

THE MAN IN THE ARENA

Interview #10

Thursday Afternoon, September 27, 2012

KAUFMAN: I talked about Dodd reading the [Ted] Kennedy thing, didn't I?

RITCHIE: About him reading the passage from his memoirs? Yes, you did.

KAUFMAN: About healthcare. I talked about that.

RITCHIE: Yes, I think you did. But I would like to ask you a question about that. That was an interesting insight into somebody in the conference standing up and inspiring people. Really, how important were those conference meetings?

KAUFMAN: Oh, the conference meetings were absolutely, positively necessary if you ever hoped to get everybody on the same page, regardless of what went on. There is just too much going on, too many things going on, that if you didn't meet regularly and kind of all join hands—not agree on everything but at least agree on the general area of what was going on, what the facts were and the rest of it. Being a majority leader in the United States Senate, or minority leader, is like herding cats. You've got all of these strong personalities. If you don't give them a chance to find out what's going on and to comment on what's going on, you've got chaos. You've got to have caucuses. I think there's a lot more now than when Joe Biden was there because one of things I noticed is nobody ever goes to lunch anymore. There's a caucus on Tuesday and the Policy Committee on Thursday, so there's a lot more meetings than there used to be.

RITCHIE: And they are not there on Mondays and Fridays.

KAUFMAN: They are not there on Mondays and Fridays, right. So it's essential, that's the first thing, absolutely, totally essential. I have to say, and it's really strange because a lot of people didn't like them, but it's one of the things I miss the most. It's funny, I learned this when I left the senator's office and I was out—not retired but not going to work every day—is that older women do a lot better job socializing than men. When they get to reach retirement, or are in their sixties, they have a built-in social network that men don't have. Men's social networks are built around the people they work with. It's not a cliché to say that a lot of men when they retire and get together with

old friends for lunch, they find out after about fifteen minutes that the only thing they have to talk about is the job. They don't have anything else to talk about.

I'll give you an example. I live in an area, and one of the reasons we moved there is because it's a great place to walk. So my wife gets up every morning and meets two, four, five, six, eight other women and they walk for an hour through this area. We've been there now for fifteen years, so I've driven out of there in the morning at everything from 5:30 to probably 10. I've seen as many as ten women walking together. I've seen a man walking alone. I've seen a man walking with his wife. I've never seen two men walking together. One of the things when you're growing up, men used to get together all the time, and they still get together to play golf and things like that. This is a long way to get to the caucuses, but the caucuses are a great social event. I enjoyed the company of the other senators, men and women. I enjoyed hearing what the other senators had to say—I may not always agree with it. But you go to lunch and hear different people express different strategies, it was a good group to get together. The same way on the floor when there was a whole series of votes, hanging out with the other senators, men and women, and talking about whatever, joking, they're very funny people, very interesting people. So the caucus provided an opportunity for everybody to get on the same page and to reinforce the fact that we're all together, working together.

There are just so many things going on that it's really important that leader and other members get up and talk about things. And then it's really important that there be some kind of debate. I know that to a lot of people outside it looks like the entire Democrats vote for Democratic issues and the entire Republicans vote for Republican issues. It's a lot more complicated than that. One of reasons why it works is the fact that there is an opportunity to get some debate in the conference. And then we've got our moment of history at every caucus meeting that you give. You're in the room, and when you look up on the wall and see [the portrait of] Mike Mansfield, the former majority leader, and you're taken—at least I was, and I think the other senators were too—you're taken with the fact this is very historic. This is not just some conference room at the Holiday Inn, there is a history here.

I remember Bill Moyers did a TV show during Watergate when Attorney General [John] Mitchell was testifying before the Watergate Committee and saying just awful things. A lot of people were saying awful things and nobody was critical of them. In the end it all worked out alright, but the committee didn't look to be that critical with some

notable exceptions. Moyers said, "I moved up here from Midlands, Texas, and I was in the Johnson White House, and there wasn't a day that went by in the White House that I wasn't taken with the history of the place. I'm standing in the place where Andrew Jackson stood." He said, "None of this with Watergate ever would have happened if the people in the [Nixon] White House had a good sense of history and the obligation to do honor to those who came before." In the end that's the key, a lot of time in the caucus and on the floor, at a time when a lot of Americans don't have that feeling, the idea that you are there for a higher purpose—not better, not that you're smarter or anything else—but that you are there and you are standing in a place where so few others stood.

Now there are some senators who are the exception, but for most of the senators I think that's how they were affected and how they approached things. Being part of a process, an incredibly important process, like speaking on the floor, or presiding over the Senate, but the caucus was really an opportunity to me that was a very positive experience. I looked forward to them, except on the days when I was really busy and didn't have the time! But most days I looked forward to them. There were times when I was sitting there thinking, "What in the hell? What is going on here right now? I don't agree with what's happening." Or "I can't believe this." But that was a very small portion of the time. Most of the time I found them very interesting and I was glad that I could go. It's one of the things I really felt there was a big advantage in being a senator over being a staff person, because the meetings for the staff were never like this because the staff all had to be responsive to what their members wanted them to do. Not that it was a whole lot different, but you don't have that freedom of action when you're a staff person because you are a staff person. You've got to be cognizant of the fact that you're representing your boss. There's a lot of candor in those caucuses. So I found the caucuses to be incredibly positive.

There were lots of things, just little things, like when we were in late at night and you would just be there until 8 or 9 at night or later, what would happen is some of the wealthier members, like Jay Rockefeller or Dianne Feinstein would order out food for back in the cloakroom, off the Senate floor. There would be a big table put up, like the tables you see in the basement of schools and churches. They'd put on top of them an array of food. Sometimes they would order Chinese food, sometimes pizza, sometimes barbeque spare ribs or whatever it was, and senators would come back and get a plate and sit down and just talk. It was a nice feeling. Now, it was different if you had to be somewhere else, or you wanted to get home, or you were running for the train or

something like that. But that's why I had an apartment in Washington. I didn't have to catch the train or anything like that. But on the floor, talking to them, and the repartee back and forth, the opportunity to hear stories and find out about people and see where people are coming from, and the rest of that, it was a very positive experience.

Then there's the famous Senate gym. It's not a very fancy gym. I remember when Senator Biden first came there they had a medicine ball or something like that. He and former Republican Senator Bill Cohen from Maine were both into lifting weights and they got the first set of weights, I think, for the Senate gym. Now they have some fitness equipment, some treadmills, and Stairmasters, and things like that. But a lot went on in the gym. It was amazing to me how many times I would be embarrassed for the women because they were off in a separate section of the gym. We would be in a meeting, this came up a number of times in the Judiciary Committee where a senator would say, "Well, I saw a Republican senator in the gym and we decided to do this thing or the other thing." I would cringe because this is exactly one of the problems in our society for women. Having three daughters and three sisters, I've always been very concerned that women be treated well. But a lot of stuff did go on in the gym, especially bipartisan stuff. There would be somebody there and you'd be talking to them. Plus it was really great for me because working out is a really important part of me—I hate it but I mean in terms of being able to feel good and stay in shape, so exercise is an important part of that.

I try to stress this when I talk to people: The overall intelligence, hard work, and competence of United States senators would be hard to match in any organization I've ever seen for the overall quality. Very different people, but if you were trying to solve a problem, by and large a good group to try to figure out what to do.

RITCHIE: When senators stand up to speak in the conference, do you ever get a sense that they could change others' opinions?

KAUFMAN: Oh yes, absolutely. Remember, a lot of times you're talking about something that hasn't really been vetted in public. I saw a lot of bad ideas get killed in the caucus. There's an old southern expression—if you look around the room, everybody would get up and say, "This dog won't hunt." A lot of decisions were made by the caucus; most of it was the leadership. Harry Reid was very good at reaching out to other members. He had his whip team and the rest of it. There were some exceptions where a lot of people in the caucus were surprised by something, which is just the nature of the

way things are right now. But oh no, people were definitely affected by the debate in the caucus.

RITCHIE: Is some of these senators defending their state, saying “this isn’t going to fly in my state?”

KAUFMAN: I think when Senator Biden was there was more of that than there is now. People were doing that, but they don’t say that. They get up and make the overall argument. Like Mary Landrieu all during the BP crisis would get up and make the argument on what we should do. I remember she and Senator Menendez got into it one day because there had to be a new requirement that licensing fees for drilling wells in the Gulf. Menendez was very strongly for that, and she was saying, “Look, a lot of the smaller drillers can’t afford it.” They went back and forth on that. Frankly, it got pretty heated. But she was not making the argument for her state. Clearly, it was a Louisiana issue, but she was making the argument more for the overall economic reasons: We need more people in the Gulf drilling because we need more oil. Menendez was basically saying, “Yeah, but we’ve got to have them there. But it doesn’t matter if there’s a gigantic leak from a small driller or a big driller, the fact that a small driller can’t afford it.”

One of the things that amazed me while I was there was this kind of government by anecdote. Someone would get up and say—I think I mentioned this already about Senator Enzi, a Wyoming Republican whose office was across the hall from me, I liked him a lot but I can remember we had a discussion about lead paint, on requirements about what equipment contractors had to have in order to remove lead paint. Senator Enzi got up—and this happened all the time, I’m just picking him out as an example—he said, “You don’t understand, I’ve talked to some contractors in Wyoming who can’t afford to buy the equipment.” I’m thinking, “Guys, this is about lead paint. This has got to be bigger than the fact that some contractor can’t afford to pay for the equipment.” If *every* contractor in American can’t do it, or a majority can’t do it, then there’s no way we can get this done. Not that *a* contractor can’t do it, which is what Senator Enzi was arguing to kill the bill. It was government by anecdote. It was like “I’ve got a driller off the coast of Louisiana and he can’t pay for the fee, therefore we shouldn’t have *anybody* pay.” Way too much of that kind of thing on both sides.

But to answer your question, no, I think if you were going to make the argument

for your state you would probably do it one on one with another senator.

RITCHIE: I've always been impressed with how much senators know about their states. In passing you hear the conversations where someone says, "What's the unemployment rate your state?" and they'll rattle it off right away, and break it down by region within the state. They clearly see themselves as representing the interests of their states.

KAUFMAN: Well, it's an important part of what our job is. I mentioned before about the reporter who came up to me and said, "Why are you doing this, just to help Delaware?" I said, "The last time I checked, if you go down the list and find my name, it says Ted Kaufman D-Delaware. I do represent Delaware, It is part of my job. I do have a major responsibility for that." Of course, Edmund Burke and others, lots of people have talked about the great trade-off between: Do you represent your state interests or do you represent national interests? Of course, the issue that always comes up on is defense procurement, where now companies go out and manage to build an airplane that has some part from every one of the fifty states in order to get members to sign on. And it works. It's amazing to me no matter how small it is. I remember Senator Dodd on another nuclear submarine that affected three thousand employees in his state. Three thousand employees would be a lot of employees in Delaware, but even so. He was for this whole weapons system based on the fact that it was going to save three thousand jobs in Connecticut. My students absolutely deplore this pork thing; they deplore the idea that members would put their state's interests, and jobs, over the national interest. I think there is a trade-off between jobs in your state and the national interest, but it's got to be somewhat in alignment. There's nothing pure. You're not purely state or purely national. There are always trade-offs.

RITCHIE: I can imagine if a senator voted for a bill that was going to cost his state three thousand jobs that would be the campaign ad against him in the next election.

KAUFMAN: It may be, but I'm not so sure where people are today. It depends on the size and the rest of it. But I don't know, I think that people are so upset with elected officials who do something that's clearly in what they view is in their political interest over what is in the interest of the country that you have to be careful in that area. I'm not so sure that a spot saying "I saved three thousand jobs in XYZ" in a state the size of Connecticut—it's very important to three thousand people, but the other spot is going

to be, "This multi-billion dollar program is going to cost the people of Connecticut this much, plus it's going to hurt our defenses." There are all kinds of other interests. I haven't seen very many people running either one of those kinds of ads.

RITCHIE: There have been ads about the sequestration and the impact that would have particularly on military-related jobs. It hasn't even happened yet, but they are using it as campaign ammunition against each other.

KAUFMAN: Oh, yes, but there are a number of states that aren't like Connecticut, like North Carolina and Mississippi, states that just have gigantic military presence.

RITCHIE: And Virginia.

KAUFMAN: Virginia, where sequestration is a big issue. There's no doubt that it's their number one employer. Clearly that's a totally different story.

RITCHIE: One other issue I wanted to ask you about, again having stepped away from the Senate, to go back to the filibuster and cloture. There's been so much written about it lately. There's been so much focus on how it's contributed to gridlock. Senator Reid has argued that there have been more filibusters in this Congress than ever before. Do foresee any kind of change? Do you think they'll ever get to the point where the two parties won't put up with it anymore and try to do something to resolve it?

KAUFMAN: Oh yes, I think they will. Let me just state first that there's a wonderful book out by Rich Arenberg and Bob Dove about the filibuster.¹ Mark Udall and I wrote the foreword. Have you seen it?

RITCHIE: Yes.

KAUFMAN: I've written about it in my column, too. Just to start on the big picture, I think the thing that most distinguishes our form of democracy and makes America unique and so incredibly successful is our protection of minorities, but

¹Richard A. Arenberg and Robert B. Dove, *Defending the Filibuster: The Soul of the Senate* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2012).

especially our protection of political minorities. Too many people think that democracy is about elections. Democracy is not about elections. I know President Bush and a bunch of folks said we should start having more elections because we're going to bring democracy to the Middle East. Well, there's a lot more to democracy than just elections. Elections are about majorities to start with, and then you've got to have a culture and the rule of law. But the big thing is they are about majorities. Far too often, we've seen around the world where you install just the election part of democracy and the majority comes in and the first thing they do is crush the minority. Which makes sense—the majority rules? Look at Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. Look at what goes on in Russia or most of the "Stans" where they have elections and the minority gets crushed. What makes our system so great is the fact that we protect political minorities. It's in the Constitution. Most of it was developed in the works by John Stewart Mill, which came after the Constitution but which talked about why it was important to protect political minorities. In cities in the United States there's a tendency sometimes for a mayor to get elected by a majority and then be punitive to the minorities. But the Supreme Court makes sure that the rights of minorities are protected.

Now, under our system where that works out and the reason why that is so powerful is because of the filibuster. The president gets elected by a majority, there's no real constitutional problem with that—I guess there are some things that the president could do. The House of Representatives is run by a majority. I'm a died-in-the-wool Democrat but the House in the 111th passed three hundred bills that the Senate never dealt with, and I'm sure that there are some of those bills that I think it was damn good they didn't get dealt with! I think there were a lot of good ideas in the healthcare act and in Dodd-Frank. Even though Republicans never voted for it, because of filibusters the Democrats were forced to put their ideas in. I do not believe that either party has a monopoly on all the good ideas. I think the fact that the Democrats were forced to take the ideas of the Republicans was a good one.

I believe that when you're in the minority—one of the great things about the Senate, and why it works so well in so many ways over the last twenty years is that you never knew when you were going to wind up in the minority. Before that, committee chairs would take all the staff. They wouldn't give any to the ranking member. Now they know that two or four years from now, I may be the ranking member, so I'm going to be a lot more considerate of the minority than I would be otherwise.

RITCHIE: In this Congress the majority leader has had to file cloture constantly. He's actually achieved it quite often, and a lot of times it's been on nominations. In the end, when they take the vote it's 94 to 6.

KAUFMAN: I've got a PhD in this because it always happens in the Judiciary Committee. It's quite clear what the Republican caucus decided to do with judges. That was they're going to hold up everything they can with the understanding that at the end of four years Obama will have only gotten 623 judges instead of 814. I mean, every single judge was held over for the next meeting. There is a rule in the Senate Judiciary Committee that you can hold them over for a week, in case everybody didn't have the required information. That was no longer arbitrary. Every single judge was held over for a week. And then, like you say, the nominee would have a majority in the committee, they'd go to the floor, they'd be held up for three months, and then the vote would be 100 to 0. It was clearly not trying to improve the quality of the decision or anything else, just trying to cut down on the number of judges that the Democrats could get through.

But when you have a situation where we're under a major economic crisis and three months into the administration the only person of high rank who has been confirmed by the senate, in the Treasury Department is the secretary, and he doesn't have any assistants because they are being held up in the Senate, then clearly we have to do something about it. I will guarantee you that if in fact the Republicans win the Senate, Mitch McConnell will use a lot of the arguments by the Democrats on why we should limit the filibuster, and eliminate the filibusters. I will guarantee you that every single person that was opposed to filibusters in the Democratic caucus will rue the day because Mitch McConnell with no filibuster will make the trains run at 120 miles an hour through the station, one right after another, and there will be no minority rights. That's just Mitch McConnell. He's interested in getting things done that he wants to get done. I think he's a good person, I really do, but he would ram it through, just like they did with prescription drugs. They had the votes.

RITCHIE: Despite the fact that there have been so many failed cloture motions, actually the Senate in this much divided Congress has passed some major legislation by bipartisan coalitions, because the issues were important to them: farm bills, post offices—everybody was in favor of not closing the rural post offices—the highway bill. So in the midst of all this polarized politics, people do come together.

KAUFMAN: Oh, yes. Look, a lot of what goes on in the Senate, you can have some bills that are extremely important that nobody ever heard of, one of the things is there are high-profile bills and low-profile bills, just to start with. It's scary sometimes the bills that pass because the electorate really doesn't know what's in the bills, or what the implications are. They can find out what's in the bill but don't realize what some of the implications are in the bill. Where if in fact a bill that's hidden the lights go on and everybody looks at it, the *New York Times* and Fox News starts reporting on it, and the bill dies. So a lot of it is how much light there is on it when it goes through. The second thing is that there are certain issues where it doesn't matter what the Congress does on it. The only thing your electorate is going to ask is: Why did you not vote for the post office bill? So the idea that the Republicans are going to foster gridlock and not get blamed for it because the Democrats control doesn't work, because I'm a member of the House of Representatives from the Third District of Kansas, people in the Third District are asking: Why don't we have a farm bill? Why don't we have a post office bill? We don't have it, how did you vote on that? So it won't be like, "Uhhh, the Democrats were ramming this thing through and I really had to stop them." "No, I don't understand; tell me again slowly why you voted against the post office bill, why you voted against the farm bill." That is the reality of the fact that in a democracy the majority rules and people can identify with the majority rules, and if you are in a majority on an issue they really care about that doesn't get passed, what happened?

The reason why there is so much gridlock is because on so many issues important to the country there's been a lot of money spent, and a lot of effort spent, to polarize the community on it. There isn't a whole lot of money being spent against the post office bill. There isn't a whole lot of money being spent against the farm bill. If you look at the 112th Congress, and you had to list the ten top issues in terms of the future of the country, none of them passed. The fact that something passed is good, but in terms of when you look at the urgency of some major problems—and again, that list of ten will differ depending on whether you're a Republican or Democrat—some of them would be on both.

RITCHIE: It's been interesting to me that on some of these big issues there has been bipartisan agreement in the Senate, which is supposedly the body where it's harder to pass anything, and they've never even come to a vote in the House, where supposedly the majority can get what it wants. It seems that the majority in the House is having trouble sticking together on some of these issues.

KAUFMAN: Well, I think the majority of the House doesn't want to pass this. Clearly, the Republican House has planted their flag very far to the right of center on these issues. They have taken positions because of the Tea Party—and I think genuinely held, not for partisan gain but because they genuinely believe it—that are really out of the mainstream. There have been a number of studies to show that these are the most out of the mainstream decisions in a long, long time. When the House decided to do that, there were a lot of members of the Senate who are not nearly as conservative or that far out of the mainstream as the House Republican caucus is. I mean, John Boehner has had major problems with where the caucus has been because he said he was going to do something and then he turns around and can't do it. There were a number of times when Mitch McConnell was left thinking "I never thought the House wouldn't buy this." So I don't think the problem is an institutional one. You have a body that is way out of the mainstream of political thought that only represents a minority of the people of the country and therefore takes positions that it is very difficult to get Republicans in the Senate to vote for because they don't agree with it. They've got two problems. One is they don't agree with it and two it would really hurt them back home. I think that's the problem.

RITCHIE: As I've told reporters, it's not that the House and Senate have been unproductive. Each one in their own way has passed a lot of bills. They just can't sit down together and agree on them.

KAUFMAN: That's true, but I saw Congressman [Paul] Ryan in the VP debate the other night talking about how he's passed all these bills and the Senate won't pass them. The only way you get legislation passed is when you pass a Senate bill you realize that you have to position it so you get votes in the House. These are not two institutions that are five thousand miles apart and nobody talks to each other. Every single Senate bill that's written, whoever is managing it on the floor, Republican or Democrat, they're trying to pass a bill in the Senate that they know can get passed in the House. What the House did over the last two years is pass bills that they knew the Senate wouldn't pass. What was it the Republican candidate for the Senate in Indiana said, "My idea of compromise is the Democrats take our positions"¹ He actually said that. If your position

¹In 2012, Indiana Republican senatorial candidate Richard Mourdock said: "My idea of bipartisanship, frankly, going forward is to make sure we have such a Republican majority in the US House, in the US Senate and in the White House that, if there's going to be bipartisanship, it's going to be Democrats coming our way."

is that my idea of compromise is the Democrats take my position, you then can't say, "Oh, look, I passed a bill and you wouldn't sign it." So I agree with you that they may have each passed individual bills, but the other thing, as you know as a historian, it's a lot easier to vote for a bill that you know is never going to become law. As long as the senators know that it isn't going to pass the House, they're a lot freer in what they're doing. If you have to vote for a bill that has to get Senate and House approval, it can't be too extreme.

RITCHIE: There have been some remarkable alliances. The fact that Barbara Boxer and James Inhofe can co-sponsor a highway bill together—

KAUFMAN: Well, a highway bill [laughs], come on, that doesn't pass the laugh test. Highway bills are about highways. Let's see Inhofe and Boxer get together on a global warming bill. You can get them to agree on highways. I loved watching the press reporting on how now that we're done with earmarks we can't get a highway bill because nobody has anything in the bill, so we ought to go back to earmarks. [laughs] That has got to be one of the most extraordinary arguments I've ever heard. We've got to go back to earmarks so that members of Congress will vote for highways. Like the bridge to nowhere? No, there are too many problems. You could fix every bill so every bill would pass. Would it be good for the country? I don't think so.

RITCHIE: Congressman Bud Schuster, when he chaired the House transportation committee, made it the largest committee in Congress because he figured that the more members who were on it, the more who would vote for the bill when it came to the floor.

KAUFMAN: Exactly. Just like Boeing wants to build an airplane that has a part made in every congressional district in the country. You don't have to be real smart to figure that one out.

RITCHIE: I've covered my territory but I know you have some other things you wanted to talk about.

KAUFMAN: Yes, there are a couple of things. One is follow-on to the idea that

all members of Congress care about are reelection. I want to talk a little bit about Harry Reid. Every majority leader and every Speaker of the House for I don't know how many years has been reviled. If you want to be popular, don't take one of those jobs, whether it is Tip O'Neill or Newt Gingrich or Mitch McConnell or Harry Reid. I want to talk about Harry Reid for several things. The first thing is in regard to this idea that all members care about is reelection. Harry Reid was in a race that I never thought he could win in Nevada. Because of a lot of tough decisions he made as majority leader, he was not very popular. He ended up winning, but it was only because he ended up running against someone who turned out to be less popular than he was. But I watched him for two years and with just a couple of exceptions this man who controlled what came to the Senate floor did not bring things to the Senate floor that necessarily would help him win his reelection. I was saying to somebody, one of the vast majorities of people who say all members of Congress care about is reelection, and I said, "Go and look at Harry Reid's record. Look at every single vote and try to figure out how that helped him or hurt him in Nevada. Then realize that nothing came to a vote on the floor that he didn't approve." I think you would find with only a couple of exceptions that's what he did. He clearly was much more committed to getting something done than he was for his reelection.

The second thing is, it was amazing to see on extremely complex pieces of legislation how in the end he would sit down and really negotiate the final pieces in the bill, healthcare reform being a good example. He knew a lot about healthcare reform, but even so he would negotiate just extraordinarily complex parts of the bill and bring people into the room on either side and work it out in order to get all of the Democratic votes to get it passed. What was even more extraordinary, especially since I was so involved in Dodd-Frank, that Wall Street reform, was he *didn't* know a lot about Wall Street reform but in the end he actually sat down with everybody and worked out the agreements. Chris Dodd did a great job getting the bill passed. There were a lot of things I didn't agree with what Chris did but it was an honest disagreement. But Harry Reid was extraordinary in the way he would sit with groups and work it through. He is really quite an incredible legislator. Again, I didn't agree with some of his strategies in terms of getting things passed. I think he was much too focused on getting sixty votes to get things passed, but in the Congress I served we passed more legislation than any Congress since FDR, maybe even more. The biggest reason of all was Harry Reid's ability to manage the body and manage legislation, to get involved it and hold it together, and keep the caucus informed, and deal with Mitch McConnell, and deal with the president, and all those other things. He did an extraordinary job and I just wanted to talk about that.

This has been an extraordinary experience, to go through this. I want to thank you for taking me through it, and I am just pleased that I could put this down on paper. Before I ended I wanted to end on a point I've talked about a lot and that is public service, and what high regard I hold folks involved in public service, and especially hold federal employees and congressional staff. But I don't think we've talked about how important public service is and the real bonus of public service enough. What we don't talk about is how incredible the rewards are that come from just dedicating a portion of your life to public service. During my very long days in the Senate as a senator and a Senate staff, many times like every other Senate staffer I would leave the Russell Senate Office Building after dark, either to go, when I was a senator, and get my car to drive to my apartment, or when I was a staff person to walk down the hill to the train station. I would come out of the Russell Senate Office Building and look over my shoulder and see the Capitol framed against the night sky. Every single time I got Goosebumps. It's the same thing when I would ride into work in the morning. I would drive down Pennsylvania Avenue and Constitution and see the Capitol, just the pride of working in the United States Senate. Those days that I was there, they would be long days and we would be wrestling with incredibly tough problems—not that everybody doesn't have tough problems—but these are extremely complex and tough to figure out what's the right thing. But you know, during all those years, I never once went home and wondered what I was doing with my life. That is an incredible thing to have happen. No matter how bad things are, you say "I'm doing something that I think is worthwhile and I'm not wasting my life."

But the biggest bonus came at the end of my career. I hadn't really thought about it and I wish we could communicate it to people when they're making the decision about what they are going to do with their lives. I spent a lot of time in the private sector. I have many friends who have spent time in the private sector and doing a lot of good things. Many times, people who have spent their career in the private sector, friends I have now, accumulated significant wealth and frankly wonderful pensions. But even so, I find a lot of them are wrestling with the question: What have I done with my life? The big bonus, the part that we should talk about more, for those in public service is the satisfaction of knowing they tried to make the world a better place. It's not even that they succeeded, but that they tried. When I was working in the Senate for Senator Biden, many times—and I mean many times—we would talk about the title to the movie, "What Did You Do during the War, Daddy?" The big bonus, which we do not talk enough to young people about, is to tell them the satisfaction that comes from reaching the end of

your career and knowing they did all they could to answer the call to duty in the war for what they believe in. The quote that I've always felt sums this up best for me is from President Theodore Roosevelt at the Sorbonne in 1910 [reading]: *"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."*

RITCHIE: That's an inspiration for I'm sure a lot of people who have served in public office to realize that you can't win all of your battles, but it's being in the arena that makes the difference.

KAUFMAN: Yes, and when you're in public service and in the last ten years even more so, time and again people feel very free to be critical, to be sure they are right. There is a great quote from Irving Shapiro's book that goes, "The problem is not what people don't know, it's that so much that people know is wrong." Whereas maybe even fifteen or twenty years ago, and definitely thirty-five years ago, people would come up to me and say, "You've spent some time in Washington, this doesn't seem right to me or what about this." Now, it's like the other night I was at a cocktail party and a guy just came up to me and started out, "What's wrong with this country? Its way too partisan, and we don't have enough statesmen. It's all about partisan bickering. Nobody in Washington cares about anything except to get reelected." That was the first thing out of his mouth. It wasn't "Hey, how are you doing, senator?" Then I started talking to him, and he was a very smart guy. He wasn't buying what I was saying. He doesn't have to buy what I'm saying. People just feel that it is like a stadium and there are people down there fighting, and what they're getting from the audience is just exactly what Theodore Roosevelt was talking about. They get a lot of grief. I don't want this to sound like personally I'm upset about it or personally I'm upset with the people who do it. I'm not. I was not personally upset with the man the other night. We talked for a long time and I don't think I convinced him of very much, but I'm perfectly willing to talk to him. He kept apologizing, saying, "I know its Saturday night and you don't want to talk about

this." I said, "It's no problem for me to talk about it."

I'm looking at the positive stage, and that's in the end as Shakespeare said to thine own self be true. It is a great sense of satisfaction to say I tried to make a difference and I did everything I could to make a difference. There really is something, looking back on it, that's ennobling. It's exactly what Roosevelt said, of being in the arena, of fighting it out, getting bloody, but in the end you walk out of the stadium and say "if he fails, at least fail while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat." That's it exactly, and we don't do nearly the job we should do telling young people about that. What's great is that all the surveys show that young people coming out of high school, two thirds want to make a difference with their lives.

RITCHIE: There are lots of young people who always come to the Capitol, as pages and interns and others. Now when new senators arrive, it often turns out that they were pages and interns and volunteers and low-level staff years ago, and they stayed in it.

KAUFMAN: No, it's amazing. One of the great things in my life is the obvious thing. One is teaching and all my ex-students. So many of my ex-students work in Washington, work in the Senate, work in the White House, work in the administration, and work downtown. The other is all the people who have worked on Senator Biden's staff over the years, either as paid staff or interns. The final group is all the wonderful people I've worked with from the Senate staff and congressional staff. That's why I did all those floor statements honoring federal employees. Every week I would get up and recognize a great federal employee. And by the way, I met lots of great people in my corporate experience, too. But I guess the reason why I raise this is because there is such a disparity between people's view of federal employees and the reality of federal employees. For two hundred years, this country has done pretty well with federal employees, and the federal employees today are the best they've ever been, especially when you go back and read about federal employees in the past. Federal employees are by and large bright, hardworking folks. If I could talk to every young person in the country I'd say, "One of the things you ought to consider when you're figuring out what to do with your life, having a career in federal service is a pretty good way to spend your life and feel good about yourself when you get to the end."

`When I look back on my time working in the senate, I genuinely could not have

done this without strong family support and enthusiasm. Starting with the love of my life, Lynne who has been my partner in all I have done. My three daughters and their wonderful husbands have been incredibly supportive throughout. Finally, the positive experience of being a senator was magnified a thousand times by seeing the joy of my grandchildren.

Don, your knowledge and assistance have been invaluable during this process.

RITCHIE: That's great. I appreciate that.

KAUFMAN: No, I appreciate your help. I couldn't have done this without you.

End of the Tenth Interview