HEPBURN: At 2:25 on the afternoon of Thursday, 21st of January, 1971, at the age of 73, a man died. There's nothing particularly unusual about this, but there was something rather special about the man. Politically, he was a Democrat; a Democrat from Winder, here in Georgia. His name was Richard Brevard Russell. At the time of his death, he had just begun his 39th consecutive year as a senatorial representative for the state of Georgia in the United States Senate. Prior to his election to the Senate, he had for ten years served his own state, the last four of these as speaker of the House of Representatives, and followed this with two years as governor of Georgia. Now at the moment we are in the Russell Memorial Library, a library set up by a trust fund to house the late senator's books, his papers, and his letters, and indeed, some of his furniture. This desk that I am sitting beside is the one that Senator Russell used throughout his time of office in the Senate in Washington. With me in the memorial library is the person who probably knows more than anybody else about Senator Russell, the woman who for more than fourteen years was his private secretary, Miss Barboura Raesly. Hello, Babs.

RAESLY: Hello, Angus.

HEPBURN: I want eventually to get on to the senator's political career, but first of all, could we go right back to the beginning of his story, to the senator's background and a quick idea of what the man was like?

RAESLY: Senator Russell came from a family that--they came from the land. His mother was Ina Dillard of Oglethorpe County. His father was Richard Brevard Russell, Sr. His father had been elected to the state general assembly at the age of 21, as Senator Russell later was. His family was a large family. He was the fourth of fifteen children born to his parents. In later years, particularly after his father's death, he became the patriarch of the Russell clan. He was, while a man of great integrity, a man of extreme brilliance, he was also a man of a warm and loving nature with his family and his associates, and a little story that just might illustrate this. Every year the Russell family has a reunion and Senator Russell carried on this tradition after his parents' deaths in order that cousins might stay acquainted and know cousins. There's usually between 135 and 150 members of the Russell family there and that will be in 1975 that will be this coming Saturday, the 21st of June.

HEPBURN: So, it even still continues?

RAESLY: Yes, they still continue them; the family's doing it. But there's one reunion--Senator Russell's habit was with his nieces to call them, Missy Joanna or Missy Hariette. And he had one niece whose nickname was Missy and she came running in when they arrived for the reunion and she jumped up in the senator's lap and hugged him and he looked at her and said, "You know,"
he said, "I guess since your name is Missy I'm going to have to call you Missy Missy." And she said, "That's right Uncle Dick Dick." (laughter)

HEPBURN: From this background in Georgia, was Russell a new name to politics?

RAESLY: Not at all. His father, as I said, had been elected to the general assembly at the age of 21 when he lived in Athens. He later moved to Winder because, as the brothers and sisters of Senator Russell say, Judge Russell wanted to be a big frog in a little pond rather than a little frog in a big pond. Athens was considered a big pond in those days. After he got to Winder, he ran successfully and had a tremendous judicial career. He was the chief justice of the state of Georgia at the time that Senator Russell was elected governor and he swore his son in as governor, and he was chief justice at the time of his death. He did not always stay in the judiciary, however, because with thirteen children who survived to adulthood he had at one time, eight of them in college, all simultaneously. He was not earning enough money as a judge to support this so he would have to quit being a judge for a while and practice law to earn some money and then he'd go back to being a judge. During the period that he quit the judgeships to earn some money, he at one time, ran for governor and at one time opposed Senator Walter F. George in 1926 for the Senate. I might say that it was his ambition that his son be governor of Georgia and it was his ambition to see his son as a United States senator.

HEPBURN: Now both father and son share one distinction, you know, they were both very young when they were elected to the House of Representatives.

RAESLY: That's right. Both at the age--

HEPBURN: Both in their very early twenties.

RAESLY: Both at the age of 21 and Senator Russell, when he was elected governor-- in fact, it is still true today that Senator Russell, as governor of Georgia was the youngest governor in the history of the state; and that's still true.

HEPBURN: So let me get on to his policies while he was governor, because this all came about towards the end of the twenties. Now in twenty-nine there had been the Wall Street crash and Georgia being basically an agricultural state, was very close to the verge of bankruptcy. Russell stood for election, once.

RAESLY: He was elected in 1930.

HEPBURN: Yes, yes, but--

RAESLY: Served thirty-one and thirty-two.

HEPBURN: --But in the whole environment of the dying economic situation--

RAESLY: Correct
HEPBURN: Basically because he thought he had the answers and in his two years as governorship it appeared that he did because he pulled Georgia back on its feet again. What kind of line did he take to get the state back going again?

RAESLY: Well, I think to understand what he did as governor, you must go back and look at what he did when he was in the state house of representatives. He studied the organization of the state government. In cooperation with the then State Representative Hugh Peterson [Sr.], who later became his brother-in-law, came up with a plan for reorganizing the state government to economize. The first step, which he implemented immediately after taking office as governor, was he cut his own salary some $3,750.00, which at that time was a little over one third of the governor's salary. Then he turned around to the people who worked for the state and said "Now, y'all gonna have a pay cut too." He reorganized it and the fact is that he eliminated 102 departments and agencies of government and consolidated them into seventeen. He instituted the state Board of Regents, so that each university didn't have its own board of regents. He established a new judiciary system in the state and the attorney general's office. His reorganization was the only major reorganization of Georgia government since the reconstruction days. Governor James Earl Carter in his reorganization a few years ago made some sweeping changes, but not to the drastic economic circumstances that Russell did. Senator Russell told me that when he was running to be governor and he had his program for reform, and he was a reform governor, but he wasn't counting on the extent of the depression and, as a result, he said that some of his most agonizing experiences were as governor of Georgia because he had less money to spend in a year than the state of Georgia spends in a month today. So he really--of his early service, he thought he had more power even as speaker of the house than he did as governor.

HEPBURN: So the key note of the reformation was economy and austerity.

RAESLY: Right.

HEPBURN: Now that takes us up to the end of his term of office as governor to his running for the American senate in 1932. Is that correct?

RAESLY: That's correct. Senator William J. Harris, of Georgia, senior senator, had died in April 1932. Senator Russell appointed a friend and political ally, Major Jack John Cohen, publisher of The Atlanta Constitution to fill the interim term. And Russell knew at the time that he was going to run.

HEPBURN: So, he had the idea, right from the beginning, that the senate was his final destiny.

RAESLY: I have the impression; he never told me in so many words, that from the age of four on he was planning to be a senator. But that, I am quite sure, is where he wanted to go. His problem when Senator Harris died was to find a successor that would not get so carried away with the idea of being a senator that he would be already there and Russell would have a problem getting in.
HEPBURN: One of the other distinctions the senator has is that he is the only man ever to be elected seven times consecutively to the Senate, so that the initial election was followed by six immediately consecutive elections. What were these like? Were they hard fought campaigns? Were they--did he make such a great impact on the people of Georgia that it was easy for him, or what?

RAESLY: Well, I think--I don't know if the lighting and the cameras can get the seven senatorial commissions on the wall behind us, but there are only three men in the history of the country who were elected to the senate seven times. In 1932 when he first ran for the senate he ran against a veteran congressman, Charles Robert Crisp, for whom Crisp County, Georgia, is named. Congressman Crisp had not been paying too much attention to his constituency, and he did not take seriously the threat of this young boy-governor, as Senator Russell was known when he was governor, running against him. By the time he realized he had a serious problem, it was just about too late when he came down and started campaigning. Senator Russell in 1936 had a very bitter campaign against Eugene Talmadge, and the bitterness was not instigated by Senator Russell. I'm not sure that it was really instigated personally by Eugene Talmadge. I think it was more their supporters. But brother divided from brother. Law firms were split up. There were threats on both candidates 'lives. At one point Governor Talmadge, and Gene Talmadge at that time was governor, showed up over here in Monroe, Georgia, with a body guard of the National Guard. Senator Russell decided, "Well, if he has a body guard, I guess I'd better get myself a body guard." So the next day Senator Russell was speaking in Elberton, Georgia, and he mentioned the fact that the governor had had a body guard in Monroe and since the governor of a state establishes the proper thing to do, that apparently it was the proper thing to do in a political campaign to have a body guard. And Senator Russell asked that his body guard stand up. And all the little majorettes from the Winder High School band stood up. (laughter)

HEPBURN: That was his first campaign for re-election, which as you say was a hard fought one. How did they go from then on?

RAESLY: Those were his two greatest ones. Actually, the outcome was closer in the 1932 campaign than it was in 1936, but 1936 was a more bitter campaign. Then 1942 and 1948 and for the succeeding years he never had any serious political opposition. A former governor of Georgia was once asked about Senator Russell's political machine or lack of political machine. The reply by the former governor was that Senator Russell's political machine was every citizen of Georgia. An interesting thing in that connection, you may call it a political machine if you like, but on his income tax returns even, Senator Russell so felt that he was working always for the people of Georgia, that on his income tax return where it has the blank for the name of your employer, he would put in: the people of Georgia. (laughter)

HEPBURN: So in these cases presumably in later elections he wasn't standing as a man avidly supporting any particular policies. He had made a reputation people knew who he was--

RAESLY: He had become a legend in his own time. People loved him, believed in him and never had met him. He was an institution in Georgia politics.
HEPBURN: Yes. During his term of office in the Senate with thirty-eight nearly thirty---rather, thirty-eight years and nine days, was it, he served under six, no, seven presidents?

RAESLY: Yes.

HEPBURN: Could you quickly run through them for me?

RAESLY: Well, he started in January 12, 1933, when Herbert Clark Hoover was still president, because at that time presidents were not inaugurated until March. In March of that year Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated; he was followed by Harry S. Truman. Harry Truman was followed by Dwight David Eisenhower. Eisenhower, of course, was followed by John Fitzgerald Kennedy. And then came Lyndon Baines Johnson and then came Richard Milhous Nixon. And it was Nixon who termed Senator Russell, the advisor and counselor of six presidents. He omitted Hoover because of his own--

HEPBURN: So that comes to quite a broad spectrum of great men in American politics.

RAESLY: It's fifty years of public service.

HEPBURN: To go back to the second man you mentioned, Franklin D. Roosevelt, now Russell was one of the men who was a backer of Roosevelt's initial presidential nomination by the Democratic Party. I believe he seconded the nomination.

RAESLY: At the convention, yes. When he was governor of Georgia, Governor Russell had invited and had entertained Governor Roosevelt at the governor's mansion in Atlanta and they were friends. Senator Russell went to Washington with the reputation of being a wild-eyed liberal and the reason for this was simply the dire straits of the country's economy. Senator Russell throughout his life had the philosophy that when the system isn't working, change it, but when its working don't go fooling around with the mechanisms. And it wasn't working at this period so he was a strong ally of Roosevelt's New Deal program when he first got to Washington.

HEPBURN: Yes. Now, you have said he was initially a strong supporter of Roosevelt but then something happened and by the end of Roosevelt's term of office, in fact, he and Russell were at loggerheads, with Russell opposing most of Roosevelt's economic and administrative legislation. How did it all come about?

RAESLY: It was a gradual thing and I think that what capped the highlight of it was Roosevelt's plan to pack the Supreme Court. His program--the Supreme Court kept ruling unconstitutional all the New Deal programs of F.D.R. As a result, F.D.R. planned if he could expand the court from nine to fifteen he'd put a bunch of liberals on there and they'd declare his laws to be constitutional. Senator George, of Georgia, was strongly opposed to the court packing plan. As a matter of fact, this led President Roosevelt to try to purge Senator George where he had Lawrence Camp opposing George in 1938 under Roosevelt's sponsorship. That contributed to it also. But with the court packing situation, Senator Russell with four other senators came up with a compromise which would have permitted the increasing of the size of the court to the number
twelve but would have eliminated the mandatory retirement at age sixty-five, which was in Roosevelt's program. Roosevelt turned it down. When he turned down a reasonable compromise, Russell could not go with the extreme changes advocated by Roosevelt in the court. Having come from a judicial family, he had great respect for the court at that time. He, therefore, came out in opposition and I believe his opposition was instrumental in Roosevelt's is totally defeated on this.

HEPBURN: So the fact is that the initial stages of the antipathy between the two men came not so much from the policy but from some underhand moves that would result in making it the kind of court his policy stood for.

RAESLY: Right, and also Senator Russell's strong belief in the Constitution. He didn't want to monkey around with it, you know.

HEPBURN: Yes.

RAESLY: But now you say his strong opposition. He did not oppose, oppose F.D.R. in every area. For instance in the--we're talking about 1938, this is also about the same time that Senator Russell, along with other foresighted men in the Congress, were trying to prepare this country for World War II, which they could see on the horizon.

HEPBURN: Yes, now you brought up the subject of World War II, which would be the next thing I want to go on to because with the advent of the war Russell moved on the the military and was appointed to the Senate Naval Affairs Committee.

RAESLY: He had been on that since 1938.

HEPBURN: Oh, so in fact it was, as you said earlier, seeing the war coming and he was one of the men involved in preparing the United States.

RAESLY: Right.

HEPBURN: Initially, the United Stated tried to keep out of the war by a policy of isolationism. How did Russell view this? Did the thing it merely as a, "Let's get ourselves organized period so that, we're gonna have to go in eventually but let's make sure we're prepared to go in."

RAESLY: He saw this as a period when America should be getting equipped because he did not believe we could stay out of that war forever. But he did not want us to go into that war prematurely, and he was getting appropriations for the navy to increase its ships. He was an advocate of the lend-lease program, where some items managed to get to England that were sorely needed but otherwise couldn't have gotten there.

HEPBURN: So that, in fact, he was preparing the country for what he knew was inevitable, rather than what--one certainly gets the impression in the early stages of isolationism that America just didn't want to know.
RAESLY: There were some foresighted men who realized they had to see.

HEPBURN: Now in our conversation earlier you mentioned that he didn't want to be an armchair quarterback which was in connection with the kind of things he was doing during the war. Could you elaborate on that a little?

RAESLY: In 1943 he chaired the only committee of the Congress to visit every battlefront around the world. And this was not a study of tactics or in order to criticize tactics or military strategy, but simply to be sure that our troops had enough of what they needed and in the proper quality. He, Senator Russell was a great Civil War buff and he may have advised the president in quiet on military strategy but he didn't try to be an armchair quarterback because he had seen what had happened to the South in the unpleasantness of the 1860's when there were several armchair quarterbacks all advising the president of the Confederacy, who was telling his generals how to run the army.

HEPBURN: So the military strategy for the specialist, he would look at the backup side of things making sure that equipment and food, supplies and comforts--

RAESLY: Ordnance.

HEPBURN: Yes, these would have been looked at too. (cough) During the latter stages of the war, of course, America was involved in developing the Manhattan project, nuclear missiles and nuclear weapons which, of course, the nation eventually used to end the Japanese section of the war. Was Russell aware of this and how did he react? How did he feel about the use of these terribly destructive weapons?

RAESLY: Well, number one, Senator Russell was among those who helped secret the funds for the Manhattan project in the federal government budget. Number two, when President Truman succeeded to the presidency on the death of Roosevelt, he did not know about the atom bomb or the Manhattan project and the military came to Senator Russell and asked him to tell the president. This was a rather delicate situation. Senator Russell had sat next to Harry Truman in the Senate for six or seven years. Harry Truman had been vice-president and he did not know what was going on and here Senator Russell had to go to the White House to inform the president of what was really transpiring.

HEPBURN: But is it not unusual surely that until more like the project was finally completed, the president wasn't fully aware.

RAESLY: Oh, Roosevelt knew about it, but he didn't see fit to tell Truman. (laughter)

HEPBURN: It was just those and such as those that knew.

RAESLY: That's right. It was just those that had a need to know.

HEPBURN: So he definitely was aware of it, he was--
RAESLY: He knew how many bombs we had, to the exact number.

HEPBURN: How did he feel about their use?

RAESLY: He felt that anything that would save American lives and result in the complete and absolute, unconditional surrender of Japan was worthwhile. And when the first bomb was dropped and the Japanese began pleading for surrender, it wasn't surrender, they were pleading for peace terms. Russell was very adamant that we should not accept peace terms under any conditions from the beginning, the initial conferences with the British and the Russians that everybody had agreed would be unconditional surrender, from Japan, as well as from Germany. He felt that we ought to drop every bomb that we had, if necessary, in order to get that unconditional surrender.

HEPBURN: To go back to the end of the European war, rather than the Asian section of the war that was probably the first real taste that America had of somewhat of a confrontation with the Communist bloc in what really can be called the race for Berlin. How did Russell feel about the way this was handled, the Eisenhower plan of a slow mopping up process, versus the [Winston] Churchill one of a spearhead, which was eventually rejected? Did he feel that we should have let the Russians get as far as they did?

RAESLY: Well, I think he had sort of mixed feelings on this subject. I think he felt that there was wisdom in Eisenhower's course, but at the same time he felt that Eisenhower should have listened a little more to Churchill and done the spearhead to get to Berlin at least at the same time as the Russians. He felt strongly that that decision by Eisenhower has been--subsequently throughout the years created a situation that is a continuing problem.

HEPBURN: Yes. To move away from that section first, but keeping our sights on the military, there was a militant reorganization of Congress shortly after the war, was there not? When all those committees were completely restructured.

RAESLY: That's correct. The Military Affairs Committee and the Naval Affairs Committee were combined into the Armed Services Committee, and Senator Russell continued to serve on that.

HEPBURN: And if I could move a little bit later on, in 1951 Russell was appointed by the Senate to serve on the joint committee.

RAESLY: No, wait a minute now. (laughter)

HEPBURN: This is complicated one. They recalled Douglas A. MacArthur a little later. Could you give me an idea of what exactly happened on this one?

RAESLY: Yes. Well, of course, MacArthur was trying to get the Republican nomination for the presidency and the Democrats were trying to get Eisenhower at that point. But what happened was that when Truman fired MacArthur the national emotion was aroused and there were cries for Truman's impeachment, and the telegrams just flooded into Capitol Hill. At the same time
there was an equal number that were flooding in in defense of MacArthur. So, as a result, the Senate Armed Services Committee announced after a closed meeting--they came forward and said "We're going to hold hearings into this." And the Foreign Relations Committee said" But we're gonna hold hearings." So it was decided by the two committees to have joint hearings. And the two committees in their joint meetings decided that Russell as Chairman of Armed Services should go in to act as chairman of the joint committee. Those hearings were extensive. The volume of testimony, it's in very, very fine print, is over six inches thick. And Senator Russell heard every word of that testimony. They held closed meetings, hearings, and at the end of each day after Admiral [Arthur Cayley] Davis, who was with the Pentagon, with the Navy, had censored the transcript, it was released to the press. It's interesting that in all the millions of words that were said only less than two per cent of the total actually was censored out of the transcript that was released and they were discussing national defense on a global basis.

HEPBURN: I've observed that the hearing lasted for quite some considerable time. Now I don't know if the camera can see this but this is one of the many cartoons that Senator Russell was subjected to in the national press during the time of these hearings. (laughter) I think this more or less says everything about how long it had lasted.

RAESLY: I don't know if the camera can pick it up close enough to read the words Senator Russell was saying to General Eisenhower, "Now General."

HEPBURN: Here we are. Here we are. That's right.

RAESLY: "Now, General, can you remember what your answer was to that question when you appeared here for the fifty-first time?" And MacArthur is saying, "Let me think, Mr. Chairman, was that in sixty-three or sixty-four?" (laughter)

HEPBURN: You were telling me earlier that one of the things that upset Russell, although I think he eventually agreed with the basic decision that was made about MacArthur, what he objected to was the way that it was handled. When he was upset that it had been just--

RAESLY: I think that the way it was handled is the reason that it caused the emotional uproar that it did in the nation. MacArthur--when he was fired the orders were being typed in a routine fashion and the White House released word that they were firing MacArthur as allied commander-in-chief in Korea. Mrs. MacArthur heard this on the radio and telephoned General MacArthur and told him and this is how he found out. Senator Russell strongly believed that Truman should have gotten General Omar Bradley or some other many-starred general and sent him to Korea with orders and General Bradley could walk up to General MacArthur and say, "General, I have the honor to relieve you," and hand him the orders. This is the proper way it should have been handled. There is no question that MacArthur was exceeding the--ignoring the orders of his civilian commander-in-chief. When Truman met with him on Guam to try to get this cleared up, three times Truman asked MacArthur if he understood his orders and three times MacArthur either evaded the question or said yes. As soon as Truman left Guam, MacArthur was running around making statements again to the press that he had been told not to make. So there was no doubt in Senator Russell's mind that military people must remain subservient under our system of government to civilian control. MacArthur had failed to do this; MacArthur should be relieved, but it should be done in the proper manner.
HEPBURN: So, by this time we've got Russell on the Armed Services Committee, which meant that, of course, he was intimately concerned with American military policy. Which brings me on to the next sort of sphere of activity and that is the direct military involvement in the war in Vietnam. How did he react initially to the involvement as a general opinion as to the way it progressed?

RAESLY: When John Foster Dulles, who was then secretary of state, proposed to President Eisenhower that twenty American military advisers be sent into South Vietnam in 1954--

HEPBURN: Yes, this was the next thing I was going to ask you. I know a lot of the American advisors seemed to think that unless America was prepared to continuously, and more or less to the end of time, defend the South Vietnamese they might as well not bother. But he didn't believe it as you were quoted and did he believe then that it could all be handled politically, that border lines could be drawn?

RAESLY: If I may draw a parallel, he was more concerned about something else. He, in the first place, did not think that America should ever get involved in a land war on the Indochina land and this was MacArthur's advice, if you'll remember back. He said never do it. And we got in there in Korea and got in there in Vietnam and you can't win a war over there. They have an entirely different society than the western civilization. They don't think the way we do. We just can't--we're not able to relate enough with them, or be humble enough with them so that we can relate with them, to try to understand them.

HEPBURN: Time and again, physically there were times we were fighting the environment.

RAESLY: Right, right.

HEPBURN: Trained open warfare troops working against trained guerilla fighters.

RAESLY: Rights.
HEPBURN: --Could present an enormous problem.

RAESLY: You know, of course, the British were very successful in that at one time. They had a little brush with the guerillas but they learned how to fight 'em. And they didn't try to continue to use the same methods of open warfare that the Americans tried to use. Of course, our Green Berets and those specialized troops knew the dirty tricks department and guerilla warfare, but not all of our troops did. Also, Senator Russell was concerned about Cuba. That's sittin' ninety miles off our shores and it's a hot bed of Communism.

HEPBURN: This was building up to a crisis point during the war in Vietnam. That was the next stage. Here you had rocket bases, as you say, just off the shores of continental America.

RAESLY: With a capacity to put bombs in New York City—further and any place in between. (laugh)—the whole Atlantic.

HEPBURN: This rubbish had been building up until President Kennedy eventually was forced to deal with it. What was Senator Russell's continuing advice to him at this point? It must have been given, as you say he was very worried about it.

RAESLY: Well, when Senator Russell was consulted by Kennedy on the missile crisis it was after Kennedy had already made up his mind. Senator Russell from other sources was aware of what was going on, and he was aware of the strategy being planned by the president. And the president knew that he was aware of this. The president did not consult with him until a half an hour before he went on television. When he did, Senator Russell advocated that we go in and take military action and wipe out Fidel Castro, Communism and the missiles all at one time while we had an excuse to do so. When the president said, "We're going to try the quarantine," Senator Russell tried—he insisted—but again got over ruled. He insisted on inspecting the vessels carrying the missiles out of Cuba, actually boarding the vessels, opening the canister and seeing that it did contain a missile. Now, all we saw when they took those missiles out, or when they said they took those missiles out, we saw a ship and they said, "Look at these canisters. They contain missiles," and they went on their way and we said that they'd taken the missiles out. And Senator Russell was opposed to this.

HEPBURN: He wanted to be absolutely certain?

RAESLY: He didn't trust the Russians.

HEPBURN: Yes. That's a point I'll be getting on to later on, but to move on to the next leg of the military project. America wasn't directly involved with men, putting armed forces in, but certainly financially and giving equipment in the Middle East war between Israel and the Arab states. How did he react to this confrontation?

RAESLY: Senator Russell had great admiration for the Israelis. He felt that most of them, of course, had immigrated from other areas and they had brought with them acquired talents which they put to work to build a nation. And he felt that, you know, when somebody is trying to help
themselves, you give'em a hand up. And he was in large part responsible for their getting weaponry and armaments through the years,

HEPBURN: So he was a strong advocate of the Israeli state?

RAESLY: Correct.

HEPBURN: Again, this bloc confrontation has the atmosphere of all the rest in that small countries opposing one another suddenly find themselves in the middle of a major Communist western bloc confrontation towards the end of the second World War--Vietnam, Cuba, Korea, of course, and now with the Middle East war with the western countries supporting Israel and the Communist bloc supporting the Arab states and financing them, certainly in the early stages, What was his general feeling about the way American-Russian affairs should develop?

RAESLY: Senator Russell's feelings?

HEPBURN: Yes, yes.

RAESLY: As I said, he did not trust the Russians. On the one hand, he was willing to talk with them and, I might say, that in regard to the United Nations he thought the United Nations was a very weak reed on which to lean our foreign policy. It was a good meetinghouse, a good place to meet and talk, but he did not feel that this country ought to be the sole primary, financial support of the United Nations. He did not feel that we should conduct our foreign policy based on its precepts and in dealing with Russia he felt that, "I'll talk with them, I'll meet with them, I'm willing to give them a chance to prove that they will do what they say but I want--" for instance, on the test ban treaty Senator Russell felt we should have insisted upon the site inspection: that they send Russians here and inspect what we're doing and we send Americans there and inspect what they're doing. On this basis he would have had no problems supporting the legislation.

HEPBURN: Now, he stayed with the Armed Services Committee until the time of his death. He wasn't chairman throughout, though, was he?

RAESLY: No, he gave up the chairmanship of that committee in 1969 when he assumed the chairmanship of the Senate Appropriations Committee and at the same time he became president pro tempore of the United States Senate, third in line in succession to the president.

HEPBURN: But, could you just sort of encapsulate the kind of things he was military policy but, of course, the Armed Services Committee and the other military committee he was on were concerned a great deal with what was going on in this country, as well.

RAESLY: Well, the Armed Services Committee authorizes the appropriations of funds for any and all activities of the military department. This might be manpower; it might be bases and where they are going to be located. He was instrumental in keeping military bases in Georgia.

HEPBURN: Yes, could we just cut back. This is a collection of some photographs and little pieces.
RAESLY: Mementoes from one of his visits to Fort Benning, Georgia. He witnessed the actual training that is shown in the lower picture there with the troops moving through the fields. At that time that was the training for South Vietnam.

HEPBURN: Yes, and the top photograph is one of--

RAESLY: Of the infantry school itself.

HEPBURN: Could you tell us something about that little bayonet paper knife?

RAESLY: Isn't that cute? (laugh) It was given to him by the commanding general down there as a memento of his trip.

HEPBURN: And this was one of the bases.

RAESLY: It has a little sheath, yeah.

HEPBURN: This was one of the bases he was instrumental in getting set in Georgia with the military.

RAESLY: Every military base in Georgia is here in large part through the efforts of Senator Russell. And somebody once said that if he would put one more military base in Georgia the whole state would sink. And his reply to that was that it certainly would not. It was built on Stone Mountain granite and it would certainly not go under just from one more military base.

HEPBURN: Now, could we move closer to home for a moment to remove ourselves from the military side of affairs. We mentioned earlier that Russell served seven presidents during his career. Now as far as I can see from reading, he was once, he once refused nomination for the--to run for the president of the Democratic Party and. once stood for nomination.

RAESLY: No, no, no, you got mi--In 1948 he was not at the Democratic convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, but was, his name was placed in nomination and he got two hundred and fifty-some votes for the nomination.

HEPBURN: So he wasn't actually nominated?

RAESLY: His name was placed in nomination even though he was not there. Then in 1952 he actually did seek, actively, the Democratic nomination. He beat Estes Kefauver in Florida. I have heard it said that he went into the Florida primary to beat Kefauver and he hadn't planned to go through the campaign. I've also heard it said that really what he was doing was trying to stop Truman from running for a third term. I've also heard it said that, well; there are two sides to the question. I've heard it both ways. Did he at any time think that he, a Southerner, really could get the Democratic nomination and I've heard strong arguments that he really thought this, at least during some portion of the campaign. I've heard strong arguments that he was political realist enough to know that he never could. My personal belief is that he was just too wise a politician
and he knew the feeling toward the South to the extent that I can't believe he ever really thought that he would get it. But I think what he was trying to do was to let the people in other parts of the country know that we do make sense down here. We're not all a bunch of racists. We do have constitutional principles that we stand on. We do still believe in patriotism and waving the flag.

HEPBURN: So he didn't in fact, let his defeat in the campaign upset, him at all.

RAESLY: No, no. I think that he realized it was coming long in advance and I think that he thought he did accomplish his purpose.

HEPBURN: Now, could he just concern himself with the military during his time in the Senate? Georgia, of course, is basically an agricultural state, and as we said earlier he never got rid of the red Georgia clay from his shoes. And, of course, he was very greatly concerned with the development and improvement of American agriculture. Could you give me some idea of the kind of things he was involved in, in this sphere?

RAESLY: Beginning in 1934 he was chairman of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee. If I might just digress a little bit off the agriculture for a moment, when Senator Russell went to Washington, Senator [Joseph Taylor] Robinson, who was then majority leader, asked him what committee he would like to serve on. Senator Russell replied that he would like to serve on the Appropriations Committee. And Senator Robinson said, "Well, I'm sorry, Senator. We have senators who have been waiting five, six, seven years to get on the Appropriations Committee. We can't put a freshman congressman on there." And Senator Russell said, "Well, you know, if you can't put me on the Appropriations Committee," he said, "My predecessor, Senator Harris, was on the Appropriations Committee--if you can't put me on there, my people expect me to be on that committee, so just don't put me on any committee." Well, he did not know it, but Huey Long had gotten to the Congress a couple of years before him and when Russell went up there he had the reputation for being another Huey Long. And the senate didn't want to have to cope with two of them. So the senators who were in line for the Appropriations Committee stepped aside and they let Russell get on the first day he was in the senate. I think it took about three days. (laughter) He was one of the very, very few in modern history to start off on the Appropriations Committee. But back to the agriculture appropriations, he was the floor manager for the rural electrification program of President Roosevelt in the 1930's. He was a strong advocate of a--and this may be a little remote to you, but a high protective tariff on jute-competes with our southern cotton.

HEPBURN: Oh yes, remote yes. I had known the jute trade was a big one

RAESLY: (laughter) Well, at that time it was. He was able to get the original parity program for the farmer; the school lunch program was one of his. These are just a few and every year the entire budget of the agriculture department was in essence the handiwork of Richard Russell.

HEPBURN: So, in fact he was generally trying to streamline agricultural policy to protect American agriculture and to increase its efficiency and output.

RAESLY: And income.
HEPBURN: Yes, to go on to something slightly different, in 1964 Russell led the eighty-three day filibuster against the Civil Rights Amendment.

RAESLY: I worked around the clock with him on that one.

HEPBURN: Now this earned him the title of being a racist for obvious reasons. But was that name really justified? Why did this man, who so far had appeared very reasonable and sensible politician oppose what appears to be a very natural piece of legislation.

RAESLY: Can I quote Senator Russell?

HEPBURN: Please do.

RAESLY: In one of his speeches in opposing this legislation, he said that if the federal government has the right to tell the owner of a hot dog stand by the roadside that he must serve red haired men with blue eyes then under the same interpretation of the Constitution, the federal government has the right to tell that same owner of the hot dog stand by the roadside that he cannot serve black haired men or blonde haired men. Senator Russell saw nothing in the federal Constitution that gave such powers to the federal government but he did know the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution and that states that those powers, not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

HEPBURN: So in fact it was purely a point of constitutional law that--

RAESLY: --Constitutional law, nothing personal, nothing emotional, strictly constitutional. If the federal government can tell you that you must do this, then they can tell you that you can't do the other.

HEPBURN: That's a great difficulty, trying to make sure the federal law doesn't impose too much on the lives of the people.

RAESLY: Right. Now, an interesting thing on that--I think it was eighty-seven days actually. They went round the clock. Senator Russell--there were only nineteen southern senators who opposed that bill. And nineteen senators can't out vote the other eighty-one. So Senator Russell organized them into three teams of six each. He was the general and each team had a captain. And as a prelude to this let me say that any time there is not a quorum present on a roll call in the senate, the senate must adjourn. Whenever the senate adjourns, the pending bill is dropped from consideration and goes back to the calendar and has to work its way up again. All right. What the southerners were trying to do was to compel the senate to adjourn through the lack of a quorum. What the proponents were trying to do was wear out the southern senators. So they decided they'd go round the clock, just to wear out the southern senators. Well, with the team concept that Senator Russell had, with three teams, say team A would take it for twenty-four hours and team B and C would have forty-eight hours off. And then while B had it, A and C were on their off-time. And they, the senators, hid out all over Washington. They were in hotels under
different names. Senator Russell knew where they were and how to get them and each team captain knew how to reach the general. Senator Russell never left the Capitol or the Senate Office Building. He was in one or the other during the entire period. It was during that period that he asked me to work around the clock with him. And I got very familiar with spending my nights in the nurses office room. A couple of times he did tell me about one thirty, two o'clock in the morning, "Take the rest of the day off." He wouldn't need me till six A.M. (laughter)

HEPBURN: Yes, you said earlier that he was a Civil War buff and, of course, with time on the military committees, he obviously picked up a lot of very clever strategy. (laughter) So clearly it was on legal points that made him reject the bill, but was he really a racist?

RAESLY: No.

HEPBURN: How did he feel about the situation of blacks in America?

RAESLY: He believed in bigger and better civil rights for all Americans. But he opposed special privileges for certain groups of Americans at the expense of the constitutional rights of other Americans. Now as far as his relations with the Negro race are concerned, the waitresses and waiters in the Senate dining room of the Capitol are all black. He knew each one by name; he knew their family circumstances. He knew which ones were having problems, which one had an alcoholic husband, which one had a mother who was getting improper care by D.C. [District of Columbia] welfare. He knew which one had a son who was graduating from high school, a brilliant young man, but he couldn't go to college for lack of funds. Senator Russell got him a scholarship. He got the one whose mother couldn't get proper help from welfare, he personally intervened with D.C. welfare in her behalf. And got her a new doctor. He knew their problems and he helped with their problems and I daresay there are not many of the more than so-called liberal senators who even know the name of the waitress who's waiting on them in the Senate dining room, much less is willing to put himself out.

HEPBURN: So he was, in fact, a man who cared?

RAESLY: He was, yes, a man who cared. He empathized. There's a difference between sympathy and empathy. He empathized with those.

HEPBURN: That leads me on to the next point. Of course, Washington was torn apart in 1968. They were severely troubled by the race riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King. How did Russell react to this? It must have been a very trying time for him, worrying him so.

RAESLY: This, to him, it was a sacrilege. This was the destruction of his Washington. This was a threat to his Capitol. A threat to the Capitol of the American people and it was to him a tragedy. It was, however, also a time when he got upset with the leaders of this country, the leadership that had been encouraging and condoning disobedience and civil disobedience. Senator Russell did not feel that a mob on the street, just because there's more of them than there are of me could make me get off the sidewalk. Where their rights infringed on my rights then that was civil disobedience and should be treated accordingly. I might say that during this period, while the capitol was surrounded by armed guards--We thought they were armed, they had rifles,
you would think they were armed, and literally battalions of troops were surrounding the Capitol and the office buildings in the area. And Senator Russell was walking back from the Capitol that Saturday morning and stopped and, it was his habit to talk to the enlisted men not to the officers, and he stopped and introduced himself to this soldier, a corporal, and asked him what kind of a weapon he had there. The corporal identified the make of the rifle and Senator Russell said "Do you have any ammunition?" And the corporal said "No, sir." And Senator Russell went along a little further and he stopped and chatted with another one and he asked him, "Do you have any ammunition?" And he said, "No, sir." He came back into the office and he picked up the telephone and he called Lyndon Johnson, the White House. He told President Johnson, and these are his exact words 'cause I heard the conversation. He realized that he was old-fashioned and that times were passing him by but that he still did believe in the sanctity of the United States Capitol, and both of the building itself and of the city and that he had learned in interviewing the troops assigned to guard the Capitol building against the potential onslaught that they were without ammunition. And that he wondered why this was so and what plans were made to get ammunition to them and how long it would take in the event there was an assault because there were rumors of an attack on the Capitol. Well, Lyndon Johnson got off that telephone so fast and turned it over to the army chief of staff and within about twenty minutes here come, with police escort, the army chief of staff and it was flanked by about five other generals and in a few minutes here come trucks with ammunition up there. And then I might say, too, that when Lyndon Johnson called him down to the White House, and this was a time now when Senator Russell was actually getting threats on his life, so were many other southern senators, and there were a lot of crackpots running around and Johnson called Russell to come to the White House to confer with him and the senator went to drive through the gate the guard stopped him and said "Excuse me, Senator, we have to search you and your car." And Senator Russell said "What do you mean, you're gonna search me and my car?" And then the guard said "Well, this is the orders we're operating under. We must search everyone including you." Senator Russell informed him that he had been coming to the White House for thirty some years; that he had never been searched before; that he was a responsible United States Senator; that he did not intend to be searched now and that he hadn't wanted to come in the first place. The President had called him and made him come and if the President was gonna put this kind of nonsense up against him why he would just go back to the Senate Office Building and the President could come see him. The result was they did not search the car and probably it was a good thing that he did not because Senator Russell was carrying a gun.

HEPBURN: I agree, but again this was a reaction?

RAESLY: Yes, and also there had been a number of very serious threats against him personally. HEPBURN: But eventually it all did settle itself down.

RAESLY: To a degree.

HEPBURN: To move on again to an entirely different situation. The man covered so much of the--

RAESLY: And I'm probably going too long in every area.
HEPBURN: Not at all. Not at all. Government is fascinating as well. In many ways Russell was a man many, many years ahead of his time. A classic example is his attitude to conservation. He was a serious ecologist long before it became fashionable.

RAESLY: Oh, he termed himself--after ecology got to be fashionable, he said "Well, I was the first ecologist in the Congress." And he was. And if you look around Georgia there are research centers for water pollution, how to clean up our rivers and keep them clean. He put twenty-seven research facilities into Georgia, in addition to the military bases that he put in here. These are to enable us in large measure to either get the most from the productivity from our farms and forests, and production of food and fiber, and the agriculture; utilization program, or our research facilities into the preservation and purification and recycling and protection of our natural resources.

HEPBURN: So in fact he was in this like he was in so many other fields, a pioneer of his times.

RAESLY: Yes. There is an agricultural research utilization building here in Athens that bears his name, the last of, I think, five research centers he put in here. Can we get up? (laughter)

HEPBURN: How are we doing so far? I'm enjoying it enormously.

RAESLY: Does it tell it? I mean, am I getting any life in it?

HEPBURN: Beautifully. I love it.

RAESLY: Good. Hi, Lee [Caldwell Swan]! Have you met Angus?

BEGIN SIDE 3, CASSETTE #214

HEPBURN: Are we rolling? No. (inaudible) To move on with the senator's work from ecology and conservation to something slightly more different. In 1963 he was appointed to serve on the Warren Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy. I believe he wasn't particularly pleased about this. He wasn't happy about that at all. Could you elaborate on that some?

RAESLY: When President Johnson called Senator Russell to ask him to serve on the Warren Commission, Senator Russell tried to beg off of that responsibility. At the time he was facing a civil rights fight. He was holding hearings on defense appropriations. He had hearings scheduled on agricultural appropriations and he felt that he had all that one man could really handle. He did not like to undertake things that he could do only poorly for lack of time. He asked the president not to put him on that commission. The president insisted that he was going to put him on that commission and Senator Russell again asked him not to and they terminated the conversation. The next day the president called about the commission and was telling Senator Russell about it and again Senator Russell asked him not to put him on the commission and the president said, "Well, I just released the names of the commissioners and you are on it." Senator Russell did
serve. He was not able to attend many meetings of the commission although he did read every word of the testimony.

HEPBURN: How did he feel about the final outcome, the verdict--

RAE SLY: Well, he even went down to Dallas and he thought in the first place that Chief Justice [Earl] Warren was all to grandfatherly in his questioning of Marina Oswald. He felt that she should have been given something closer to a third-degree type questioning. And when he went to Dallas, Senator Russell gave her that type questioning. He did manage to get a little more information than had come forth from Warren's efforts.

Senator Russell had reservations about the report of that commission. In the first place--well, to begin with, Warren insisted they were going to have a unanimous report. Everybody was going to sign a unanimous report. Warren insisted further that the report was going to say that there was no conspiracy. The report was further going to say there were only two shots fired and the same bullet hit Kennedy and [John B.] Connally. And there were several other very flat statements that Warren was going to make.

And Senator Russell, in the meeting when the actual final wording of the report was discussed, endeavoured to get this moderated. Warren just--he wouldn't give in. He was adamant that this was the way it was gonna be. And so Senator Russell finally just sat quiet and when Warren was through, he looked around the table and he said, "Now, we're all agreed but we're gonna sign this report." Senator Russell said "Excuse me, Mr. Chief Justice, before you put my name leave a little room for a short paragraph because I am going to put in there that insofar as the information available to this commission is concerned, there is no evidence of a conspiracy." There's quite a difference here and several other statements that he modified similarly.

HEPBURN: So then he wasn't happy that all the evidence hadn't been put before the commission?

RAE SLY: He did not know--well, in the first place, we have no way of knowing whether Russia, for instance, gave us all the information in their files about [Lee Harvey] Oswald's stay in Minsk. Now you can't go in there with a gun and demand it. There's no way. He was not satisfied that we had all the information that might be available from the Mexican government. And he had reservations in these areas which he publicly expressed after the report was issued. As Senator Russell stated, the way the report is now worded if later evidence comes along or somebody stands up and wants to be famous before they bow out, they want to say, "I'm the one who conspired with Oswald to kill Kennedy," nothing in the report will be contradicted. It will stand for a thousand years because of qualifying statements that Russell had put in it. And once Russell pointed out this weakness, John Sherman Cooper who was on the commission, Jerry [Gerald Rudolf] Ford, who was on the commission as a congressman, and they immediately fell back in line with Russell and said, "Well let's keep this. Now he's got a good point." And so then the chief justice had to come in and give in and moderate it.

HEPBURN: So, the report is now qualified in case of more evidence.

RAE SLY: Right, if in a hundred years something else shows up it will not be contrary to it.
HEPBURN: Of course, the whole case is still being discussed.

RAESLY: And it will be. It will be like the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. A hundred years later it's still being argued.

HEPBURN: Could we look back over the senator's just over thirty-eight years in office?

RAESLY: Fifty in office.

HEPBURN: I mean in office in the Senate.

RAESLY: Yeah. All right.

HEPBURN: I'm not counting from his Georgia appointment. During that period he wasn't directly responsible for putting forward a lot of legislation, but he was the man who drove much legislation through, was he not? He tended to play a sort of supplementary role?

RAESLY: What he did in the first place, he always was willing to do a favor for another senator but he rarely asked another senator to do a favor for him and this was one of sources of his tremendous power in his later years. Every member of the Senate was indebted to Richard Russell and, as a result, he didn't have to offer legislation. He could, for instance, tell Clint Anderson, chairman of the Public Works Committee, "I sure would appreciate your putting in an authorization for a dam at Calrke Hill," and it was put in the authorization bill. Once you get it in the authorization bill, Russell was on the public works subcommittee of Appropriations and he'd get the money for it. He didn't have to have his name on bills.

HEPBURN: So he wasn't the glory seeker type?

RAESLY: No, he was a quiet--

HEPBURN: He used the political machine as it should be used.

RAESLY: Right. William White referred to him in his book The Citadel, which is incidentally one of the really great books about the senate, referred to Senator Russell as the senate type or the senate man, a senator's senator. He worked quietly but effectively. He didn't seek national glory, national publication, but the people in Georgia knew what he was doing. The people in the military knew what he was doing.

HEPBURN: So, again, his own people could see what he was doing because he was doing so much for Georgia.

RAESLY: Sure. He had dams going up here, research buildings over here, you've got an army base over here and all of it has got Dick Russell's name attached to it. So they knew what Dick Russell was doing and those were the folks that counted with Senator Russell.
HEPBURN: But looking back over the bills he was principally associated with, was there any one that you would say--well, first of all, could you give us an idea of some of the ones that--let us recap, we mentioned them earlier on but to recap on some of them.

RAESLY: Well, the Rural Electrification Bill. He floor managed that in the Senate in the 1930's. The school lunch program that again was initiated in the 1930's and became permanent law in 1945 is still being used today to feed the school children. There is the cotton parity program. There is the protective tariff for the rural people of Georgia and also a protective tariff for some of the industries of Georgia. By the way, he--I don't think we've brought out how many defense contractors he brought in here or the fact that he was responsible in large measure for Lockheed getting a billion, multi-billion dollar contract for the C5A and the fact that it was built in Georgia by Georgians.

HEPBURN: Did he himself single out any one piece of legislation which to him would like to be remembered for as a great contribution to the development of America?

RAESLY: Yes, he stated time and again that the most significant contribution he had ever made throughout the history of his career in the Senate was the school lunch program.

HEPBURN: In fact, we've got a little board here just showing some of the information about this.

RAESLY: The bill up at the top is the 1945 bill which enacted the program into permanent law. I don't know if you can--there you can see it there. That's where it became permanent law and that is the basis for which it is still continuing today. They just amend it and extend it. Previous to that they had to enact a new law every year. Down here is a picture of some children eating the school lunch.

HEPBURN: What was his reason behind considering it so important? It obviously tells us something about the man. I mean, for instance, his rural electrification program, obviously a major piece of legislation, is concerned with people living now. But this one is--it's almost geared to the future, isn't it?

RAESLY: Yes, it's geared to the future. I think there's probably a combination of circumstances about that. In the first place, the REA bill, although he managed it, did not bear his name. On the school lunch program he had a difficult time getting it considered initially and he learned something from that experience. He went to--the first year he was in Washington he introduced the bill, and then went to the chairman of the agriculture committee and said, "Mr. Chairman, I hope you will consider my bill." And nothing was ever heard from it. So the next year Senator Russell, next Congress, gets this same bill, does not introduce it, takes it to the chairman of the agriculture committee and said, "Mr. Chairman, I'd appreciate your looking over this bill and see if you think it is worthwhile for me to introduce it." And the next day the chairman of the agriculture committee introduced the bill and it was promptly enacted. (laughter)

HEPBURN: I see, again learning how to handle the senators.
RAESLY: Right. I really think that a second factor, which is very important in considering his pride in that legislation, was the tremendous love that the man had for young people and the faith that he placed in them for the future of our country.

HEPBURN: To move directly off the senator's own career, I'd like to, just the next few minutes, talk to you about your association with him. How did this all start?

RAESLY: Over my objections. (laughter) I really didn't want to go to work for him. (laughter)

HEPBURN: Huh?

RAESLY: At that time I had been reared in the Virginia suburbs of Washington. I was very happy in the position I had with the army and the Pentagon and I had a nice comfortable little rut and I just really didn't care whether I went over and worked in the Senate or not. My father had been a congressional assistant and I knew the long hours. So they kept upping the ante and I finally went over and started handling, first his military cases, and then I worked into the personal secretary.

HEPBURN: How did he first strike you, the first impressions obviously could be--

RAESLY: Well, now I worked for him--the first six months I worked for him, I only saw the man three times.

HEPBURN: You were handling--

RAESLY: He was rather remote from his Washington staff, in part because he was so terribly busy, and there were generally three or four members of the staff who had complete and total access to him at all times. Of course, during the six months when I was not his personal secretary, I was not one of them. I think--as I say, I saw him twice when I was the only person who took shorthand available for him to dictate to, and then I took a phone message in to him one time. And I really didn't have any--I had heard a lot about the man, but I didn't have any basis to make a personal judgement. Then later at the end of 1956, he asked me if I would like to be his personal secretary, if I wanted to live and stay and travel in Georgia whenever he did. At this point he paid my way to come down from Washington to stay a week and to travel over Georgia and to get to know the state. The understanding was if I wanted the job as personal secretary, it was mine. If I didn't, I could stay on the staff in the capacity that I was in. If I didn't like Georgia, that wasn't going to be held against me. I took me about two days to decide that I wanted the job but he made me take the full week to get acquainted with the state.

HEPBURN: It must have been quite intimidating because at this time, he already had an enormous reputation.

RAESLY: Well, I told him when I accepted the job. I said that I had one grave reservation. I said I didn't know how to be a personal secretary to a senator. (laughter) And he would have been a great teacher if he had gone into the academic field because he told me, said, "Miss
Barboura," he said "I'll teach you what you need to know to be my personal secretary. And I will never fault you if you try and fail. But I will fault you if you fail to try." As a result of that statement I would get into the worst predicaments, and the biggest messes. I'd finally just go in and say, "Senator, look!" (laughter)

HEPBURN: Now you worked for him for more than fourteen years, didn't you?

RAESLY: Right.

HEPBURN: What kind of a man was he to work for? So far we've built an impression of him, from his career: a quiet man, a man who worked behind the scenes, a very industrious man and a very--

RAESLY: He set high goals for himself. But he knew the limitations of human beings. He was a very--the first word that comes to mind, of course, beyond anything else is integrity; second, comes humanity. The way he could empathize with anybody. He was just as. at home talking to the queen mother, or the king of England, as he was in talking to the rural dirt farmer out in Georgia. And he talked the same way to both of them. There was one physical handicap that he did have in politics. He never did learn to talk out of both sides of his mouth at the same time. (laughter)

HEPBURN: Again another reason why he became the senator's senator, a much respected man.

RAESLY: Right--and with his family and his friend, even his office associates. If someone in his family had a problem and needed his advice, all they had to do was let him know and he would stop whatever he was doing to advise them and help them and give them the benefit of his thinking. He could take a big bundle of problems and orient to the very heart of the problem and say, "If you solve that one, the rest will go away."

HEPBURN: He also had enormous concentration, didn't he? You were telling me earlier about the day the lights went out.

RAESLY: Yes. We were in Winder and the lights turned off. It was pitch black in the room and he continued to dictate, just as if the lights had not turned off, and I was sitting there scribbling a character and flipping pages and thinking, you know, "How long is this going to go on?" (laughter) He finally looked back at the letter to see what he wanted to answer next and he realized that he couldn't see it and that the lights were off. He asked me what happened to the lights and I said, "Well, they've been off for about five minutes, sir." And he said, "Well, you did get what I said, didn't you?" I said, "Yes, sir, I got it sir. But I can't read it back right now, sir." (laughter)

HEPBURN: In the course of his many campaigns and, of course, in his work with the Armed Services Committee and the Agriculture Appropriations Committee he must have traveled considerably throughout America and, of course, all over the world. Presumably as his private secretary you would accompany him on these. It must have been fairly hectic.
RAESLY: His travel was not typical junket that you hear about; his was a working trip. He would not go headquarters in Paris for four days while he is supposedly studying the military bases out in remote areas of France. He would headquarters right at the military bases and if he had to go through Paris on the way back, that just happened to be part of the route and he wouldn't hesitate any longer than it would take him to get the next flight out. He could go into a place like Oporto, Portugal, where a gentleman introduced himself, Antonio Russell de Sousa. Senor de Sousa traced his genealogy back to the Russells of England that Senator Russell's genealogy goes back to and he immediately began relating with this kinsman of his. And began telling Sousa the history of Oporto back in the fourteen hundreds and the fifteen hundreds that Sousa didn't know and he had lived there all of his life. He had a marvelous capacity not only to retain facts, but to catalog them in his mind in such a way that regardless of the subject, it was just like he just flipped a little catalog card and here it is. And he could pull out the most obscure facts at the strangest times, where--a subject you wouldn't think he would know anything about. He was a widely read man. These bookcases here in the library contain the--they came from the Washington office. And these were just the three that were in his, private office. The other twelve we couldn't bring with us. Books he kept in these cases, in his private office, well, I think he thought his staff threw books out if they left his private office. He had no great confidence in our ability not to lose a book. So the ones that he particularly prized are in these bookcases. We have replaced them in there and if you glance over them you'll find his reading covered almost every aspect of the human Society.

HEPBURN: His memory, of course, must have stood him in very good stead in his travels throughout the world. He must have had to deal with foreign diplomats and foreign military personnel.

RAESLY: Yes, and I know of at least one occasion when his very dry sense of humor almost got him in trouble on his foreign travels. In 1943 when he made the round the world tour of the battlefronts, they visited Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-chek in their home in China. Senator Russell had known Madame Chiang since her days in Wesleyan College at Macon. And Madame Chiang being a close friend was teasing Senator Russell, sort of giving him a little bit of a hard time, about the fact that he had never married. Senator Russell understood that the Generalissimo did not speak English and naturally the whole conversation was with Madame Chiang. So when she kept asking him about why he never married, he finally, just off the top of his head, said that when he was a young man in Macon he was walking by Wesleyan College one day and there on the steps of the college sat the flower of the Orient, the most beautiful girl in the world. She had won his heart, then and there on the spot, and he had searched the world over ever since to locate her again and it was not until this very evening here in her home that he had again seen the vision of his youth. About that time he looked at the Generalissimo. While it may have been that the Generalissimo did not speak English, Senator Russell said that there was no doubt in his mind that the Generalissimo understood every word he had said. (laughter)

RAESLY: That's right. You may like to see this set of cuff links and tie claps that was Madame Chiang's gift to Senator Russell at Christmas in 1970. It's one of the artifacts that we have down here.

HEPBURN: Can the camera get--I don't know what you can see of it.
RAESLY: That was a long lasting relationship. The Madame Chiang inevitably every Christmas sent him a very nice gift. One year it was a very handsome ice bucket. Another year it was a beautiful red lacquered bowl. That too has a little anecdote that goes with it. The red lacquered bowl is completely round. That is, there's two sections, and the top and the bottom are exactly the same. It doesn't matter which way you set it, you see. We brought it down to Winder and Senator Russell's cook, Modine Thomas, who had been with Senator Russell and had been with Senator Russell's mother before her death, wanted to know what this double red bowl was. Senator Russell informed her that it was a double grits bowl. You could serve grits in two bowls at the same time.

HEPBURN: And, of course, with America's very close relationship with Nationalist China, this obviously provided a very strong personal link.

RAESLY: Oh yes, and with his position in defense and in defense foreign aid.

HEPBURN: Yes, indeed. We haven't actually mentioned about Senator Russell's private life at all, his hobbies. Obviously he was a very concerned politician but you mentioned earlier these books and the range they covered. Did he have any other great hobbies?

RAESLY: He was an avid baseball fan. Whether it was an obscure outfielder or the current fad in pitcher, he could give you the ERA [Earned Run Average], the batting average, lifelong, for the year, he could tell you where he grew up, what his hometown, how long he'd been in baseball. Football was the same way. He came down to the university in the spring practice of 1969, met with Coach [Vincent Joseph] Dooley and the team out on the practice field, called all the team players by name, never having seen them except on television. You know, started talking to them about their grades and which ones ought to do better, and he knew the positions they played and their weaknesses and their strengths. Coach Dooley later said that Senator Russell was probably not only the greatest fan of the Georgia team, but he really thought he ought to be the coach, he knew the players so well. (laughter) He was an avid reader. He read all the time. He was a Civil War buff. He'd driven Sunday afternoons to the battle fields of the Civil War through Virginia and Maryland. He was a well-broadened, well-rounded man. He did play golf one time. When he was governor of Georgia, Bobby [Robert T. Jr.] Jones gave him a set of golf clubs and he came out to the course and was going to teach him how to play golf. Now there are two versions as to why Senator Russell only played one golf game. His version is that this was the Depression and he didn't think it: was seemly for the governor of Georgia to be out playing golf when people were hurting for food. The other version, which comes from people who were associated with the senator in his employ at that time, was Senator Russell felt that any man who could get beat so badly at any game ought not ever play it. (laughter)

HEPBURN: You've told me so many fascinating little stories about the senator. Do you have any particular favorite you've been holding out on me?

RAESLY: Oh, I like them all. (laughter)
HEPBURN: Well, again, speaking on his private life. You mentioned earlier he'd never married. But there were rumors, were there not, that he was in fact engaged and that the engagement was broken off?

RAESLY: There were rumors and he may have been, or maybe he wasn't. I do know that he enjoyed the companionship of a lady. He dated up to within a few months before his death. I must say, and I went out to dinner with him on occasion, one could not ask for a finer escort. The epitome of southern courtliness. In fact, many of the ladies of our staff said, they didn't go out to dinner with him, but when they were asked his outstanding characteristic, they would reply, "courtliness." The courtliness was there but I go first to the integrity.

HEPBURN: You're not going to answer me are you? You're not going to tell me the truth are you? (laughter) Could you back up to the career of the senator and sum up his character in a few words. Is there any particular--you mentioned integrity. Is this to you the--

RAESLY: To sum up his character would take me the next thirty-eight years. I think integrity, humanity, the acute intelligence, the retentiveness--he almost had a photographic memory, the constancy of the devotion to the Constitution and devotion to the people of Georgia. Every day he wanted to serve Georgians better than he had served Georgians the day before. I think that--

HEPBURN: Again, of course, a man in his position could so easily have abused the power that he had in the Senate but his integrity kept him studiously to the Constitution and to the growing interest of the American people. How did he sum up himself? Is there any way that Senator Russell himself would like to be remembered?

RAESLY: I think that a quotation from a speech he once made on the floor of the Senate would probably best sum it up. He was in the middle of a speech and he said "[Lost on Tape]--by a recall petition from the people of Georgia, by defeat at election or by retirement, I expect to take with me my honor. And I think that is how he would want to be remembered.

HEPBURN: Towards the end of his life he contracted a fever which stayed with him until--

RAESLY: Well, now he actually contracted that many years earlier. They thought it was asthma until 1938, 1958 when it was diagnosed as emphysema.

HEPBURN: At one point he had cancer as well.

RAESLY: That was in 1969. He had a tumor in his left lung. There was no surgery. He received cobalt treatments. The tumor completely disappeared. It never reappeared. It was in no way connected with his death other than the fact that the cobalt treatment further scarred the lung tissue, which was already damaged by emphysema. His death was brought about by the emphysema. There was no cancer involved.

HEPBURN: How did it appear to affect him? It should have slowed him down and limited his actions, did it?
RAESLY: In the last year or so, yes it did, inevitably. But he had a tremendous will and he could--it's like the man who normally can lift one hundred pounds when the occasion demanded it, Russell could exceed his own abilities and where he might normally, metaphorically speaking lift one hundred pounds, he could will himself to lift five hundred pounds.

HEPBURN: So integrity, pride and honesty, honesty in his own work, are the keynotes of the senator's career. Thank you, Miss Raesly.

RAESLY: Thank you.

HEPBURN: Now, although Miss Raesly is shortly returning to Washington, the work of cataloging and indexing the 45 tons of documents, letters and books in the Russell Memorial Library will continue. [It will] continue until such time as everything has been indexed and cataloged and the library can at last be opened and political and historical researchers will be able to study through the eyes of a man who was infinitely involved, the terms of office of seven presidents of the United States and thirty-eight crucial and exciting years in American political, economic and military development. Of course, they will be able to sum up for themselves the life and work, if in this case the two can indeed be separated of one man, Senator Richard Brevard Russell, the senator from Georgia. Again, thank you, Miss Raesly.

RAESLY: Thank you.