

BOB SHORT: Good afternoon and welcome again to another in our series of Reflections on Georgia Politics sponsored by the ICL, Young Harris College, and the Richard Russell Library at the University of Georgia. We're very fortunate today to have as our guest Senator David Gambrell, who most of you will remember as our United States Senator who succeeded Richard Russell. Senator, we're delighted to have you here.

DAVID GAMBRELL: It's nice to be here. Glad to see you.

SHORT: You have had -- excuse me.

GAMBRELL: Glad to see you again. It's been a while, but we've been seeing each other for about 40 years off and on.

SHORT: We're old friends. We're old friends. Literally, old friends! Well, you've had a very interesting political career and lifetime, and if you would, I would like for you to tell us a little about your beginnings in politics, how you got interested in politics, and your career in the Senate.

So let's start by saying that you were appointed by Governor Carter in 1971. I've often wondered, although I've known several Governors, how a Governor goes about appointing

someone to the United States Senate. Does he pick up the phone and say, "David, I want you to go to the Senate." Or does he bring you over, sit you down in front of his desk and say, "I want to appoint you to the Senate?" What happened? How did you get to the Senate?

GAMBRELL: Well, that's an interesting question and I don't know if there is any sort of one way that people get appointed to the Senate. When you mentioned this, I was running in my mind not only my own experience, but what other people had been appointed in our time. Of course, I think Zell Miller may be the only other person who's been appointed in quite a long time in Georgia history, and you might ask him that question too, because he's had it more recently than I.

In a sense, it's a long story because Governor Carter and I went back a number of years before any politics came up -- before he got intimately involved in politics, and we became friends. And so, this worked up into a relationship where -- when the time came -- he decided he would like to appoint me to take Senator Russell's place. And it's all very much an unexpected, unanticipated, unplanned for event when it came up.

The way I met Jimmy Carter -- and you mentioned you'd be interested in that, and it is a very interesting story. If you recall in 1962 when the federal courts had done away with the apportionment of the state legislature -- the Senate and the House -- there was kind of a scramble there about who was going to run for what and the reapportionment of the state into the new districts. And down in Southwest Georgia a new district was created and elections were taking place for the state Senate, and of all the elections that took place that one fell into contest

because, as we say, some of the local politicians manage to steal the election from Jimmy Carter.

SHORT: [Laughter]

GAMBRELL: And that's an interesting he tells about in one of his books. But in any event, he and his friends down there decided they were going to contest this election, and again there was a number of considerations. But it wound up that it was suggested that they consult with a lawyer named Charles Kirbo, who had practiced law for some time in Bainbridge nearby down there and who had come up to be a partner in the law firm King & Spalding where I was a young partner at the time myself. And so, I was there in my office, I guess it must have been July or June of 1962, minding my own business, and I get a call on the intercom telephone. He said, "David, come on down here. I got somebody I want you to meet." This was Charlie Kirbo, who I worked with on a lot of legal business at that time, and I had been involved in a number of political things and was familiar with state and local politics and all that, but never had been a candidate for anything.

And in any event, I went down there and Charlie was sitting with these two gentlemen who had come from south Georgia, and as I've told the story and Jimmy Carter repeats it in his book, he was -- he had come from his peanut warehouse and warehouse clothes -- Brogans and khaki shirt, pants -- and I said later him describing this -- this was not the usual customer at the King & Spalding law firm in Atlanta, two guys dressed that way. But anyway, I was introduced, this is Jimmy Carter. Well, I had read in the paper where there was an election contest, but that was the

start of our acquaintance was I was helping with his election contest. I had done some legal work in election contest cases, as had Charlie Kirbo.

So we worked that up and of course, Charlie was the principal lawyer and I was just supporting what he was doing, but we were successful in having the election set aside. And step-by-step through the process, there was a reelection and Jimmy Carter won that -- was elected to the State Senate and served two terms, and then ran for Governor in 1966, and that's where Bob Short himself appeared and was a big figure in the campaign. And it was Senator Carter at that time recruited Charlie Kirbo, and myself, and a number of other people who had -- he had become acquainted with. I had just been elected President of the Georgia Bar Association in the summer of 1966 and I think that was one thing that caused -- then Senator Carter to think maybe I could be helpful to him.

And he called me, I was taking a little break down in South Georgia, got a call. I was out fishing in the fishpond. There's a call from Jimmy Carter here and in any event, he asked me to come join him in the campaign. I'm sure you remember the group that worked with him, but we did recruit a number of lawyers in different sections all over the state in running that campaign.

And of course, he lost. That was the Democratic primary in which Lester Maddox and Ellis Arnall were the top two candidates, and Carter came in third, and after it was over, all these people came up to us and said, "God, if we had know you had a chance we would have voted for you. You would have won this election." And so, maybe they always tell you that, but it seemed like -- as Governor Jimmy Carter said at that time. He said, "If all those people had voted for me, I would have been elected without any runoff." So, I think that encouraged him and a lot of

us to think that he was not out of politics and had a good -- so in any event, he came back and ran in 1970 and won.

And of course, the primary was in September of 1970 and then the general election in November of 1970, and the inauguration in early '71 and within just a day or two of him being inaugurated, word came down that Senator Russell had died in Washington. So I was not expecting a lot myself in this capacity. We were all trying to help Governor Carter get set up and move his people into the Capitol and all this kind of thing, and so some of us began to talk about who would be a good person, and what kind of a person and so forth. And the reason I'm telling you this is I really don't know what was said other than one of my main contacts with the situation was Bill Gunner, who was one of Governor Carter's chief aides. He said, "David, you need to stay out of this as your name has gone on the list." So, that was the first I knew that I was under consideration and so I didn't have any more -- well, I sent some names in that I would recommend, but I did not get involved in the decision.

But several days -- well, Governor Carter said, "I'm going to wait until Senator Russell is buried before we bring this out in the public."

SHORT: [Laughter]

GAMBRELL: And so there was a lapse of about a week or ten days, but I get a call from the Governor's mansion, "The Governor would like you to come by here on Sunday night." And I went up there and he told me. He said, "I would like to appoint you if you are willing to accept

this." And I, of course, had a notion by that time what it was all about. And so I went by and we talked it over and of course I was very flattered and challenged by this whole idea, but I had given it some thought and I had two things in mind. One was that I wasn't going to take it just for two years being in Washington, that I expected to try to make a career out of it so to speak and run for reelection when the time came. And I thought if he had any other ideas about it and wanted to run himself or something of that kind, I'd rather he appoint somebody else that would be a caretaker.

And he said, "No." He said, "I'm not interested in it. It comes up in the middle of my term as Governor and I want to serve the full four years." So, he would like to have somebody that was prepared to make the race for it and so the other thing I said was, "Governor, you've just been elected and you've got your program here to run and this job in Washington in the Senate is a different job. The politics are different and the whole subject is different." I said, "If you've got some ideas about how that ought to be done, well, I'd like for you to say so now, because it would be my plan to conduct it as a separate thing from the Governor's office in Atlanta." And he said, "That's the way I'd like for it to be done." He said, "You need to have your own platform, your own program, and your own politics." And I said, "Well, that could get us crossed up some." And he said, "Well, that is possible. I hope not, but I hope you would understand if that comes up that way. I certainly will understand if you are dissatisfied with me, that you're free to say so." And so we had an understanding about that, and so I told him, "Yes, I will accept it."

So a day or two later it was announced and I went off to Washington. So that's how it happened

in my case. I don't know how it happened in Zell Miller's case and other cases, but I felt pretty good about the way it went because I was not ambitious to do this in a sense that I was promising anything or was promised anything. And I had a fair chance to make it on my own, and so that's the way I went into it.

SHORT: Let's go back to 1966, a very weird election. I still believe we should have won.

GAMBRELL: We should have won. [Laughter]

SHORT: But we didn't.

GAMBRELL: I think it would have been a lot different too. I wondered a lot of times if he had been elected. They just had four-year terms at that time and you couldn't run to secede yourself, so he never would have been Governor. But that first -- and it might not have fit in with anything Presidential or anything else. So it's interesting how the way things happen and the way things work out are dependent on some very small things. A lot of times, disappointments are the best thing that can happen to you, because it throws you into something else.

SHORT: Well, I imagine if you ask Jimmy Carter today is he sorry today that he lost, he'd probably say no.

GAMBRELL: [Laughter] That's right!

SHORT: But getting to the politics of it now, we had this situation. We had Governor Arnall who was a Roosevelt Democrat out here. We had Lester Maddox who was a staunch segregationist over here. We had James Grey, who was siphoning off the Talmadge votes. So that left us with a pretty big job. You know, we had to find a way how to get some of these votes away from these other candidates. But when you mentioned that people said, "You know, if I'd known you could have won I would have voted for you." At the end of that election, as you may recall, all of the pundits were saying that if the election had gone on for two more weeks, Jimmy Carter probably would have won.

And I believe that because he came on strong in the end and I think that's what made him Governor four years later. If he had taken a big defeat -- and I think you'll agree with this -- if he had lost big, he wouldn't have had a chance the second time around. But here, you're not a professional politician. You're a good lawyer. You're appointed to the Senate, and like Mr. Smith, you go to Washington. Now, what did you find when you got there?

GAMBRELL: Well, looking up over this audience here today, I think there are some people who remember this. It's interesting to me, maybe half of the people living in Georgia today were not even born at the time that we're talking about and even a lot of the ones that were born were too young to remember. So, I think people here are in an age group that probably do remember those times even if they didn't live in Georgia, or even if they weren't active in politics.

This was January of 1971. I guess it's debatable what the big issue was, but I feel like -- felt like

then and feel like now that the war in Vietnam dominated almost everything that was going on. Here in the South, we were also having a crisis in the Civil Rights Era of school desegregation and other civil rights type issues that pitted the North against the South and was a traditional political dividing line, so to speak, throughout all politics. So a lot of people think they're having tough times politically and a lot of sharp, divisional, controversial politics now, but I really think it's mild compared to what it was back then. [Laughter] One thing I recall that sort of causes me to smile now is even as nice a guy as Arnall was burned in an effigy at one time about desegregation. So, that's how intense things were back in those times. So when I got to Washington, those were -- you might say -- the hot issues that we addressed.

Another thing that's interesting to me in reflection -- the first vote that I cast in Washington was not on the floor of the Senate and a recorded vote in the government. But I went about the second or third day to a Democratic caucus. All of us members of the Senate, who were Democrat went -- all that were in Washington, and the issue was withdrawal from Vietnam. And it's so interesting because it was the same kind of thing we've got going on here now about withdrawal from Iraq, and the proposal of the leadership had built up over time to full withdrawal by the end of this year, that is, by December of '71 or January of '72. And it had a lot of qualifying things about it, but essentially that's what it was. We're going to withdraw our troops from Vietnam and from a wide area of Southeast Asia by the end of the year -- bring them home. Of course, you all remember there were marches and riots, and one thing or another going on in this country. Young people were going to Canada and seeking asylum and just a lot of very intense feeling. As bad and strong an issue as that is today in our politics, it was much

worse then.

And so, that was the proposal and it was a resolution to try to get that implemented in the government in the coming year. And my reaction to it was that it went too far and I voted against it. It carried in the caucus by a substantial majority, but a number of Senators, including myself and mostly Southerners who were more supportive of the war at that time, voted against it. I felt unhappy about it because I didn't want it to go down that I was in favor of carrying the war on indefinitely. And, irregardless of what went on, I had drafted a resolution of my own and submitted it, and the leadership in effect shoved it aside. They said, "We're not going to work on that one. We're going to work on our own."

But Senator Talmadge -- I sent it around to him to let him know that I was putting this in, and he said, "I might sign that." So he joined me in putting up our own resolution about withdrawal.

And the essential difference between what we proposed and what the Democratic leadership proposed was that we were not going to withdraw in a way that signaled that we were going to abandon support of our allies throughout Southeast Asia, which include the Taiwanese, Chinese. That was a defensible place. Thailand had a very strong military and could support and defend themselves with our help. We had spent five or six years trying to support a failing government in South Vietnam and they never did rise to the capacity of being able to protect themselves in their own homeland. And I felt like we had run out of gas on that, that we didn't have any choice except to throw a lot more American soldiers into what may be a losing proposition. And if the South Vietnamese couldn't protect and defend their own political situation, we were not bound to do that indefinitely.

And that essentially is the way I feel about Iraq, because we have gotten lost with the word victory. To me, the issue in Iraq is not victory in the sense that we win and take over something we can occupy and patrol. It's a matter of giving the -- let's say, moderate Iraqis -- an opportunity to take control of their own country and run it. And if they were showing the same kind of signs of -- they are showing the same kind of signs that the South Vietnamese were in 1971, I'd say we would start looking toward withdrawal. But we're getting a lot of positive signs I think in Iraq and so I think the situation is somewhat different. Anyway, that was what we faced right away, and continuously through the year the Democratic majority started this resolution that they had adopted right there the first few days I was there into various legislation, particularly appropriation legislation that this money is appropriated as long as we withdraw from Vietnam by the end of the year. That was defeated, I think, every time it came up. I don't think it was ever approved of as a part of the law, but it -- the way the Democrats had of agitating that issue during that entire year. So that was literally the first thing to hit my desk was withdrawal from Vietnam.

SHORT: We had some pretty good committee assignments. Your space in aeronautics. You were on small business and maybe one or two more. I can't remember.

GAMBRELL: Well, they, as you probably know, they divided up into what they call major committee assignments and others. And my major assignment was the banking committee, at that time called Banking, Housing, and Urban Development. And Senator Sparkman of

Alabama was Chairman of that committee. So that was as an interesting assignment. And then as you mentioned the small business, which oversaw efforts to support small business through education, appropriation, lending, and things like that. And then the space program under the Aeronautics and Space Committee.

That was another thing that happened right after I got there is -- what was it, Apollo 11 or something, one of these space flights, the guy landing on the moon had come back. And so, they gave everybody on that committee an autographed souvenir, which I still have, of that moon shot and return. But throughout that time I was up there on that committee -- it was small compared to the things that they do now -- but one of the questions that came up was setting the direction for the space program in the future. And there were all kinds of ideas and suggestions. It was really amazing to me, but all these scientists and space exploration experts and so forth had these things. They were wanting to send something out and they were telling us how they would use the magnetism of Mars to flip this thing out and shoot it out to another place, go to Venus or one thing and another. And I remember saying, "Look, our farmers need to know what the weather is going to be next week and next month." I said, "Let's get that down pat and then we'll talk about these other things."

SHORT: [Laughter]

GAMBRELL: And so, that was sort of the story of the space program, is -- the scientific community was all excited about all the possible things that could be done and I was hoping that

we could do some useful things along the way.

The Banking committee turned out to be something exciting, and banking didn't sound like a very exciting thing. But at that time -- and maybe some of the people here will remember -- Lockheed had gotten sort of battered from some of its bad experiences and the development of some of their products, in particular the C5 program had lost a lot of money -- the giant transport plane. And so, every year the Appropriations came up about that, they got hassled a lot and Senator Foxmeyer of Wisconsin became famous for jumping on Lockheed whenever he had a chance. But right in the middle of that, Lockheed was developing what became the L-1011 transport plane. And they, it was as you all probably know, these giant planes are built around the engines. The engines -- I mean the plane is kind of a carton that's attached to some very important engines and the seat, the L-1011 was designed with three engines and they were to be built by Rolls Royce in Great Britain. And in the midst of getting this program going, Rolls Royce went into bankruptcy and they reneged on the engines. And that reverberated back into Lockheed to where Lockheed was threatened with bankruptcy and that would interrupt the C5. And so, it was a bad time for Lockheed.

And Lockheed arranged with some New York banks to get refinanced and get a \$300 million loan, but the banks put on a condition on it -- that you got to get the U.S. government to guarantee the loan. So that became a question that came before the Banking committee -- should the government become a guarantor on the debt of Lockheed Aircraft for the purpose of building this L-1011 airplane. And so, I guess I would have thought it was something that should have been done anyway, but because this happened to be Lockheed, which was an important part of

our economy here in Georgia -- although these planes were going to be built in California -- I took that on as a project. And it was interesting to me -- sort of the division of the banking. The proposal was made by the Nixon Administration and the Secretary of the Treasury came over and appeared before our committee to advocate this -- the adoption of this bill. But that was Secretary Connelly, who had been Governor of Texas -- was the Secretary of Treasury at that time.

So it was not a Democratic proposal, it was not -- a lot of the Foxmeyer-type, populist-type members of the Senate said, "You know, let them go bankrupt. You know, why should we get behind some big corporation that can't handle its own business?" So I told Senator Sparkman that I would like to help out. He said, "Well, good." He said, "I don't want to get mixed up in that. Haven't got time." He said, "You could just take it on." So I wound up being the floor spokesman for the Lockheed Loan Guarantee Legislation in the U.S. Senate, and carried on the debate and so forth. And it was a very interesting experience and very -- kind of unusual for a freshman Senator to be thrown into this posture, but it gave me a lot of friends out at Lockheed and around Marietta.

But we won that and it was an interesting group of people. The Republicans were supporting the administration proposal and the support we got from the Democrats came through organized labor. They recognized that programs of this kind were important to working people in the airline -- I mean in the aviation industry. And so, we got the votes of that group and then a few others scattered around. And we didn't know until the vote was actually taken how it would go. I remember going up on the elevator to vote that day, one of the Senators from Montana, a

Democrat, said, "David, that -- this vote means a lot to you." I said, "It sure does." He said, "Well, I made up my mind if it will help you, I'll vote for you." He couldn't have cared one way or the other. He wasn't going -- so, we won it by one or two votes in the end.

SHORT: Well, before we get too far along, tell me about David Gambrell and his family.

GAMBRELL: Well, that covers a good bit too and you asked about when I got involved in politics, one of the interesting things about all this was the connection that we have had with Senator Russell and his family, and for my entry into public office to have been as his successor was really remarkable. But when I was a little boy, we lived just a short way from the old Governor's mansion in Ansley Park in Atlanta. Clayton Scofield back here used to live in Ansley Park, after he married -- he and his wife. But I know he knows about Ansley Park. Maybe some of the rest of you do, the old Governor's mansion? But when we moved into that house, Richard Russell was Governor of Georgia. Lived just two doors away and several family stories about the encounters that this little kid had with the Governor. And, of course, Russell's father was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia at the time. And Senator Russell -- was then Governor Russell -- was not married, never did. He was a bachelor. And he asked his father and mother to come over and live at the Governor's mansion to sort of serve as his host and hostess. So they were there too and the families got to be friends. My father told me that some of the political wags said for the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia and the Governor to be living together in the same house was a violation of the principle of the

separation of powers!

[Laughter]

GAMBRELL: But in any event, that's where my contact with Senator Russell began and various contacts with various members of the family over the years. But the next sort of major contact was the way I met my wife, Luck, who's here that you've introduced. She was working for Senator Russell when he was a candidate for President of the United States in 1952. I had just gotten out of law school and she was applying for a job in Washington, and while she was waiting she went over to Senator Russell's office and offered to help out. He said, "Of course, come on." And there were some contacts between her family and the Russell Family over the years, so they were already introduced, you might say. In fact, Senator Russell used to claim that he had introduced us, which was at least figuratively true, because that's how we happened to meet.

But she went out to Chicago to the national convention in 1952 to be on his host committee and so forth, and I had just gotten out of law school and a friend of mine and I said, "You know, before we go to work, let's take a trip to Chicago and see how these conventions go."

SHORT: [Laughter]

GAMBRELL: So naturally, when I got there, I went around to the Russell headquarters and a mutual friend introduced me to Luck, and that's how we met -- is under Senator Russell's

auspices, you might say. So, all of that background was very interesting in terms of our relationship with the Russell Family, before his death resulted in us going to Washington. But my own background -- my father was a lawyer. He grew up on a farm in South Carolina not far from where Zell Miller's family comes from, the 96th District in South Carolina. And he was going to be a school teacher, but because of World War I he had an opportunity to go to law school and that brought him to Atlanta. And my mother's family were professional in the military and they were stationed in Atlanta, and that's how they met. So that was my family background on both sides.

Her family was also from South Carolina, so I'm sort of more of a South Carolinian, although I was born in -- first member born in Georgia. But I grew up, went to the county schools in Fulton County in Atlanta, and to Davidson College in North Carolina, and to the Harvard Law School. And I happened to do well enough in school to be invited to come back and be a teaching fellow at Harvard Law School for a year, and then I started practice. And as I mentioned, I went into the firm that became King & Spalding, and through that met a lot of very interesting people. I mentioned Kirbo -- Charlie Kirbo -- but Griffin Bell was, you might say, my first mentor at the Spalding law firm. And through that connection, encountered a number of public and political personalities and exposures.

I think the thing that got me involved in, you might say, political law -- not long after I got there they had this desegregation of the schools in Little Rock. I don't know whether you remember that, but they finally called out the National Guard -- actually, it wasn't the National Guard, it was the 101st Airborne, or some airborne division was sent in there to keep peace in Little Rock.

And I was asked to do some research on the legality of that particular activity, and did. And then later -- this connects up with the 1962 situation. In fact, I think it might be why Charlie Kirbo asked me to get involved, but when they were considering -- the federal courts were considering their reapportionment of the state legislature, I was asked to do a research project on reapportionment law. And I remember saying, "There's a case pending in the Supreme Court of the United States called Reynolds vs. Sims." If they decide that one way, it's going to do away with the County Unit System in Georgia, and of course that's what happened. But I had had that background as a lawyer with these politically oriented cases, which I think got me involved in the Carter case.

But in 1963, I organized my own law firm and was in an independent law practice from that time on. After I left the Senate, I went back to my firm, and I don't like to use the word retirement, but I have backed off of law practice pretty nearly entirely now. And so, that's where it stands. Along the way, as I mentioned, I think this sort of helped put me into more visibility for political purposes, and that was -- I was President of the Atlanta Bar Association. Clayton's son -- Clay, Jr. -- has been -- now a federal judge -- was the President of the Bar Association then, and then the Georgia Bar, and then a number of things in the American bar.

SHORT: Children?

GAMBRELL: We have four children, three girls and one boy, and have five grandchildren.

And they live scattered all the way from North Carolina to California. So we get to see them in

little sprinkles along the way.

SHORT: Any lawyers in the family?

GAMBRELL: No, I guess I'm the last one and I don't see any coming on either. So maybe we'll run out of lawyers.

SHORT: [Laughter] Well, we're going to be forced to take a little break here while they change the film in the cameras. Senator, I hope you don't mind.

GAMBRELL: No, I think it's a good idea!

[Laughter]

[BREAK]

SHORT: If you don't mind, Senator, let's get back to your Washington environs. You were there, realizing that you had to come back home and run for reelection. How did you balance your Senate duties with vote-getting in Georgia?

GAMBRELL: Well, that's a little bit harsh to say, vote-getting. Getting acquainted would be a better description of the way I viewed it, although it certainly had to do with reelection and the voting. I was not going to neglect what I was supposed to do in Washington, but I felt a sense of

urgency about the politics back here, and by politics, I don't mean back room politics. I mean developing a relationship with the voting public that would hopefully work in my favor when the time came. But getting back and forth to Washington -- if you have to do it -- it's not hard, and the weekends were not busy in Washington as far as Senate business was concerned. And I think out of, oh, maybe 60 or 70 weekends from the time I went up until the election, I probably spent all of about maybe five or six in Georgia somewhere, and then of course there would be special occasions during the week, and then the recess periods where I was back here too.

But we worked very hard at making contact with people all over Georgia and trying to develop a comfortable relationship. So, I guess balancing is a good thing. But those was only two things that we did during that period was work the territory back here and tend to the business up there.

**SHORT:** A very strong field of candidates in that election. You had the former Governor and you had others. Now, that brings up the question of campaign financing. How did you manage to raise funds for that race?

**GAMBRELL:** Well, and this is like a lot of other things that you might have asked about or be interested in. It's been 40 years and I'm not sure about the exact answer to a lot of questions, but money raising back then was not as well organized and as professional as it is now. In fact, you might say that it was almost prehistoric compared to what we see now. But I had a campaign finance Chairman and Treasurer, and then people organizationally in different parts of the state and each one of them had the responsibility for raising money. So I'm not sure in what sense

you're asking. We didn't go to lobbying groups and say, "You know, what are you interested in and how much money have you got?"

[Laughter]

GAMBRELL: But we talked to the people who were politically interested and were prepared to give money, and a lot of them were just ordinary citizens who were friends of ours. And that's the way we did it.

And of course, you were involved in the 1966 campaign for Governor Carter. You remember how informal that was and how little money was produced, and that was true again in 1970. I was the campaign Treasurer in both of those campaigns for Governor Carter and we didn't raise what would be interest on, you know, a year's worth of collections on today's campaign. It was very meager and gotten up sort of \$10, \$5, \$25, \$50, \$100 at a time. So that's the best answer unless there's something specific.

SHORT: Well, I was curious to learn how a person, you know, in Washington, managed to run a campaign in Georgia. It was simply that. But --

GAMBRELL: We did it through your supporters and people that were willing to take the time to work on it, particularly in their area, and you had to have somebody in each county or at least Congressional district.

SHORT: Incidentally, the 92nd Congress, I believe, passed a campaign finance statute. Do you remember that?

GAMBRELL: No, there were efforts and have been continuously. It's an ugly thing to me, and apparently the Supreme Court insists on free for all campaign financing as being a free speech issue. But I think it's gotten to the point where politics is polluted. We used to have campaign rallies in places like Young Harris or small places all over the state and people would just come there and you would have a barbecue for them. I mean, you'd give them something. Now, every meeting is a fundraising thing and you know you've got to buy a ticket to go see your Senator or your Congressman. And it's hard to blame them for that because that's the way it's done and they can't -- the newspapers rate people by how much money they have raised or can raise. So that's the environment that they're in, but I think it's -- even if votes are not being bought, so to speak, it's just ridiculous for the campaigns to be based on how much money they can spend. It takes the candidates out of touch with the public to me.

SHORT: I still get them, even though I'm retired over here fishing and playing golf. But nowadays instead of getting them from one candidate, you get them from three and four and five. I don't -- it scares me!

GAMBRELL: [Laughter] Once your name gets on a list, why, you're there forever! I mean, your grandchildren will be getting mail to you for the campaign contributions!

[Laughter]

SHORT: Speaking of that, do you favor public financing of campaigns?

GAMBRELL: Yes, in this sense -- that that's a good alternative to minimize fundraising by the candidates themselves. I know I haven't worked out a plan, but -- and they have that as an option now that you can -- if you agree to certain restrictions on spending and that kind of thing -- that you can participate in public money. So I think if everybody agreed to that it would probably be healthy. Certainly better than what we've got.

SHORT: Before we get away from it entirely, your mentor was one of my heroes, Charlie Kirbo.

GAMBRELL: Okay.

SHORT: And Mr. Charlie was just a favorite person of mine. Tell us a little bit about him -- his personality, his character.

GAMBRELL: Well, I hadn't thought of it before, but just sitting here looking at you, if these people don't know him --

SHORT: [Laughter]

GAMBRELL: -- You would be reminded of Charlie Kirbo by looking at Bob Short and listening to him! But he is quite an interesting guy and unlike anybody important in politics that you can think of, and he got into -- well, let me be sure everybody knows, this was Jimmy Carter's most influential personal advisor throughout his political career. Charlie Kirbo died, I think you know, about ten years ago. So he hasn't been involved in it lately. But he was a lawyer in Bainbridge, Georgia. Cathy Cox probably knew him while she was there, but -- and he comes from an important family down there. I think his father -- maybe grandfather -- had been Clerk of the Court and held offices in there locally. But Charlie became a lawyer before the war, World War II, but went in the service. I think he was into paratrooping during the war, but he was a very quiet, soft spoken, modest, but tough guy who everybody respected, and he was very good as a trial lawyer.

It was interesting the way he got -- happened to become a big city lawyer later. He had been in Bainbridge maybe 15 years and we had a case involving something that he got drawn into. This case had some connection down in Southwest Georgia and some of our senior lawyers got to know Charlie and were very impressed with him. And Griffin Bell was going on the Court of Appeals and they were looking for somebody to fill that gap, and so they invited Charlie Kirbo to join the firm, which he did. And his style and personality was, you might say, out of place in a big city law firm and big business law firm. But they needed a good trial lawyer and he had experience. So that's how he came into it. Of course, he wasn't disinterested in politics, but he would never have gotten involved with any major politics, I don't think, except that this would-

be state Senator down there in Southwest Georgia got -- had the election stolen from him and Kirbo was recommended as his lawyer. And that's where they got to be friends and remained so every since.

So he stayed on. Of course, he -- when Jimmy Carter was elected President, he asked Charlie to come to Washington and be his White House Counsel and so forth. Charlie said, "No, I am not going to Washington. I'll be on the end of the phone if you want to call me, but I'm not getting involved in that." So he was up there. He was up there a good bit, but he was -- he declined to become officially connected with the government and just as a friend, so to speak.

SHORT: Great man. Let me ask you this question, if you had your career in the Senate to go over again, would you have done anything differently?

GAMBRELL: Let me tell you this, it may sound a little bit arrogant, but I felt like everything I did was the best thing I could do at the time and I don't feel badly about anything that I did, any position that I took or stand. I've even said every vote I took -- or to put it another way, I don't remember any vote that I made that I would have voted a different way. So I feel very good about my service in the Senate and a part of it was I got a good response from my fellow members of the Senate, although I was the most junior -- I was number 100 for about 12 months and then somebody died and somebody else came along and got to be 100. In fact, I was number 98 by the time I retired, but I seemed to have a good relationship with even the most senior members of the Senate and I was proud of that.

SHORT: Good. Of course, things have changed since the seventies. Do you think that our political system in this country has become too mean and too aggressive? And if so, what do you think that the average American can do about it?

GAMBRELL: Well, it's interesting to me -- back in the early times that we were talking about -- most Southerners were Democrats and we had a one-party system here. And it used to be said, "Well, gosh, I wish we had a two-party system so there would be some debate and something enriching about political things other than factional swapping around." So I guess my experience suggests that neither way is perfectly satisfactory. What has happened is Southerners were historically connected with the Democratic party and -- but they were more, I'd say, conservative on a lot of issues and sort of rode the middle there in Washington between the traditional Republican party and the -- well, I'll say, emerging Democratic party, and gave a little balance to it and a little bipartisanship certainly in national politics. And so we didn't have the partisanship in national politics that we do now.

The other side of it was, back here at home it was just a mad scramble within the Democratic party of almost every election. I mean, there's nothing going on in national politics that's any meaner or any more partisan or aggressive than what used to happen in the Democratic primary in Georgia. So I would say it's probably going to happen whichever way it's put together and we have to find a way to live with it. There is always the possibility of a third party, but that's very unlikely and so it might be that some rules could be mutually developed between the two parties.

Well, we've seen -- you watch the television and these Democratic-Republican primaries for President and it gets pretty tough there. I saw Obama and Hillary Clinton the other night. They were going at it as tough as anybody ever went! So that's politics and it's interesting. I think the public, certainly the press, has a stake in showmanship of partisan politics. They like to turn it up and make it that way and then everybody denounces it and they go on. So, I'm not sure there's a solution for it.

SHORT: What is your fondest political memory?

GAMBRELL: Well, I wish I had more time to think about that because whatever I said would probably be a mistake in terms of what is my fondest. But I want to say this -- I had a lot of wonderful experiences traveling around the state of Georgia, and Cassie's done this too. And I still have friends out there that I haven't seen in 20 years. But if I happen to stop over in a given place and picked up the phone and called them, they would be just as warm and friendly. So I would say my fondest memory is having the relationship with people all over the state of Georgia that we had then and still have a lot of them now.

SHORT: What's your biggest disappointment?

GAMBRELL: Well, I didn't like losing that election!

[Laughter]

GAMBRELL: But the other side of that is -- and this is whether you call it fond recollection -- I didn't feel bad about what I had done and didn't feel like I lost because I had done something wrong, or that really a lot of fault was found with what I had done. The election, at least from what I heard after it was over, was not as much a criticism of me as it was a lot of infighting among others that caused it to shake out the way that it did. So I was disappointed to lose, but I wasn't disappointed with what I had done. So that's the two sides of that coin.

SHORT: Your greatest accomplishment?

GAMBRELL: Well, that's an interesting point. If you listen to Sam Nunn, you'd have said I hadn't accomplished anything!

[Laughter]

GAMBRELL: But there were some specific things that were done like the Lockheed bill that I -- just happened to fall in my lap there and that was a pretty good accomplishment for a freshman Senator to get that done successfully. But I don't list that, that was just a job that came along that I had an opportunity to do. I think the thing that I was proudest of and it's not just myself, but if you all recall Governor Carter said at his inauguration that the time for racial discrimination under law in Georgia has passed. And he declared an end to that. And to me, that was one of the main things that was important about politics in Georgia at that time. I was not a

crusader on this issue, but I was hoping that we could find a way to get ourselves out of the trap that we were in -- in the South -- of racial discrimination; not only because it was inherently wrong, but because it put us at a tremendous disadvantage with the whole rest of the country and the world.

The South was penalized in people's minds because we had this system here and couldn't shake it. So that was something that Governor Carter declared and put into effect and I had an opportunity to carry forward that spirit in Washington in a number of ways. One of the most interesting things that happened there -- and it didn't get a lot of publicity and didn't necessarily deserve publicity -- but the Equal Employment Opportunity Act came up for amendment while I was there. And the amendments were not grave, but on both sides there was an effort to rehash the whole subject. The Southerners would have liked -- I say the Southerners, not necessarily all of them -- but traditionally we didn't like that bill in the first place, thought people ought to be free to do what they wanted to about hiring. And the liberal end of both parties felt like that was an important step in the civil rights program.

So there was a fight over the amendment and the reenactment of that Bill. The liberal side of it, if you want to call it that, wanted to make it even more oppressive in terms of the remedies that could be applied. And there was a filibuster, which I supported against that type of enforcement.

I was in favor of having it enforced through ordinary litigation procedures, but not to have the government come in and step on some employer because of alleged violation. And a group of us, including Lloyd Bentsen from Texas and Bill Spong from Virginia, and Lawton Chiles from Florida got together and we agreed that we would vote for the Bill and would not filibuster the

Bill if they would withdraw this punitive enforcement plan. So that was implemented, and we did, and the Bill and the other amendments passed, and the Bill was adopted. And the effort to have a further filibuster failed, and that was the first time any substantial group of Southerners had not supported a filibuster against a so-called civil rights bill.

And to me, that was the end of Southern willy-nilly filibusters of civil rights legislation. We -- anything that was punitive, we felt free to filibuster, but anything that was fair, we didn't filibuster anymore. So that was a step along the way toward putting that issue to rest, which I -- and as a result of that, I don't mean that particular thing, but the adoption of that spirit and that coalition of younger Southern Senators and Representatives, we don't have the trouble with filibusters. In fact, what is interesting to me is the filibuster has wound up on the other shoe, more filibusters come from, you might say, the Northern group than comes from the Southern group these days. So I feel like that was a constructive addition to our government's system that I was rather proud to have a part in that.

But that -- I was just trying to think, I mean your question was my proudest accomplishment. I guess my proudest accomplishment was being successful and getting Jimmy Carter elected in 1970. I don't mean that I was the one, but I was one of the ones and you asked about campaign financing. The difference between then and now, I was Treasurer of the campaign and we had collected maybe as much as \$120,000 by the time of the primary. Of course, Carl Sanders was our opponent. He gathered about \$500,000 or \$600,000 and that was the story of his campaign. When the votes were counted in the first primary and we had a runoff there to decide, but Carter was ahead at that time and it was sort of obvious we had the momentum. We had a headquarters

meeting that Sunday after the Tuesday of the election in a motel in Atlanta, and I got down there and there was a line from the fourth or fifth floor down the hall waiting to get on the elevator out in the street beside the motel of people wanting to give a campaign contribution. We had collected almost as much money in that one day as we had in the whole campaign! There's nothing like being a winner or about to be a winner to help you. In fact, the guy that has no opposition can collect more money than the guy that's running. That is a serious weakness in the system there. And I got this money together, I never will forget it. When people ask what has Rosalyn Carter got to do with Jimmy Carter's business, I got this money, most of it in cash and put it in a satchel, and we got on a plane and Jimmy said, "Give that satchel to Rosalyn when you get to Plains. So we flew this money on Sunday evening and turned it over to Rosalyn Carter, who was the Treasurer of the campaign.

[Laughter]

GAMBRELL: But they had advanced a lot of money to the campaign and so that, I hope, was used to pay that off. But that is sort of the way it worked in those days -- very hit or miss, and best you can do type of campaigning. But I was very pleased that we were able to win that and certainly think that Senator, Governor, President Carter has been a wonderful, positive influence not only in politics, but government and in, as I said, the afterlife as a past President. So that's a proud thing in my book.

SHORT: What role did you and Mr. Kirbo play in '76?

GAMBRELL: Well, Kirbo was at all times a very close consultant in the sense that Jimmy Carter turned to him, and this was true in Washington and after he left Washington, for almost anything personal, political, or otherwise. So he was very influential -- not in political strategy so to speak, but just things that bother the candidate. I was not too active in '76. My experience in politics took me out of the law practice seriously for years, and I had sort of resolved that I was going to try to put my business back together. But the other thing was, Jimmy Carter was going to carry Georgia and so what he had to do was to reach out. I put him in touch with some people in different parts of the country that I knew and some of the members of the Senate that I had gotten acquainted with to try to encourage them.

But he -- as was true here in Georgia -- his Presidential campaign was very much a grassroots thing. He didn't go to a big political figure in a state and say, "Would you carry this state for me?" He went down on the street level, shaking hands with people, going to meetings, you know, rotary club or whatever it might be and making personal contact with people. So that was a job that he had to do through contacts that he could make on the ground in different places, and that's how he did that. So I didn't have a big part in it. Luck was in the Peanut Brigade, went to several states and that was -- I mean, there is a limited the number of people you can contact personally in the national -- but that Peanut Brigade made it possible for him to reach ordinary people at street level through some people that they would recognize, non-political people, and it generated a lot of enthusiasm that helped him win the first few primaries and gain some momentum himself to get the nomination and then the election.

SHORT: Finally, Senator, this question, how would you like to be remembered?

GAMBRELL: Well, it'd be interesting if I am remembered!

[Laughter]

GAMBRELL: My career was so short, but there are some people in the family and otherwise, maybe a few out in the public. I would like to be remembered as somebody who did what he had the opportunity to do. I've been remarkably blessed in the things that have come in front of me, and I haven't talked about my law practice career, but I just had an unusual, fortunate experience in what came to my table there as well as in the politics that we've talked about. But that I did what I had a chance to do, and of course we are talking about public business, affairs, and things of that kind. I hope I'm remembered well within my family, children, grandchildren, and so forth. But I did -- have had remarkably fortunate opportunities come to me and I have tried to do my best with them, and I hope I'm remembered for having done a pretty good job and doing my best.

SHORT: I think you'll be well remembered.

GAMBRELL: Well, thank you, Bob.

SHORT: Now, questions. Any questions of Senator Gambrell?

GAMBRELL: Yes ma'am?

FEMALE AUDIENCE: I would like to hear more about Griffin Bell.

GAMBRELL: Griffin Bell, do you know him yourself?

FEMALE AUDIENCE: No, I don't.

GAMBRELL: Well, the reason -- I was just curious to know because he is one of the finest, most able people that I have ever been thrown with. I consider myself very fortunate.

Incidentally, we found along the way that he and Luck are cousins, about third or fourth, or something like that. So -- and incidentally, I found out about 10 or 15 years after I got out of politics that Jimmy Carter and I are cousins, about seventh or eighth cousins. But we found we had a common ancestor! But no, Griffin Bell -- just a little background -- grew up in Americus, Georgia and he, I don't think, had expected to be a lawyer. Modest circumstances. But went to South Georgia Southwestern College before the war and went in the service, and was in the army for about five years during the war as a supply officer. I think he got into that because he had been working as a shirt salesman before the war, then he thought -- anyway.

But he went to Mercer and finished college and law school after the war, and was recognized, I

think, right away as being a person with a lot of ability and leadership. And within five or six years, I met him in 1952 or '53 in Atlanta. From 1948 until '53, five years, he went to one of the first, one of the best firms in Savannah and practiced. And then he was invited to become a partner in a prominent firm in Rome and was there several years. And then somebody at the Spalding Law Firm in Atlanta noticed him in some way, and so he was invited to go down there. So by 1953, he had moved through these short steps from law school to a leading law firm in Atlanta. Again, just recognized for natural leadership qualities.

He -- in politics, he was Governor Vandiver's Chief of Staff when he was Governor between 1958 and '62, and right in the middle of that the -- was Kennedy's -- Jack Kennedy's election as President. And he was asked to be the Georgia campaign manager for the Kennedy campaign and they carried Georgia by the largest majority of any candidate in the -- that ever ran in Georgia, and throughout the United States in the election with Nixon.

So he gathered some more recognition and a year or two after that there came a vacancy on the U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit, and Kennedy appointed him to that. He stayed there from about '62 or '63 until about '77. And my own connection with him, as I mentioned, I went to work at the Spalding firm in about 1955 and Griffin Bell was one of the sort of middle-aged litigation partners, and I was assigned to work with him, and we got to be good friends at that time. But he left the firm four or five years later to go on the bench. But anyway, he came back to the Spalding firm and pretty soon became the managing partner there and carried that out over a number of years. It was an interesting story that sort of describes him. I read in the paper that one of the other partners that was a contemporary of mine was the managing partner down there.

And I talked to him on the phone and I said, "I thought Griffin Bell was the managing partner."

And he said, "No," he said. "Griffin is not the managing partner." He said, "He's just the one who says who is going to be managing partner."

[Laughter]

GAMBRELL: So that shows you what his influence and standing was there in that firm. But he's a very fine person. He's a strong leader and a good friend to have -- loyal and good instincts, and made a good judge when he was judge. I don't know whether that answers the question, but that's my experience. Yes, sir?

MALE AUDIENCE: If I'm correct about the timeline, you were in Washington during the Watergate proceedings? And -- or did you miss that?

GAMBRELL: Was I in Washington during Watergate?

MALE AUDIENCE: Were you in Washington during Watergate?

GAMBRELL: Well, the answer to that is yes, but I'm not implicated in that.

[Laughter]

MALE AUDIENCE: I was wondering about any recollections you might have?

GAMBRELL: Well, what's interesting about that -- that event, the Watergate robbery, or burglary, or whatever they call it, took place in the summer of 1972 and I was serving in the Senate at that time, but the campaign was going on here in Georgia so I was not there. And, of course, it didn't come out as to what had happened until -- in the fall. So I was disconnected with what went on with that, and, of course, I lost the election and didn't go back and all the aftermath of that came up after I was gone. So in a sense of being there when it happened, the burglary -- yes. But I was gone when the investigations, and the committees, and all that took place. So I don't have any firsthand knowledge.

Senator Ervin, of course, was Chairman of that committee when it was investigated and he was a very good personal friend of mine, and Clay Scofield, you may remember his son, Sam Jr., was in school with us at Davidson College. So I had met, in fact the year I was President of the Atlanta Bar, we had Senator Ervin down here to speak. And so he was one of the ones that I knew before I got there. But I was going to say, I didn't have anything to do with that aftermath of the Watergate.

SHORT: Yes Cathy?

CATHY COX: What were your impressions of President Nixon?

GAMBRELL: Well, I don't know whether you're asking that in the personal sense. I met him a

couple of times and, you know, he was not a warm personality, but he worked at it very hard.

You know, I remember, actually, the first time I encountered him in person. They had a breakfast at the White House. And I was over there, and he was going around speaking to everybody and I was introduced as Senator Gambrell, and he said, "Oh, yeah, you're the new Senator from Georgia." I mean, he had it right on the tip of his tongue as to who I was although we had never met.

But I think my feeling is about what normal understanding is -- he was a capable person and had, in some sense, very good political instincts, but he had no personal charm and didn't have a lot of people who were intensely loyal to him. I think he also felt -- I don't know whether you'd call it an inferiority complex, but he felt like the world was down on him and he reacted to that a lot.

But on the other hand, when he got out from under pressure there in Washington, he, like Jimmy Carter, turned out to be a pretty good ex-President in the sense of contributing to important things that he was doing. So I'm probably not as hard on him as a lot of people would be, but he did have some shortcomings, yeah.

I don't think he personally ordered the Watergate burglary. The tapes show that he was startled when it was brought out -- that that had taken place -- but his choice of people around him was what brought him down. And particularly as a lawyer I felt this very strongly, I think his Attorney General was very weak in terms of ethics and morality, and put up with a lot more than he should have. And that was, in a sense, not disloyalty but a disservice to the President not to hold up his end of the bargain.

Any others? Is that another one?

COX: What factors do you think contributed from the change in the Democratic controlled South to a Republican controlled South?

GAMBRELL: What factors led to that or what has it been a cause of?

FEMALE AUDIENCE: What do you think led to the change?

GAMBRELL: Well, I mentioned earlier I think a lot of Southern Democrats, including myself, are uncomfortable with a lot of the mix, so to speak, in the new Democratic Party. And over time, people peeled off and are still peeling off to an environment that they feel more comfortable with, and the same -- and that -- I don't give that much credit to the leaders, so to speak. I think that was a reflection of what they felt was going on underneath them. You know, why are you putting up with this and why are you doing that. And so, the Southerners, I think, are instinctively more conservative on a lot of issues, and I don't mean the race question -- certainly not that by itself -- and have felt more comfortable with Republican platforms and stands and things of that kind. And so, as the public peeled off, the party leaders peeled off to and it led to that change.

Yes?

MALE AUDIENCE: If you were to run for office today, could I ask which party you would

connect yourself with?

GAMBRELL: Well, I call myself an independent now.

[Laughter]

GAMBRELL: That leaves me free to vote my conscience, so to speak, and I have over the years been friends with members of -- I mean, office holders of both parties. I'm not happy with everything that the Republican Party does and I think if I were to run in that party, I would probably differ with a number of things that they have. But I guess I would say if I had to run for office in one or the other, I would probably run as a Republican.

Yes?

MALE AUDIENCE: This may be a little unfair, but if you had the ability or authority to appoint the next President of the United States, disregarding whose running for it, who would you pick?

GAMBRELL: Well, that -- I'm not sure I could say. I'm not an idealist about who I want for President. One thing is he or she would have to want to be President. I wouldn't pick somebody because I thought they were a good person, regardless of whether they wanted to be. The only ones I know who want to be right now are the ones that are running. So if I had to choose among them -- but it would probably be one of the Republicans rather than one of the Democrats. Is that enough?

MALE AUDIENCE: You're off the hook!

[Laughter]

GAMBRELL: That's a good political answer, isn't it?

MALE AUDIENCE: Well, let me ask you one more question. Sam Nunn is the one that took the seat after you left, is that correct?

GAMBRELL: You know, I'm probably biased on that subject because Sam and I were -- he's the one that was elected in my place, and -- but I would say this, he was the second best guy in that race.

[Laughter]

GAMBRELL: So I'm not -- I'm not down on him. We were friends before that election. I don't think that he demonstrated a principled leadership in his period in Washington -- and I don't mean he was unprincipled. But he had not, and right now has not announced what he would stand for if he was going to be President. That's pure guesswork.

MALE AUDIENCE: They didn't have him in mind.

GAMBRELL: But I'm just saying in -- you mentioned his name. That would not be one that occurs to me right off the bat even though his name has been bandied around. I don't know, for instance, the Mayor of New York, but I think that's -- I think that's -- I think the group that met out there in Texas are just dreamers. I mean, people, particularly ex-politicians, enjoy standing back and, you know, throwing barbs at the ones that are doing it. But you've got to do it within the system and they're the only ones that are going to be considered are the ones that are nominated.

So, Governor -- I think his name's Boren out there -- was a very fine Senator, might make a good President, but I don't think he can do it sitting there in Norman, Oklahoma thinking great thoughts -- great thoughts so to speak. You've got to develop -- and this is true -- Senator, Congressman, Secretary of State, whatever -- you've got to develop a personal relationship with the electorate in order to govern effectively. So just being a good person with good thoughts and moderate disposition doesn't necessarily make you good President. So, that's the reason I say you've got to want to do it and you've got to be willing to put up with the arduous circumstances of being elected.

All right.

[Applause]

SHORT: Thank you very much, Senator. It's been a pleasure having you.

GAMBRELL: Oh no, I enjoyed it! Thank you.

[END OF RECORDING]