

Bill Stuckey interviewed by Bob Short
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Bill Stuckey

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BOB SHORT: I'm Bob Short, and this is "Reflections on Georgia Politics," sponsored by the Richard B. Russell Library at the University of Georgia. Our guest is Bill Stuckey, former five-term Congressman from Georgia's 8th District, and chairman of the Board of Stuckey's, Inc., which is a nationwide convenience chain founded by his father. Welcome to our program, Mr. Congressman. As you know, our series of oral histories are designed to preserve the experiences and recollections of famous Georgians for future generations. It's a pleasure to have you with us.

BILL STUCKEY: Thank you, Bob. It's great to be back together again. You and I go back a lot of years, and I want you to know how much I value and appreciate that friendship. It means a lot to me.

SHORT: Well, thank you. Thank you. Well, we're anxious to hear from you about your experiences, both in Congress and in business. And I remember that it all began in Eastman, Georgia, with your mother's recipe for pecan candy, and your father's persistence as a salesman.

STUCKEY: Well, I know he was a good salesman, but Bob, to be quite honest about it, she never shared the recipe with me for the nougats or the log rolls, so I have no idea. We have a recipe, but I couldn't make it, myself. But, it's interesting how everything first got started. My father actually was at the University of Georgia, and the Depression hit, and he went back home. He was farming; he was living with his grandmother and plowing. And he figured there was a

better way to make a living, other than plowing behind a mule. So, he went down to the guy that owned the local feed and seed store, and asked him did he have a job, and he said, "Well, I don't have a job, but I buy and sell pecans. If you'll go out and buy the pecans, I'll buy them from you." And my father knew nothing about pecans, so Mr. Bennett, the owner of the feed store put the different varieties of pecans in little brown bags, marked the name of them, and how much he would pay him for them. So, my father would go out to the farmers, and whatever pecans they had, he would match it up to what was in the bag, and you know, pay them less than what he could get for them, and take them back, and he did very well then.

He ended up buying and selling pecans himself. And then he got the idea of going out on the highway, Highway 23, putting up a little stand with pecans on there, and people started stopping and buying pecans. And then my mother got the idea, "Well, if they're buying pecans, why not make some pralines and fudge, divinity and log rolls?" So, it all sort of started from there. And it grew to where we were in 44 states.

SHORT: You grew up in Eastman?

STUCKEY: I grew up in Eastman. A lot of people say, "Where in the devil is Eastman?" And my aunt says, "You can't get there, you have to be born there." So, it's about 55 miles south of Macon, the beginning of south Georgia, middle Georgia.

SHORT: You attended Georgia Military Academy also, in Atlanta -- College Park.

STUCKEY: Yes. College Park. 1948. And I graduated from GMA and came to the University of Georgia, and went to business school and law school, and got out and went into business with my father.

SHORT: What was your job with your father's enterprise?

STUCKEY: When I first got there, I spent most of my time in the marketing and development of stores. Then after that, my father never really wanted to go beyond the Mississippi River -- go west, and I think the reason why was because of transportation costs. And I put together some friends, and we raised some money, and we developed the Stuckey stores west of the Mississippi. And years later, my father merged the parent company with what then was Pet Milk, and they made an offer to my group, and we merged our group with them, and then we became part of Pet Milk. But I spent a lot of my years right out of college working in Arizona and New Mexico, some in California, developing the stores in that area.

SHORT: How did you get interested in politics?

STUCKEY: I had merged the companies and didn't have anything to do. No. I mean, Bob, you can't grow up in middle Georgia -- south Georgia -- what? -- 15 miles from where Gene Talmadge was born and raised in McRae, Georgia. Politics is a way of life. I don't know if you

recall, but the whole 8th District always had the nickname, “The Bloody 8th.” And politics is still a way of life in that area. So it was, I think, a pretty natural thing. But my grandfather had been the county sheriff, and my father had been in the State House of Representatives. So, it was not unusual to have politics in the family.

SHORT: A family thing.

STUCKEY: Well I failed to mention, I also had an uncle who was sheriff at the time. And my daughter is now in politics.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

STUCKEY: So, it was a bit of a family thing. But a lot of it had to do with the area that you grew up in. It’s a way of life.

SHORT: How do you define your political philosophy?

STUCKEY: Well, Bob, the era I came up in was, in all honesty, I think a little -- a little different from what it is today. Everything today is so polarized. The Democratic Party is so polarized with the far left, and the Republican Party is so polarized with the far right. And I really grew up a middle of the road conservative, moderate -- whatever you want to call it -- Democrat. I grew

up a young man when Franklin Roosevelt was president. And you know, growing up then, Franklin Roosevelt was God. You know, we believed -- really I'd say moderate to middle of the road, that we always believed in the free enterprise system -- that's been nice to me, but I also believed that government had a place, and government had a responsibility. And you know, being a Democrat in that era was, I felt, very comfortable -- being a moderate Democrat. The problem is now we don't have any Democrats in Georgia. Everybody has become a Republican now.

But you know, another interesting thing about how the times have changed. I know when I first went to Congress you could argue on different issues, different bills, and at the end of the day everybody would go out and have a drink together, and you know, sit down, and there was not -- frankly, the animosity that you see today. And I mean it's you know -- people, at the end of the day, put their politics aside, and they were able to get along as friends. And we don't see that anymore today, that day is gone.

SHORT: You first ran for Congress in 1966, facing an incumbent Democrat, and defeating him, and also having a Republican opponent, who later became a United States Senator. What do you remember about that campaign?

STUCKEY: It was hot. It was hot. Maybe the hottest summer we ever had. Well, I think the thing I really remember was that nobody bothered to tell me that only 4% of incumbents ever get defeated, so I remember how stupid I was to run against an incumbent. But I was very fortunate.

I had some very good personnel, very good staff. And we did a lot of innovative things in politics that had never been done. We utilized a lot of advertising, sent out personal letters to all of the registered voters. But I think my early -- and still my philosophy was sort of Lyndon Johnson's, and that is the person who presses the most flesh, the most hands, wins the election. And I spent most of the summer walking around from every little town, every little village and community, knocking on doors, going from street corner to street corner, house to house. We even bought an old bus and put a platform on it, and put a speaker on there. Got a 12-string guitar. I grew up and went to the Episcopal church, so we didn't know too many of the old fashioned hymnals, so I learned a few "Rock of Ages," and "A Closer Walk With Thee," and a few other songs, and we'd stop in all these little communities and get a little crowd together and shake hands and we passed out a lot of pencils. But it was a lot of fun.

SHORT: Speaking of "The Bloody 8th," it was a mostly rural district that depended upon agriculture, and I guess forestry, as the economy. Such a big district is, I guess, awful hard to cover. You mentioned that you went by bus, and did a lot of hand-shaking. What was the tenor of that district at that time?

STUCKEY: Well politically it was -- I mean, it was extremely conservative. But at the same time, you have to remember -- there again, I felt like I was pretty much in sync with the district. They had voted for Franklin Roosevelt, they voted for Truman, they voted for Stevenson, they voted for Kennedy. Lyndon Johnson came along, and sort of shook things up quite a bit. It was

basically a moderate district, and to be honest, the 8th District has done very well because of government programs – let's don't kid ourselves. We were very dependent upon Warner Robbins Air Force Base, we had Glen Cove down in Brunswick, we had Moody Air Force Base at Valdosta, and agriculture was very big, and still is. We're in the timber business. We've got over 40,000 acres of timber in South Georgia now. And so, you know, commodities, rural agriculture, that was the district back then.

SHORT: Well, you were elected and go to Washington. What was on your mind at the time? What were your goals when you arrived in Washington?

STUCKEY: I was going to change the world. I was going to save the wrongs of the world and right them, see the hungry and feed them, see the oppressed and lift the yoke of oppression from their neck, and I found out a freshman Congressman doesn't have a whole heck of a lot of influence, except when the dean of your delegation tells you how to vote, you'd better listen to him, and particularly the Speaker of the House. So yeah, that first year was a learning experience, it really was.

SHORT: Well, the Democrats were in control of the Congress --

STUCKEY: Oh, yeah.

SHORT: -- at the time, and that meant, I assume, fairly good committee appointments.

STUCYKEY: I was very fortunate. I wanted to be on the interstate and foreign commerce committee, and I was very fortunate in getting on that committee. And I was very fortunate in getting on the Finance Subcommittee. It always made it easier to be on that committee when campaign time came and you needed campaign contributions. One of my opponents one time drew a big map of New York City, and it had a little square around it, and he said, "Why do 95% of our Congressman's contributions come from five blocks consisting of all of Wall Street?" But it did make campaigning easy.

SHORT: Well, let's talk for a minute about campaign financing. What is your opinion of the cost of political campaigns nowadays, and do you favor public financing?

STUCKEY: I've changed completely, Bob. Campaign spending is totally out of control. Probably out of control when I ran, and I'd be the first to admit I spent too much. We didn't have TV stations then. We had to go out of the district and buy space, and, you know, that lapped over. But I've come to believe that the system that the English use makes more sense. The campaign is a very short campaign. There is public financing, and you get some crazy folks running, but, you know, they don't go anywhere. And I've come to the conclusion that we're better off with limited public financing and a very short period of time to run the campaigns. We've been going now for over a year. This is crazy. The public's tired of it, and frankly, I'm

not happy with the process of electing or selecting our candidates to run for president. We've really lost something. Everybody laughs about the smoke-filled rooms and all. I'm not so sure that we didn't have better candidates running for president then than we do now.

SHORT: We've been in a few of those smoke-filled rooms, haven't we?

STUCKEY: Yeah. And, you know, what people don't realize -- I was talking to a group of students, and I was talking about the way that you gained bargaining power was that you would always nominate your governor or your senator as your favorite son when the vote came around for president. Where you would end up, as you well know, is four or five different states with their favorite son, and then everybody would go back to the smoke-filled room, with moderation prevailing, saying, "Okay, who's the best candidate?" And, you know, you ended up with probably the better candidate to serve the people than what we are going through now, with the caucuses and the beauty contests that run the election. I'm not so sure that that process wasn't better.

SHORT: So, you go from Eastman to Washington. How did you adjust to Washington life? It's different.

STUCKEY: Well, it's a lot different than Eastman, Georgia. But, one thing you've got to remember is that I had a good education at Georgia, so that -- seriously, that prepared me very

well. And going to high school in Atlanta, so the big city didn't overwhelm me. But you're overwhelmed as a young person, and you see some of the great leaders that are there. And I remember, talking about when I first went there, I came home one night, and I was telling my wife. I said, "You know," and I looked around, and there were people like George Mahan, Chairman of the Finance Committee back then, and the House Ways and Means, and you had people like Sam Rayburn, and you had people, of course, different department heads. And I went back home one night, and I was telling my wife, I said, "You know, look at all these people," and I started naming them, like the Sam Rayburn. And I said, "Do you know how many truly, truly great leaders we've got in Washington?" And she said, "No, I don't know the exact number, but I know it's one less than what you think it is." So, Washington could be a very humbling experience. But you met a lot of great leaders, and I tried to learn a little bit from it.

SHORT: Yeah. Social life was really built around the government.

STUCKEY: That's an interesting question. A lot of people back then -- Congress was not year-round. And a lot of Congressmen -- their families stayed back home. So everything was pretty much built around politics. My wife, early on, made it a point of getting involved in the community. I mean she, you know, went with the pink ladies, the Junior League, and made it a point. So in a sense we did have two social lives. An interesting thing is when Congress is in session, you pretty much have two or three receptions every night. You know? You've got either somebody from transportation, or the industrial world, airlines, soft drinks, and there are

two or three receptions, and you just go from one reception to another. And you either learn how to be able to consume a whole lot of alcohol, or probably end up in rehab. But you're absolutely right, there is a big social life, and it revolves around politics, and that's the way you raise money.

SHORT: Tell us, Mr. Congressman, if you will, and if you recall, what is the first thing you did when you arrived in Congress? Did you report to the Speaker, or did you go to your office? What happens?

STUCKEY: Well, the first thing I remember, well, first off, when you get to Congress, you have no seniority, and back then seniority determined everything. So, I was on the bottom of the totem pole on getting an office. But, the first thing I remember, and I have to tell you, it was a moment that I don't want to go through again, and an interesting part of our history. But Adam Clayton Powell, a black member from Harlem, was called before the full House, and of course, the first vote is you vote for who is Speaker. The second vote we had was whether to seat Adam Clayton Powell, or to kick him out. And my district at that time was about 35%, 36%, 37% minorities, and of course, they didn't want Adam Clayton Powell thrown out, but as it was, he was thrown out, and the Supreme Court said, "You know, people from Harlem can elect whoever they want to, and he went back, ran again, and got elected again." That was an interesting case, and I think the Supreme Court ruled correctly. You know, if, like being from Louisiana, you want to elect – and I'm not trying to put down Louisiana, but it comes to mind, because I think,

well, their history would bear this out. If they want to elect Ed Edwards, or Jefferson, you know, that's up to them. I do think Ed Edwards had the best campaign slogan of all, though. He had bumper stickers, and everything, when he was running against David Duke, and he had been convicted of, I think, misuse of funds or something. He was running for governor, for reelection, and his campaign slogan was "Reelect the Crook. It's Important." And I thought, "You know, only ..." Georgia politics is a lot of fun, but we don't quite match up with that.

SHORT: Our delegation at the time was fairly strong in seniority.

STUCKEY: Absolutely. It made the South. You go back when we had Richard Russell, Chairman of the Appropriations -- House Armed Services Committee -- Appropriations Committee, then you had Senator Talmadge, Chairman of the Finance Committee, then you've taken the House, and Phil Landrum was on the Ways and Means Committee. We were in very, very good shape. And we had a good cross-section representative of the committees. But, that's another thing that the Democrats have changed. When I first went to Congress, you didn't just say, "I want to be on Agriculture," or "I want to be on Ways and Means." Back then, the Democratic members of Ways and Means made up the committee, and it was called "The Committee on Committees," that determined what committee you got on. So, you had to go with the dean of your delegation to the person who represented your part of the country. If you didn't get his approval, you didn't get your choice of committees.

SHORT: Who was our dean then? Was it ...

STUCKEY: Phil Landrum.

SHORT: Phil Landrum?

STUCKEY: Uh-huh. And I remember very well John Watts of Kentucky was our regional person on Ways and Means. He was the senior person.

SHORT: How do you look for friends? I read where some survey showed that most Congressmen tend to seek out friends in their business. In other words, bankers look for bankers. Farmers look for farmers. Lawyers look for lawyers. And yet, one Congressman once said that all the friends he ever made weren't that, they were his workout partners in the gym.

STUCKEY: There's a lot of truth in that. All the people that you serve on subcommittees with, or committees -- two of my best friends, one was from Michigan, and one was from the State of Maine.

SHORT: Peter Kyros.

STUCKEY: -- One was from Illinois. Peter Kyros. Good for you.

SHORT: I remember Peter Kyros.

STUCKEY: Yeah.

SHORT: Nick Galifianakis.

STUCKEY: Nick Galifianakis from North Carolina. We were talking earlier about campaign buttons, and you might remember his campaign buttons. Most people were, like -- we had, a "Stuckey" button. Well, that's all that was on there. Well, you couldn't put Nick Galifianakis on one button. So, Nick had two buttons, and the first button had "Elect," and the second button had "Nick," and the first one had "Gali," and the second one "fianakis." So, all of his supporters would go around with two buttons, "Elect Nick Galifianakis." And he ran for the Senate and was defeated. Last I heard, he was teaching constitutional law at, I think, the University of North Carolina. Or, I think he was teaching at Duke University.

SHORT: I remember those fellows from being in your office, and playing darts.

STUCKEY: Oh, yeah. Well, I'll tell you an interesting thing. Somebody on the floor had a piano, and every now and then we would roll it in, and Shirley Chisholm of New York would come in and play, and she had, really, a professional voice. She was a very talented young lady,

and we'd just all sit around, Democrat and Republican, you know, and just have the time of our lives.

SHORT: Let's talk now, Bill, if you will, about your work on your committees. You were on the Agriculture Committee, the District of Columbia Committee, and the one that you wanted most, you said, the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee. And, you were chairman of a subcommittee on Commerce, Housing, and Transportation. Tell us a little bit about your service on those committees, and what you tried to accomplish.

STUCKEY: Well, I'll be rather short on it, because, the subcommittee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, we had jurisdiction over the securities industry. And I think the thing I'm most proud of and look back on is we created what is what is called NASDAQ, and our title for it was the National Market System. And what it was a system of trading securities that was not quite as stringent in regulations as the New York Stock Exchange had. Also, it was a little different than the fixed rate structure that the New York Stock Exchange created. I was a co-author of what now is NASDAQ, and when I got out of the, when I retired from Congress, I went on the NASDAQ Board of Governors and I really enjoyed that. The committee that I would never recommend for anyone, but I didn't have much choice in was the District of Columbia Committee. When I first went to Congress, the District didn't govern itself. There was no home rule, it was run by a committee of Congress. And I was stuck on that committee, and I won't go into the different ... but it's interesting. We were, at that time, constructing a subway system.

And one of my duties as chairman of the subcommittee, I think, was to make sure that Royal Corporation in Winder, Georgia, built the cars that we used for the subway. So, that was part of it. But the other things that I really enjoyed and am proud of -- the other was putting Cumberland Island under the National Seashore. And also, getting Okefenokee put under the Wilderness Act and protecting them. But, as you well know, most of the work of Congress is done in the subcommittees.

SHORT: Right.

STUCKEY: And, you know, you spend most of your time in the subcommittee, and then a little bit less with the full committee, and there is no way that you can know every bill that goes before every committee, and that's why you'd better have a good staff. You can pretty well judge whether the person is going to be a good Congressman, a good Senator, or not, by the capability of their staff.

SHORT: Particularly your constituent services people.

STUCKEY: Oh, yeah. You know, I'll never forget, someone asked Bob Stevens what was the first responsibility of a member of Congress, and he said "To make sure he gets reelected," and the way you get reelected is to give the best constituent service.

SHORT: In that regard, you were at the top of your game there. You ran, you served five terms, and as I recall, you never had serious opposition after your first term.

STUCKEY: Yes, I was very fortunate. But, you know, we really went out of our way. We did a couple of things that they've since stopped, and I think one of them was because of us -- of my office. But you know, the franking privilege allows you to mail anything out free. So, I remembered years ago that Gene Talmadge and Roy Harris had put out a paper called "The Statesman," I think.

SHORT: Right.

STUCKEY: And it went all over the state. So, I came up with the idea of, you know, why don't I put out a paper? And the name of it was "8th District Progress." And, of course, you know, every high school group that had their picture made on the front steps of the capitol got into the "8th District Progress." And, you know, we would put recipes in there, and this was mailed out, free, to every household in the 8th District. Well, you know, it's kind of hard to get defeated when you get a free mailing to everybody. And so, finally, they said, "You know, this might not quite be right." They said, you know, it has to be official business. Well, that didn't give us a problem. We went and read the whole letter every month into the Congressional Record, and then it became official business, and then we franked it out and sent it to everyone. And since then, they have, I'm not sure how they went about it, but mass mailings under the franking

privilege, like that, I don't think they're doing that anymore. But, that was, I mean, we did a lot of things. If you had a Social Security case, or what have you, you know, we would follow it all the way through. We had, we must have had four, five or six people, just doing nothing but working on Social Security.

SHORT: Write your Congressman.

STUCKEY: Of course, now they e-mail.

SHORT: Yeah, e-mail your Congressman. Well, you began your career as a Congressman at a time when the country was in pretty much upheaval ...

STUCKEY: Oh!

SHORT: Over several things, the Vietnam War.

STUCKEY: Bob, if I had to go back and pick out, and you had to put a ten-year period together, I don't think you would find, even going back to the War Between the States, a more disrupted time. You had the Vietnam War going on, you had the Martin Luther King assassination, you had the Bobby Kennedy assassination, you had the burning of Washington. I'll never forget looking out my office window and seeing Washington burning. I'll tell you nothing, like that,

will break your heart. You had Watergate. You had Gerry Ford pardoning Nixon, and by the way, I think that was one of the real profiles in courage. He should have, you know, I think he did the right thing, it cost him the election, but he should have done it. But, you had John Mitchell and the Watergate. You had the Watergate hearings. You had, just -- well, and then you had the depression of 1974, we had gas lines, Nixon took us off the gold standard. You know, go back and name a ten-year period that was less turbulent than that, and I'm not that there was one in our history, it was a mess.

SHORT: And you had the aftermath of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that ...

STUCKEY: Yeah, and the big march on Washington.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

STUCKEY: It was just, like I say, one thing right after another.

SHORT: How did you cope with that?

STUCKEY: I figured five terms, it was time to retire. And not only that, you know, a lot of people think Congressmen make a lot of money and all. Fortunately, having merged a company, I had some independent funds, but when I came to Congress, my salary was \$26,500 per year.

My wife can run through that in a very short period of time. But, if you're having to maintain two homes, and all -- it's hard to do. But I wouldn't take anything in the world for it. I loved it. It's the greatest honor in the world.

You know, people ask me the question, do I miss Congress? I don't miss the day-to-day grind, I don't miss the raising money all the time, but I'll tell you what I do miss, I miss the camaraderie, which we talked about earlier. The camaraderie, which I'm not so sure -- it might not still be there now. I think that might have left about the time I left. And, I miss seeing a lot of my constituents. As you, you know, Bob, if you went back, just in your life, and I think this is true of most of us in politics. What was the greatest satisfaction you got, and it would have to be the friendships that we all made. And these are friendships that are lasting now. I looked at you, and my God, we go back, I don't even want anybody to know how old we are, and then I look around and you and my daughter, who is in the State Legislature, have your own friendship. But this is the part I think we all miss when we get out of politics.

SHORT: Speaking of your daughter, she's in the State House of Representatives, and does a magnificent job.

STUCKEY: Thank you.

SHORT: Everybody thinks she's a wonderful member, and she is.

STUCKEY: Thank you.

SHORT: Are there any other politicians in the Stuckey family?

STUCKEY: I hope not. Well, she's a good lawyer too, and a good mother, let me throw that in. But no, she loves her politics. She represents the Atlanta area, around Emory University and all, and she is right in her element. She is not happy that the Democrats aren't in control of the legislature, but she loves her politics. Thank you for asking.

SHORT: Going back to the turmoil of the 60's, what was Congress like during the Vietnam War?

STUCKEY: Bob, I think that really was the beginning of the division between the parties. You know, you and I grew up and we always said, "The Democratic Party is one big umbrella, and it's big enough for all different philosophies." And I think the war did change that. It polarized the Democratic Party. And I think it left some wounds that still aren't done -- I mean, still haven't healed.

SHORT: Were you at the 1968 convention, the Democratic convention?

STUCKEY: There is no way you could have gotten me to the 1968 -- I might look dumb, but I

am not totally stupid. I went to the 1960 convention, which was a very interesting one, in L.A. when John Kennedy was nominated. But I had better sense than to go to the 19 -- I would imagine you were at the '68 convention, though.

SHORT: I was there, I was there.

STUCKEY: No, there was no way I was going to get caught up in all that.

SHORT: It was something to behold. I don't think that this country will ever go through another convention like that.

STUCKEY: I hope not.

SHORT: I hope not, also. Which also brings up the question that I wanted to ask you about war. The Vietnam War was very unpopular with the people. Our present war in Iraq is very unpopular with the people. It seems that the only time that we, as a country, unite behind our political leadership during a war is when the war is provoked, like Pearl Harbor or World War I. Do you have any thoughts on that?

STUCKEY: I think the big difference -- like say, World War II, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan -- there was less communication than we have today. People get their

information instantly. You have all the bloggers out there. You have -- anyone that has a computer, they've got an outlet for their thoughts. And so, you've got people who are -- there are more facts that are thrown out there. There are more opinions. People are thinking more. Growing up in the 30's and 40's, I think that we didn't get all the instant information. The only thing that we really had was the news that came on during the weekend. If you remember, they had the little news strip at the theater and we all went to the theater on Saturday -- it cost nine cents to get in -- and then we had Roosevelt's Fireside Chats that everybody listened to on the radio. And that was really about all the news that we got back then.

But I think sometimes we rush to judgment too fast. If you recall, the big theory in Southeast Asia was the domino theory -- if Vietnam fell, everything was going to fall. My God, we could have saved a lot of trouble and lives by just walking away and letting them become capitalistic. They're more capitalistic than we are now. I think the mistake we made was the Soviet Union falling and communism leaving China. As long as they were communistic, we ruled the world. They couldn't get anything together. Now, everything we buy at Wal-Mart comes from China, and the Russians are more capitalistic than we are, maybe a little more on the fascist side. But you know, I think sometimes we rush to judgment too fast. And I think you're probably right. When it's unprovoked, I think we need to take a long, hard look at if this is something we want to get involved in. Sometimes we don't learn from our past history.

SHORT: One question about the Nixon situation, when he resigned from the presidency, the impeachment vote never came to the floor of the House. Is that correct?

STUCKEY: Uh-huh.

SHORT: If it had come to the floor of the House, would it have passed?

STUCKEY: I think so. Probably one of the reasons I think it would have passed -- and this is leadership -- there was a gentleman, still a good friend of mine. I still play golf with him out at Burning Tree -- Tom Railsback, a moderate Republican. Our voting records were pretty much identical when we were in Congress. We belonged to two different parties, but Railsback was on the Judiciary Committee. I think it finally became clear that -- while I'm convinced that Nixon did not start this, I'm convinced that John Dean is the genesis of it -- but once it did reach Nixon, he did start the cover-up, and there is no question about that. And there is a great book out called *Strongman*, and it is the biography of John Mitchell, and I recommend it as good reading. But, once Railsback realized -- knew about it and participated in the cover-up, and had committed perjury that -- you know, that it was time for him to go. And I think that Railsback's leadership would have brought the Republicans along. Plus, at that time that the majority of the House were Democrats, and so the large majority of the Democrats would vote for impeachment. So, there is no doubt in my mind that it would have passed.

SHORT: The resolution would have passed.

STUCKEY: Yes.

SHORT: Do you think the Senate would have voted to impeach the president?

STUCKEY: That's a good question. I'm not sure I can answer that -- I'm not sure I can answer it. I got along pretty well with Nixon. You know, I don't think anybody was ever really close to him. I probably got as many invitations to the White House when Nixon was there as I did when we had Democrats there. And, talking about the ten-year span that I was there, you know, one of the great events is that Nixon opened up China, and I don't think a Democrat could have done that. And you know, talking about ten years of something going on every minute, I mean, what a historical moment -- Nixon going in and opening up trade with China. Like I said, looking back, maybe we should have left them alone. The dollar would be worth a lot more now, and we wouldn't be in the recession that we're in. But, I mean, Nixon did make some bold moves.

SHORT: Now we're importing food from China, as well as the trinkets we've seen over the years. Do you think that's worth a strong look, to see whether or not the country ought to use some means to equal that trade with China?

STUCKEY: If I had one thing that I would carve in stone, it's "Tariffs Don't Work." You want to go back and see what created the Great Depression, 1928 or 1929, go back and look at what happened. We are a globalized economy. And, we might never ever be number one again

financially, because of that. Because you've got China, with the work force that they've got. You've got Russia, with the natural resources that they have, but you know, they gave Clinton a hard time about NAFTA. NAFTA had to have been passed. We are, and forevermore will be, in a global economy, and the sooner we learn to compete with the rest of the world, we will be better off. Adam Smith was right, capitalism works.

SHORT: Will we ever be able to solve our dependency on foreign oil?

STUCKEY: Sure.

SHORT: How do we do that?

STUCKEY: Maybe not in mine and your lifetime. You know, that's interesting. I'm not sure I know the answer, you know, the television ads that T. Boone Pickens has on now – you've got to keep a close eye on him, anyway. But, you know, basically, he's right. We need to try everything. I think we need to look at whether it's solar, whether it's natural gas, whether it's drilling for oil. You know, I think we ought to go ahead with nuclear power, I think we're really missing the boat on that. And at some point, I'm not so sure that we might not see automobiles run with nuclear power. We ran the -- what was it? -- the Submarine Savannah, or Atlantis, for a long time. But I mean, there would be a point where, I think -- well, one thing, we have to get off of oil, because it's not going to be there forever. So, it's just a matter of time before we

figure it out.

SHORT: Transportation. You worked on transportation issues in the Congress. Do you think that we put too much emphasis on highways in the past, and less emphasis on other modes of transportation?

STUCKEY: Bob, I'm the wrong one to ask that question. We franchised the Stuckey stores, we franchised all the Dairy Queens that are on the Interstate Highway System. So, I owe a big part of my livelihood to the Interstate Highway System. But you have to remember, if you really go back and look at what is happening, some of the taxes that are Interstate Highway taxes are being pulled away from the highway, and has been used on public transportation. So, you could make the case that interstate travel has indeed helped public transportation. But I will say this, being chairman of the committee that had the oversight of the public transportation -- the subway system in Washington -- you ought to see our subway, it works. I mean, it's first class. So, yeah. We've got to go to public transportation, and at some point we need to utilize our railway system. Personally, I think the feather bedding -- the unions -- have done a disservice to our transportation on the railroads. But it's so much more efficient, and we really don't use railroads like we should right now.

SHORT: You served with three Speakers, as I recall. Paul Albert was Speaker when you arrived there --

STUCKEY: No, John McCormick.

SHORT: Oh, John McCormick was Speaker when you arrived.

STUCKEY: Uh-huh.

SHORT: But Albert succeeded him.

STUCKEY: From Bugtussle, Oklahoma.

SHORT: Right. One Congressman once told me he gave him the best advice he ever had, which was "Vote your district."

STUCKEY: Yes. And he's absolutely right. If you get away from voting your district, you're in trouble. Mr. McCormick was an elderly gentleman, a wonderful, wonderful guy.

SHORT: What kind of a Speaker was he -- a leader?

STUCKEY: Well, you know, I think all Speakers probably will be compared to Sam Rayburn. He was a leader. He was strong. To go back beyond Sam Rayburn, to go back in history, you

would probably have to go back to old man Joe Canon, who ran -- the Canon Building is named after him. If you study history, he was pretty tough. And Longworth was a pretty tough Speaker. But Sam Rayburn, if you had to have a mentor, as Lyndon Johnson did, and Harry Truman, with Sam Rayburn, you would want Sam Rayburn as your mentor.

SHORT: Did you have a mentor?

STUCKEY: Phil Landrum was always mighty good to me, the dean of our delegation. He was a fatherly figure, a wonderful person. Senator Talmadge was always extremely nice to me. But Phil Landrum and Bob Stevenson, we just had a wonderful -- Jack Flint -- we had a wonderful group of people that were a little bit older than I was at that time.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute, if you will, about party politics, particularly party politics in Georgia. We've seen, over the past few years, the Republican Party coming from way behind to take control of the Georgia political situation, the Governor's Office and the legislature. What happened?

STUCKEY: The polarization of the Democratic Party. And you know, basically, I think, Georgia is a much more conservative state than others, and some people might take that to mean a racist state, or -- and you know, I don't buy that. I'm sure that there's probably -- the race issue is probably present with some of the people in Georgia, but I think that's something really in our

past, Bob. I certainly hope so. But I think, fiscally, government spending, government control of everything versus state control, or private individual rights. I just think Georgia is a little bit more conservative than what the Democratic Party has been. Private property rights, gun control. The Republican Party has had a better stand for the -- like we were talking about, you vote your district. Well, you'd better appeal to the voters of Georgia, and I think the Republican Party has just done a much better job than we have as Democrats.

SHORT: Well, many disenchanted Democrats feel that the party in Georgia is too partisan, too urban, and too dependent on minority and labor support. Do you agree with that?

STUCKEY: Well, being from South Georgia, that's all we ever heard all my life. You forget, Gene Talmadge said he never wanted anyone that lived in a town that had trolley tracks to vote for him. Of course, we had the county unit system back then too. But, you know, I hate to see that. But that's not just Georgia. You're seeing that in all of the -- and we've become more urban.

I introduced a bill one time, and I don't think I ever got a hearing on it. But it was one that I worked a long time on, I thought had a lot of merit then, and I still do. And the idea was that we've got too much concentration in our urban areas, exactly what you were talking about. And we do know that in the urban areas, it's harder to manage, small is better than large. We know that you've got a transportation problem; we know that you've got a crime problem. We know you've got a problem of picking up the garbage, you know, so why don't we wake up and let's

all get the devil out of the cities? Well, the reason people go to the cities is they're looking for jobs. So I spent, like I said, quite a bit of time coming up with a bill. And basically, what the bill would do is it would give tax incentives or tax credits to people that would locate their manufacturing areas into rural areas, and the idea would be that people will follow where the jobs are, and I really believe that. And you talk about redistribution of the wealth, this is redistribution of the people and at some point, I think it's going to happen. We can't keep piling people on top of each other in our cities. The cities are close to being unworkable.

SHORT: Mr. Congressman, you ran very well among the minority voters in your district. How did you campaign in those days for those votes?

STUCKEY: Bob, one thing that I think was significant, not just to me, but to particularly any Democrat running in the south, was the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It really was constructed so that what we tried to do is to get out and register as many of the minorities and blacks as we could. And I would go around to the various churches, and just start drives for everyone to come in and to sign up to vote. And of course, I felt like that running as a Democrat back then that I was just signing up votes for myself. So, I really made it a point to be active with the black community and with the churches.

And I think one of the interesting things is I was at the -- I believe it was one of the churches in Waycross, and I spoke to the congregation and had a nice -- I felt like -- talk. And later on, I was in the office with the pastor, and he said, "Well, young man, we're all going to vote for you."

And I said, "Well, that's wonderful." And I said, "You liked my comments and what I said and all?" And he said, "No, not particularly." He said, "Every white person running for office comes down here and says that same thing that you're saying." And I said, "Well, why are you going to vote for me?" And he said, "Well, you've already proven yourself." And I said, "Well, how is that?" And he said, "Well, you have all those Stuckey's stores up and down the highway." And I said, "Yes, Sir." And he said, "Well, when folks in this part of the country, when we travel north, we try and plan our trips--" and you've got to remember, now, this was the early 1960's, "--we plan our trips to stop at the Stuckey stores because the restrooms, they aren't segregated." And I said, "Well, Reverend, I appreciate that, but --" I said, "I have to be honest with you." I said, "The reason why, probably, we don't have them segregated is my father was too cheap to build two different sets of restrooms." And he said, "Well, it didn't matter because ya'll never segregated the restrooms." So, when I got back home that night, I went up and I said, "Daddy, thank you. I appreciate it."

SHORT: So, the Stuckey name helped you.

STUCKEY: Oh, indeed it did.

SHORT: Well then, after your ten years, you decided to retire. Why?

STUCKEY: Well truthfully, five years, or five terms, that was long enough. You know, a lot of

people now sign pledges they will only run for two terms, or four terms. Five terms was -- it was time. And being very, very frank about it, my father died in 1977 -- February of 1977, and I knew that he was ill. And I really didn't have too many options. Back then, I probably could have tried to run the business from Congress for a short period of time, but there were so many conflicts of interest, and today it would be impossible. I couldn't do it today. But with his passing away, that pretty well made up my mind.

SHORT: So in 1985, you decided to reclaim ownership of Stuckey's, and made it a different company, and you've done that.

STUCKEY: Well, we've taken it and we're going in a little bit of a different direction. In 1978, I had acquired the rights to franchise the Dairy Queens on the Interstate, so we were back active on the Interstate Highway System. When I reacquired Stuckey's, they had sold off most of the property on the Interstate, so we really started going in a different direction, and we started selling the pecans and the nuts and all to the grocery chains. And we are now in, I think, 4,500 grocery stores all over the country. So, Stuckey's has eased off the Interstate, and the Interstate Dairy Queen has eased onto the Interstates. So it's funny how that little twist has gone about.

SHORT: I once heard a story about your dad, which was that he would get an automobile, drive until he needed to use the restroom, and decided that would be a great location for a Stuckey's store.

STUCKEY: Well, I think what he really did, Bob, was he would go to a large town, like Jacksonville or Atlanta, and what he would do is he would have, like, three or four cups of coffee, and then he would get in the car and start driving, and he would figure that was about the best place to put up a store. And I think there's a little validity to it. But the big thing was, he always said, "Early to bed, early to rise, work like hell, and advertise." And he always believed in billboards. So, the billboards had a lot to do with it, too.

SHORT: Well, obviously, they worked. Well, before we run out of time, would you please tell us about the Bill Stuckey family. You've mentioned Stephanie.

STUCKEY: Well, I guess we're your average typical, dysfunctional family. We're, you know, we have different talents and different directions that we've all gone in. My oldest son is in Augusta, and he is in the insurance business, and he's done very well. My oldest daughter lives in Eastman in the home that I used to live in, and you couldn't get her out of Eastman; she loves Eastman. My other son -- Time Magazine, the May 26th issue, just had a full page story on him. He does children's video programs for TV and the different studios and all. But I was rather proud of that. I never made Time Magazine, much less a full color page story. But he is very active in the children's video end of it. Stephanie is an attorney; went to Vanderbilt and Georgia Law School, and she is in the Georgia General Assembly. My youngest son is a professor at Brown University. He is our -- well, they all turned out pretty well, intellectually, but he's our

professor in the family. And Brown's a great school, they just have the worst football team anywhere in the country.

SHORT: Looking back over your public life, what has been your proudest moment?

STUCKEY: Well, I was already married to my wife before I got into politics, but politically, I think the three things that I really am the most proud of are Cumberland Island being preserved, the Okefenokee being preserved, and creating the original bill of what is now the NASDAQ system.

SHORT: Uh-huh. Your biggest disappointment?

STUCKEY: Well Bob, I was always pretty fortunate in politics. I think the thing that I do miss, and that goes back to friendship. When I retired from Congress, I ran the businesses from Washington, and I stayed in Washington because our children were in school then, and we didn't want to take them out. So, I ended up staying in Washington, but you know, I missed Georgia. Georgia is my home. My roots are here. I love the red clay and I love the sandy beaches. And that's the thing I missed the most. I don't know that I'd call that a disappointment, but I'm ready to come back home. I love Georgia. Georgia has been good to me.

SHORT: If you had your career to do over, is there anything you would have done differently?

STUCKEY: Oh, I'm sure there are a lot of things I would have done differently. I probably would have made several votes differently. I probably would have been a lot more aware of what was going on in Southeast Asia. But I have to say I enjoyed my political career. I enjoyed the friends. I still have friends. Look, our friendship goes back.

SHORT: Yes, it does, yeah.

STUCKEY: The big disappointment now is I think we have reached that point that I'm afraid to look at the obituaries. We're few and far between. You start talking about different things that have happened, and you look around, and there aren't many of us that know what we are talking about, Bob.

SHORT: That's right. Finally, Mr. Congressman, how would you like to be remembered?

STUCKEY: Well, I'll go back to what I said earlier, Bob, my roots are still -- still Georgia. I love Eastman, Georgia; we've got a wonderful little family cemetery there. But you know, and I mean this from the bottom of my heart -- being somebody that loved home, loved Georgia, and loved family -- but you know what I told my wife, I want a typical Episcopal funeral, they don't last 15 minutes. And I think that there is too much nowadays of everybody being eulogized, and overrated. And you know, another generation comes on and passes on, and you know, it's time

to move on. And if I had to be remembered for anything, like I said, I'm very proud of Cumberland, and Okefenokee, both good Georgia projects, and creating NASDAQ.

SHORT: Well, on behalf of the Richard Russell Library and the University of Georgia, Bill, I want to thank you for sharing with us your reflections on Georgia politics.

STUCKEY: Bob, thank you and thank you for your friendship. Now come drive back to Washington with me.

MALE SPEAKER: Before we wrap up, and we can edit this back in, do you want to -- I don't know if you've really full explained the Okefenokee, and Cumberland Island, and the work you did on that.

STUCKEY: Well, it took about five and a half years to get Cumberland together, and it would take about that long to explain it. You had all the rich folks fighting and ... oh.

MALE SPEAKER: Bob, is that a question we can ask real quick?

SHORT: Yeah. What do you want to know?

MALE SPEAKER: Just to --

SHORT: Tell us what you did?

MALE SPEAKER: Yeah.

SHORT: That kind of question?

MALE SPEAKER: Yeah, yeah, yeah. For this, the Okefenokee and Cumberland Island.

STUCKEY: Yeah. And you can't, I mean, it's so complicated. You had the Carnegie family and the Rockefellers owned part of it, and the families had, you know, they all needed the money. Old man Carnegie built all the libraries, and left no money to his children. And he was smart. He didn't leave the children anything. So, they had Cumberland Island. That was their big asset. Most of them wanted to keep it and just live over there. And Miss Lucy, the granddaughter, still lived over there. Meanest damned woman that ever lived. And she wanted to keep it like it was. But most of the Carnegies, they had a genetic disposition to being alcoholics. So anyway, nothing really was going to happen until Charlie Fraser came over there and took a bulldozer and started clearing 3,000 -- I mean, a 3,000 foot runway, and all of a sudden, everybody woke up and said, "Whoa! We've got another Hilton Head and Sea Island here." So, that got them off of dead center. So once we got Charlie stopped, then they went back to everything and nobody else wanted anything done, and finally, they realized that they

had to do it. And then, to try and get -- Camden County wanted to -- they wanted to benefit from it tax-wise, and they wanted a bridge over there. The Interior Department didn't want a bridge. If you've got this running, maybe this is the best way and you can edit it. But you know, they wanted to profit from it. They wanted to have it where 20,000 people could get over there in a day's time. Well, the way they've got it now, it's like 300 go over there. Miss Lucy wouldn't do anything until her son was assured of an income out of what's now called Greyfield Inn. You might have stayed there, Bob. Well, the State Department -- I mean the Interior Department didn't want a commercial enterprise right in the middle of a National Seashore. So, we finally had to convince them that maybe this wasn't such a bad idea. And then, we had the problem at that time that there was no money in the Interior budget for it, and the Mellon Foundation, I think, came up originally with like \$25 million. And of course, the Mellons and Carnegies were both from Pittsburgh, and big competitors. But anyway, it took forever, and we finally ironed out a bill and got it passed.

And Okefenokee was the same way. You know, not everybody wanted to give up their land. And I think, in the long run, they realized that the protection of the Okefenokee was the best thing to do. And for some reason, people focus on Cumberland Island, and going down there. But Okefenokee is just as beautiful, and I think, probably more beautiful. And more people ought to take advantage of it and go down there.

SHORT: We haven't talked about your work on the Chattahoochee River.

STUCKEY: I didn't do that much on the Chattahoochee. That was somebody -- the Ocmulgee runs through my district.

SHORT: Yeah.

STUCKEY: The Ocmulgee and the Oconee come together, and --

SHORT: You didn't work on a proposition to have a government protection of the Chattahoochee?

STUCKEY: Bob, that was -- that might have been Fletcher, or -- no, that wasn't during my --

SHORT: It wasn't you?

STUCKEY: Huh-uh, that wasn't me. No. No voters are anywhere near the Chattahoochee River.

SHORT: Right. Okay?

STUCKEY: Thank you.

SHORT: Anything else that you want to -- what else do you remember that we haven't talked about?

STUCKEY: Well, you know -- and as just a little aside -- everybody back in those days, when they went to lunch, hell, they'd all have two martinis, three martinis, and think nothing about it. Man, I'm telling you, I don't know how those people survived all that. Hell, I'd sit there and sip with them. But I mean, there was just a -- it was a different world. And it didn't matter whether you were Democrat or Republican. You know? You'd go out to have lunch sometime, and you know, if there were two Republicans or two Democrats, it was now we're going to the Republican club, or now we're going to the Democratic club today. You go into the Democratic club today with two Republicans, and they'll throw you out. They'll probably throw you out if you go in with two other Democrats that are not voting right.

SHORT: It's bad up there, isn't it?

STUCKEY: It really has changed.

SHORT: You know, I think this recent thing about the Republicans with continuing to be in session while the Congress is adjourned, is --

STUCKEY: It's just a cheap shot. You know ...

SHORT: Yeah. Yeah.

STUCKEY: You know, we're just as guilty, Bob. You know, now it's like -- the only color dogs we had were the yellow dogs, and that was, you know, even a yellow dog will go vote the Democratic party. Now they've got the blue dogs and the green dogs and all, and well, we all disagreed, and we voted differently, but we still stayed together. We were not that polarized. I didn't see any of it, really.

I think one of the best speeches -- talks I ever heard -- and both are members at Burning Tree. That's one of the few places -- and now the elected officials won't come out there because, you know, we don't let women in. But one of the best talks I ever heard was when Bob Michaels was a minority leader, and he's one of the nicest people that ever lived. Bob Michaels and Tip O'Neill, after dinner, got up to the podium, talked for about an hour without the first note. And you talk about a love-in, now there's two people who couldn't have been any more opposite; Bob Michaels, a right-wing radical redneck, and Tip O'Neill, a New England clam chowder liberal, and they were the two best friends and locker mates at Burning Tree. They played golf together all the time, but they played off of each other and laughed for over an hour, without a note. And everybody was sitting there having a drink, and smoking cigars. Do you think you'd see that today? No. And that's what Congress is missing.

SHORT: Yeah.

STUCKEY: I wish there was some way we could restore that.

SHORT: Well, I don't know. You know, I worked with Miller there for a number of years.

Well, the whole time he was in the Senate. And I would go up there, and I couldn't believe -- I couldn't believe how that place operated, having been around the Georgia legislature, you know, and it's getting just about as partisan.

STUCKEY: Yeah.

SHORT: Yeah. It might be worse one of these days.

STUCKEY: Well, of course, back when you and I were growing up, I think the only Republican we had was -- oh, what's his name? He used to own the Howard Johnsons. His father-in-law was the first head of the Georgia Republican Party. I'll think of it. I'm trying not to think -- I'll tell you something interesting that people have lost sight of. Really, when I first started running, a lot of the blacks would still tell you that they were the party of Lincoln.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

STUCKEY: Because, even as a young kid, long before I even thought about running for politics,

the blacks were Republicans, if you remember.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

STUCKEY: And Bob, you ought to remember --

SHORT: I remember, yeah.

STUCKEY: Most of the blacks voted Republican.

SHORT: That's right.

STUCKEY: Because Lincoln had freed the slaves.

SHORT: Right.

STUCKEY: I don't think -- it's funny, I never heard them call it the Republican Party. I always remember they called it "The Party of Lincoln."

SHORT: "The Party of Lincoln." Uh-huh.

STUCKEY: So what are you? "I'm The Party of Lincoln," which was the Republican Party. But now you don't see any -- or very few -- black Republicans, and certainly very few white Democrats -- white male Democrats. They're an endangered species. And I'm a recovering Democrat. I'm trying to figure a way to get this group back together.

MALE SPEAKER: And you had said you could trace a lot of that to Vietnam. Are there other things that really sort of caused divisions along the way?

STUCKEY: The Civil Rights Act didn't -- I mean, I think that people were -- pretty much, they accepted it. They knew it was wrong, or were over it. I mean, there was still bigotry and there was still -- I mean, you know, still is. But I think they got that out of the system with Lyndon Johnson. And by the way, Kennedy never could have passed the Civil Rights -- and not only that, Kennedy didn't want to, Kennedy didn't give a damn. All he wanted to do was get reelected. But Lyndon Johnson really believed it, and knew how to twist arms to get it done. But the Civil Rights Voting Act, actually, I used to my advantage; it was the best friend I had.

SHORT: You know, I -- Johnson appointed me to a federal thing down here, what's now FEMA. People often ask me, you know, "Who are your political heroes?" And I always say, "Lyndon Johnson."

STUCKEY: No better politician anywhere.

SHORT: Not a popular thing to do, not popular. But Lyndon Johnson I admired for this reason. He knew what he wanted, and he knew how to get it.

STUCKEY: Yes. I'll tell you one of the funniest things -- he knew every trick in the book. When I had won the Democratic nomination, and back then it was the same thing as being elected, even though Mattingly was running, I got a call from Bedford Sanders, and he says "The President wants to see you." And I said, "The President wants to see me?" And he said, "We're sending a ...". They sent one of those Lockheed Jetstars down there to pick me up. And he said, "You be up at Warner Robbins, and we'll bring you. The President wants to see you." Fly back, get in that damned Jetstar, and they've got a doctor onboard and some damned Brigadier General, and flying to Andrews Air Force Base, and get off the plane and a damned helicopter, get in the helicopter and we land on the back lawn of the -- west lawn of the White House. And Bedford Sanders comes running out and takes me into the Oval Office, and I walk in and I look up and here's this 6'8" son of a bitch, bigger than God himself, and he walks over there, and he puts his arm around me, and he says, "Billy, I need you." And my wife said I never made a vote against him after that.

And you know, and that just -- and I'll tell you another thing. I about cracked up, because one time he had all the freshmen Congressmen -- there weren't many of us that year -- and we were coming into the White House, and he pulls me over to the side as we were going into the room to sit down. You know, he was no fool, I always had "Bill, Bill, Bill," but people who knew me

called me "Billy." He always called me Billy. And he said, "Billy." He said, "You sit close to me," he said. "Now, I don't know all of these freshmen, so you know, if you have to lean over and tell me, you know, who's talking." And I thought, "You son of a bitch. You know everybody they've slept with, how much money they owe. You know who their great-grandparents were, and what they were put in jail for." But you know, I'm like you. You buy it hook line and sinker. He was the best that ever lived at it. Yeah. He was good.

And you know, talking about how politics has changed, Bob, it was not unusual when Ladybird was out of town for the phone to ring and you'd pick it up and it's Johnson on the phone himself, "Billy, what are you doing?" "Well, I'm signing my mail, Mr. President." And he said, "Well, Bird's out of town, and I want somebody to come over here and have a drink with me." And sometimes you'd go over there, and there would be maybe two or three other people. Sometimes you'd get over there, and there'd be Jimmy Symington, the son, playing the guitar and maybe 30 or 40 people. But one thing he was always doing, he never stopped politicking. "What are your constituents? What are they saying about Vietnam? What are they saying about me? What are they saying about, you know, Martin Luther King?" You know, and he'd go around the room. His mind never shut down. He just lived, breathed, and died politics. He was unusual. You couldn't help but love him. And Gerald Ford was probably the nicest guy we ever had. I played -- he played out at Burning Tree. I played a lot of golf with Ford. But Ford was the last of the good guys.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

STUCKEY: And he did the right thing. Well, let me head back.

[END]

**University of Georgia
Bill Stuckey**

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