. It was exciting that way.

End of Interview #11

THE VIEW FROM THE LOBBY

Interview #12

Thursday, August 16, 1990

RITCHIE: I wanted to ask you again about your 1968 campaign for the Senate. Given all the things that happened to you in the 1964 campaign, what was it that made you decide to run again in 1968?

ELSON: A number of things. First of all, Carl Hayden wanted me to. After he saw how I handled myself during the '64 campaign, he really came about thinking I would be a good senator, if I could get elected. Even though in 1968 I had to go and offer his support to both Udalls again, both Stewart and Mo, mainly, he still thought they might have a better chance of being elected. But then the other one was Eugene Pulliam, who on the day after I had lost the '64 election, he came over and said, "If it's the last thing I do I will see you in the United States Senate." And then, I wanted to do it myself because I found out that I really enjoyed campaigning, and I felt I was really qualified. If anyone had been trained for the job, I think I had; and I think I would have made a very powerful one-two punch for Arizona had I been elected in '64. Can you imagine with Carl Hayden sitting here and my knowledge of the inner workings, and probably being able to get the committee assignments that I wanted, mainly because Carl Hayden sat on the Committee on Committees, or whatever we called it in those days.

And I think I told you, when I went to Arizona's first Boys' State, I got elected to the mock Senate. So my whole life I really thought I'd like to be like a Carl Hayden, and always wanted to be in the United States Senate. I learned right after I got back her that the only thing to be was one of them, if you really wanted to have an effect on things. You could be a very powerful staff member, which I think I was, and probably didn't recognize how much power I had when it was going on, but you're still a clerk. I don't care what they called you, staff director, administrative assistant, you're still hired by the Senate. I loved the pressure that you had of knowing that if you screwed up you could be through by the end of the day. It made you very cautious, and you did your homework pretty well.

Again, I'm digressing; but that whole time that I worked with the senator, I always knew that he could get information so much more rapidly than I could, that for me to get the same type of information I might have to do a lot of reading, talk to a lot of other staff people, check a lot of

things, where he could pick up the phone and call any cabinet member any time he wanted to, night or day, or the president of the United States. That sort of put you at a disadvantage, so you really worked pretty hard to make sure that you checked all your sources. But I loved that pressure of the game of wits, and being able to engage in that.

And even though it was such a horrible campaign in '64, in the sense of all the things that happened to me on the way to the forum, people now knew who I was. I had name recognition. I knew that we would probably get the Central Arizona Project authorized, and I hoped that I would get my fair share of the credit, because I was really the legman for the senator, went to all the conferences and negotiated things, and felt that I had played a major role in getting it authorized. But I think against a lot of my close political advisors I wanted to run. I realized the only way I could run again, without going back to the state and getting involved in starting all over again, and what would I do while I was doing all this, because I was not independently wealthy, never have been, never will be. I knew that my only chance, probably, of raising funds to make a race, either for the House or mainly for the Senate, was to be raising them while Carl Hayden was still here and I had a little bit of leverage. A lot of people had urged me to go slower, to say run for governor or run for one of the new House seats. But I had laid such a groundwork and had people in every county that I thought I could rely on in a new election attempt. And then the senator, as I say, as the time rolled on and it got closer, he tried to do things for me that would make it possible for me to run again and get the publicity. He let me be even more outspoken than I had become.

I guess the bottom line, is, I just wanted to do it. I wanted to be a senator. I think it's pretty rare for someone like myself, relatively unknown when I first got started, no financial resources, and yet having had this opportunity with Carl Hayden. I think anyone would have loved to have had the chance that I did to even run for the United States Senate and get the Democratic nomination. I was proud of that, both times. I felt very confident that I could win the nomination again in 1968, and I always knew that it would be Barry Goldwater that I would be running against, because Barry

—and I've got to give him credit for this—from the time he left the Senate in '64, after his abortive presidential bid, when he went back to Arizona I'll bet you that 275-80 days a year he was all over that state for those four years. I mean, every grade school, every high school, he didn't miss a beat to sit and talk to those kids and give his usual [expletive]. You know, talking about government, and the war, and he's such a charming individual, sort of a man's man, everyone was charmed. But he was everywhere.

When I was thinking about it as it approached the time to make a decision in the fall of '67, Lyndon was going to end the war in Vietnam any day, and there was always light at the end of the tunnel. If he had done that, if the war had ended and he ran again, which everyone thought he would, up until his shocking announcement, Arizona would have been an interesting situation, because Barry, although he has he name recognition, has always been a controversial figure. He originally won by the Eisenhower landslide, or he would never have been in the Senate in the first place. So he was always vulnerable to the right situation. For instance, there is no question in my mind, I think I would have beat him in '64 had he only been running for the United States Senate and hadn't gotten the nomination, because Lyndon would have carried the state by such a huge margin that I'm convinced that I could have done to Barry what he had done to Ernest McFarland. So when I made the decision to go ahead and move people, and raise money, in the fall of '67, it was on the basis that the war was going to end and Lyndon would be leading the ticket.

The picture that I showed you that was in the campaign flier was of President Johnson and me in the White House, just the two of us and the photographer. We were actually talking about the campaign and Arizona politics and the delegation to the convention and everything else. Of course, that was the week he announced he wasn't going to run. From the time I actually made the decision in the fall of '67 to the time he made his announcement, things weren't looking too good, but again, I had sort of committed myself, even though at the time of Johnson's announcement I had taken my advisors to Mexico, down to Acapulco for a high-level strategy session [laughs]—play session is more like it. They to a man all advised me that it was sort of a hopeless cause. They said it was still up to me if I wanted to run, they would all be there and they'd do what they could, but looking at things as they were at that particular moment, I was probably going to get my [expletive] beat rather badly.

Yet by this time I had raised money, moved some people to Arizona, my family was out in Arizona, everything was laid. And I think in the back of my mind I was saying: "It just can't keep going like this, I'll get a break somewhere along the line." It turned out that a break never did come. But I pretty much made the decision on my own to continue. I should have, I guess, known better, because I sort of knew that as the campaign went on, and as the Central Arizona Project was moving along, that I would probably be called back to work with the senator and some of the others in the struggle. And that's what happened. I'd be out in Arizona campaigning and the next thing I'd know I'd be called back. The senator didn't want to do it, but he felt that I had spent so much of my time doing what he wanted done that he would reluctantly suggest that maybe it would be best if I could get back for a couple of days. That would turn into a week. So it was pretty hard to do a decent campaign as it moved along. It just made planning impossible, fund raising impossible in many ways.

Then as the summer came along and you had the assassinations, it just seemed like it was getting deeper and deeper. And of course by then I had filed and was on the ballot. It just became a different type of nightmare than it was in '64 [laughs]. This time it just seemed like every time I'd feel optimistic about something that was going on, another happening would take place over which I had no control. That's a helpless feeling when you are running for public office, when you know damn well that there are circumstances that you can't control. But I still felt confident that I was going to get the nomination, and of course no one wanted to run because they knew Barry was running. So in many circles I became the sacrificial lamb, that's probably why I won the Democratic nomination by such a large majority [laughs], because no one wanted to get into the fight.

RITCHIE: Did you ever worry about those law suits?

ELSON: Coming up again? No, the reason for that was that first of all most of them were dismissed with prejudice or I got judgments on the pleadings. It turned out that the man who had brought most of them, he had been blackmailed himself, had homosexual tendencies and all, and had died. Of course, I anticipated that they might come up in the campaign, but the way they were all handled by the lawyers I had engaged for the senator and for me, we had pretty much put that aside. The call girl situation, since my wife stood by me, I wasn't fearful of that reappearing, though

another event happened in '67 [laughs]. But I felt I had all that under control, or a very good explanation, and sort of came out a hero on all that. So I wasn't fearful of any of that coming up again, though in any campaign any of your past can come back to haunt you in different ways, it just depends on the imagination of the people that are putting together their campaign against you.

Quite frankly, I don't know how I feel about it to this day, but I think the type of campaign I had run against Barry probably started a lot of the first negative campaigning, because I tried to make people laugh at him by using his own statements to play back at him. They were rather effective, but it was sort of negative in a —well, a cute negative campaigning. It was quite clever, I thought.

RITCHIE: One other question about that campaign: you had said earlier that in '64 you had a lot of trouble getting a campaign manager, and that you had really served as your own campaign manager. And in '67 you thought you had somebody on the staff who would play that role. But then he was appointed a judge. . .

ELSON: Well, he became first U.S. attorney.

RITCHIE: How did you happen to lose your primary candidate?

ELSON: His name was Ed Davis, he's now a very fine bankruptcy attorney. He left the bench and set up a private practice. He's an excellent attorney. In Ed's case, we had agreed to name someone else to be U.S. attorney, the senator had agreed to it, and then overnight Ed changed his mind. It really was like a low blow, but at the same time Ed had worked very hard for the senator and deserved the chance. The guy we were about to name was a close friend of Ed's, not that close a friend of mine. So he had to call the guy and tell him that a change had been made and he wanted it, which made things a little difficult among the three of us. And it was a little embarrassing to have to go back into the senator and tell him that we had changed, because when Carl Hayden gave his word on something, it was really something to get him to change his mind. He raised a lot of questions about the propriety of having told him that we would and not doing it. So it was a very delicate situation that way.

I think Ed wanted to do it because he saw it as a good opportunity. He wanted to go back home. And of course I wanted someone in the U.S. attorney's office that I could trust, not knowing what might come up again, and I sure didn't want to put someone unfriendly in the position, or recommend to the senator to put someone in there. It turned out that the guy who didn't get it became my campaign manager. Thought he had been in politics a lot, he didn't know where all the bodies were buried back here, particularly on fund raising. Again, I didn't have anyone really to raise money for me and I had to sort of do it myself. So some of the same flaws that I had in '64, I again had in 1968. And it's a mistake not to have someone that you can really trust and listen to and let them make all the nasty decisions and buffer you so you can be out campaigning. So it was not very well organized. I did use the same man in the same PR firm that I had used in Senator Hayden's '62 campaign, the same pollster, John Kraft, that I had used in '62 and '64. I had my heart in it, but it just seemed like this mountain was too steep and too high for me. I couldn't even get halfway to the second campsite the way things were going.

The thing that I really enjoyed about the '68 campaign, when I won the nomination and the campaign went on, I got to say about everything I wanted to say, but no one was particularly listening. I really enjoyed it that way, and I still have a lot of those speeches that we made, and we were way ahead of our time on environment, and industrial development, and city problems and all that. The biggest shock I think I had on that survey was that I had wanted to concentrate on metropolitan problems, because Phoenix and Tucson had grown so much, and this was the only political survey that I had ever seen that really startled me. We had a question on the urban problems, and no one felt they were an urban society, they still thought they were a little western town! So it was pretty hard to make that a big issue, when they still looked at themselves as a little country town.

After a while, I was just hoping that I could make it respectable and be able to at least walk away with my head high. Having lost a close one, and then losing respectably, I mean it was 57-43, I think the percentages were, if you are going to lose it's a lot easier to lose by a large majority than it is by a close one, because you are always haunted. To this day I am haunted about how a break here, a little more money, doing something a little differently, I would have been a United States senator. But I was, I think, a much better candidate in 1968 than I was in 1964, I was more

relaxed, I loved getting out in the circuit. I had one good one under me. I don't think unless you have done it yourself you really appreciate that, or some election where you're out rubbing hands, and under fire, and thinking on your feet.

I was very good at that, particularly in responding to questions, because after the years I had spent back here, there wasn't anything that I didn't know, or at least knew a little bit about the subject. That gives you a tremendous advantage over someone else in being current that way, and being able to reflect them. And among the press, if you're in a belligerent atmosphere, an adversarial atmosphere, you can always spot the one questioner who wants to really get you, and he's really an expert in the subject, you can finesse that pretty well because they're easy to spot. They want to make a statement and embarrass you. I became quite good on the give-and-take. I loved doing it that way, because I could turn it and expound on my own theories of government and how it works. So from that standpoint, I was, I think, a pretty good candidate.

RITCHIE: In general, did you think that the press gave you a fair shake?

ELSON: In '68? I think so, under the circumstances. Yeah, in fact a lot of them endorsed me. Of course, Pulliam endorsed both of us again, that sort of thing. I got pretty good coverage. The frustrating thing though, in that campaign, in running against a guy like Barry, just take Social Security matters. He wanted to do away with the system and make it a private insurance fund and all the other things. And you'd go to a place like Sun City, or Green Valley, these retirement communities, and they'd still love him. It didn't matter that he was going to wipe out their Society Security. You'd remind them of that, and he'd come out of those precincts with just huge majorities, and these were the elderly. I thought I could make some inroads there, but it didn't matter what he said. It's just like this inconsistency between rugged individualism, "we did it all by ourself in Arizona," and we had some of the biggest raids on the U.S. Treasury by Carl Hayden in the history of the country, while you have Barry Goldwater saying "we did it all alone." We'd quietly take it with our hand behind our back and attack the federal government on the other hand as being bad for the whole system. It just was a frustrating time.

RITCHIE: Well, when the dust settled and the election was over, and you had lost, and Hayden was retiring from the Senate, what did you anticipate you were going to do next?

ELSON: From that evening till I returned to Washington was another bad time in my life. My marriage was under great strain, mainly due to my liking women too much. I guess I developed a reputation as a womanizer—I don't like that word particularly but it probably fits. Then I was in debt. Again it doesn't sound like a lot of money in today's world, but I think it was something like \$90,000-\$100,000 in debt, and my friends who had signed the PR contracts and those sorts of things were on the line. I had to raise something like \$35,000 within sixty days or they were going to get sued. So again it was a hectic time. I didn't know what I wanted to do or what I was going to do. Then closing down Carl Hayden's office, I wanted to try to place all the people who had been working for him, and loyal to him, and trying to get them settled. So I was moving back and forth.

I did manage to meet the deadline and get my friends off the hook. The other \$45,000-\$50,000 it took me seven years to clean that up. The worst anyone did was 33 cents on the dollar. I remember sending the last check for \$1,800 to someone who I'm sure had written it off by then. But I didn't have any post-election fund raisers or anything like that. It was more from just talking to people and raising it. I raised—and so did Barry—a fair amount of money in Las Vegas. My brother was head of the FBI there all during the '60s, so through him I met a lot of the people around there. He would tell me who were the fairly clean guys, and who were the bad guys. He wouldn't say anything, he'd just introduce me and then he'd leave and I'd do my own talking.

There was a guy who owned the Dunes, by the name of Jake Gottlieb. He's now dead. He came out of Chicago, owned a trucking company and a lot of real estate, was very, very wealthy. I remember going to see Jake when I was trying to raise some funds, because he had helped before, and it was always cash. He looked at me and listened to my pleas, and he said, "Roy, do it like we do in Chicago. Just tell them to go to hell, you'll pay them when you can. I won't give you any money to help pay off your debt, that can wait, you've done your yeoman service and you can tell them to go you-know-where. But if you promise me it's for you, and for whatever you want to do, like to go into business, or go back to Arizona, I'll give you a half million interest-free

loan. When you can get around to repaying it, give it a try. If you don't. . ." It sort of sounds like one that President Bush's son [Neil] had. I don't know what was wrong with me, because I said, "I can't do that." He said, "That's the only way you'll get any more money from me." The tragedy of that is that shortly after that last visit with him, I saw him once again in Chicago, and then he came down with cancer and eventually died. If I had just taken him up on the offer it might have changed my life drastically, in the sense of being able to stay in politics, start a business, and I would never had had to pay the loan back. it would have been more of a gift than a loan. But I didn't. I don't know, maybe it was my Calvinistic upbringing, but I didn't think it was right. It was another one of my mistakes [laughs]. Anyhow, it would have changed things a lot.

RITCHIE: Speaking of your Calvinistic upbringing, this was the time that you managed to get your brother appointed chaplain of the Senate.

ELSON: Yeah.

RITCHIE: How did that come about?

ELSON: Well, I know my brother wanted to be, and of course it's like anything else around here, it's who you know and that sort of thing. Senator [John] Stennis wanted to nominate him, and did nominate him in the Democratic caucus. I really just told Edward that I would work on some of my Democratic friends, senators, particularly the Catholics and anyone that might have any doubts. So in between all this running around I did manage to make a few contacts. They all knew who he was, of course, and respected him. But I think I added a little to his getting a very big majority in the Democratic caucus, and he went on from there to become chaplain in the new Congress in '69.

RITCHIE: Sort of like the last patronage appointment from the Hayden office.

ELSON: Yeah [laughs]. And of course I did use the senator's name. I think I got the senator even to make a couple of calls. I felt good about that. And he was then chaplain for the next twelve years until the Republicans took over.

But as I say, that was a very bad period. I didn't know what I was going to do. I wanted to go back to Arizona, but I remember it's amazing once you lose, and closing down the senator's office, and we earlier in the year had been moving out a lot of his files, some to the Hayden Library but mainly to the mill in Tempe, and we were going to make the transfer later, after we made sure everything was in order, or that we were satisfied with the way they were going to take care of them. But it's amazing, overnight, when you have lost, or you are no longer in a position of power, how so-called friends disappear. I must admit that it came as a shock to me, because I thought I had some very good personal relationships with a lot of these people that represented organizations, the major corporations, labor unions and all that.

I remember so many of them telling me. "Well, Roy, with your experience and background, you'll have no problems." But when you told them that you were broke, didn't have a job, were in debt, and I was thinking of setting up a consulting business—which I eventually did when I got back later in the summer of '69—just overnight you're sort of gone and all the real or imagined hurts that you might have been involved in, or the grudges that people might have had, when you're down they like to make sure you're down for good. It's like putting the silver spike in. But it jolted me. I found out who some of my real friends were. I'm always surprised, every time I've been in difficulty, where a lot of times from those you least expect comes the greatest help, who remember things that you might have done accidentally just in the routine of things that were very important to them, but wasn't particularly to you, or you didn't think it was very important, it was just "sure, I'll do it." A lot of things have always happened to me that way, that when it looked the darkest, someone would come out. As I said, this was when my marriage started falling apart, all during this time. I moved the family back after we had sort of made a reconciliation and tried to set up a consulting business.

Starting out that way, I did some unusual things for some clients when I was desperate for having a client. Some of the big boys that I went to said, "We'll see what we can do," and then you'd never be able to reach them again. I remember some of those very specifically, and there's always a bend in the road. I'm not saying I'm vindictive, but I could be [laughs], if I ever had the chance. One of my clients late that summer or fall, I became a consultant to the National Association of Broadcasters. They had hired me only because they were doing some work on the copyright bill. A

guy that I knew who was down there in their government relations department had recommended me to them. He had been with the Communication Workers. So they hired me as a consultant. The rest of my business was sort of one-shot affairs. I was able to pick up enough to pay the mortgage, and feed the family, and keep the kids in school, and slowly start paying off some of the campaign debts. But it was a horrible period of time.

RITCHIE: Having been a Senate staff member for such a long period of time, how did the Senate and the Senate staff look to you when you were now on the outside trying to lobby for a copyright law and other things?

ELSON: Well, I remember once, it was right after I had lost. I was standing in the hall outside the senator's office and I ran into a guy who had been around for a long time by the name of Joe Miller. He was close to Maggie and Scoop's office, actually married a girl who worked for Scoop, I used to call him a "corridor creeper." I ran into him, and he reminded me of the story and said, "Well, you can join the rest of us corridor creepers now." Actually, the staff treated me pretty well, and members, too. I think they were very straightforward, and I think most of them respected me. Of course, a lot of them, particularly staff, were envious. I don't know whether that's the right word, but certainly I think they admired secretly that I had made the effort of something that they would like to have done themselves. I had good access to most of the senior staff and a lot of the members.

For instance, on my brother and the chaplain thing, there was some concern before the Democratic caucus and the actual vote about how Barry Goldwater might feel, coming back to the Senate, about my brother, after I had run against Barry. Of course, Barry said, "He's a friend of mine," meaning both Roy and my brother. He said, "That's no problem whatsoever. In fact, I'd like to second the nomination if you'll let me in the Democratic caucus."

I remember in those early days, some of Barry's people did hurt me when I thought I was coming up with a real good client. At the last minute I lost it, and then I found out why through a source. The Republican state committee woman from Texas, I think, shot me down, mainly because a former staff member of Barry's, who is still around as a lobbyist, told her she shouldn't hire anyone like me because Barry wouldn't

even let me in the office. Well, this really bothered me. This was early in '69. I thought if this was true, if Barry really feels that way, then boy I have some real problems; I might as well just get on the rail and get the hell out of town and go to some other country or some other state in the union if this were the case. I hadn't moved my family back from Arizona yet, so I was out in Arizona getting ready to do that when this all happened.

I called Barry at home, and I went out to see him at his home there in Phoenix. I explained what had happened. He said, "Come on, Roy, you know I'd never do anything like that." He was really pissed at the person who did it, and he called that woman in Texas who was on the board of this organization—and it would have been a super client for me—and told her, "Roy knows more about the workings of the Senate than anyone you could possibly hire. You'd be getting a good man. Just because he ran against me is no reason not to hire him. He's welcome in my office anytime." And he said this all in my presence. But the damage had already been done. They made a different selection. But it made me feel a lot better knowing that this was totally unauthorized by him, and unbeknownst to him. I was really much more relaxed after that, because that would have been really devastating to my livelihood or survival, but Barry is just not that type of person, and I appreciated it very much.

RITCHIE: You were unusual in that the two senators from your home state were both men you had run against.

ELSON: Yeah [laughs].

RITCHIE: And in the House you had Udall, who hadn't necessarily been in your corner.

ELSON: That's true, and I never got any help from any of them either, particularly. I got more help out of Barry than I ever did out of Fannin. I think my distaste for Paul probably showed through, and it was hard to be really polite. I just never had the respect for Senator Fannin as I did for Barry, and Barry the man and Fannin the man. Mo and I always seemed to get along. We got along much better than Stewart and I, but it made it very difficult. I know they were glad to see that I was probably politically dead and would not be a force to be reckoned with. We'd gotten the

Central Arizona Project authorized, so that was behind us. So I didn't get much help from anyone in our delegation, not that they had much to fear after that from me, because I had no power. Fortunately, in the business that I did get initially, they weren't on the committees that I dealt with as a lobbyist. So I really didn't have to deal with them that much.

RITCHIE: Did you focus on the Commerce Committee?

ELSON: Yeah, and the Judiciary Committee, particularly because of the copyright issue. Then subsequently when I went full-time with the National Association of Broadcasters, well, then it was the Commerce committees and a lot of other committees, and the Judiciary Committee, but I didn't run into the boys that much.

RITCHIE: Did you find dealing with Congress more frustrating from the outside? Trying to convince somebody of the rightness of your cause?

ELSON: Well, the way I looked at lobbying, and all the lobbyists I ever respected that I put in a class by themselves, and there were some good ones. Earle Clements was one of the best I ever saw. And there were a number of others like him. My approach to lobbying, when I became the chief lobbyist for the National Association of Broadcasters, was that I had a great respect for the members and the bodies themselves, so I was probably more of an advocate for them than I was for the association. I always felt that they should know both sides, as far as I knew it, what our issue was and why we thought it was, but I also let them know what they were going to hear from the other side. I just felt that was right. I believed in keeping those confidences in my relationship with individual members and staff. But I also believed in a lot of pounding the pavement.

And I never, ever, rarely, and I can't even think of one time, went around staff. If I couldn't work it out with staff, I'd ask to see the member with the staff person. I always remembered that I had the last shot at the old man when someone came to see me, and I wasn't going to make that mistake of aggravating the staff member. On occasion, when we couldn't agree, I'd ask the staff member: can we go see the member,

I'd like to have a shot at him. A lot of times they'd just say: go see the member. Or they'd say: why don't yo go take it up with the guy?

I found it frustrating in that it was all persuasion and there was no power. You had to figure out ways that you could bring some pressure to bear from grassroots or from other sources. Reaching Torby MacDonald, who was chairman of the House Communications Subcommittee, and Harley Staggers, was always a challenge because of a lot of things going on involving the networks, who had their own agendas a lot of times, and not necessarily those of the entire membership of the broadcasting industry. And the reason I left my consulting business and went full-time with the broadcasters quite frankly was I was bored. When I look back, having been around a lot of power, having been in campaigns, all the excitement of Capitol Hill, having run twice myself, then I couldn't believe you could make money—and I wasn't making a lot of money, but I was making more than I made on Capitol Hill—for doing nothing. When I started my consulting business I'll bet you I didn't work, if you really called it work, an hour a day. I thought, my God, what a racket! By, what a whoring job this is! I couldn't believe people would pay you for information that they could go get themselves if they really knew where to go and how to do it. I was just bored. I thought, God, I'm going to blow my brains out. I've got to do something. Sitting there and making a few phone calls and going to some silly meeting, or covering a hearing, I thought, gee whiz, they're paying me money for this?

First of all, I wasn't a very good businessman. I think I always sold myself short financially as far as working it out, I was never a very good advocate. I should have had a business manager or something. I could get the job done, but I wasn't very good at taking advantage, as a lot of my friends had, and a lot others I know, who I don't think had the background or the knowledge or the experience but had been very successful, so-called lawyers who are really lobbyists and have become very wealthy people as a result of this. I always wanted to stay small when I had my consulting. If I wanted to do anything with someone else, I wanted it sort of on a contract basis. I didn't want to build an organization and get tied down with running something like that.

But the real reason I went with the broadcasters was this emptiness of having had such an exciting time and things always happening and your mind just razor sharp

—well, for me it was razor sharp, it was probably a pretty dull razor—but I just couldn't get over it. Then everything was personally going on in my life at the same time, it just made it all even worse, in the sense of this lack of excitement, or of being able to control events, or to do anything. So when they asked me to join the broadcasters full-time, I thought about it a great deal; and I looked at all the industries that I might want to get involved with, that I had either worked with and all the other things, and I thought, well, actually, if there's any place in a private sector where I felt that there was a segment of our business world that could keep the government honest, and had a responsibility in public service, it would be the broadcasting industry, the way that the papers were failing, less readership, and television was taking over, and people were getting more and more of their information through those sources.

When I looked at them, besides networks of course, most of the members of that association, most broadcasters are really small businessmen who have roots in their community. I thought, gee, you could really develop a very powerful lobby if it was done right and you could really have a bearing. Again, I was thinking in terms of power, and that could be pretty exciting. And yet it was the one place that I thought, because they had to get their licenses from the FCC and they were supposed to be serving in the public interest, that this fit into my holding my nose as I might have, had I represented some of the corporate world that I had encountered from my years on the Hill, that I didn't like their selfish interest. And, of course, that was another misjudgment; because you find out that broadcasters were more interested in the bottom line than they were in their public service. That was a very great disappointment to me, and I could go on about that, but I think I did some very good work for them as long as I was with them, but I knew sooner or later that I couldn't last there either.

At one time or another I managed to irritate one or two of the networks, never all three at the same time, but I had good relations with most of the commissioners and knew a lot of them personally very well, and developed some very good rapport with both of the chairmen and subcommittee chairmen, as well as the ranking members of the committees.

RITCHIE: Didn't Dean Burch become chairman of the FCC at that time?

ELSON: Oh, Yes.

RITCHIE: Another Arizona connection, although not quite in your camp.

ELSON: No, and leaned more towards the cable interests at that time than he did broadcasting. But I knew all of them down there, and helped get a commissioner on there, like Joe Fogerty, who worked for [John] Pastore up here on the committee. But that's another long story.

RITCHIE: The FCC has always seemed to me more of a politically sensitive commission than a lot of the other regulatory commissions. Sam Rayburn had his nephew on the commission at one time.

ELSON: Oh, yeah, very sensitive politically. Christ, all you have to do is go back to the '50s when they were handing out the television licenses. How do you suppose Lyndon got his radio and television license in Austin? And Ernest McFarland got his, and a whole bunch of them. Yeah, they were always very politically sensitive. I guess what's always bothered me a little bit about government too is the closeness between the industries and the regulatory agencies. Of course, on the one hand you are trying to get people that are qualified to make judgments in this area to serve on these things, at the same time it's almost a revolving chair, they're going back into industry. So you want knowledgeable people, but I always noticed even when I was on the Hill, and certainly when I went into the private sector, there was always too much closeness between the regulatory agencies and the people they regulated. That included the banks and savings and loans—you talk about a closeness! Maybe the FCC was more visible because of television and radio, but I think there might be some other agencies that really had closer ties with the industry, where really where you drew the line was hard to see sometimes, it was a very sandy world.

And you worked, of course, at trying to influence those members. I always liked dealing one-on-one. I would take people to a lot of lunches, or we would meet for drinks or something like that, to get them away from their offices and the telephones and things like that. I guess I was sort of an old-fashioned lobbyist. Again, I could see the handwriting coming at me because I wasn't into doing all the high-pressure mass-mailings, all the PR, ads and the whole thing that it has become. The lobbying

industry is the biggest growth industry in the country, I think, certainly in Washington. I still believed in that personal contact, and the people that I had working for me, I told them that I expected them to spend eighty percent of their time creeping around—I mean walking around these corridors and seeking people, and staying on top of things, and only about twenty percent of their time sitting in the office filling out some damn report or writing things down.

I don't know in today's world, the way the big outfits now operate, with the huge budgets, I don't know whether they're any more effective. They're certainly a lot more expensive than some of the old-fashioned way. Though it seems like you are appealing to the masses to try to get something done, if you've got the information—a certain amount of it I'm sure has to be done, always had to be done, and was done, as you look back through the history. Lobbyists are necessary if you are going to get the information. We certainly, as I said before, relied on them heavily for getting their information, but we also tempered it our way after we checked it out. We expected it to be partial, certainly promoting their cause, but again it was trying to balance this. Having been sort of a child of the Hill myself, and then being a lobbyist trying to influence it, and trying to balance this because a lot of times I could understand their problems as well as they did, and a little more. I had a difficult time explaining it to our board or our president why you don't want to push him here, or you don't want to do this. Saying no to the people you are representing isn't necessarily easy and they don't always listen. Then they'll go do something stupid and they'll want you to go bail them out, because they hadn't listened to you in the first place. It was frustrating that way.

A big trade association like the National Association of Broadcasters, good old NAB, gave you the impression that the president of that organization had a difficult time, and he spent more time trying to keep the membership happy with their little requests for information or their convention and other stuff, rather than the real issues that confronted them. In trying to get them aroused on things that they should really be aroused about was sometimes not too successful. Then they'd get really aroused on the wrong issue, and think that that was the only thing that really mattered, when there were other things going on that would really hurt them much more, both financially and from the standpoint of what they were able to do, or could do.

RITCHIE: That was an era when the Nixon administration was squared off against the broadcasters.

ELSON: Yes, you're right. And they had [Clay] Whitehead down there as head of whatever they called it [Office of Telecommunications Policy] at the White House. One of the nicer men who I met during that time who has done very good work is Brian Lamb who heads up C-SPAN, put that all together. Very able guy. Then you had a CBS, what was his name? The number two man after [William] Paley who ran CBS.

RITCHIE: Oh, Frank Stanton.

ELSON: Yeah, and you know the thing over in the House.

RITCHIE: That's right, he was cited for contempt.

ELSON: Yeah, right, and they didn't play that one very smart. But anyhow, it was hard. I found myself though—this is interesting, after you go back to the Communications Act in the '30s and read all the background of that, the real reason why they set up the FCC was for the best interests of the broadcaster in the industry, because people were jamming, and frequencies weren't assigned, and it was sort of a mess. So in their own self-interest they agreed to be regulated and they'd serve in the public interest. But like a lot of things that went that way, regulatory agencies were set up really to sort of level the playing field or to protect those that already had their interests. That happened in the broadcasting industry. But I found myself sort of siding with the way the industry had developed, going back to the phonograph really, and radio. It was a lot of entrepreneurs that went in to develop broadcasting. It wasn't the government that had developed the industry, and it hadn't been subsidized by the government. When they set it up it certainly did protect a lot of interests, but otherwise you would have had chaos, if here wasn't some national regulatory agency, or an agency to oversee how this thing was going to function. Mainly it was an engineering one in the beginning, on the frequencies.

But I found myself actually sympathizing with their position, that they really were the entrepreneurs in the government, and so they paid a heavy price then when

it got into the convenience and necessity of saying that they can only do a certain amount of programming, and having to go through the license renewal process every five years, and all the other things. So intellectually I could support a lot of their position on that, even though I became disappointed later when all they really cared about, after they had all these licenses for all this time, what they really cared about was the bottom line. Now you have cable and all these things, but in those days the stations were like money machines, particularly a TV license. Then AM was the big thing then, and then FM developed; now FMs are the lucrative ones and AMs are the poor ones in the radio field, so you saw a big transition there. But, my God, the money that those things generated! It was incredible. It was like having a money machine. I wish I would have had one. Ernest McFarland, I think his station was worth seventy or eighty million dollars when he croaked. I hate to think what Lyndon's was until they finally got some more [stations] in there. It was a wonderful deal.

I found that for the most part I could support a lot of the first amendment stuff, that was easy to do. And a lot of the regulatory restrictions on advertising, you know, like when they lost cigarette advertising. That was all skillfully managed by old Earle Clements. He was the one who pulled that off really well, because he didn't want those counter-commercials. That was a beautiful lobbying job back in those days. It was masterminded really by Earle. But like the fight on saccharin, and then on copyright, and dealing with the Motion Picture Association, and the cable fight. As I mentioned, I was involved in that first fight way back in '56 when they failed to regulate cable at that time, and there was that big wonderful fight between Pastore and Kerr, and Yuma, Arizona, was the test case. But for the most part I found that I could honestly, in my own mind, support what I was arguing for, and worked at it pretty hard. In my own mind I was a very good lobbyist for the broadcasters.

I think I'm still a legend down there when it comes to expense accounts because I wouldn't get mine in right away and of course it was your own personal credit card, it wasn't their's, but by the time you got them in they would be quite large. We had a new comptroller who would always question them. Actually, I ended up losing money because I would forget taxi fares, and by the time I would fill them out I would have lost a receipt or something like that. A new chief financial officer came in who had been in the military, and he was sort of questioning my expenditures and didn't know what I did. I said, "Why don't you just pick a day and just go with me, and you can see

what I do. You pick a day, I don't care what it is, and I'll show you what I do." Well, finally he did. He picked a day, and I said, "Okay, you've got to meet me at eight o'clock in the morning because we're having a breakfast for a commissioner, and then we have to go to Capitol Hill and then back down to the Democratic Club over in the Watergate." He said, "I can't meet you for the eight o'clock breakfast, I'll meet you at nine." Well, I had him running all over! We had been up on the Hill, we met with the FCC, then we had a meeting with Lionel Van Deerlin, chairman of the subcommittee on communications at that time. Then we came over to the Senate side and saw [Ernest] Hollings and a couple of members over here, then we went back down to the FCC.

I had three fund raisers to go to that night, starting at five thirty, I think it was, two on Capitol Hill and one downtown. One at the Democratic Club, one at the Capitol Hill club, and then one at the Carlton Hotel downtown. Well, about eleven o'clock at night we were sitting in the lounge at the Carlton, now that everything is over, having some more drinks, and he's exhausted. I finally put him in a cab, he's half crooked; and I sent him home to his wife. I said, "I don't think you'd better drive, you'd better take a cab." I said, "Do you want to go with me tomorrow, I've got another eight o'clock." He said, no. Well, he didn't show up for three days. When he came back, from then on he was sort of an advocate. He said, "I don't know how Roy does it." Because I was in the office bright and bushy-tailed every morning and off again. From that moment on I never had any problems about my expense account.

RITCHIE: You mentioned going to those fund raisers. Did you find as a lobbyist that a lot of people on Capitol Hill had their hands out for campaign contributions?

ELSON: Oh, God! In fact, I was the one who set up the PAC for the broadcasting industry. I hadn't been there but about six months or a year, and I saw how they were raising money for campaigns. They were going to the same people, a lot of it was under the table. First of all, you didn't get enough money that way, but they were always going to the big boys, and then by the time you got the check there was always a mix-up. The first time I wrote up a memorandum that somehow leaked to the trade press, but we brought it up at the board meeting down in Naples, Florida. I'll never forget it because I almost got my [expletive] fired for even suggesting that they set

up a political action committee. We're above doing anything like that, you know, we provide them with time—and you heard all this rationalization where they didn't want to come up with a penny for these candidates. In fact, they expunged the record that this was even discussed at this board meeting. But six months later at our June board meeting here in Washington it came up again. The plan was adopted by something like 35 to 2, and that's how we started. The reason I did it was trying to get some of the grassroots to build up some things.

But sure, I think my record for fund raisers in any one night was eight or nine. After a while that really became a chore, because they were going all the time. It's gotten much worse than it was in the '70s and early '80s when I was still doing that sort of thing. And you would end up seeing the same people. It was like: "I'll see you at the next one." The same lobbyists representing the same people, and we'd all be going to the same fund raisers. But you also wanted to be seen, and the reason that the PACS were effective was that you were able to deliver there at the door; and you were counted, and you were seen. What I felt sorry for, having had some experience myself in raising money, was the candidate. It's a lot easier when you're a staff person, doing it that way than the member himself. I've always thought it so degrading to have to go do it yourself, and still do. But man, the costs have gotten so out of hand that they went to them. But I think I went to as many as eight in one night. Say you had a drink at each one, you could build up a tolerance; and you could become an alcoholic and I'm not sure that I didn't for a while have some problems. I'd limit myself to one drink and go on, and sometimes I'd just drink soda and pretend.

But I used the fund raisers to pick up a lot of information, was very cognizant of who was there representing whom, and how much they had given. I'd try to make it an intelligence-gathering operation from my standpoint and pick up a lot of information, though it didn't necessarily apply to your problem, but it could affect some legislation that you're interested in because it was the same committee and it might get backed up and they were there for their own reasons, and their priority might be a little higher than yours. All that information helps. It's sort of like a computer, you put it back there and then figure out where things fall into place and what you might encounter down the line, particularly as a session is coming to an end. Again, I had mixed emotions. I sort of liked going to them, and then I sort of hated going to them, because you saw so many of the same people doing the same thing, and you'd end up

a lot of times talking to the same people every day. So I tried to make fun of it, and after a while if they were really bad I'd maybe have two drinks instead of one [laughs].

RITCHIE: Your broadcasters really made out on those things, though, because obviously the largest share of the money they contributed was going back to paying broadcasting advertising.

ELSON: Oh, yeah. Of course, I made several mistakes. Maybe I mentioned this to you before. I used to go to a lot of state association of broadcasting meetings; and I would have a speech, and I'd be on the program, sometimes it would be the whole thing, sometimes it would be a workshop, whatever. For a while there I was going out there and telling our members—which I thought was only the dutiful thing to do—if they knew how Washington worked, and I was here to tell them how it worked, they could save a lot of money in attorney's fees by either asking the member for some information or have them make the inquiry at the FCC, or use your public servants. I was doing this for quite a while, and then finally apparently one of the lawyers that was out there at the same thing, from the communications legal fraternity head one of my talks, I think it was out in Portland, Maine. I was making a big speech, and I was talking about a lot of stuff about big government and how you can help in all this. And the next thing I know, our president, Vince Wasilewski, who's a super guy and I got along with him really well, but he called me and said, "Roy, we may not be sending you on too many more state meetings, but when we do, I think you had better forget about the legal fraternity. You're hitting some people's pocketbooks. You know, they've had longstanding relationships with their clients." He did it very tactfully, but I certainly got the message [laughs]. And from then on I didn't go to too many state meetings unless I was specifically requested. But I thought that was funny.

RITCHIE: Did you find that there were certain senators who were more supportive than others, that you went back to? You mentioned Senator Hollings for instance.

ELSON: Yeah, but like anything else, you also knew that they had constituent problems. And I think with the politician you've got to tune your ear to hear what you're really hearing. That's when I think I started seeing changes that I mentioned in one of our earlier interviews. I became disenchanted with a number of members

who, when you thought you had their word, would double-deal you. As I said, they didn't have to give me their word or anything, and I normally made pretty sure of what I was hearing and asking, I think I had enough experience in that area. And when you went back to them, after say they went against you when they had told you they were going to support this, they would say, "Well, circumstances have changed. There was this difference and that." I would say, "No, the principle is still the same. Nothing's changed. You changed." I would go back and see them.

That's when I saw this "playing to the gallery" sort of thing, and not being very careful with what they said, or they wouldn't say anything if you pressed them. I could probably have been criticized, particularly as a businessman, and certainly maybe as a lobbyist, of not being a person of hard sell. I don't think I ever threaten anyone. If I did, it was so tactfully he probably missed it. We did go after some people politically that had doublecrossed us. And in most cases we were successful in seeing that they weren't around again. But that was rare. I spent a lot of time trying to cultivate those that were really against us, or appeared to be say more pro-cable, or more pro-motion picture, or whatever. I always figured that those were the people you had to work on the most, and again would try a long pool of just keeping them advised, staying in touch if they had any questions, and looking down the line that they might vote your way. And always hoping to have quick access.

I know on one battle, for instance, that I had lost in the committee on a tie vote. I remember all our people got all excited. I said, "I told you we were going to lose it, we weren't going to win it—we had a chance," but I said, "I guarantee you, when we get to the floor, that's all the votes they're going to get." And when it got to the floor, that's all the votes they got. I had laid out a good strategy and we had done our work real well. I think I proved my great worth at the time to the broadcasters on that issue, because we really had that nailed down. They only got eight votes.

But, I don't know about lobbying—I think I felt a little like a whore. After having worked for such a great man, and around such a great institution, and seeing some of the giants, even with all their shortcomings, at least all those people had been elected by the public, by their constituents. There's just something about—though I realize lobbying is necessary, essential and some are very, very fine, I also found some really cruddy people. Their ethics left much to be desired. It still bothers me to this day, I've

seen a lot of law firms for instance say on a tax bill where they might have a number of clients that they represent maybe on the same section of the bill, and actually sell out some of their clients, mainly because they can't take care of all of them, maybe not the same section of the bill, but in the same bill.

I might have mentioned about being at one meeting where we were waiting for the client. This is when I was representing the record companies and the industry. We had some PR people there, several big law firms; and one of the senior partners in a law firm came in before the client arrived and we were all sitting around, because we had all known each other, sort of BSing about everything. I remember his saying—and I remember who he said it to, distinctly too—to another partner in another law firm, he said, "Well, we ought to be able to keep this one alive for years." It disgusted me, because here we were there supposedly trying to figure out how to solve this client's problem, this was the Recording Industry of America, and what they were talking about was how do we keep this alive and get the fees?

That was near when I started to get burned out. This as after I had left the NAB and had gone back to consulting. It just sort of summed up what I saw going on in Washington among the so-called professional lobbyists and attorneys. There isn't a major law firm in this town, if they really had a code of ethics, that shouldn't be disbarred for their conflicts of interest. Then they farm them back and forth to each other. It's become a game. That's why I don't think much gets really done, because it has become such a game. As I say, there's nothing wrong with lobbying, but it shouldn't be practiced for the benefit of a certain profession, the lobbyists themselves.

RITCHIE: I've heard that people who used to work on Capitol Hill, when they become lobbyists, in the beginning they have all the contacts with people they had actually worked with, but the longer you lobby the fewer old associates are still left up on the Hill.

ELSON: That's right.

RITCHIE: Is there sort of a shelf-life of a lobbyist?

ELSON: Well, yeah, except I've seen some like Horace Godfrey, who never really worked up here I don't think, but he was in the Kennedy administration and then represented the sugar people, one of the best lobbyists around. There are a number who worked at it and have done it over a period of time. But, sure, I would think there is, unless you really keep up, and you're pounding that pavement, and doing it, and working at it. I can think of a number that I would say have been able to maintain, or develop new contacts. But the Hill has changed so much, and people aren't staying around as long, and they're moving on quicker, and that's true downtown too in some of the agencies. I noticed when I was "traveling" that when I got back it was amazing to me just in say one Congress people moved on, and how someone else was running the show, or a new staff person was running the committee.

The other thing I might have mentioned is that having been a Democrat, the corporations and trade associations I think were very smart in hiring as top lobbyists for them a lot of Democrats, because mainly it was a Democratic Congress, and has been for so long, with minor exceptions. What fascinated me was that I soon found it was like that told saying, was it Ben Jonson? "When seen too often familiar with its face, we first endure, then pity, then embrace." All of a sudden you found all these good Democrats becoming the best conservatives and sort of right-wing fascists [laughs], and it bothered me. A lot of them, I wouldn't say all, but a lot of them took on the identity of the people that they were representing.

I can honestly say, I don't think I lost my own identity and what I believed in that way. Certainly I'm still probably a bomb-throwing socialist or whatever. Anyhow, I found that pretty amusing because I knew them all. But those who have been around for say the last fifteen or twenty years, that left here back when I left, and are still in their top positions, they don't enjoy it anymore. They're just putting in their time to get out, and it's like watching zombies. It's really sad to see what's happened to some of the brightest, ablest people, really good, to see how they're really burned out, and sort of cynical, and disgusted, and sold out, in a way, I guess that's what I mean. It's sad to see some of the. I won't name any of those names.

RITCHIE: But it's a type at least.

ELSON: Yeah. I don't think we finished yet. Can we maybe do it if I can get up in the morning?

End of Interview #12

ONE MAN AGAINST THE MOB

Interview #13

Tuesday, August 21, 1990

RITCHIE: You were saying that you've never read a good book about Washington.

ELSON: No, I guess [Allen] Drury's book [*Advise and Consent*] was probably as close as any that I've read, that has a feel for the whole power structure and the way Washington worked back then.

RITCHIE: You said there were concentric circles.

ELSON: Oh, yeah. When I first came here it just seemed to me that the socializing that took place was mainly in private parties, or at embassies and in diplomatic circles, mainly because they had the blue laws and all that here, so you couldn't move from one table to another with a drink, and everything had to be off the table at a certain hour. At midnight on Saturday things closed down. But there were these concentric circles, and they would all sort of overlap together. Sometimes you'd run into the military, or the diplomatic crowd, and then there would be the legislative crowd, and the White House crowd. Not all of them fit on top of each other, but they sort of intertwined. You'd fall into it. It was more by accident than by design, unless you deliberately started going to embassy things.

I know I used to be invited a lot of times to them. And I probably should have gone to a lot more than I did. The senator would get the invitation and he rarely went to any evening event unless it was an Arizona function or a White House function where it was sort of a command performance, or something like that. So I had lots of opportunities if I had taken advantage of them, and probably could have expanded my interests and circles if there had been the time. But between all the lobbyists and the other demands on your time, when you're working six and seven days a week, and have a young family, it just became impossible to do all the things that you wanted to do.

Of course, you could become a real alcoholic in a hell of a hurry if you went to all the social events that you are invited to in Washington.

I should have put in those circles the lobbyists. They sort of flowed through the stream too. You would find them at various functions. It's a great, confusing, wonderful, exciting city because the power's here. It certainly has been the center of the world's power, and when you're around it, it's just hypnotic almost. I found it fascinating, and I wish I had gotten to know more people, and I wish I had spent more time with the diplomatic and military crowd than I did, though they were normally coming to us, particularly the military, and also the State Department, for money. When the old man was sitting on top of the purse strings, we didn't have to go too often to them. But I sort of regret not having spent a little more time expanding my circle of interest. Who knows what might have happened?

RITCHIE: Why do you think that most of the writers don't capture the Washington that you knew?

ELSON: Well, I even see it in some of our pundits that on the talk shows, who think they're all so smart and have great insights into Washington. First of all, I think you really have to have a little experience on Capitol Hill to get the flavor of it and to understand its workings. It's hard to be just a casual observer in some remote position. I think you really have to be involved in it to get the feel of the give and take that takes place, and the nuances, because it's like sifting sand: you can never capture it, and it's always changing. So I think you need experience first of all, and then I think most writers—or pundits—have never really been in a political campaign and really been into the guts of politics, of running a campaign, or raising money, or doing all the hard stuff, and understanding the pressures from constituents, and from interest groups and lobbyists. Very rarely has one of them been a lobbyist either.

I think it's very difficult to find someone who can capture all of that. I'm not saying it can't be done, I just think that this is a very difficult place to really capture the sense of just the Senate alone as an institution, let alone taking into consideration the House. And people forget, I think, so often that you only have 535 members, or how many there are now, and they're the only elected officials you have federally except for the President of the United States, and he's the only one in the executive branch

who's elected. The Vice President goes along for a ride. People forget that these are the most responsive people in the world, and have to be if they want to stay around for a little bit or have any influence.

To me, the legislative branch has always been the fascinating one because it is so much more responsive. It is also more difficult to control, to lead, to achieve consensus. Yet in our democracy it's the only place that I now know that can really keep the executive branch honest, and of course there's always the fight between executive prerogatives and legislative prerogatives in every area you can think of. It's shifting all the time, depending on the popularity and strength of the president and his mastering of all these very same things. And then of course you do have that third branch, the judiciary, it depends on how active they are. And of course the Senate as an institution, I think is probably the greatest institution in the world, I mean that we still have in the world. It is a body that grows, and goes backward, takes one step forward, and falls on its [expletive]. Just in the time I've been here—and we're talking about thirty-eight years now—to see it change, and the ebb and flows of power, and the different changes in leadership in the House and the Senate, and the strong presidents, I still have a lot of confidence in it.

I'm not particularly enamored in the way things are going right at the moment, but I have hope for the institution itself, because it always seems to respond eventually. It may take awhile, but it seems to keep the process, the democratic system, alive. I can't overemphasize enough in my opinion the understanding that the Congress is really the place where people should pay the most attention to the type of individuals they send here, because it's the only chance they really have to make the changes that they want and be felt.

The president is limited in his control—just look at Reagan, for instance. He won on a platform of less government and cutting the budget, and you know what happened there. Government has gotten bigger and the debt is totally out of whack after eight years of his administration. But people believed all that stuff, and again it was—like we talked before about the mythology and the reality of images. Yet we're paying a hell of a price and I don't know if we'll ever recover from some of the things that went on during the '80s. But to me the place to be, and the place that American citizens should

be most concerned is in the type of people they elect to the House and the Senate, if its going to work.

RITCHIE: You commented about the pundits. How would you rate the press and the media in general in terms of the way they cover Congress?

ELSON: Shallow, for the most part. They do not give the men that are here credit for the talent that they have, and the reasons that they function the way they did. Particularly when it comes to television, it's the moment. You can't do anything in depth, even with public broadcasting, like McNeil-Lehrer, and some of those. I think they find, as the president does on many occasions, it's easy to blame Congress for the problems. They didn't react, or they didn't do this or that. Most of them don't seem to understand, for instance, the budget process at all, a president making a budget and how that whole thing works. Unfortunately, they really think that their stuff smells good, for the most part. They think that what they pontificate is the gospel, and they're able to give this insightful analysis of a situation.

I've yet to see any problem—you remember the old saying, "there's always two sides to every question"—when I first came back here I suddenly realized that there were about forty sides to every little simple question that seemed to come up. Because anything that you did here had an effect on everyone, whether it was taxes, appropriations, a special project, defense, just name it. This is why I've always loved politics, because I can't think of anything that affects everyday an individual's life in some form or fashion. Not paying attention to it, and sticking your head in the sand, why you'll soon get your [expletive] blown off. So it does bother me that people don't vote like they use to, or register and take the interest in it.

I'm sad to see the destruction of the two political parties—mainly because of the presidential races. There's no real grass roots out there anymore. It's put together for the moment. It's not really an organization. They don't have the patronage, they have no way of keeping discipline. Now it's more of a money-raising scheme through mass mailings. You get the names without faces and bloody statistics. That's, I think, really too bad. At the state level, particularly, at least it seems to me, they talk about the party. But just like that court ruling up in Illinois where they said you can't fire a person because patronage is only limited to the very highest echelons. And of course

it's true in Washington. I don't know how many Schedule-Cs there are now, but probably less than there were in the '60s, and now you have a bigger government. I've always felt a president should have the chance to get control of the government by putting in his people. I think we touched on that a little bit when we were talking about Kennedy and the way he moved right after he was elected. He did move his people in as rapidly as anyone I can remember, so to that extent he had a better control of policy than you might have expected from him.

RITCHIE: Your career spanned the age from before television in politics to the age when television dominates politics. How have the United States Senate and the senators reacted to media broadcasting?

ELSON: Well, I think we touched that earlier too. I always come back to that damn Class of '58, where you had nineteen new senators, sixteen new Democrats and three Republicans, and then I think a couple more came in in the next year as a result of special elections. Twenty or twenty-one new senators came in, that's a fifth of the Senate changed at that time. I think that was really the first television class. Of course, they had learned through their media advisors, which became popular during the late '50s although you always had PR men around or newspaper people and that sort of thing. But I think it has become a tremendous influence. I have mixed emotions today about the televising of the Senate and House. I don't know that it has added to the debate particularly. You see a lot of politicking, and grandstanding, and posturing. But these guys are good. They know how to get that sound bite and to say quickly (and look pretty) something that's rather frivolous, but it gets the news back home.

Television has tremendously changed campaigning, certainly. There is the constant pressure of keeping everything up, everyday, and getting their attention so you can get some exposure, particularly if you have other ambitions. But just being a senator you need occasionally to get some exposure for back home. I'm not saying in every case, but most of them realize that they have to utilize the media and exploit them as much as the media has been exploiting them. I really don't like it, because there's nothing in depth. The presidential debates, for instance, are a big farce. I remember going over to represent the Democratic National Committee briefly with the League of Women Voters and some others. I said, "They're not really debates. They're

little performances. And until you actually have some real debates and let the two candidates freely swing at each other, then you might find out how a man stands up." But as far as their value goes, they're too much controlled by the media, and the parties won't agree on anything. Maybe they are coming around to something they can agree on.

I saw the change when I was running Carl Hayden's campaign. Of course, he looked like a cadaver in those days. He was eighty-five and his skin was atrophying a little bit. So the way we handled his television appearances was we had him the year before, when we had been out there in the state, I had him down in Glen Canyon Dam in a chopper, wearing a hard-hat, and down at the fort inspecting the troops, and in a tank. It was a deliberate thing that we put together. We went to missile inspections, went down to Cape Canaveral, just did all those things. At the same time, we were also working, in the sense that all these were legitimate things that he wanted to see anyhow. But we had a camera crew along and got all this in the can very early. Then he never appeared live, outside of some posed shots. We made a thirty-minute documentary. When we showed it, it beat all the ratings of the networks, which sort of irritated them. I mean, it was a very well-done documentary. Someone like that, of course, is at a disadvantage on television. He might be the most brilliant guy in the world, but may be uglier than hell or too pretty. You never know what's going to be an advantage or a disadvantage, so everyone does it a little differently.

We also used a lot of radio, as I did in my campaigns. Radio, I think, is one of the most effective ways of reaching voters—I'm talking about buying commercial time, radio can do a much better job with some of those talk shows, but you find fewer and fewer of those. We had a few in Arizona where these guys were really pretty good and knew some history, and knew a little bit about government and could ask the second question, the third question. That was refreshing. But that and direct mail are very effective, and you can target it now with computers, knowing your demographics pretty well.

Today, it seems like the media—and I'm including all of them, the journalists too—anytime when you read any of the newspapers it seems like it's not like journalism was, where in the first couple of paragraphs you can get who, what, why, when, and all the essentials of the story, and then if you wanted to read on and get really detailed,

you could do that. Now, it seems like everyone has a by-line in the press, and on radio and television, and they all try to predict what's going to happen. It's not just good enough to say this is what happened. I think we touched on this in one of the other interviews, about how that's all changed. I don't know what's wrong with the words "no comment," or just a plain "no," or "I don't think right at this time you need to know, when the time comes we'll give you a report."

I personally feel that one of the bad things that happened was a lot of the Sunshine crap, because all you find anymore at a mark-up of a bill are maybe some reporters and a lobbyist. You don't find the public there, it's the lobbyists. You can hardly get in for falling over the lobbyists. You're not able to go into executive session, particularly in a mark-up, where in the art of politics it's the compromise, or the working out of these difficulties and complicated subjects, where you can have this give-and-take and make the argument, where a lot of things *were* decided in the old days. Now, all the reform has forced, in my opinion, is members to meet quietly ahead of time or in little groups, or over the phone, or in offices, to decide on what they're going to do. Then the rest is a damn show. You know, they go in there and go through the very same damn thing that you see maybe on the floor, or when they're campaigning.

And of course, the lobbyists are sitting there. I remember sitting there. You respected the man and hoped that if say the amendment that you had asked him to propose or he had agreed to offer, if that didn't work that he had enough judgment to either make a compromise that wasn't going to hurt you, or would work out something that might not be as good as you wanted, but at least he would work it out. But so many times a member ends up looking at one of the lobbyists sitting there and he's afraid to do him a service because they'll end up telling him, "this is the bottomline, we can't go beyond this," and all that. So he let's it go, or loses. In an executive session you could work out those things, because you knew where the amendments were coming from, and there are not too many surprises around here—at least I've never found too many when it gets into a mark-up. So I don't think it was abused, quite frankly. A lot of the reporters, again, they wanted it because they had to take what the committee chairman, or subcommittee chairman, or members would tell them when they came out of the meeting. Of course, you filed a report, it was all there, the language was there, but they're lazy, a lot of them. I'll bet you half of these reporters

don't read the damn report or the legislation. They take whatever they say it is. There are very few of them that really read that much, in my opinion.

As an example, I remember when all hell was being raised, I guess this was back in the '50s, when the salaries were always secret, members' office salaries. They knew the total amount, and what the top was to be paid, and that sort of thing. But the individual salaries were secret. The press was saying "the public has a right to know," and all the other things. Well, all it did was once every six months they'll print the salaries of the senators' staff in the home paper. What it did cause was a lot of discontent among fellow employees on the Hill because they'd compare themselves against someone in someone else's office or on a committee and what they were getting, and so the pressure was on the member to bring them all up to snuff or work out something else, which caused some changes in the whole way salaries are handled up here now.

They got that, but outside of the overall thing about salaries for members, my God, on the pay issue as far as staffs are concerned they only do that every six months. The Secretary has to fill out that six-month report. I guess they still do it, a big old green volume with all the salaries—which is useful information if you want to go through and dig it out, fine. I guess I had no real objection to the listing of salaries, because ours were, I think, handled pretty fairly and equitably. But I know it did cause a lot of problems among other staffs, because they'd say, "Gee, I know I've been here longer and I should be getting more." And of course, it was up to each member of the Senate and the House to determine their individual salaries. Now we're going to civil rights and job security and all these other things.

What I loved about the Senate was the pressure of knowing that if you screwed up you got your [expletive] canned that day. The member had the right, because it was his tail that was on the line, not yours. I sort of liked it that way. When I was hiring people, and I hired a lot of people for Carl Hayden over the years, what I tried to look for—and wasn't always successful of course—was loyalty to the senator. They didn't have to agree with everything that he said, but if they had a disagreement at least keep it in-house; and a willingness to keep your mouth shut. I mean there's a lot of loose talk about things that they didn't either have all the information and may have seen part of it but not all of it, or understand it. It was pretty hard to find that. Of course, you'd

figure that after ninety days or whatever you'd find out how good they were, how bright they were. But if they screwed up, you had a right to get rid of them.

Now, that's an exaggeration that we'd do it in one day. Most of the time, anyone we fired we gave them a good severance and helped them maybe get located somewhere else. But on occasion I've just out and out fired people, mainly for lying, saying they did something they didn't do, or they were supposed to be someplace. A couple of people that way. I personally liked the pressure of knowing that. It just kept you alert, knowing that you had to exercise a lot of judgment. I don't think it makes you less aggressive, because you're being cautious. I just think it makes you look for those forty different sides. The secret is so that you'll never be blindsided on anything, that you know you've anticipated where pressures are coming from, or where the arguments are coming from, or who might be for or against you on certain legislative matters or political issues.

As I said, I just loved working under that sort of pressure, and I don't think in the whole time that I worked for Carl Hayden, outside of the two times that I mentioned to you about how he told me about how I thought his thoughts, that he really ever complimented me on anything. He just expected you to do good work. He'd let you know if he didn't particularly like it, but he sort of expected the best out of everyone. He didn't mind our playing, you know I think our office had a reputation for working hard but also playing very hard. And he loved to surround himself with young people—I think it kept him young and stimulated him. Though he had probably heard every argument we ever made, all of us combined, at one point or another in his career, he just liked being reminded, and having the stimulus of people argue with him, or come out with some of these things. Where the hell were we? [laughs]

RITCHIE: We've been talking about the staff in the '50s and the '60s. Now that you've come back in the '90s, what does the Senate staff look like to you today, by comparison?

ELSON: Well, I don't like what I've seen since I've been back these fourteen months or so. Number one, I can't believe how these staffs have grown. I think they've either tripled or quadrupled since I left here on January the 2nd or 3rd of 1969. I saw it of course when I was a lobbyist. Now there seems to be a lot of layers in

between people and the member. I don't know that the members are being better served particularly by the larger staffs. I know there's been a tremendous increase in constituent mail and all that, and they've all seemed to have gone back to opening all these home offices all over their states. We did all of that out of Washington in our day. In the last couple of years we did open two offices, one in Phoenix and one in Tucson, but most of the stuff we'd still have them come back. They were more or less "ears," and people would go in and complain to them. But we'd still do all the stuff mainly out of Washington.

Number one is the tremendous increase; then, I don't know, I've become very fond of the computer personally, but I don't know that in this age of communication that people are really communicating. I don't see them talking among themselves. They're all hidden behind these damn pieces of equipment. There seems to be a lot of make-work, too. For instance, I always thought that certain committees ought to have the support elements, like our budget thing, what do they call that office?

RITCHIE: The Disbursing Office?

ELSON: No, no, no. The budget. . . .

RITCHIE: Oh, the Congressional Budget Office.

ELSON: Yeah, things like that, and the Office of Technological Assessment, those sort of things I thought were wonderful innovations, or improvements, because you needed some of the technical, non-partisan expertise that you could rely on, not rely necessarily on the executive branch, or on industry, for information, that you could have access to some impartial people to analyze it, who weren't promoting it. I've found, which I'm sure has always been true, but it seems to me that there's more of it today than there was then, that the executive branch doesn't always tell you the truth. They're not always coming forth as they should in giving the type of information that rightfully should be available to members of Congress, and to the committees.

This, incidentally, is where I think Carl Hayden was really a master, because you didn't dare come before his committee and lie. That son of a gun could get right to the heart of a complicated problem. You might think he was sitting there asleep or

something like that, and then he'd come back. I don't know how many times I've seen it, but he'd come with these penetrating questions and practically knock the guy off the witness stand with the question.

But I don't know about this tremendous increase in the personal staff and committee staff, like having a member entitled to a staff man on every damn committee he serves on. That's what a professional staff is supposedly for on a committee. In those days, when I was up here, the professional staff was pretty damn professional, though they all got their by politics, but they served the members for the most part very impartially. As I say, it seems like the members are being more and more isolated from the public and the lobbyists. I know when I was lobbying for those ten years and had my own consulting business, again recognizing the importance of staff, I always concentrated on good staff relationships. And yet, it was really hard to keep up because there were so many changes. They don't seem to stay as long.

That's the other thing that I think is different. There was more real interest in public service when you came as a staff member to Capitol Hill and worked here than it seems to me now. Again, this has just been my observation since I got back, it seems to me it's become more a thing to put on your resume, looking for something bigger and better. And there seems to be too much specialization. You have an expert on this, an expert on that. I was spoiled—that's the wrong word I guess—but the way Carl Hayden trained every man in his office was that you learned to do everything, and so you really weren't a specialist, you were a generalist. You were supposed to apply good judgment to everything. He felt, and I feel, that in our government, in this city, there is someone who is an expert who knows a hell of a lot more than you do, and you can draw on that resource. It's up to you to know how to get to that resource, bring it out, apply it to your problem, and bring them together. To me, that's the real art of the politician, and that's why he is a politician, to bring the expertise of others together and apply it to a social or political problem.

I was exposed to everything, and that's what made it so exciting. One thing I can I say about myself: I wasn't afraid to make decisions. I thought I knew the senator's position pretty well on most things, and I thought I had good judgment in making decisions, and I'd make them. I wouldn't waste a lot of time. But I would

always try to get as much information as possible. At least I was always willing to make the decision and take the heat for it if it was the wrong decision.

But now it seems to me there's a real age of specialization. The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing all the time. The leadership, for instance, has to try to bring that together when everyone has this little cubbyhole niche they're in, and bring them out. And too much legislation, for instance, I think is being written on the floor. Before, when they'd come out of committee, you'd pretty much go along with the committee chairman and ranking member, because they had really carefully looked over the subject that was in the area of their jurisdiction. And as you pointed out in one of our early interviews, when you look at the Appropriations Committee, you had all the chairmen of all the other committees on there in the first place, so they were always talking, they had this really close arrangement. Now, you don't find that to be the case. An awful lot, it seems to me, of legislation is being written on the floor, mammoth paperwork.

I like some of the changes that have taken place, as I said, in the support area. For instance, your office and what the Secretary's office has been doing in this area, I've always felt that there should have been something along that line. You're talking really about peanuts when it comes to the budget up here, but some of those things I've really felt were very, very good.

I know I've heard Barry Goldwater and a lot of others saying "you ought to cut the staffs in half," I don't know whether I'd go that far. So, those are some of the changes. The other thing that I seem to note, and I think it's again because there isn't the closeness, because it's gotten so big, is this camaraderie that is sort of necessary to make the system work. It's really sad, because we're missing a lot, and I think it's essential. But people don't seem to trust each other anymore. To me, the only thing you have in politics is your word. If you made a commitment, your word is your bond. If you violate that, you don't have anything. It seems to me that people are lying to each other up here, staffs, and they're holding people like it was all their own, like it was some big secret that you couldn't get if you really worked at it or something like that. I've even noticed members lying to each other, and that's pretty damn bad. There's a lot of—well, I don't know whether I want to call it partisanship, but the great thing about the Senate, because I always believed in unlimited debate, I'm always very

fearful that its too easy to get a majority, that's the simplest thing in the world. And now sixty percent is awfully easy to get. And yet, under some of the rule changes, I think they've abused the thing from the time of the old days.

Maybe members are socializing more than staff people, but there's no place for instance like the Carroll Arms anymore. You've got the Monocle over there and some other places, but there's no one place you could fall out of the building and just go there, like the Plaza. And then you have the other change that I see, the proliferation of lobbyists. Jesus Christ there must be just in the last twenty years, you look at the lobbying lists, that book on trade associations, it gets bigger and bigger. More and more companies and organizations are now located here in Washington, when they used to be spread out between here, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, the headquarters of all these organizations. Now they all seem to have offices here, so you stumble over this horde of individuals. That's made a significant difference. For the most part they're single-issue type organizations. Too often, I think that really screws up the whole political process. So those are some of the changes that I've seen. I guess I'm sounding as though I haven't liked many of them. [laughs]

RITCHIE: I wanted to ask one other question about the media as a factor in this. You talked about the shallowness of the media, but when you were in Washington and functioning in the Senate for all that period of time, were there any particular reporters that you had more confidence in than others? People you would turn to regularly to read or to provide information to?

ELSON: Well, some of them were local. Of course, you've got to remember about Carl Hayden, he never had a press secretary until I hired one in 1961 or 62, and that didn't work. Then we had one after that. We didn't cater to the press very much, though it came in. Roger Mudd we had a high opinion of. I thought he was very good. And Bill Small, who was covering the Hill, was very good back in those days. I'm trying to think of some of the others. The senator knew all the big reporters. He knew [Drew] Pearson, he knew [Walter] Lippmann, he knew all those people. But it always amazed me that so little came out after they talked to him, or he talked to them. It wasn't that he wouldn't discuss a subject, it was just that he wasn't giving them the type of things that they wanted, that would sell newspapers, or get commercials, or help the ratings.

We kept very close touch with the local press at home. The *Arizona Republic* had an office here, but the others didn't. What the senator would do was send them the *Congressional Record*, and a *Directory*, through the year, and then in return they'd send him the newspaper. Then when we went around the state, we stopped in at every newspaper publisher, all the television stations. I did talk him into doing local interviews with both radio and television. He was always very good at it, because he was wonderful off-the-cuff, and always had this wry sense of humor that caught them off guard. He had that little twinkle in his eye, and always a surprise answer. They weren't quite expecting some of his candidness. He was very natural at it, and very good. I think he would have been wonderful in today's world, as he was when he was a young man, or even when I first went with him. He was so natural and honest, it just came through. You couldn't help but respect the man for that, and it showed very much.

RITCHIE: You cited Roger Mudd, what was it about Mudd that appealed to you?

ELSON: First of all, he really was a good observer and he seemed to do his homework. He did a lot of background digging. I don't know Roger's background that much, and I never had that many dealings with him. But every time we did, or saw his coverage of something, he at least knew the issue. He sort of had a respect for the Congress and the institution, it wasn't: they're all bad guys; and they're dumb; who sent them back here? He seemed to have a great respect for the institution of the Congress, and for that matter the White House too. But he really seemed to work at it. And he wasn't—at least I never found him to be—so pushy.

I know it used to bother Carl Hayden when we had someone testifying, like a Kennedy or someone like that, before one of his subcommittees, or something was going on of major import, where the cameras would come in. It used to make him so mad because as soon as that person had finished testifying and they'd gotten what they wanted, they'd start breaking down the cameras. He almost had the Rules Committee propose a rule that once television covered a hearing they had to wait until the hearing either recessed or were excused before they could start moving out their equipment. Because the television crews were awful, and still are, lots of them. They'd just up and move their cameras, and break down all the wires. You'd think that was the only

important issue. That's where you got frustrated, because they'd be covering some popularity contest rather than what was really the substance of matters taking place.

But because of that twenty-four hundred miles between here and Arizona, we were fortunate in some ways that they weren't that close, that we could get away without paying too much attention to them. So many times, the senator would just say, "no comment." It could be on some of the biggest matters in the world. Then the question would come, "Well, isn't it true what so and so said." He would say, "Well, maybe he did, I don't know, you'd better go ask him." And he was able to get away with that. I don't know whether he could do very much of that today, because there's sort of this symbiotic relationship between the press and the politicians. They're almost becoming one and the same [laughs], because they're using each other. The cost of modern-day politics has made getting those little sound-bites on the evening news very, very valuable. If you had to pay for those, they'd cost a fortune. So they're all jockeying for that position.

RITCHIE: Earlier, you cited Allen Drury's novel very highly. Did you think that really captured the Senate of the '50s when you were here?

ELSON: Well, it was a composite of a lot of people. I thought I could identify certain characters, and of course we did have the suicide and all the other things up here. At the time, I felt he had come fairly close to capturing the institution. You know, you've got to remember that all these guys are human beings.

That's the other thing I should probably say. You asked me what the difference is today. I think that privacy is not quite as private as it was back then. Today, Jesus, I don't think I could even run for office with the type of scrutiny that they put you through, and all the little personality quirks that you might have, or not have, or the things you've done. For instance, I can't think of very few people that grew up in the '60s, or went to college then, who probably hadn't tried some marijuana at one time or another. Of course, in today's world that would disqualify you if you even admitted that you might have tried it, in a controlled situation. Though there's always been womanizing going on around here, I don't think it was any more discrete back then, it was just that the press didn't pay that much attention to it. It was probably more of a male bastion of macho stuff then, so that was probably a plus in many ways than

today. We had gay members then and staff, but I see a great increase in that area. Not that there is anything wrong with that, or their ability to get the job done, but again the media makes things out of that, so that's different.

I remember looking over one of the forms that one of these people for nominations that need Senate confirmation have to fill out, and my God, who would want one? [laughs] Every little. . . well, they want to get into your bedroom, they want to get into every possible thing. I don't know anyone that can really, if you've done anything at all, or you've been active, cannot have some vulnerability somewhere along the line.

I was told, and I sort of felt, that one of my strengths in being Carl Hayden's AA was I always had a sense for where someone was vulnerable. I sort of knew how I could play it, too, at some point along the line. Not necessarily in a cruel way, but with the right timing you could take advantage of that particular weakness, or whatever the vulnerability was. But in today's world, around here, my God, they're asking an awful lot of human beings with all their make up to adhere to some ethical standards that I think are absurd.

I sure wouldn't want to be sitting on the Ethics Committee in today's world, with everything that's going on, and the way the media has tried to make certain things that you probably wouldn't have considered questionable twenty years ago, they've turned it into a big question. I guess I could think of a lot of other changes, but I don't want to sound like—I find it difficult sometimes when I listen to myself talking to others, I don't want to dwell on the past so much, because this is a rapidly changing world. It was then, but it has the appearances of moving faster now, and perhaps more complicated, but I'm not so sure that's true. I don't want to sound like I'm putting down the Congress or the Senate, or the institutions of government particularly, I'm just disappointed because my level of expectation has always been higher than the performance. Where you get really cynical, I guess, is when there's a big gap between the expectation and performance. If there's enough of that, people end up doing themselves in. [laughs]

RITCHIE: Last year, the Senate turned down the nomination of John Tower, a long-time member of the Senate, to be Secretary of Defense, and they debated his

drinking and his sex life and all the rest of it. Some of the newspapers wrote that the day of the Senate club was over, and this symbolized it. Is that a fair assessment?

ELSON: I don't think so. No, I think it depends on the members. I see a time when a "club," like we refer to "the club," could be around again. It's not one that's going to disappear. It may not be as strong as it once was, but you still have a core of people that are really movers and doers.

I think Tower brought so much of that on himself, because he was open and notorious, and just sort of rubbed it in everyone's nose. You notice this about little people, they all think their stuff really smells good. I remember when he first came here. Over where the chairman, meaning Hayden, had his hideaway, right across from it there was a door that was about three feet high, and it was arched and everything else. I don't know what was back there, but we used to say, "This is Tower's hideaway." Anyone who's been around here—I personally saw him in a condition, well, I mean intoxicated, and with different women at the Carroll Arms and at the Monocle. He had sort of a special table there. I'm not so sure it's all right to be open and notorious, but he was just flagrant. I don't think they would have turned on him had he been a nicer person. I mean, he double-dealt a lot, in my opinion. I could see why this could then become an issue. Because there's a lot of members around, and others, who play games and have extramarital affairs, and drink a lot, and play a lot. But it's not so blatant that it becomes an issue. And it's not a continuous activity.

There's something about power. I know in my own case, when you're around lots of power, it attracts these extremes, the brightest and the best and then it really attracts some of the worst human beings in the world. Women have always been fascinated with and attracted to the power thing. There's a certain group that either gets a vicarious thrill or identifies with that power. So as a man, I always said it was almost impossible to stay out of trouble on Capitol Hill, because there were *so many* attractive ladies, and they thought you were sort of interesting. And even if you were married and did everything, you had to have almost a Christ-like character to avoid an indiscretion at some point along the line. And there was always the danger when you're around power too, you start believing some of the things that people say about you, and it goes to your head. When you see things get done, and happen, and how you can use power, and that it really works, all of a sudden, my God, I can do lots of things!

I remember—I'm digressing again, this is almost the way we started these interviews—I remember that after a while there was period of time when I was so used to making decisions, could make them, and on certain matters, just to get the same thrill of getting the job done, I would either wait till the last minute to do it, to see if I could pull it off, or somehow deliberately complicate it with something to see how I could get it done, if I could really work it out under the time-frame of these situations. That I realize was not very good, but I did it mainly because of the excitement. I loved making decisions and seeing if it would work out. But I caught myself up short when I realized that I was really playing some games with everyone there by delaying or doing things in the normal course of affairs that would run real smoothly, and I had to go out of my way to complicate it so I could get the same thrill of using power. So its a corrupting influence.

RITCHIE: Hedrick Smith has a book called *The Power Game*.

ELSON: Yeah, I'm into that, but I haven't read it all.

RITCHIE: Did you think that there were many games players that you dealt with in Washington?

ELSON: What do you mean?

RITCHIE: People who enjoyed the thrill of the game the way you've described it.

ELSON: Oh, yeah! I think both members and staff did. Oh, gee, what comes to mind, I think Russell Long was one of the best. And Bob Kerr. They were two of the best game players, who just loved everything about it, putting together things and playing it. And then there were some staff people that I knew who got the same thrill, same sensation, and played, and looked at it as a game. Though I did do some playing, I always thought of myself—I still think I am—as pretty idealistic in many ways, although a lot of people would certainly disagree with that. I always felt that there was more to it, and it meant more than just a game of politics, getting elected, or getting your man elected and everything else. That you're really there as a public servant, and that was the highest calling you could have. I think a lot of that comes because of the

type of family that I came out of, my brothers and sisters and my parents, and my education, the professors that influenced me the most were always those who believed in this higher calling rather than just going out and playing the game or making money or whatever. I played some games, maybe a lot of them, but I didn't view myself just as a games player. I guess a lot of this is in the eye of the beholder, but I still feel that there can be no greater reward and more fun and more excitement than being an elected official. My one regret in life is failing in obtaining an elected office, particularly the United States Senate, because that's something I really, really wanted. It still hurts.

ITCHIE: There's one other sort of exciting period of your life that we haven't talked about, and that's the period that's covered by James Bamford's article about your experiences with the mob in the 1980s. How did you ever get involved with a loan shark, and the events that transacted after that?

ELSON: The government asked me that question repeatedly. [laughs] When I left the broadcasting industry, I was bored and really burned out. I started back in a little consulting business, and as I said I had enough clients. I wasn't doing it to make a lot of money, but this situation developed that I was introduced to through this lady friend of mine, and I watched it operate, and I think my motivation for getting involved, and even getting others to get involved, or at least opening the door of opportunity to them, was that being burned out what I really wanted to do was put together enough money to take a sabbatical.

What I really wanted to do was get away for eighteen months to two years and try to write a book about Carl Hayden. Because I knew I wasn't enjoying lobbying any more, and I just didn't have any drive to get into real estate or some business or something like that. There was nothing that was exciting me, and then this sort of fell into my lap. And I saw an opportunity to put together a lot of cash in a hurry. What I wanted to do was have enough to get a van, get a computer, just take off, store all my stuff, and just go and see what I could do. Just travel and try doing something about Carl Hayden. Also, I wanted to have enough in reserve so that if I wanted to come back to Washington, open an office and start again, maybe after this recharging had taken place, that I could do it. A lot of people don't believe that, and I'm not so sure

that the government always believed that. I think they do, because I ended up being a hero for them.

But I got involved, and I got conned. I thought of all people, though I'd been probably conned before up here on the Hill in politics, I guess I wasn't particularly street-wise. The guy looked like a hood, but after he once started talking, man he had everyone believing him, from a former president of a bank to a former assistant secretary of the Interior, and a bunch of attorneys. I wasn't the only one that was taken in. When I introduced him to some of these people I just said, "If you're interested, here's this," and then let him talk to them. I made no pitches. But as it turned out, the way the thing operated I ended up being almost a part of the thing because I ended up being the one that sent the money, received the money, and all of a sudden it was cutting into my time from my lobbying jobs.

The only thing that saved my [expletive] during that whole thing was that I kept meticulous notes and logs. Because it was cash, and because it was all verbal, always in the back of my mind I thought, "If this thing falls apart, everyone's going to be looking to me." That's when I started taping this guy, Danny Mondavano, originally because I didn't understand the lingo in the deals, in what he was talking about. He would explain them, and I wanted to make sure that I had a record, so secretly I started taping those conversations. Because they weren't always the same people, they weren't always the same rate of interest return on the money, and it started getting complicated. So more to protect myself, it started out innocently. I just kept doing it, just to make sure that I had a record somewhere if push came to shove.

Well, of course when it turned out to be a scam, and the house of cards folded—I've been starting a collection of books and articles on con games and scams and everything else, and got some good ones. They go on every day, but it makes you feel like a total idiot when you think at least you're a little brighter than that, to be taken in. But then I think greed also came into the picture. I saw all this easy money that was coming in, and I was collecting a certain percentage on everything that everyone else had put in. So my stuff was running up pretty fast, and I could see this pot at the end of the rainbow where I was going to be able after a certain amount of time be able to do the very things that I had wanted to do. I had never been very good at saving

money, or looking for a rainy day. It was just easy come, easy go; spend it today, don't worry about tomorrow.

When I look back on it now, I'm certainly much more relaxed now than I was back then, but it really became a nightmare. And then the embarrassment of it all. First of all losing everything. Before I was totally convinced that it was gone, I used some of my money to pay off these investors their interest, thinking that he was going to get everything straight and everything would be back to normal. I lost not everything that I had, but even some stuff that I had borrowed. Then I went looking for him, and we had several sessions and meetings. He was always going to work it. From the time it started really getting bad, I started taping everyone, not only him and his group, but anyone that was involved in it. Because I thought, "If I'm going to go down the tubes, someone might be interested in this history."

Then when I made that fatal decision to go to Palm Springs to try to get the head of one of the families to collect the money for me, that was a fateful decision. I knew what I was doing in the sense that I knew when I went there that I was crossing the line into some behavior that was if not illegal certainly questionable, because I was asking them in effect to extort money from someone for me, although it was our money. Those nights and days, of course I was armed all this time. I started packing a gun and learned to sleep with it. In fact, I still miss it today, not having a .38 between the cheeks of my butt. Feeling that cold steel was always very comforting.

I learned one other thing—you know I got knocked around once, some people came breaking into this house once, looking for me, and I got threats—I found out I was probably very capable of killing. I think I learned that I could do that without a great deal of remorse, considering the type of people I was dealing with. But I was also frightened. The pressures that were going on at the time, I got very little sleep. I spent I don't know how many weeks out in California running these people down. I'd wire myself, and I did all this on my own. There was no government help in anything that I had done. Then he disappeared and I couldn't find him. That's when I went to the other mob figures. And they were charming in many ways. We used to sit around. I don't know who was BSing the most, them or me. We would tell war stories.

There was one who was really interesting. He must have spent half his life in most of the major prisons in the country, talking about being up in Ithaca with [Willie] Sutton, the bank robber, and how they used to cook their Italian food and make their little stoves, and the rumbles that they'd do, and the people that they'd kill. You know, it was delightful Damon Runyan-type stuff. I wish in those cases, when we were having these conversations, I wasn't always wired, and I would love to have had it on tape. In fact, I suggested to one of them I'd like to sit down with him with my tape recorder [laughs]—little did he know!—and get all these stories, because some of them were really fascinating, and I think probably some of them accurate. I'm sure a lot of them were exaggerated too.

But I also found out about underworld figures, the Mafia in particular. Well, this stretched all the way from a patriarchal group up in Boston and went through the Giancana crowd out in Chicago. I learned all this stuff as I went along, but there were various influences coming to bear because of this individual in the family out on the West Coast. And then of course I'd known a lot about some of them through my brother and being exposed to Nevada and Las Vegas and things like that. You found out that politicians certainly had a lot more honor than they do, because everything is money, that's all that matters. The bottomline is you have it or you don't have it. If you don't, you might get your knee broken. And you found out, that like anything else, am I really mean enough and tough enough to do what I'm capable of doing? The others are chicken. But when push comes to shove, there were some that I would not want to meet in an alley alone, and the others I would just as soon meet them because I know that they would back down before I would. As I said, some of them were pretty charming, but the language itself, it was almost like being in the oil fields when I was roughnecking, every third word was a cuss word, or talking about women. Their language almost needed a separate dictionary to sometimes understand, talking to some of them.

I felt like two people. I couldn't believe I had gotten myself in this mess. Then I'd see this other person and I couldn't believe that I was doing it, because I became a hell of a lot braver than I thought I ever would be. I was doing things that I never thought I'd do, and alone. On the one hand I'd be looking at this one guy, and then looking back at the one that I wanted to admire or have some respect for, and then I saw this other character who was turning into being just like one of them, trying to use

some of the same tactics and playing some of the same games, and trying to understand how I could compete and take them on. I had to be out of my gourd to think that singlehandedly I could take on all these people. Someone should have taken me aside and given me a good shake and said, "Who in the hell do you think you are? You're not Superman or Batman or any of those."

But I kept some logs and diaries through all that, and as I was traveling around I would talk into the tape recorder, because I didn't want to forget anything. On the one hand I felt a great deal of terror, and on the other hand I said, "You're really exaggerating. This is a gang that can't shoot straight in the first place." Sort of underestimating them, and yet when the government finally found me—and of course I'll never forget that, because I thought, "Oh, God, I'm in deep trouble now." I knew it was a race to see if I could get the money back before the Feds caught up with all these guys. I just knew it was a race against time.

I couldn't even borrow money to make any more moves, but when the Feds found me it was the Organized Crime Strike Force in LA. When I heard that call on my answering machine, I thought, "Well, it's all over now. No one's going to quite understand this situation." I remember when I finally called them back after three or four days, I kept avoiding them, and finally I talked to this one attorney. I admitted I was the person, and he said, "Well, we'd like to talk to you." He said, "We'd like to fly you out here, it won't take long." I said, "I just can't, it's a busy time." He said, "Well, you've got a choice. You can either fly out on your own or we can send the U.S. Marshals for you." But he also said, "When you do come, make sure you bring all your records." He said, "You can fly out one morning and we'll meet with you an hour or two, and you can go back that night." I said, "I don't think you realize what I might have." Then that started another nightmare.

I don't know whether I should go into it, because Bamford has another article coming out—not just an article but a book coming out about another individual who was a client of mine. This is not very much known around Washington, but at the same time this was going on I had a client who turned out to be an international con man and spy and everything else, who I represented while I was trying to stay alive, again by accident through my son who thought he was helping me. I had talked to this guy by the name of Ernie Kaiser. Anyhow, he turned out to have been everything.

Fascinating character. He made some of the other hoods look like child's play. He spoke about seven languages, and he was a charmer. The coolest cat I'd ever met. He had himself shot out here at Charlie's, just to avoid appearing before a judge. You know, Charlie's is where all the spies hang out, out there in McLean. Anyhow, this was also going on at the same time I was going before a Grand Jury. If you've never been before a Grand Jury, that's a hell of an experience, particularly without benefit of an attorney.

I decided to just hope for the best and give them every bit. When I went out on that first trip and opened that suitcase, I'll never forget the eyes on this one agent, whom I'm still in touch with, and this lawyer. Here on one side it was just filled with ninety-minute cassette tapes, and on the other side were records. I didn't take out all my records, I only took out the individual ones. They looked at that, and boy you talk about being hustled back to the federal building in a hurry, and under guard. They said, "Well, just give us an example of what's on these tapes." I pulled out one and they put it on and played it. I thought they were all going to have orgasms, the whole crowd. [laughs] They said, "Oh, this is wonderful!" And of course, it was all admissible because I had done it, it wasn't done by the government—though I had done most of it in California, which was against the state law. But that didn't bother me at the time, and I could care less. So instead of being there for a couple of hours I was there for that whole week before they let me come back. And then that started the whole business.

Then it turns out that the government was tapping some of the same conversations that I was taping. So they fit in lovely together. But one part of the Strike Force didn't know the other part of the Strike Force was working on this case until later. They discovered it, and my God! Anyhow, after I finally went to see them, and I kept appearing on these tapes that they had about collecting this money for some guy named Elson, when they were tapping these other family members. Then they realized they had already found me and I was already out there. [laughs]

There was a period of time from the time that started until just the year before last when they all went to jail, this other situation involving this Ernie Kaiser, which is in some ways more fascinating than the Mafia thing. I was involved in three trials as a key government witness down in Tampa. Ernie Kaiser, I know where he is, he's

in Germany. They're still trying to extradite him, and that's another long story, but that was going on at the same time. And not only that but the IRS had been auditing me for about—oh, it went on and on, for about seven years of business, three years of personal. Then my sister died during this period and my other brother and I were going between here and Toledo, Ohio, to take care of her. It was just a nightmare. Just a godawful nightmare. When I look back on it, I don't know really how I survived. That's probably why I shake so much. And actually to come out of it as well as I did, because once I knew I made the mistake that I made, I certainly did what I think was the right thing, so far as the government was concerned, and was willing to take my knocks if it came to that.

I guess I've always been one who sort of likes to go close to the edge. At the same time this was all going on, I must admit that I was fascinated by it all. I was excited about it all. And somehow in the back of my mind I thought I would get the [expletive]. I still want to get Ernie Kaiser, but I haven't been able to do that yet. Neither has the government. It was again this vacillation between the terror and feeling like a stupid [expletive], and then feeling also the excitement of the chase, of the hunt, of the matching of wits, and all the other stuff. In some ways I felt like a James Bond, you know that type of character, except I didn't have all the equipment. And I was amazed what one person can do, if you really stick to your guns and are not totally afraid. I must admit on a lot of occasions I was very, very much afraid. But when I look back at it, I say, "[expletive], that was exciting."

RITCHIE: It sounds a lot like an Elmore Leonard novel.

ELSON: Yeah! [laughs]

RITCHIE: There was a period there when your life was in a danger by the mob and you decided not to use government protection but to go hide out on your own. Why did you do that?

ELSON: Well, first of all, I was a little familiar with the U.S. marshals and quite frankly it sort of depends on who you're dealing with there, whether you can work out a good situation. I felt also to lose one's identity that way and start a new one, I sure and hell didn't want to do that. But mainly I didn't really trust them, that

they could protect me the way I wanted to be protected, and that would be like going to jail, having to live that way. So, thanks to this friend of mine, who also worked for the senator, who I'd hired way back, I was staying with him, I decided to take off. I don't know whether I mentioned that I was hiding up in the Picacho Peak Mountains, until he brought in a criminal lawyer, who was familiar with mob activities and had been in the Justice Department back here during the Kennedy days. He brought in a former Secret Service and former FBI man who specialized in the security of executives and things like that. We met for three days and I guess I had gotten a threat by then. When they finally got to town—he flew them in—I forget how much it must have cost him to fly these guys in and pay the attorney. We must have met for two days. It bothered me because supposedly the former FBI and Secret Service guy claimed that he had done some checking and the odds of my making it to the trial were somewhere between sixty-five and eighty-five percent *against* making it to the trial. Well, that didn't sound like very good odds to me! [laughs]

The attorney supported what he was saying, and they were recommending a plan to send me to South America, where until the trials came up I'd be under security, and if I needed a woman they'd bring one in, you know, that sort of thing. But I said, "That sounds to me like being in prison—except for the women!" I guess I could get booze and everything else, and the cost was something—they estimated the length of time I'd be in this situation was eighteen months—it was going to cost somewhere between a hundred and a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars. Now, my friend was willing to pay that, and I thought, I'm not worth that.

But those meetings ended on a Friday, and I was staying at his place, and I think it was on a Saturday morning that the two of us met, and he said, "Let's make a decision." I went over everything and told him, and I said, "I think I'll just go back to Washington and take my chances, and wait." Actually, he said, "Roy, you've always wanted to take off and go, why don't you? It would be a hell of a lot cheaper for me to pick up a little vehicle for you and you just take off." After we went over that, sure enough, within two days, three at most, he bought the vehicle. In the meantime, we had a couple of funny things happen, like an unordered pizza being delivered to his home. And he wanted me the hell out of his place in a hurry [laughs], for which I don't blame him.

So I took off and started wandering. I turned down the Witness Protection Program, but I had some good advice before I hit the road. The FBI gave me some very excellent advice, a couple of agents and one in particular in California. Then when I came back here, when I passed through here later, I met for two days with a terrorist expert from the CIA, so I got a lot of good advice on what precautions to take. Of course, I eliminated all traces, there was no way that anyone could reach me, or through my family, they didn't know where I was. So I had some excellent advice on how to disappear, and I found out you could. The vehicle that I had could not be traced to me in any way. It was through some funny corporation.

I went armed. That always bothered me, because unless they deputize you or something like that, local jurisdictions control gun control, so if you ever got stopped. . . . But I had a .30.30 with me, and a 12 gauge shotgun with pistol grip on it, a machete, mace, a Browning 9 millimeter, a thirteen-shot semi-automatic, which I could shoot pretty good, and then this .38 snubnose revolver I carried with me all the time. All were loaded with "special" ammunition. So when I'd stop at night, I'd sleep with cocked guns all the time.

It's wonderful to just start somewhere and say, "Gee, I don't want to go there," and just turn around and go in some other direction. It turned out that I had friends everywhere that I went that I hadn't seen in years. So I would call them. I would be outside of town. I wouldn't give them very much notice. I'd say, "Do you have a cup of coffee? Could I stop in?" I'd make sure I wasn't followed, and park a distance away and then go in and talk to them, tell them the story. Everyone said, "Stay with us a while." So I would maybe stay a day or two and then move on. Sometimes longer than that. Other times I'd just stop at a state park and camp out, just be with nature. But I did an awful lot of driving, and I loved to drive. A lot of it was repeat, back and forth, in the same area. I had a CB, so I could listen to the truckers, and they were very helpful. You could always get information and know what the conditions were.

The one thing that I did, though, if anyone got a phone call, when I might have been staying with a friend or something like that, and it was a hang-up, or anyone asking for me—man, I was on the road as soon as I could pack the truck. That happened to me twice. Once down in Florida. In fact, I doubled back and forth across Florida getting out of there. Again, I found out even under the tension of always

having one eye in the rear-view mirror and taking precautions, and always crossing the street with a group of people, just taking all the precautions that you did, that I loved being on the road. It was exciting to see America and see all the places I went to. In fact, I could have stayed on the road another year. Maybe that's what I'll do.

Despite the tension, everyone was wonderful. The people were nice. Someone would see the license plates and say, "What are you doing?" I'd say, "Well, I'm off writing a book, and I just was passing through." I'd stop in these little dives. But I really didn't have very much money, so I had to husband what I had. That's why I stopped in and saw a lot of friends. They would feed me. I had enough clothing and underclothes and things like that to last ten days to two weeks, before I had to get it washed. I'd stop more frequently than that, but I could have lasted a good two weeks without having to feel dirty.

But I really enjoyed seeing America, and there are some places I didn't get to that I wanted to go to. Then I'd be called back because they thought the trials were going to start, and then I'd go back out to Los Angeles. Only one day against the main group, I guess I was the only witness the government called. They ended up all pleading guilty, including Mondavano, who was the con man who caused the problem in the first place, and his son and wife. They all ended up pleading guilty. But I had to wait a whole month. The FBI put me up, at least they put me up in a decent place, the Marina Del Rey, under an assumed name, a nice hotel. But the government doesn't pay you very much. In fact, it's not pay, it's sort of a witness fee. I think the room at a government rate went for about ninety dollars, and I think you got eighty-three, so you were in the hole before you even started. I had no government subsidy that time I was on the road. It was all help from this one individual and occasionally from my family. Certainly a lot of my friends helped me as I moved around, but I really, truly enjoyed the run. So they could have chased me a long time.

They always say, "If they really wanted you, they could get you." I'm not so sure they could have. Because I covered about everything. Only once or twice did I get careless. Nothing came of it, though I got scared. But it was fun.

RITCHIE: Do you have any assurance that they've stopped looking for you now?

ELSON: No. I talked to one of the agents not too long ago, within the last couple of weeks. A lot of them are out of jail already, and a couple that I was nervous about are out. For a while there we had a source, and that was mainly because I had become friendly with the wife of one of them, who I got to help the government, and she had great sources of information. I had a report that once—this was last year—that it was just a matter of when, not how. There was no doubt that he's a dead man—meaning me. So I reported that to the FBI, but I think we both figured that was probably jail talk. See, you don't know. And those guys could do that time standing on their heads, where you and I would go crazy after three days. You know, a year to twelve years is nothing for some of them, because they've spent most of their lives in places like that.

I don't know. They've indicated that they didn't think there was, but again, they can't give you any guarantees or any assurances. I'm now going on the theory that they pretty much have other things on their mind. I imagine though that if I stumbled into something I might get knocked around a little bit. I don't know whether I'd actually be terminated. What you always feared with someone like that is that some cowboy who thinks he's doing something real fancy, or who's crazy on drugs or something else, might go after you just for the hell of it, because you embarrassed them, or that sort of thing.

I've always felt fairly safe here in Washington, for the most part, because I think they're not going to do anything stupid. But then on the other hand, the way things have developed around here, you know it could easily be laid to a drug killing or an accident. So I'm just as happy that I'm leaving.

RITCHIE: Well, what kind of plans do you have for the future?

ELSON: Well, I'm going back to Arizona and I'm going to be a cowboy for a while, I guess. I really would like to put down, or use as a basis for some fiction—I'd like to do something with all these experiences. I really feel like I've had an unusual life. Lots of things I haven't told you about were unusual. I feel it's been exciting and there might be something to say. So I'd like to really get away and give it a try, because I don't think I'd forgive myself if I didn't.

Secondly, I'd still like to be around politics and try to get a new, fresh look. And the only way I know to do that is to go back, sort of be quiet for a while, and watch the local scene, and see if I can recharge the battery. I feel that maybe with the type of problems we're facing, and the experience that I've had, I might be of use to someone, or to society in general. I've not ruled that out. Then I'd like to finish my travels that I didn't on my run. You know, the United States is just such an incredible country. I hate to see what's happening to it, with the infrastructure, the way it's falling apart. When I was driving around I found that every bridge in the country had to be rebuilt, and little towns have all died, and our big cities have gone to hell. I identified a lot with [John Steinbeck's] *Travels With Charlie*, so I wouldn't mind doing some of that.

I also always wanted to do something with photography, and I would like to play around with that. And yet, I really feel the need to just get away for some quiet time. I mean, no telephones. My nerves haven't been too good in the last few years. I think the episodes, all of them put together have taken more out of me than I realized. So now I feel a real need for some form of rejuvenation. Hopefully, this will come about back in the place that I love, being isolated and away, but not so isolated that I can't get to a library or do the type of things I might want to do.

So I have mixed emotions about leaving Washington. I'm sort of sad. It's sort of hitting me now, as I drive by places that I've been and all of a sudden memories come back. And going through things and trying to sort out things and pack. I'm sort of leaving Washington as I came, pretty much broke. But I sure have had my share of excitement and fun, so I guess I shouldn't complain. I'm still half-way healthy, and I still think I have a future. I don't intend to just sit on my [expletive] and twiddle my thumbs and contemplate my navel. I want to do more than that.

I'm going to miss Washington. I think I've been in most of the major capitals in the Western world, and practically all of Central and Latin America, and I still think Washington is the most fascinating of all in its sort of funny way. So I'm going to miss it. I learned one thing when I was on the road, and when I was going through everything. As cynical as I may have sounded during these interviews about politics and government, I still love it and I can't get it out of my system. As much as I say bad things about it, I still get excited about it. Every time I get up in the morning and read the morning paper, or listen to the news, I get all involved again. I'm hoping that will

be tempered a little bit when I really don't have access to some of that. [laughs] But it's going to be tough.

RITCHIE: Well, I think it's great that you've left this record through the oral history, but I really hope you'll write a book about it all.

ELSON: Well, I'd like to try.

End of Interview #13

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