

**Bobby Rowan interviewed by Bob Short**  
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**Reflections on Georgia Politics**  
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BOB SHORT: This is Bob Short and this is Reflections on Georgia Politics sponsored  
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We're here today in the home of one of Georgia's best known and widely appreciated public

servants, former State Senator and Public Service Commissioner Bobby Rowan. Bobby, we're in your home. It's a very beautiful home and I understand it has some history.

BOBBY ROWAN: Well it's an old house. It does have some history. Two men treasured it before I owned it and they lived from the time they acquired it until their death. I hope I can do the same thing. The hardwoods will last longer than me though--I assure you so. But this house was built in 1932 by a saw miller from Alapaha, Georgia, which is seven miles away. And he selected the hard pine lumber from a sawmill and he built the house and he lived and raised his family until 1958 when he passed away.

Lewis Barnes, a native Enigmian, he bought the house from him and moved it three miles out of Enigma on the Turner Church Road, and he lived in it 40 years until 1998, and we lived next door in the brick house down here. Barbara really enjoyed restoring old houses and things. I liked the house because it was just like the one I was raised in where my parents had nine children, I was the middle one, and our house was almost a duplicate of this one. And so it was an easy house. A hall and bedrooms on one side, kitchen and whatever on the other, and so it suited me too as a pleasant house to live in. So we bought it. We moved it here again, it's been now moved twice, and started redoing it.

On the outside, even though the lumber at that point was, you know, some 70 years old, we only replaced four boards on the whole house. And we kept all of the old woodwork and we opened it up a little bit. And the thing that we agreed on that I really wanted was that there's no paint on this house inside or out that's not white. I only bought one kind of paint. That's white.

So we live in the white house in Enigma. We got a front porch and rockers you can rock on and I hope to spend the last part of -- last phase of my life sitting out there thinking about meeting people like the two of you and reminiscing about the great ones of Georgia from Zell Miller to Herman Talmadge to Celestine Sibley. Celestine was a great friend of mine and she was an admirer of this house -- came here several times on the way to Willacoochee where she had ancestors, but she was a national treasure and she'd come by here and we'd -- always she was willing to take a glass of sweet iced tea and we enjoyed her. But anyway that's the house and we also put up a white fence so people would know we was serious about white.

SHORT: Well we're anxious to share with you some of your experiences and memories of Georgia politics beginning with your election to the Georgia Senate in 1962 at the age of 26. But before we do that, let's talk for a minute about Bobby Rowan growing up in Enigma, Georgia.

ROWAN: Well, I really came from a huge Rowan family. My great-grandfather was William Barry Rowan that moved to this county in 1846. He had run away from North Carolina at 14 and moved to the county in '46, and then in 1850 he moved to this county and built a house and that house burned in 1878, and he built a second house. You know it was a poor working man's house and actually my son and I still have that house built in 1878 and one day we might restore it, but it's got wide boards that he hand sewn and a pack house that's a little older than the house itself.

I was the middle of nine children, and nine children was not unusual because my daddy -- he was

called Jay Alvin Rowan. We were all double named. And he was also the middle of nine living children. There was more than that of them, but there were nine who lived to be old enough to join service and leave home. And then his name was James Henry Rowan and he lived on the same land that I was raised on and his daddy, as I said, was William Barry. William Barry had nine children. So we had three generations of nine children born on the same two acre square of land in Berrien County.

I married a girl from Enigma and moved up here and started teaching school and farming, but when I was at the University of Georgia the passion growing up was mama and daddy who didn't have much opportunities for education, but they had more intelligence than all nine children. They wanted us to go to school. Encouraged us to get an education, but particularly the girls. There's four girls and five boys. And my daddy was passionate about the girls and this conversation was many times around the kitchen table. You know I've got it in the book about the teachings of my father at the table.

We had pleasant conversations at night, long conversations. Mother was a great cook on an old wood stove and a long bench and as more children would come along and new baby would slide down and high chair be replaced, and when you went on around you kept sliding around you got close to daddy who always sat at the head of the table. Conversation would be, "What you going to do now son?" because he knew, you know, with the children coming somebody had to leave. He encouraged us to go to college and helped us. Daddy would always say, "Now I'm going to help you boys, but I'm going to send you girls. I want you girls to get an education because you might marry somebody that dies, and have to raise children. You might marry somebody that's

sorry and have to run him off. Still got to raise children."

And anyway finally between the GI Bill and one of us helping the other one, all nine of us did in fact finish from the University of Georgia system and various things. But while I was there, because I had a sister in school at the same time and I was working in the mess hall and doing different things, and I found out there was a job on campus called the campus leader and if you got elected to that you had free room and board and certain other fringes and could sell little stuff and whatever. So I ran for it.

It might have been the hardest race I ever ran. I needed it. And got elected. Had a lot of friends on Ag Hill at that time. My opponent was a law student who was not a bad fellow except I didn't say that until after I defeated him. But I got Ag Hill all revved up and Ag Hill council. There were more poor farm boys up there than there were rich lawyers, and I said that often. But then that was in 1958 and Marvin Griffin was running for -- he was Governor and he was running -- Roger Lawson was going to be his candidate. Ernie Vandiver was a Lieutenant Governor and they both came over to the University.

The campus leader's job really was a job that had earlier been recognized as having some political impact, you know, from Herman Talmadge to Jimmy Bentley and on down had been in those roles a little and both of them offered me a job on their campaigns. But I had to go to the Army. Anyway that wasn't part of my plan. But so in '58 when I graduated from school and went to the Army and then got married and came back farming and teaching school, and four years later I ran for the Senate and under the old rotation system, and that's where three counties in rural Georgia would band together and every two years they'd rotate the Senate seat, and the

House of Representatives each county had one legislator, so Berrien, Cook and Brooks had been rotating that seat and it was Berrien County's turn to run.

And so I chose to run in '62 and about a week before the election I was running against a couple of good friends of mine at Happy Yarborough from Ray City who had run about eight times.

Every time he got a few more votes. He got more against me than he got against anybody, but still it was less than 300. Hanson Carter was from Nashville and his brother Frank Carter was a very popular physician there and Hanson was too, so we squared off to run for the rotation Senate seat.

And a week before the election the Supreme Court ruled that the county system was not legal, and ordered the election to be held under the popular vote, and ordered at that time that there be a special session to reapportion the state Senate. So there we are running, our names on the ballot in a hotly contested Berrien County race and there were sheriffs, everybody running, and we was going to be voted on whether we wanted to or not.

And so Hanson, Carter, and I met up at the courthouse in Nashville and we agreed that this election there wasn't anything to it because it didn't count, and so we agreed that we would neither one campaign. That would be the end of it. Let the people do what they wanted to do and just through with it because it didn't count. We shook hands on it. I came back to Enigma. He went wherever he went.

That night Marvin Griffin was having a rally at the Jay Charver's Warehouse in Nashville and a big fish fry and I was sitting around here about 5:00 and I said, "I believe I'll just ride down there." I rode down to his rally and honest to God one of the first people I saw was Hanson over

there shaking hands. Me and him started back that same day politicking as hard as ever.

And when the election was over I had come out on top, but then they reapportioned. And at the same time a young fellow, nice fellow named Jack Sullivan was running against M.E.

Thompson, former Governor, for the Senate seat under the rotation plan for Echols and Lowndes County, and Jack Sullivan beat him. And so it was natural when they put Berrien and Cook and Echols and the near -- I mean and Lowndes together. He and I had both run. I had run to represent Berrien and Cook and he had run to represent Echols and Lowndes.

So we had a runoff in the special election and with Enigma having, you know, 500 people and even Berrien County having 10,000, and Lowndes County having 50,000, I didn't think there was any chance I could win and I had pretty much told folks, you know, I'd went around and thanked them for voting for me and helping me get elected. I had really decided, you know, I couldn't run, couldn't win, and I didn't think it was a real good use of my friends' energies to keep on running.

Julian Paulk was a politically active Mayor of Alapaha. He was also the employee of Commissioner of Agriculture Phil Campbell. And he was a political operative for Phil in this area. And as I said Mayor -- Judge Lott was a -- and is a -- fine judge from this county and considered the smoothest politician in the area. So they invited me to a fish fry at Julian's cabin on a Saturday morning and they invited -- I didn't know it, but they invited 40 or 50 people from the county and Flicker Wilkes was a representative from Cook County. He came over and they all encouraged me to run and the word was that if we don't run somebody from Berrien and Cook against Lowndes, we won't ever be able to. And so, they raised me \$325.00 cash money

and that was a right smart for a campaign that you didn't spend none in.

And so I agreed to run and as people was leaving Judge Lott said to me, he said, "Rowan, when everybody leaves you wait around. I want to talk to you." Said, "We might can win this race."

And I thought, "You know, this could be a waste of time, but whatever the judge said I'd listen."

So when everybody left Julian Paulk got him a drink of liquor and went out to a pecan tree where there was one of the tables where we were eating, and Judge Lott was already out there resting with him a little drink. I went out there and sat down with them and Lott told me these words.

He said, "We might can win the race, but you'll have to listen to me, you know," and he joked a little. He said, "You know Rowan, to win races the greatest attributes you have are being dumb and humble. See you've got to learn how to be dumb and humble." He said, "Now you've got to work on humility. The other's coming along real good."

That was 46 years ago and I never forgot it. Then he said to me -- in all seriousness he said, "Listen this is a special election. All of the votes won't be counted because not many of them will vote. All we got to do is get 51% of the people that go to the polls. Not many people's going to want to go to the polls. So we've got to get enough people among our friends to get that 51% or to win."

He said, "Now I don't want you to go anywhere else except Lowndes County and Lenox and Cook County." That was where he lived. He says, "I want you to go to Lowndes County and Lenox and campaign. Start around your house. Talk to your neighbors." I said, "Well Judge they all voted for me." "Yeah but you got to talk to them again. We've got to get it back out." Anyway, that's what I've done, except one trip when I got invited by the editor of the

newspapers to go to meet with the *Valdosta Times*. It was nothing more than a courtesy visit and I knew that but I called Judge Lott. He said, "Oh yeah, but listen here's what to say to them. You go down there and I'm going to tell you what to say."

So I called Jeanie Griffin and -- I mean Teeney Griffin was his name, and I agreed to go down and meet with him, and when I got down there he asked me about where I was from and Lott had told me to say all this. He said, "I know what he'll ask you." I said, "Well I'm a schoolteacher and a farmer from Berrien County." I said, "I was campus leader at the University when I was up there mainly supported by the Ag school. And I know I don't have much chance to win the race and the reason I'm running is not necessarily to win, but it's because Berrien County and Cook County have already selected me as a Senator."

"Now I know that Mr. Sullivan, who I don't know very well but I understand that he's a fine fellow, he was elected by Lowndes and Echols. So I'm going to run to give the people of my area a chance to vote for me if they want to. I don't think I'll win, but I'm going to work as hard as I can and if I don't win now I might want to run again for a lesser seat like House of Representatives or something."

Well he wrote the story just like it and in his editorial he endorsed Jack Sullivan. I had done what Lott said. I didn't try to campaign down there, and in the -- endorsed Jack Sullivan he mentioned that these words, and I still got the editorial, "Bobby Rowan is a nice young man, schoolteacher and a farmer, and he'll get elected some one day, but it won't be this time." And Lott was so tickled when he saw that he said, "We got them now. We got them. So they don't think there's a race."

Then the editors of the Nashville Herald was Jeanie and Junie Griner. Talented people. They pretty much took it over from the widow Wardlaw Stalin who died and Lott got them to postpone their edition of the weekly newspaper which usually came out on -- printed on Wednesday, came out on Thursday, to print it on Friday and come out Saturday afternoon. So the paper came out the last edition before the election on Tuesday. Went pretty generally all over the county because it was a well-read local newspaper, and had a banner headline as big as the one that, you know, they had on the Atlanta paper whenever Japan bombed Pearl Harbor -- elect a Senator from Berrien.

And the fight was on then, but we -- but that night when the votes come in Berrien County I got 2,976 votes and my opponent Jack Sullivan got 44. And in Lowndes County I got 350 and he got about 3,100. And of course I beat him in Cook by 1,000 to 400. So I easily won the race, but it was all because I worked from my strengths and had not excited my opposition.

And that's still a lesson I think works today in these legislative and senatorial districts. Work from your strengths because if you get -- if you're in an area where you're popular and you get eight people to go to the polls, you'll probably get six of them. If you try to get a new vote in an area you're not popular, instead of you getting six you'll get your opponent six to come out. I think that's right. But anyway that was the way I got there.

And then after I got there I have to admit I worked real hard and I made friends. Next time I ran I carried every precinct in Lowndes County but one. And so I made some friends and the people down there always treated me real nice.

SHORT: Let's go back to January 1963 when you began your first term in that Senate that became known as the classiest Senate of all times. Tell us a little about that Senate, who was in it and what you did.

ROWAN: Well as I look back over the things that the good people of Georgia gave me a chance to do, none of them compares to the day that I was in the first modern day Senate. I was in awe of all that was about me. I really didn't feel like I accomplished much. Matter of fact, when I sat down in the midst of that first Senate and saw who was around me, there was a sense of great humility. I really didn't think I belonged there. And in my wildest dreams growing up as a child I never dreamed that one day I'd just be voted by the accolades of the people into a Senate that comprised such great people -- Zell Miller, Robert Smalley, J.B. Fuqua, Wyck Knox, Pennington over from -- from Madison, Martin Young, and Render -- not that Render was in the House, but, you know, a Mr. Heard, Albert Moore, Lamar Plunkett.

SHORT: Julian Webb.

ROWAN: Julian Webb, one of the great jurists of all time. And Frank Downen from Savannah. And it was just a -- it was an assortment of all the kind of people that we ought to have running government today and I'll exclude myself in that. These are the kind of people -- they were attracted because Carl Sanders brought a breath of fresh air. It was the end of the county unit system. It was the beginning of a new day, and Carl Sanders was a masterful Governor. He

dealt with the House of Representatives, which 80% of them were Marvin Griffin people. They were still one man -- I mean they still were the old county unit system vote. The Senate, of course, was Carl's Senate. He had got J.B. Fuqua to run. Now J.B. he was -- he never opened his mouth in the Senate. Never laughed. Of course he certainly never cried. He was just a part of the Senate.

Lamar Plunkett was a gentleman's gentleman. And, you know, to this day had Jimmy Carter listened to me history would have changed some. Whenever Richard Russell died I went to Jimmy Carter and I had -- he had got elected the same time I did. He was in that group of the first group of Senators. I went to Jimmy Carter and I said, "Jimmy, why don't you appoint Lamar Plunkett U.S. Senate? He would go to Washington. He would provide such a dignified difference for our state. He would be a great United States Senator." And if he had of appointed him, he would have got reelected. Had plenty of money, but he was a gentleman's gentleman. Bill Flowers, Flowers Bakery Company, came on two years later. But if you asked me what was the great opportunity in life, I would have to say it was learning, having a chance to be one of them, having the chance to be equals with that first group of Senators, you know, it was the great ones. And let me tell you a story about that. It shows you I learned so much from my friends there. Martin Young didn't have any children and he had been very successful as a county commissioner and a state Senator. Served many years as a Senator in the Senate. And in his own precinct, Alba, out there in that county and in seven races Marty Young never lost a single vote except one time. There was about 100 people out there and Martin Young got every vote every time except one time he was running against the banker and his neighbor come to him and

told him -- says, "Martin, I'm in a tight. I'm going to vote for you and

I want you to know it, but I got a note at the bank, " and says, "ain't nobody else going to vote against you and he'll know that we voted against him. We've told him we're for him. " Martin said, "No, no. You go ahead and vote for him. I'm going to win anyway." So when the votes come in there were two people that voted for the banker and Martin always laughed in Atlanta. He said, "You know, there are 46 people that went to the banker and told him they voted for him."

But that's sort of the way the politics was back then, but anyway to serve in that body, I was sitting beside Mr. Martin Young one day about the fifth day of the legislature, and I'd read everything. Peter Zack Geer gave me a boost because he appointed me Chairman of the Rules Committee. I mean Secretary of the Rules Committee. Back then the Rules Committee -- the Chairman was the Lt. Governor and then the Secretary was the one that kept the bills.

And back then they had one secretary in the whole body. She worked with George Stewart who was the Secretary of the Senate and my job was to everyday when he assigned bills to go get them and take them to the hotel, and the next day I was to go by before I left and get with Peter Zack or in his absence Al Hatchet who was his Chief of Staff, and they'd give me the list of bills to bring back the next day. Now if you can't find a bill you can't duplicate it, so if that bill was lost it couldn't be brought up, it couldn't be passed, nothing could happen.

So Peter Zack, anything he didn't want he just put it in that committee and he also told me -- he said "You know, you used to be a schoolteacher, didn't you?" I said, "Well yeah." He said, "Well I want you to learn the rules of the Senate." I took him serious and tell you the truth

within -- before the session was over the one thing I had accomplished -- perhaps the only thing might have been I could quote every rule in the rulebook, and people would come to me and -- it gave me some power early on -- they would come to me and ask me about a rule. I'd always answer them honestly even if I was against what they were trying to do, and then if I had a problem with the a bill I'd ask them -- I'd say, "Now listen I don't expect you to, but if you can, help me." And they would. I'd done them a favor, they did me a favor.

Another one in that group was Leroy Johnson. Might have been the most influential man I ever served with, but I was sitting beside Martin Young and I looked up the ages of everybody. Jim Westbury who was a Baptist preacher's son, an accountant and a great friend of mine after a while, we had to warm up to one another. He thought I was a redneck and I thought he was something different from me as well, but we finally became the greatest of friends.

I was sitting and I realized for the first time that I was the youngest Senator ever to be elected and nobody said nothing to me about it after five days. So I was sitting there with Mr. Martin. Mr. Martin would chew a piece of a cigar and he had a spittoon pushed up under his desk. They had moved all them out but he went and got his and pushed it back under there. He was a real neat chewer of tobacco. He's sitting there slowly chewing tobacco. I said, "Mr. Martin" -- he lived about 30 miles north of here and I would ride back and forth -- I'd drive him really back and forth to Atlanta a good bit. And I said, "Mr. Martin, you know it's not important, but, you know, I'm -- I'm the youngest Senator ever got elected." Mr. Martin slowly kind of chewed a little bit and he said, "Well Bobby, I -- I just wouldn't say nothing about it. Nobody probably won't even notice it." I thought that taught me humility more than many other lessons, but --

SHORT: Well they --

ROWAN: It was a great -- it was a great body. Leroy Johnson came in clearly taught me something too. He was the most effective legislator I ever served with. He had a technique that I used for many years. I told others about it. Leroy Johnson went into his desk.

You know, at that time there were members of that Senate who were very careful not to get caught shaking hands with Leroy. It wasn't me because I guess the greatest gift I had is about the race issue was from my daddy who stood firm against his own family. When we worked tobacco which you had to go to Willacoochee and get a bunch of hands to come and help you crop tobacco on your crop day, we'd go up there and get a lot of African Americans. Not a lot but eight or 10, and some of daddy's neighbors that came over and helped us didn't want to eat at the same table with the blacks. This was in the '40s.

And daddy -- matter of fact I got this stitched on the wall over there. My daddy told one of them who said, "I don't mind working with you and all like that, but I just don't want -- I just don't want, you know, everywhere else we go the blacks eat in the yard and we eat in the house."

Daddy said, "You know, Ken you're all right as a neighbor and friend but listen. Any man that works in my fields eats at my table, black, white, whatever. Now if that ain't satisfying to you, then we'll be friends and we'll just quit working together, but that's the way it's going to be here."

So I think that taught me -- I never really had a problem with Leroy but Leroy Johnson would

come in very polite, sit at his desk. When you walked over to shake his hand he was always there early but he was always reading his bills, not trying to create a ruckus or anything, but he had -- you walk over, he'd stand up, he always addressed you as Senator. Senator Rowan, how are you doing? Say fine. And then he would come to you during the day. You know back then they would have debate decorum, and you would -- people would walk around the chamber and he would come over and say, "Senator, I read your bill and I like it. I just want you to know I'm going to be supporting it."

Now he never came over and told you he didn't like it. He only came over and said well -- after he does that all year long and then once in a while he had something he wanted, he'd come back over and say, "You know, Senator Rowan, you've been a good Senator and whenever the session is over I'm going to go down to Enigma and Nashville and Ray City. I have some friends in the black churches and I'm going to tell them I hope they reelect you because you're a good Senator." And, you know, that was good news because back then it's real hard to get good connections without getting caught doing it, you know. This was sort of a tense time politically. But I'll remember that, and then Leroy said, "Oh and incidentally I've got this little bill."

You didn't -- you didn't even have to read it. I said, "Leroy I'm for it. Don't worry about it. I'm for it." He was very effective and Hugh Gillis who was a great Senator as well and he was almost from the exact opposite spectrum of the world as Leroy Johnson. Two of them began to realize the power of each other and there was many times when I was there when Hugh Gillis and Leroy Johnson got on the same side of an issue it was called a mortal lock on the Senate. Nobody could beat it. The Governor, the Lt. Governor, nobody.

But anyway that was such a great experience and I over the years, you know, the Senate's changed. You've had other people to come in, made great contributions, but that first Senate and even two or three Senates later when Bill Flowers came in. Not necessarily a great Senator, but a great personality, great -- his exposure to people. See, matter of fact Bill -- and he liked me only because I knew the rules and he used me from day one to tell him the rules and he'd joke and say, "You know, Bobby Rowan and I put together are the two richest members in the Senate." I said, "Yeah I'm the poorest and he's the richest, but you put us together and we're still --" but it was a day of great camaraderie. And I got associated because of the committee I was put on, one of the mental health issues and mental retardation. And got a chance to work really -- and still do. I'm still on the Board of the ARC of Georgia and have been wherever they've asked me for all these years for the retarded citizens because it was a chance to do some really feel good things and nobody rewarded you for them. The retarded citizen didn't vote. So if there was a selfish thing -- unselfish thing that I had the opportunity to do I think it was work in that field. I still am proud of community. We moved them out of the institution.

When I went to Milledgeville -- mainly Gracewood, Gracewood they had about 1,800 patients over there, about 350 or 400 staff people. Those people that worked there were the greats public servants in the world. I never will forget they were right across from Fort Gordon where the Fort Gordon had a dog compound where they housed the dogs for the military. Their per diem was \$12.00 a day. Gracewood per diem was \$3.00 a day, and it's just such a great contrast. And Central State Hospital -- matter of fact last night I was flipping through the channels and saw the old movie The Snake Pit. Do you remember that?

SHORT: Um-hum.

ROWAN: It was one of the first expose movies about the conditions in mental hospitals. Tell you the truth, Milledgeville was a lot like that in the early '60s. Ernie Vandiver changed it some, but anyway those were great opportunities for me to do things and have fun too and get to go to Atlanta.

SHORT: How did you adjust to big city life coming from Enigma?

ROWAN: Well it didn't affect me much because in the early days -- I don't think it's that way now regrettably, you know were you in Atlanta or were you was in Enigma, were you was in the legislature or wherever you was you still, you know, maintained your own life and your own friends and paid for your own meals and paid for your own trips and that's not the way it is now. You go up there and I hung out with some friends of mine that was a lot like me. Talmadge McKinnon in Willacoochee. He was an old farm boy that come back out of the Navy and ran for office. Real popular over there, and later Frank Eldridge. So I don't know if I had much of a culture shock.

I did have the habit of walking from the hotel in the morning to the Capitol and I usually was the second person that got there. The first one was Jimmy Carter who I knew he was headed somewhere when I first met him. I never thought it would be the White House. I picked him to

be a Congressman or something like that. I think that's what he picked too. It just sort of wound up the other way, but he was hardworking and they had a big joke around -- Bob Smalley was another one that worked studiously on the bills in the Senate now.

Then Mark Gruger was the master of the house. He came in early, but I was an early riser over there and went around. I was mainly talking to people that was there. It wasn't long before we hired three secretaries to come in and take dictation from the Senators. We didn't have any to start with. You go sit down side the desk and write letters. And one of them that we hired still works for me today Frieda Ellis. Do you remember Frieda?

SHORT: I remember Frieda, yes.

ROWAN: She does a little work for me when I'm in Atlanta, gets my email. Great gal. She came in there high stepping, good looking widow.

SHORT: Yeah.

ROWAN: And what was the old boy up in the mountains Bo Loggins.

SHORT: Um-hum.

ROWAN: Bo, you know, kind of took to her. They had a real case going a while because he

was young and handsome and she was a beautiful young girl. Still is a beautiful lady. But anyway that was sort of the setting in the Senate.

SHORT: Speaking of Talmadge McKinnon --

ROWAN: Huh?

SHORT: Speaking of Talmadge McKinnon, I understand that you once went on a shopping trip with him and you both bought new clothes to go to Atlanta.

ROWAN: Oh that was the day we went up there. Talmadge lived over here in Willacoochee and he like me had got elected in kind of a special election. There had been a general election -- I mean regular election neither one of us would. And Talmadge was he was a handsome fellow. He was in the Navy and he parted his hair in the middle. He was about 6'3". He was about 38 or 40 years old. I was, as you said, 26 and he had a new Mercury car but it didn't have air conditioning, and when he and I went to Atlanta for the first time we'd gone both of us to BC Moore's store in Douglas and bought a new suit. And unfortunately they had suits of all sizes but we bought the identical suit because he -- he had a long, you know, tall and my clothes because I was always portly, you know, always had a little problem being fleshy and my clothes didn't fit anyway. But we went over there, my wife had gone with me, we picked out this suit. It looked good and I could afford it.

Talmadge come by here on the day we went up to Atlanta. We had registered at the Georgia Hotel and they was just infested with about 200 legislators. You could stay down there in a private room for \$5.00, you could share one for nine, four and a half a piece, but there was 150 or 200 legislators in the country boy. The big dogs, the rich people – Jimmy Carter and Harry Jackson from Columbus, they stayed at the Piedmont, and the Dinkler Plaza is where the big liquor drinkers and the fancy people stayed because that's where the movie stars came. That was around the corner there. And but we stayed there at the Georgia Hotel.

And we pull up there in front of the Georgia Hotel and they had valet parking the cars and so we got out and it had been hot going up there and I laid my coat in the backseat and he had laid his coat in the backseat. First time them folks ever saw me and Talmadge McKinnon, I got his coat and he got mine and -- and whenever he walked in ahead of me and I looked at his coat and I said he's misbought that coat. Realized it was the same -- you could almost see his elbows. It was like this sticking that far, and I looked down and I couldn't even see --

[LAUGHTER]

ROWAN: I says Talmadge. He turned around and he said by God we've got different coats on. So right in front of George Bagby and all that bunch up there, Husky Odoms and all them in the Georgia -- me and him -- they was sitting there looking at the newcomers and me and him swapped coats before we signed up at the desk.

SHORT: Let me quote you, Bobby, a story written by your friend Celestine Sibley. And I'm quoting her from the *Atlanta Constitution*. "Rowan was one of the progressives. Born of personal decency, southern populism and the rules of his father's house." Now we've talked about your father but we hadn't talked about your political philosophy. How would you define your political philosophy?

ROWAN: Well, Celestine's words are a lot smarter than I am, but I would agree and say that she's right. If I am anything I'm a populist and I believe that, you know, we are in fact charged as a community, a church, a school, county, a state or a nation with being friends to those that are less fortunate, but that doesn't mean we don't expect them to work, do their part in whatever station of life they have.

You know I'm not for the welfare state. I'm really for the workfare state, but I have problems when I see, and always have, always will, never really able to do a lot about it, but I don't think that we ought to forget while men might have been born equal under the Constitution, in this life it doesn't stay equal very long. So those that are less fortunate than me as a politician particularly, I want to be helpful to them and I don't see anything wrong with that. That doesn't make me some liberal, wide-eyed person. It doesn't mean that I'm on a side that is different than what I am. That's just what I am. It's how my daddy was, you know. He went through the Great Depression. I was born during the Great Depression and he always talked about, you know, that no man ever come out and wanted to work for food that he didn't give him food. But no man never come up and wanted money, he never gave him money either. He said, you know,

if you want to work for me I'll share what I got.

And so that's sort of what I think government ought to be. I don't agree with what's happening now in either party, to be honest with you, Bob. You know, we've both got so carried away as parties to where the big bucks -- I mentioned -- I might have mentioned earlier that I ran my first race with \$325.00 and that seemed to be enough for me. I bought a little ad or two, but mainly I got out and worked for it. And I see these legislators now being pushed to raise \$100,000.00 to run for a Senate or a House seat.

I don't believe they have to have that. I really believe that if they spent the time and effort shaking hands, speaking honestly, going over the area, asking people to vote for them, I think they'd do just as well as a TV ad on Albany that very few people see. Stations get the money and, you know, I just have a problem. I don't expect to be corrected. I'm not bitter about it, but if there's one thing that I believe to be true I think I've always enjoyed the fact that I was a populist.

You know the great populist of Georgia was Tom Watson; however, Tom Watson finally became the thing he despised, you know. And I always when I read his writings he had done so many things that I like and then in an effort to become greater, go to the US Senate and do bigger things or whatever in the hanging of the -- what was that case in Atlanta --

SHORT: Leo Frank.

ROWAN: Yeah, Leo Frank is where he became the thing he had always despised. And, you

know, he became a Jew hater and a black hater and, you know, I always made up my mind that, you know, I like the role of advocating from my neighbors and friends.

You know this afternoon my neighbor passed away and, you know, he was very popular, but even if he hadn't been, even if he had been disliked, we would have been there because he was our neighbor and that's just the way that I feel like we've missed it somewhere, particularly in the legislature. I don't think they have to have the money that they're soliciting to win.

SHORT: 1962 Governor's race, young Senator Carl Sanders and former Governor Marvin Griffin, what do you remember about that race?

ROWAN: Well I remember a lot about the race but since the race I've learned a lot more about the race. For instance, there was a critical turning point in that race. Right about where the maybe the Hyatt Regency is or Marriott Marquis in downtown Atlanta there was a hotel down there called the Downtowner. That was Marvin Griffin's hangout. And Marvin told me this himself. Later Garland Byrd who was in that '62 Senate as well, he'd been Lt. Governor, got recovered from his heart attack and came back and ran for the Senate, in the modern day Senate. Marvin, you see, that race started out with Marvin Griffin and Garland Byrd strongly opposing one another. Carl Sanders was running for Lt. Governor against Peter Zack Geer. Peter Zack Geer's friends pulled one of the oldest stunts in Georgia politics, used many times in the old county unit system days, and it was get somebody with the same name to run too. So Carl Sanders is Carl E. Sanders. They got a man named Carl F. Sanders to run for Lt. Governor.

Well Carl realized that they were going to squeeze him and beat him, so he said if that's what they're going to do -- also see Carl was -- I mean Peter Zack was being supported by the old Talmadge group and they were basically at that time for Garland Byrd. So he says, "You know, if they're going to do me this way I'm going to run for Governor."

So when he announced for Governor, Marvin Griffin, who was a shrewd, likeable, charismatic, the best storyteller Georgia ever had perhaps, friend to many people, ran many races, and was always just real solid, but a man of humor and wisdom I think, he had been the champion of state's rights, segregation, and the county unit system, and whenever Carl announced he realized that this thing was over.

And then it became rumored that Garland wasn't feeling well. Some say he had heart problems. Some said that he might not have. I think he probably did. His son tells me he probably did; however, it might have been caused by the situation he was in because Carl Sanders announced and that took Mills B. Lane because him and his airplane was on Carl's side. So rumor got out that Garland Byrd might drop out of the race.

Marvin Griffin called him and asked him would he meet him at the Downtowner, and so he agreed to and they met just the two of them at the Downtowner, and both of them actually had talked with me about this thing, about this meeting. Marvin said he told him he said, "Garland, now you know if you will stay in this race either me or you will be elected because we won't let that young whippersnapper get it." He says, "If I fight you everyday talk about how bad you are, if you fight me everyday talk about how bad I am, Carl Sanders will be out there trying to talk about both of us, nobody pay no attention to it."

But he told him that day, "If you get out of this race, I can't beat Carl Sanders. If I should get out, you can't beat him. You stay in, one of us will be elected. If I get elected I'll throw Ms. Gloria, that was Garland's wife, I'll throw her a biscuit along the way, look after you, and, you know, if you get elected then you can throw -- " I forgot Marvin's wife's name, said, "-- you can throw her a biscuit and that will take care of me. And he agreed to do it, but then about a week later Marvin said he pulled out.

SHORT: You've written this book, Georgia in Modern Day Legislature, which is very, very good, and in that book you say that you think that Carl Sanders has made or when he was Governor was probably the most progressive Governor we've had in a long time and he really made a modern state out of Georgia.

ROWAN: Oh he did. He did. And, you know, he was not my kind of person necessarily. At that time I was a country boy. I wasn't a redneck but I was considered one. Carl was more uptown, you know, they called him "Cufflinks Carl". So we didn't start out with great admiration for each other, but I think quickly we gained great respect for each other. Me because he thought for some reason or another, probably falsely, that I could produce a product in the Senate, and me because in him because I thought he was really good. I know how tough it is to manage the House of Representatives from the Governor's office and whenever I went up to get my committee appointments you think I talked to Peter Zack Geer? I talked to Carl Sanders.

SHORT: That's the way it was back then.

ROWAN: That's the way it was. You went to the Governor to find out what committees you're on.

SHORT: Yes.

ROWAN: And then, you know, if you -- his enforcer was the highway department because the legislator -- listen, we didn't really have any power. We could vote on a lot of things, but the budget appointments and all that was run by the Governor's office, absolutely. It always had been and it stayed way that until Lester. Lester got elected. That was kind of a fluke, and he didn't know the power he had and before he got a chance to take over in January, George L. Smith had taken it away from him and created the independent legislature.

You see Marvin -- I mean Ernie Vandiver was afraid that Marvin Griffin would be elected Governor in '62. See Vandiver was Governor. He feared that Marvin might come back. So at the end of his term he got with George L. Smith, Flicker Wilkes from Adel, Battle Hall from Rome, and several leaders and they passed the Independent Legislature Act, put in place the way they were going to take over committees and everything -- just like they did. Well those laws are on the books -- they're to have a vote and they select their own speaker, speaker's going to appoint everybody to committees and all that was the way it was going to be.

Well Carl got elected and you know how he handled that?

SHORT: He said I'm not going to do it.

ROWAN: He said I'm not going to do that.

SHORT: Yeah. Well you don't blame him, do you?

ROWAN: No, no. And so he didn't so they didn't challenge him because he was too powerful. Matter of fact, the big fight was the House boys were going to elect George L. as Speaker right one. He had been Speaker under Vandiver. And so they got a big movement. I learned a lot about how politics works on this.

So as we begin to get up there in Atlanta on Sunday I was around they had the Hospitality Room at the Georgia Hotel, they had the big one over at the Henry Grady, you know, where everybody was, and George T. Smith was from Cairo and I had known him. He had been served -- he served only two years. He was the only South Georgia legislator that supported Carl Sanders and got elected. Others supported him and got beat. But he was a Carl Sanders man and only served two years, and he announced he was running for Speaker.

George L. had announced he was running for Speaker and, you know, everybody assumed that the House of Representatives 80% of them was for Marvin, you know, all strong, and so that night I was over at the Henry Grady Hotel and George T. walked in and I asked him I said, "Well George how is your race coming?" "I'm all right." You know he spoke quick. He said, "I'm all

right. I'm all right. I'll win." Well George L.'s people had said they had about 120 votes or something. I said, "Well they claiming they got a lot of votes, George. How many you got?" "I got one. That's all I need, Bobby. I just got one." "You just got one?" He said, "Yeah. Yeah. I got the Governor and that's the only vote that counts."

Well the next day you know the more liquor they drank that night, and there was more than there should have been back then, and a lot more than there is now really, they all gather around and are talking about all that and I went over to the House the next day to see them nominate George L. and George T. Well, when they called for nominations you know who rose? George L. And I says well is he going to nominate himself? He got up and he nominated George T. Smith. He had gone out to the Governor's mansion that night and he had traded with the Governor on several things for his buddies and himself and I learned then that's the way it's done. And George T. was elected by acclamation.

SHORT: Bobby, before we get too far away I'd like to talk for a minute about Peter Zack Geer.

ROWAN: Well first of all you've got to remember Peter Zack because of his stature as a person. He had to be 6'3" with flowing red hair, a ruddy complexion that fit extremely well with the rednecks. No secret that he drank a lot of liquor. Enjoyed it immensely.

But having said that, in politics there's many roles one can play, but if you want to mention the people that have the greatest talent to preside over and manage a legislative body or even make a speech, I don't think anybody reached the heights of Peter Zack. Now, you know, he wouldn't

do the things necessary to be elected. He wouldn't go to the prayer breakfast. He wouldn't do things he didn't want to do. But he was a masterful presider and his greatest performance was after he got defeated. There was a time after he was defeated by George T. when the House of Representatives and the Senate had to meet and elect by vote of the House and Senate the next Governor of Georgia because Lester Maddox hadn't got a majority. Peter Zack Geer, the defeated Lt. Governor, presided over that body. It was statewide. People watched it, and if he and George T. could have run their race the next day he would have won hands down.

He was the old school. He cared for and really followed Herman Talmadge and he was destined for greatness under the county unit system no doubt. That's where he was headed but when that run out from under him he just couldn't quite fit in because the urban block, you know, the big papers and all. He was never a favorite of any of the areas that had the political muscle where the people were. But to his death he was a charismatic, great lawyer, and just a, you know, just a real contributor to the history of Georgia politics.

SHORT: Talk to me a bit about 1966.

ROWAN: 1966 was the election when Lester Maddox got elected. Now Lester had run against Peter Zack Geer, as you remember, and lost the race for Lt. Governor earlier. And was not really considered a man of great threat. I believe you had Jimmy Carter running. You had Ellis Arnall. You know, Ellis wrote the book, Shores Dimly Seen. He reprinted I think that was in '42 or three, and he got elected the first time, then, you know, over 20 years later he reprinted that book

and marked out "Dimly Seen" and put "Clearly Seen." You remember that?

SHORT: I remember that. Yeah.

ROWAN: And he was a real challenge, but he was -- he was a Jimmy Carmichael out of base and Jimmy Carter was the peanut man from down here, and but Jimmy also was a liberal bent that a lot of people didn't like. He had Jimmy Gray who was the -- owned the TV station in Albany running. He was Mr. Conservative. He had spoke at the Democratic convention and made a great speech a year or two before that, but he was from the north and was a Yankee and he never could get off the ground though he had more money than all of them.

And Lester just had this little sign that says "Maddox Country". That's all it said -- just black white "Maddox Country" and he nailed it up on walls. He come through here talking to people and while he was talking to them he had nailed up five or six signs. You know, never remembered anybody's names. "Hey big guy, hey chief," just sort of a little bit of a buffoon like, but when he got to voting there was enough racism and whatever left down there enough dislike for -- for Ellis Arnall, enough distrust of Jimmy Carter until Lester Maddox came in first.

And he and Ellis got in some kind of a runoff and he won, but then Ellis Arnall's people wouldn't quit and they petitioned, and in the general election they got enough votes that Lester -- he's running against Bo Callaway. I should have said that. A Republican who was the first real challenger in Georgia politics because he had money and was a Republican, had been in Congress. But Lester didn't get a majority vote. Bo Callaway got -- might have even gotten a

few more. I believe he did. And Ellis Arnall got enough to keep either one of them from getting the majority.

Then by law it had to go into the House of Representatives. So then the Democratic Party decided they'd rather have a man like Ellis -- I mean like Maddox instead of a man like Callaway and the one that made that call was Herman Talmadge. He sided with Maddox. He took his machine and went to the legislature. I know this because he talked to me. "And we can't have Bo Callaway. All of y'all will have opposition. All he's trying to do is build a party." Well I liked Bo Callaway pretty good, but I wasn't about to sacrifice for him. Rarely does a politician sacrifice for somebody he just like pretty good. You know that, Bob.

But anyway, so Lester won hands down in the vote in the House and Senate, and the one that had publicly despised Lester politically as much as anybody else was Mills B. Lane. He had really fought Lester. He had really fought Lester. You know this is not -- I really learned to really like Lester. I liked him. I disliked him and then I after evaluation I realized that this guy was for real, so when you look at the things that I can tell you he's done he measures up in ways that most people don't.

First person Lester ate with after he was sworn in as Governor was Mills B. Lane at the Commerce Club. First lunch he had. But anyway that was all right. Mills B. worked his way back in pretty well. That's all right too. I didn't fault -- somebody had to run the government.

SHORT: Tell us about the Tuesday Club.

ROWAN: Well I've been there. I know that every word in that book is true and I have been speaking about the Tuesday Club with great fascination to myself, and honest to goodness, Bob, it's in the book. It was in earlier things I had done, places I'd been and said, never nobody -- you might be the first question I ever had. People don't understand what was happening in this state. They don't understand that it didn't matter what happened, a few power brokers in Atlanta, Georgia, who met every Tuesday, made all the decisions. They put people where they needed to be to be influencers. There was a time when nobody else had money. They did. Nobody else had airplanes. Mills B. did. And this Tuesday Club was the elite of Atlanta.

And let me tell you the way I got invited in that thing. After George Busbee defeated me and 14 others for Governor, he appointed me to the Human Resource Board. I was the only one that endorsed him and I did, and I liked him. He liked me. And we had had a good 14-year-relationship when we were in the House Senate, and so George -- George Busbee wanted to pass -- this was before he appointed, right after he took office -- he wanted to pass a Constitutional amendment taking taxes off the Fulton County Industrial Park.

And George called me and he said, "Bobby I want to hire you to do something. He said I want you to be my lobbyist." So I went up there to see him and he said, "You know the legislature and you can help me with this." He says, "We want to pass a bill exempting the industrial authority of Fulton County from ad valorem taxes. We got to have somebody follow along." He said, "I'm going to put a lot of muscle behind it. Carl's going to put a lot of muscle behind it, and we want you to be our man on the ground."

And I said, "Well George, you know, I don't know much but I got a feeling even now with not

knowing any more this is hard to do. How you going to take ad valorem taxes out of all those rich companies when people in town they -- " "No, no, Bobby." He says, "We got the muscle to do it and we want to hire you to go over there and do it." Says, "Matter of fact --" I said, "Well I don't know." "Listen, I want you to go with me to lunch," and he took me to the Tuesday Club. And I was introduced to the man that was going to work with them on a project they obviously had talked about.

Is there a newspaperman named Tarver?

SHORT: Jack Tarver.

ROWAN: Jack Tarver. He presided. Every bank was there. Every utility was there. Cousins Properties was there. The old boy that had the building funny name downtown there, he was there. Ging Lot?

SHORT: Jin Latt?

ROWAN: Gingnillia -- no. Arthur Gignilliat was there. He was president of Savannah Electric.

SHORT: Savannah Electric. Yeah.

ROWAN: But there was this builder downtown who was everybody's kind of muscle man.

He's on Ellis Street there. Jenna -- anyway nice fellow. Anyway there were about 20 people in the room and they talked about what they were going to do and then they assigned certain people to do certain things. Like Tarver, they talked to him about an editorial at the right time and they talked about the other, you know, the banks what they were going to do and everything.

And, you know, and then I went over there and I started talking to the people who had to handle the bill and I went back to the Governor. I said, "Busbee, you can't pass this." He said, "You don't think we can pass this?" "No, you can't pass it now. Some things I know. Unless you're going to take, you know, you're going to get your highway department and publicly you're going to come out, you're going to say we're going to do this for the state of Georgia or something, but you ain't going to pass it because the people in Fulton County don't want it and the people outside ain't going to vote for it unless you're for it." I said, "Bobby Rowan can't do it."

So I went back a second time to the Tuesday Club and I told them that I didn't think they could pass it. At least I said I don't think I could pass it. Carl was there. But anyway the Tuesday Club -- you see what that club was was this. Now Lester broke up the club because he wouldn't play ball with them. They couldn't figure where he was. They couldn't figure out who was on first and who was on second. He just -- he'd ride his bicycle off into eternity. And so they decided they better not get caught. So they pretty much quit the Tuesday Club during Lester's era.

But they decided to have -- it all started with Jimmy Carmichael whenever the cities really lost big, Atlanta and them, they lost big with Jimmy Carmichael getting the most popular votes, but old Gene beating him. And so they decided then, never again would they take one side. They'd

buy both sides. The Tuesday Club's job was to buy both sides. Have somebody out there for everybody. And that lasted until Lester Maddox was sort of the middle of his term, and then Jack Tarver left who was the newspaper honcho and, you know, the different banks begin to be bought out by those -- things changed.

So they didn't have -- they kind of knew it -- I remember a fellow, AB Padgett and the guy Bert Lance, Virgil Jones, all the big bankers around there. But they simply got people on both sides and whoever won, they were their best friend because they'd put more money in their campaign than anybody else. And so that was just -- and so they ran the thing, you know, for 20 something years, the whole state.

SHORT: You mentioned the race for Governor. You entered that race. What prompted that decision?

ROWAN: Well, the fact of the matter is that I had some ambition. I had had a good run in the Senate. I was -- I think at the time recognized as one of the Senators that had -- I hope know if I can say this without -- I don't need to be immodest at this time in my life or modest or anything else, I'm just trying to tell the story. Wasn't a sense of greatness or anything, I thought I could do it. I talked to the smartest man in Georgia about politics and running -- at least I thought he was the smartest man in Georgia -- about running for Governor and he said to do it.

Well I ran. Think I might have run fifth in a 15 man race. I knew after I got in there I had this great idea of running for Governor and not taking any money. I limited the contributions to

\$250.00. I ran the kind of campaign that ought to win. I had more contributors than everybody running put together if you add up from a dime up. My average contribution was \$13.86.

Hal Raines was the political writer for the *Journal*. He came down here to Tifton Road with me to Albany to make a speech. Wrote an article coming back as a result of that trip and I was no longer a candidate anymore because he said these words. Said, "Bobby Rowan is a good fellow, probably make a good Governor, but you can't beat your opponent to death with an empty moneybag."

George Busbee repeated that. He staged a question. Norman Underwood is the one doing this. He staged a question in Albany. He flew into the airport and he had one of them to ask him, "What about Bobby Rowan?" He says, "You're sharecropping with Georgia Power." And I did -- I put my ad on the front page. I got a lot of publicity. Particularly after I found out I wasn't going to win, and that didn't take long, but George said, "Well, you know, Bobby Rowan would be a great Governor. He's a good fellow, a good friend of mine. If I get elected Governor I'm going to appoint him something. I want him to help me run the state."

SHORT: And he did.

ROWAN: Well he did but what in the hell do you say about that? You know I had been kicking him in the ass -- I'm sorry. Edit that out. I had been kicking him around. How do you go back with a man who said you're great, be a great Governor, good friend, ask you to run government, what do you say? He preempted me. So from then on I was the man that didn't have enough

money to win.

And so that -- I didn't and I wouldn't have won, but anyway I was fighting to stay up top among the ones that were doing things, but it was all a matter of -- happens to a lot of people. I listened to myself, but Bob, the fact of the matter is politicians tend to do that. If you listen to yourself you could make some real serious errors about political judgment, but I wanted to be Governor and if I would have been Governor I even to this day think that the populism I would have brought into play and maybe along the way, you know, I'd have out at the Governor's mansion -- I had young kids and I always joked about if I got elected I'd cut a hole in the damn fence out there so my neighbors could come play with my youngins, and I probably would have.

But anyway that race because maybe I didn't, you know, I didn't get angry, I didn't lose focus, I ran as if I might win, knowing -- see whenever they collapsed me on -- if the newspaper say you can't win, you can't because you have your own friends. I carried this area down here. I done all right in Athens and a little bit in DeKalb County in places, but clearly not enough to be a contender, but that race -- because I went all over Georgia, when I ran later for the PSC that's what elected me. Not only running the race getting to know people, but making friends and not enemies.

After I saw I was going to lose I didn't jump on Busbee anymore. I just, you know, I just did clever things and, you know, talked about chasing Bert Lance's Learjet in a pickup truck and did anything to sort of put my head on the front page and had a great time with the race. If you know you aren't winning and you're not bitter and if you like people, how else could a man from Enigma, Georgia, walk in a clothing store in West Point, Georgia, go through it and shake hands,

greet people, say hello, ask them to vote for you and leave? How else could you do that? If you went in there just as an individual and shook hands they'd run you out. Think you're going to shoot them or something.

Politician has a great chance to meet people and to be successful, and if he's sincere a great chance to do good. See county government doesn't have the resources to do really great things for the people. Washington is too big. You can't influence it even if you get up there. You know even the legislators and senators they can't -- the bureaucracy runs it. You can't do anything as an individual in Washington. It's the state government that you can influence because you'd have better schools, better healthcare, better roads, better buses, and anybody that has a vote and is willing to vote can have an impact.

SHORT: Jimmy Carter followed Maddox in the Governor's office by defeating Carl Sanders. I want to give you a quote from a story in the Atlanta newspapers by Bill Shipp, friend of yours, and I'm quoting, "Carter ran a campaign that was groundless and vicious." Is that a fair description?

ROWAN: I don't really think so. I think Carter ran a campaign that was a little -- it was a campaign run on the elements of political success. Now he made a main issue about Carl Sanders not inviting George Wallace over to speak, but yet Carl Sanders was far more conservative than Jimmy Carter. And, you know, he abandoned that rhetoric on the day he was inaugurated because when he made his inauguration speech all of us were surprised because I

knew -- I was standing close by outside, I knew that it was an agenda, Bob, that was not for the state of Georgia. I knew then. I thought it was the US Senate maybe.

But anyway, I don't think that -- I think it was a campaign that was based upon certain elements of politics that had a degree of success -- of being successful. Now I say that because Carl fell into it. You see he let himself be portrayed as Cufflinks Carl. He was too proud to tell the truth. It wasn't Carl that should have been Cufflinks. Carl he was a self-made man. His daddy worked in the mill. He was from Augusta. Smart, young kid. Come up hard, made a lot of money and was successful. It was Jimmy Carter that was the son of a king. Had money and land and property. Went to the Naval Academy and did all these things. Jimmy Carter portrayed himself as a peanut farmer from South Georgia, redneck. Carl Sanders portrayed himself or allowed himself to be portrayed as a rich successful lawyer in Atlanta and neither one of them was true. But I think I would say Shipp's -- I would disagree with my friend Shipp because I think it was the politics of the day and it wasn't nasty enough to be considered terribly offensive on most of the things he did, and maybe Carl played into him. Now as I've said I already said that Carl Sanders was one of the great Governors of all time. He was focused on Georgia. He brought it out of the county unit system. He certainly helped solve -- he and Vandiver -- the integration crisis. We never suffered like Alabama. Nobody ever stood in the courthouse door.

If Carl Sanders hadn't got elected we would have faced all of that that Alabama did and our state -- you see what made Georgia great is when we solved the integration problem, Mayor Hartsfield, Carl Sanders, Vandiver -- whenever Georgia became a place when people up north didn't fear to come, and when the Southern Company built enough electricity that we could air

condition Georgia, air condition was essential. Georgia would have never gone without adequate electricity.

Air conditioning, solving the integration problem is the reason Georgia's growing today just like it is because people up north had come down here. They didn't have to get outdoors among the people. They didn't necessarily like Georgia people, but they liked -- they got out of the sunbelt, snowbelt, too cold down here, summer's all right because they got air conditioning.

I think that -- I think Jimmy Carter was the man that clearly was able to stay focused on the mission. I think he went after Carl Sanders, but, you know, he had suffered defeat four years earlier many said because he allowed himself to be portrayed as what he was. Gray was the conservative, he was the liberal, and Ellis Arnall was more liberal or whatever, but he came in third. If he'd have come in second probably we would have never heard of Ellis Arnall -- I mean of Maddox. If Maddox hadn't of got in that race we'd never heard of him. We would have heard of him but he wouldn't have been a leader. And Jimmy Carter would never have been president.

SHORT: But Maddox was successful, Bobby, though in becoming Lt. Governor after he was Governor and --

ROWAN: That's right.

SHORT: And for four years we went through the fights between Maddox and Carter over, first

of all reorganization, and then everything else. Now you were up there during all that. Tell us about that period.

ROWAN: Well first of all, Maddox's greatest victory was not being elected Governor. That was his greatest accomplishment, but that was handed to him by a mix of things that normally wouldn't have happened. The legislature, Herman Talmadge going against Callaway and everybody deciding to get behind -- anyway, but when he ran against George T. Smith that race was for real. He won it because he was popular and it was his.

And he and Jimmy were on, you know, just like I'm a populist, Lester was not a -- he was not a racist. He was a segregationist. He believed that, yet he appointed more blacks as Governor than anybody's ever appointed and more women. He didn't have a -- and he appointed some really honest people to jobs that often before people that might be less honest were appointed to like on Pardons and Paroles. Like a lot of other things he did, so and, you know, I had a -- didn't have a -- I had a great disappointment with him, and he did me I'm sure, because the problem I had whenever I was one of his floor leaders working with Maddox was that everybody else was his floor leader and I'd go down -- one day I went down there and they wanted certain of the Ag people -- I was an Ag person and I went down to Lester's office and I said Governor, a lot of the agriculture people, the Farm Bureau and everybody, wants the sales tax off farm machinery. I don't know if I ever told this story. And I said, "You know my friends I'm a farmer too, we'd like to do it." He said, "Well Bobby, I think it was Jay Butler says we can't afford to do that. It costs us \$30 million." I said, "Well Governor, to be honest with you, I think

you're probably right. And if you tell me that we can't do that because you're going to oppose it, then, you know, I'm on your side. I'll go back down there and tell them that you're not going to let that happen, that you're against it, can't afford it, and I did."

But Ford was in the tractor business and he and I were great friends and we've discussed this a little bit. Ford was president of the Tractor Dealers Association and he --

[PHONE RINGS IN THE BACKGROUND]

ROWAN: He went down to see Maddox -- it will quit. He went down to see Maddox same day. I'd went to Al Alloway and everybody and told them that Lester couldn't do that, and Ford went down there and took a couple of people with him. I don't know exactly who. And Lester agreed that he would support it. And he came back up to the floor and took the well of the House and said that, "Governor Maddox has just authorized me to read this statement," and he read Lester's statement saying he would support it what he just sent me to fight for. And that just irritated me so.

So I didn't say nothing, but that was -- I decided the best thing for me to do, because I didn't want to stay bitter all my life about it. I didn't dislike him. The best thing for me to do was just quit and get somebody else and he did. He got Mike Padgett and that was better for him because Padgett's agenda was different than mine and that was okay. But anyway, see that's what I disliked about Lester as Governor. Now it's because people done him that way more often than they should. But he still was not what people said he was. He didn't deserve the licks he got.

He never got the credit he did deserve.

And most of all, see everybody else is rich and I tried to get the legislature to pass funding for his retirement. You know Busbee had it, everybody else had it. Lester Maddox -- was before he died was in desperate financial straights. You know that better than anybody, Bob.

SHORT: Um-hum.

ROWAN: The legislature wouldn't do anything for him. That was one of my great disappointments with the legislature. That was a sense of fairness.

SHORT: Um-hum.

ROWAN: But anyway, Lester as Lt. Governor, he pretty much stayed on his philosophy and he was -- but he won that race because he was a popular Georgian.

SHORT: How about reorganization?

ROWAN: Reorganization needed doing. I'm not sure it accomplished anything close to what Jimmy envisioned. It needed doing because it hadn't been done since Richard Russell was Governor. There were 237 departments, separate line items and all that, departments. And Jimmy came in. If I had to criticize it, and I've said this before, I think he tried to do too much,

too soon, with too little. Case in point, I was active in the mental health mental retardation movement and I was trying to separate them rather than put them together because of one thing. If you say -- I've had numbers of people say to me, you know, I always support the mental health programs that you're for, Bobby.

[PHONE RINGS IN BACKGROUND]

ROWAN: That will go away. Because I really support retardation. Mental health is not retardation. They're not treated the same thing. There's a cure for mental health and there is a training opportunity for mental retardation. It's not something that has a cure. So I wanted to separate them, but Jimmy put them together and that was the point that I disagreed with him on. But I thought reducing human resources to a smaller number was good. So on balance at the end of the day we were better off having gone through the reorganization. It didn't prove to be as effective as many hoped, but it was worth doing only because something needed to be done.

SHORT: How would you rate Maddox as a Lt. Governor?

ROWAN: Better than Governor. I think it's because -- he wasn't a bad Governor, but often he didn't govern. He didn't govern. He simply didn't govern. And let me give you a case in point. When he got elected in November -- I mean when he got elected in January, Carl Sanders, Flicker Wilkes and George L. Smith had already drawn up his two year budget. Maddox had

nothing to do with it. He wasn't even Governor. Then they took Flicker Wilkes he resigned in the legislature and became Maddox's budget director. So it was two years that they convinced Maddox in what we needed was to be in favor of an independent legislature.

Now I thought that was a mistake and said so because I knew what was going to happen, see. So really same people that ran government under Carl Sanders pretty much continued for a couple of years. It took Maddox about two years to learn everything but he did learn it and then he brought in some people. Mike Padgett, you know, became closer to him and he was -- and Johnny Caldwell helped him some, Tom Murphy. So they began to bring Maddox into the fold, and so I think at the end of his administration he was better. That's clearly shown by the fact George T. was a pretty good Lt. Governor, pretty popular, pretty articulate, pretty honest, had a lot of friends. Lester beat him. Beat him handily.

So I would rate him as -- I'd rate him as one of the good Lt. Governor's. Not necessarily the best one, but a good Lt. Governor. And we had so many fair governors until I'd count him a fair Governor. Not a bad one. He was a strong on the moral side, Bob. He was weak on the knowledge of administration.

SHORT: That brings up an interesting point that we've discussed quite often, and that is that most of our governors in modern Georgia have served in the General Assembly.

ROWAN: I believe all of them except Maddox. If you name them coming down you see you had, you know, from way back, you know, from Richard Russell, Ed Rivers, Columbus -- I mean

Ellis Arnall, Speaker of the House, I believe. Then you had M.E. Thompson wasn't in the legislature, but he was acting Governor. And of course Marvin -- I mean Gene -- Herman wasn't in the legislature, but then Marvin was in the legislature and then Vandiver was -- would have been Lt. Governor as in general, and then of course you go on through the list. All of them, even through Sonny Perdue, except Maddox, was a product of the legislature.

I think that's pretty good because as a legislator they learn if they think they're going to be Governor they're mostly studious and in a learning mode, and they learn about the -- not only how to budget, but the limitation of the budget process. They learn that we ain't got \$20 billion now to budget because 98% of it is already budgeted. You can't cut the schoolteachers. You can't stop the paving of the roads. You can't stop school bus drivers. You've got to have healthcare. You got to pay the healthcare workers. So all that is a continuation budget. And up top there's about 2% where you can affect welfare and other things, you know, if you want to have a partisan agenda. The legislators learn that but it's something you don't learn unless you've been there.

SHORT: So you had served in the Senate, you had run for Governor, and then you decide later to run for the Public Service Commission.

ROWAN: That's right.

SHORT: Why did you want to get back into politics?

ROWAN: I didn't necessarily want to get back into politics. Mr. Short, you assured me to start with. This was a page for history. Now where anybody ever looks at it or sees it is not a great concern to me. My job if I have one is to speak fairly truthfully and to mention some of the reasons I've done certain things that my grandchildren and great-grandchildren can observe if they want to, and have good, clean answers.

You've asked me one now. Why on earth after 14 years of being absent from politics, though I had been on the Board of Human Resources, which was a continuation of a labor of love for the disadvantage and disabled, part of the populism in me continued. So I wasn't out of it all. I just wasn't -- I wasn't in politics. Why would I want to get back and why would I want to run for the PSC? You know, you -- you'd had one more week and \$10,000.00 in 1970 you would have won the Public Service -- and then I would be interviewing you instead of you interviewing me.

SHORT: Well thank the Lord I lost.

ROWAN: Yeah it was the best thing. But anyway, why did Bobby Rowan run for the PSC? Well first of all, Ford Spinks is retiring and he and I had been friends and had served together. I had encouraged Jimmy to appoint him and we had gone back as friends and neighbors and still are. You know he's still a -- he and Ruby are good friends of mine. He was retiring and he wanted me to take his place. Well I really didn't think I wanted to be on the PCS. You had Palford over there and Palford proved to be one of the most miserable people that I have ever

known anywhere, any time, and the biggest hypocrite. You know, Southern Bell and to a lesser extent Georgia Power, they owned him lock, stock and barrel, but he put up a facade, he never went out and eat with them. Well he didn't because they all stuffed his plate.

Anyway, he was just a -- anyway and then why would I want to run for the PSC -- also why would I think I could win? I'd been out 14 years. And then Bob, something happened to me. I was -- at the time I had went broke farming and that's a great experience. If everybody could be assured of having been successful and coming out and going really broke, that is one of the most learning experiences you could ever do. In my case I went stone broke in the cattle business when everybody else went broke. My neighbors were pretty much broke. And I had the blessings of Job and that, you know, I went broke and then I came back when things were better because I had friends. That's what made it.

But anyway I had gone back to lobbying and had a little more presence in Atlanta. Had a client or two. Life of the South and -- to get registered for lobbying up there to start with I didn't have anybody, so I registered under the Enigma Brotherhood of Farmers. Got me a big tag -- you know you can't walk around -- what the hell are you doing here, Rowan? So I went down and registered as the lobbyist for the Enigma Brotherhood of Farmers and I spun a yarn about being, you know, 20 people down here that meet every -- 5:00 every morning and so and now that I was a lobbyist and I could get another client or two and Rich Houston got me to do some things, so I had gotten back in it in '86 as I mention like that.

And then Ford wanted me to run for it. And I didn't want to run -- didn't think I could, didn't have any money, was just recovering. But then the last of the session in '88 -- this story is not

going to be long. It's probably off point. You can take it out if it is. I thought I had the flu the last week of the session. Me and Hanson Carter were staying at the old hotel the -- it is now the Sheraton. It was then something else. We was staying over there, staying together really.

And the last week of the session I just had the flu. I was so sick I couldn't even go over there, but I didn't want to go away because I had two or three little bills and I needed to follow it. So the day the session was over I called the doctor in Tifton and told him I had the flu and I got in the car, left before it was over, and I drove to Tifton -- and this had to be around March the 8<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> -- and I went to the doctor and he came in there and looked at me and he left, come back out and he drew a blood sample and he left again and he come back in. He said I don't know what you got, Rowan, but you ain't got the flu. I'm putting you in the hospital.

So turned out I had a -- I was bleeding to death. I had colon cancer and it was -- the tumor was - - because I'm big in the girth anyway, it was not detectable and I was just bleeding and that's the reason everything was so low. I was about to bleed to death. They put me in there and on March the 16<sup>th</sup> they operated on me. Colon cancer and whenever they got through I didn't have any problems, I didn't have to have a colostomy. I was real fortunate.

I just had a recovery period of about a month and while I was in recovery I realized my station in life. I had a potential to build a little lobbying business and to stay in Atlanta and make enough money to survive having gone broke, but I didn't have any health insurance. Here I am with a \$15,000.00 bill which I could pay, that ain't much. Today it would be \$300,000 and didn't have any health insurance and I realized that if I got elected to -- Ford Spinks had talked to me -- if I got elected to PCS and stayed healthy for one month, I've got health insurance the rest of my

life, you know, because I already had 13 or 14 years in. So I made up my mind in the hospital, I was going to run for that job, bust my ass to get it, do all I could to get it, work as hard as I could 24 hours a day, beg my friends to help me because I wanted that job because I needed the health insurance.

And you might say that's such a foolish thing, but you see I could have faced chemotherapy, I could have faced a continuing -- could have got my lymph -- I could have faced bills that nobody could pay doctor bills. You've got to have either some kind of government agency or health insurance something can pay. You can't pay enough to pay your doctor if you have a bad problem. And so I ran because I knew, and I was honest about it, if I could get elected I had health insurance for me and Barbara and that was important to me.

And actually, so anyway I ran and a lot of people helped me and I got elected. You know I went to -- Culver Kidd had one day for five counties down there, brought in the sheriffs and everybody. They cooked the fish, furnished the liquor, and put on a party and I carried every county. Never went back. So it was friends helping me, but I needed that.

I got it and then in '94 times were changing and I wasn't as passionate then. I couldn't be because I had, you know, I had enough years I could involuntarily separate, so I had -- I had my retirement in place, so in '94 when I lost I didn't just back off and cry about it. Matter of fact I wrote a book, I hope I give you, in three days. If I didn't I'll give you one, talking about my 34 years of public life, that's before I wrote the other one.

SHORT: Well I'm anxious to read it. Let's talk a minute about some of your friends, Zell

Miller.

ROWAN: I think it was Ed Jenkins who described Zell as two Zells. You know this much better than me. As Zell and Ezell. So I -- maybe I'm not plagiarizing, I'm giving an honest discussion of my opinion of him. Doesn't take anything from him, I don't think I wouldn't want to do that really. I have no reason to. He was always very nice to me on most occasions. But Zell Miller could turn from your best friend to a man you was almost afraid of right in front of your eyes. You've seen him. It's surely happened to you. And, but basically Zell Miller was a far deeper thinker than most people thought. Pretty much thought through most issues, and as a result he was a good Lt. Governor.

Now when he ran against Herman Talmadge he got defeated and then Mattingly beat Talmadge. I think Zell made a change in his life and he decided then he was going to abandon some of the issues, you know, at that time he was real pro labor union and was real Mr. Liberal and Mr. Democrat. He changed and became a little more acceptable to the Georgia political life and as a result of that he was on the track to becoming governor. Then he had a few friends that either because of his nobility or selfishness, like Virgil Williams and others, that wanted a Governor in the Governor's mansion and they early on put a lot of money into him as Lt. Governor to run for Governor and nobody could really catch him.

Murphy misstepped, he backed Bubba MacDonald and that was a real disaster because most people thought he could sing and when he got around the state and they heard him sing they didn't like his singing. He really couldn't sing. He was the only man that wanted to sing I ever

saw that somebody should have stood up and said, "Hell you can't sing." But he enjoyed -- he'd break into a song, and Murphy backed him. Roy Barnes was running on his own. Zell was running. Andrew Young was running. Andrew wasn't ever going to get there, and I think Bubba MacDonald got 6% of the vote. Roy got almost enough to force Zell into a runoff. If Roy had got a runoff with Zell, he might have beat Zell that time. But it's good he didn't because Zell went on to become Governor for eight years and then Roy became Governor and a better Governor than he had been back then. And then, you know, he had Bobby Kahn, you know, if neither one of them had been lawyers he might have beat Perdue but, you know, a trial lawyer thinks they're smarter than anybody in the world and Roy wouldn't listen. You know that. Good fellow. Good friend of mine. Or Bobby Kahn wouldn't listen. They didn't think he had to have any South Georgia people and he didn't get as many as he should have. He got many but, you know, he didn't get as many as he should have.

But Zell was -- if you add up the years he was Lt. Governor and then Governor, I give him high marks for keeping Georgia on a stable course and being a fairly well liked Governor with a vision for the future. Now I'll have to tell you, and I don't think I'd say this to Zell because no reason to hurt him, but I want a -- I still call him Governor, not U.S. Senator. For whatever reason he missed his balance up there, and it culminated -- is that the way you say that word, anyways, work on that -- in a performance that I was not proud of. At the Republican Convention he came out angry, looked angry, he didn't act friendly, he missed his audience, he left angry, and I think that hurt him. One of the few things he ever done that really turned south on me. Now I'm just -- that's my opinion. My opinion because it was not the characteristic Zell.

You see the Zell side was one of the most persuasive, diplomatic, political persons I've ever known. That was Ezell that walked out on the stage that night. That was clearly Ezell. And you know what I'm talking about at the Democratic Convention.

SHORT: Sure. Yeah.

ROWAN: But I liked his book pretty well. I thought he was on target with his book. I don't agree with all of it, but I say I'd count him as one of the people that made a difference. Carl Sanders made a difference. Zell Miller made a difference.

SHORT: While we're on the subject of party politics, what do you think is the reason for the Republican Party takeover of the Governor's office and the state capitol?

ROWAN: I think if you want to really reach down into the genesis of it all, it was when the legislature funded public television and the lawmakers. Now, there are politically active people that watched the lawmakers, some of them that are not political active. It's just it's a choice to watch. Many of them look at it and see if they see their legislator. A lot of people watch the lawmakers.

Now, when you see the lawmakers beginning in about 1992 or three, the Republicans when they interviewed a Republican legislator or when they got in the well, they really made a pretty good impression. Most of the time were fairly reasonable people, even maybe a few of them up your

way is not, you know, some of the abortion radicals are way beyond anything reasonable. But basically they were pretty well looked upon as pretty acceptable Georgians, you want to be with. Now when the Democrats got up there to speak it was mostly radical, very liberal, mostly Atlanta oriented and the public out in the state that was making the decision making decided the Republicans in the legislature looked a little better than the Democrats. You know I shouldn't call names but, you know, Gonzala James, good friend of mine, but didn't make a real great impression. Didn't entice the party too much because she had a radical stance and she stood it. I think that was the beginning of the erosion.

Then you had the Democrats with too much power. Newt Gingrich came up with a gimmick rather than a strategy. The gimmick was a Contract on America. It sounded good. It should have been good, and he swept things out including me out of office, Warner Rogers out of office, almost got Zell, you know, almost got everybody. It was a good strategy.

And then they became too powerful and now to be honest with you the pendulum is swinging back. People are beginning to decide, as I view it, they're not real sure about this, you know, this -- this all Republican government. George Bush is not very popular. I noticed in the program the other night Reagan was mentioned. Other -- Clinton was mentioned. But you know who wasn't mentioned? George Bush. Neither side, but Obama probably shouldn't and McCain wouldn't.

So, you know, politics has changed, but I think it changed because -- and you've got to remember now there's a certain amount of racism in the state. There always has been. There always will be. And that played against the Democratic Party.

SHORT: So you feel like many disenchanted Democrats that the state party is too urban and too dependent on minorities and unions for support?

ROWAN: I would say that's really the trouble. And, you know, like I remember a conversation Marcus Collins and I had with Roy Barnes and Bobby Kahn. You talk to Roy you mostly talk to Bobby too, you know. So we went in to tell him that he wasn't doing good down here among us white conservatives. Me and Marcus was for him. A lot of people like us was for him, you know. A lot of us didn't want to be party to the Republican movement. Didn't feel comfortable there.

And so we went down there to his office and Marcus would have done more talking than me. I just kind of added to it. He said, "You know Governor you've got to pitch us white folks a bone." He says, "You know it looks like y'all just left us. Everything y'all doing up here, you know, you're doing for --" and he named some names that I don't have to name, and, "You know, the leaders up here there's, you know, down home folks don't think you care about us." And I was surprised at the words that Bobby Kahn came up with. He said, "Well Bobby, that's the reason we're going where the votes are." He says, "White conservative men are not going to vote for us, not going to vote for Roy Barnes." And I said, "Well what about the schoolteachers?" He said, "Well I'm going to work on that a little bit," but he never did, because really the schoolteachers would be the most. It wasn't the flaggers because there's not that many of them. But he said, "You know, we're -- that's not where the votes are."

I thought then it was a mistake because there was no way I could help Roy Barnes unless he gave me something to help him with, unless he does something I can talk to the farmers about or whatever. So we really had no tools if you were a white Democratic. And so Roy lost most of them.

SHORT: Before time runs out let's get back to Bobby Rowan. Bobby, you're a legend in state politics not only for the serious contributions you've made, but also for your fun loving side. I'd now like to ask you to confirm or deny some Bobby Rowan stories. Did you really write the famous speech delivered by Senator Roscoe Dean?

ROWAN: Well the truth of the matter is that's -- that is absolutely true. I've never heard it told that it was embellished to the point where it wasn't true. And if I wanted to dig through my archives I could come up with a handwritten speech that I wrote for him and took it to the Governor's office in the back where a gorgeous lady that's now deceased was working from Cedartown. Her daddy was a sheriff over there.

SHORT: Yvonne Redding.

ROWAN: Yes. She typed it up in big, broad speech type type, and I gave it to Roscoe Dean and I give you my word that occurred in 1964 and I believe in the course of next 10 years I did a lot of good things, Bob, but as I traveled around the state I'm always chagrined that the only damn

thing anybody remembers is that speech I wrote for Roscoe Dean, but I can't deny it because it's all true.

SHORT: Well tell us about the speech.

ROWAN: Well you've got to remember -- I might have earlier said that I was elected campus leader at the University. Roscoe Dean was a freshman over there and he aspired to be like Gene Talmadge. Combed his hair like old Gene. He had a flock that fell down in front. And over there he was always wanting to associate with people he thought had power.

So I was campus leader and Roscoe became my -- one of the people that I could count on to do certain things politically and he also had a little old honorary -- he was in the Greeks had some little fraternity he was in, and it wasn't nothing, but he wanted to be on the X Club and he wanted to be in the honoraries and the campus leader had a lot to do with that who was nominated and who got it after they were nominated. Roscoe figured I was a man of some power, which wasn't necessarily true. And he attached himself to me a good bit and I got to know him.

He gave everybody over there a Christmas present, a little pen or a nail file or something, every student, and every married student Roscoe Dean gave a Christmas tree. Sixty-two hundred students over there. About 800 of them lived in married housing. So he was then running for something. He's always -- his life was politics and food and liquor and he couldn't drink liquor. His mama was deeply religious.

But anyway so then two years later Bill Zorn was the senator from Jesup and one of my very best friends, one of the best lawyers -- country lawyers I ever knew. And we became great friends, and then when Roscoe run against him I tried to help Zorn, but Roscoe beat him two to one in every precinct. He was a masterful strategist. He was the Carl Rove of the '60s really. He knew what to say, how to hurt you and back then I remember we had -- you had self-service gas. Bill Zorn told me this story and Roscoe didn't deny it. I confronted him with it.

There was a big black man driving an old smoking Cadillac. Went all over the county with big Bill Zorn signs on it. Pull up and rudely blown his horn and get out smoking a cigar and ask to put him in a couple of dollars of gas and don't mind checking the gas, you know, and the windshield was kind of rusty and they'll do it because that's what they're supposed to do but and then he'd get in that thing make a bunch of smoke on the thing and then he'd say, "You boys don't forget to vote for my old good friend Bill Zorn. He was one of the nicest men. He helps our church." He drove off. They'd say -- you can imagine what they'd say. Anyway, that was some of his tactics. And but Roscoe was again, you know, like Jimmy Carter thing earlier, he was playing what it was that was winning for him.

He came over to the Senate though. His first bill was outlawing nudity in Georgia. Twenty thousand church signatures outlawing nudity. Banning it completely. All public and private -- well public places. Well we didn't have no nudity in Georgia. It wasn't legal anyway, but Roscoe he -- I says, "Roscoe it's already illegal." "Don't matter. We're going to pass the bill. Be sure it and don't happen again." So he got a lot of mileage out of that and pretty well figured out he was a political fluke. He voted for every appropriations for anything. Voted against

every -- voted against every tax increase.

I began to realize that on issues that Roscoe didn't know anything about I could vote him. So I sort of added to my political strengths in the Senate by spending a little time with him and he'd come to me wanting me -- Roscoe done all of his speaking by rising on a point of personal privilege. He didn't debate. He couldn't think -- he didn't think he was -- anyway he didn't do best in a debate forum. He did best when he prepared himself, got up and delivered. He was always targeted, but he was always wanting to fight anybody that had taxes.

Well I wrote him a speech about tobacco and wrote him a little point of person, little five or 10 minute things, you know, and he would rise up and he'd begin to trust me. And then Carl Sanders come out with a bill, got it introduced by his floor leadership, raising the tax on cigarettes. And Roscoe immediately came to me. He said, "Bobby, Bobby, Bobby." He is a very impatient man, sort of. "You got to help me write a speech. Good gracious you got to help me -- I want you to write a speech. I'm going to fight Carl Sanders' tobacco tax." And I said, "Roscoe, I don't know if I want to write you a speech about that. Now I'm inclined to vote against it if I can figure out how I can get away with it. But I'm not one to want to kick Carl --" "You got to help me Bobby. Won't tell a soul. Won't tell a living a soul. Won't tell a living soul."

Well I decided, you know, maybe I'd have a little fun so I was over there staying at the hotel and you remember old Bob Andrews?

SHORT: Very well.

ROWAN: He died a year or so ago. He was a clever fellow. Drank as I did at that time too much liquor, but a great fellow. Lived at Gainesville. And so Bob Andrews and Frank Eldridge was over there and I began to write Roscoe's speech. And the more we wrote the funnier it got, and Bob Andrews added some lines, you know, the voice of the turtle walking all the land, a quote from Solomon, you know. And so we just had a good time drinking a little bit of liquor and just having fun with Roscoe's speech.

And then I wrote it, you know, as I said I was writing it all day and then I went and got it typed up, and I never dreamed Roscoe would give the speech. I thought when he saw that speech he would laugh at it and say, "Rowan you, you rascal what are you trying to get me to do?" But he didn't. Looked at it. Went in the -- the pantry room there, read it and said out, always had a cigarette in his mouth says, "Rowan the best one you ever done, best speech you ever wrote." I realized then I said, "Listen, well don't -- don't say anything about it, Roscoe. I'm not out to fight the Governor, I'm probably going to vote with you, but don't --" "Oh I won't, I won't, I won't say anything about it." And then he turned and it wasn't three minutes later I heard him tell a fellow says, "Rowan's a good speechwriter." I knew then.

But anyway, here was the speech. First of all, it was a speech against Carl Sanders' tobacco tax and it started out -- we had written the speech where you write a paragraph that makes some sense, and then you just go absolutely crazy with the next line, then you come back to some sense of civility and then you go crazy again. So it started like this. It said "Gentlemen, I rise today to oppose the bill by Governor Carl Sanders doing further damage to a desecrated industry

raising tobacco by imposing upon them a tax that is unfair, unjust, and unlikely to succeed in accomplishing the goal that Governor Sanders is proposing. Certainly is not likely to succeed with my support."

Then the next paragraph said, "Now gentlemen, nepotism is no excuse for extemporaneous frivolity." Well whenever -- when he read that, and he had practiced before the mirror, he told me that, "Now gentlemen nepotism is no excuse for extemporaneous frivolity." Well then he got through that and it said, you know, the evils of putting all the tobacco farmers in a state of economic distress. Made a little sense. Then the next line -- when I took the speech to Roscoe I stood him before me and I, you know, still that -- I said, "Now Roscoe, I'm going to tell you a Rodney Dangerfield one-line joke. A speech this great should surely have a clever side to it. I'm going to tell you a joke, " and I told him a one-line joke, you know, like Rodney Dangerfield uses. I could never remember what that joke was because he didn't give it, but in the speechwriter preparation they put in parentheses, "Now tell the joke." And I was just sitting there cringing when he got down to that paragraph and then Roscoe said, "Now tell the joke." And everybody just rolled like what in the hell's going on.

Then he sort of leveled off and then his last paragraph said, "Gentlemen, I rise to quote the noted philanthropist and tobacco farmer who spoke these immortal words over 50 years ago PJ Puddin Willis from Pearson, Georgia who said, 'Gentlemen, I prefer no further taxes.' " And that lived on. Why it lived on I don't know. And you think my friend Andrews or my friend Eldridge acknowledged knowing anything about that? No.

SHORT: Well Bobby --

ROWAN: And then let me tell you the end of the -- quick end of that story. I knew -- I knew I wasn't going to get away with writing Roscoe's speech against the Governor. You know what I done? Soon as I could get an appointment I ran down to the Governor and said, "Governor I want to tell you I just want to talk to you a minute and you've got a liquor tax and you've got a cigarette tax. Cigarette tax hurts me a little bit. I planned to keep my mouth shut and vote against it, but if you'll let me off the hook on the cigarette tax I'll vote for your liquor tax." He didn't answer me directly. He said, "Senator, said did you write Roscoe Dean's speech?" I said, "Yes sir. Governor, I have to admit I did, but if I'd known the dumbass was going to give it I wouldn't have written it." But he laughed. I voted for his liquor tax and I voted against the cigarette tax.

SHORT: Well let me ask you this question. Did you really introduce a Senate bill requiring voters to be dead at least for three years before they could vote?

ROWAN: That was a time of great frivolity and one of the facts is wrong. It was two years.

SHORT: Two years.

ROWAN: However, anything less than two and a half years was to be considered as just two

years. Let me tell you the way that was. That happened in 1964 in the summer. Carl Sanders had decided he wanted to rewrite the Constitution and he didn't do it correctly because you're supposed to have a Constitutional convention.

He called the legislature together in the summer. We had a special session, and you have two bodies. The House was very deliberative on the Constitution revision. You had people like Al Fowler and you had great Constitutional lawyers, Denny Groover, and they were going to work for several weeks on rewriting the Constitution. Well what was the Senate going to do? At that time Jimmy Carter had just proved in court that the election process was flawed and he had gotten -- before that he had gotten -- him and Charlie Kirkwood got him put in the Senate, you know, he lost and all that fight, so the election code needed reforming.

So Carl Sanders assigned the election code to the Senate and let us perfect it while the House perfected the Constitution. Now the Constitution was going to take four or five weeks and did, to rewrite the election code was almost a 30 minute session because all you had to do is just declare that it had to be honest, you know, if you voted a dead you had to do better than that; vote them in alphabetical order which is what they've done when they got caught, you know, voted 100 people out at the cemetery in alphabetical order.

Anyway, we didn't have no time. So Peter Zack Geer called all of the chairmen in and said, "Listen. We got a problem." "Says you know we all like to come over here and party and so forth and the House is going to be working everyday and they're going to be having a lot of debate and deliberation, and we're working on the election code and we ain't got nothing to do. It won't take us three days to perfect this thing, but we've got to extend it out as long as they are.

So what we're going to do we're going to come in, we're going to be a little slow opening up and try to give a long prayer and go in session and then finally get around to calling the issue at hand, the election code, and I want y'all to be prepared with a series of amendments. Don't matter whether they pass or don't pass. It won't matter. We'll finally draw it after it's all over into, you know, said we done got the bill drawn, but he said we got to look like we're doing something which means we've got to have a debate."

Now there's several people participated in that by offering -- anybody that could think of anything to put in, they put in. And one of the regulations was you couldn't hand out literature within 200 feet of a polling place, and I raised with the objection that whoever drew the bill didn't understand all of Georgia because 200 feet out of the polling place would put us out of town in Enigma. Jimmy Carter used that many times.

And the other thing I did was when it got to the voting the dead which was the big accusation against Joe Hirsch and them over in Lumpkin County and over in that wherever it was west -- wherever it was over there somewhere.

SHORT: Lumpkin, Georgia.

ROWAN: It was over there around Plains. The charge was that they had voted the dead. So I thought it would be an interesting discussion to make an argument for the rights of the dead. And it makes more sense than you think. Here was the argument and it was received and the jest of almost a Demosthenian type debate different -- some of them even sided with me. I said look

what is the most precious thing an American citizen has? It's his right to vote. The right to vote. Maybe it is a more cherished right than property or money or possessions. Anything short of life itself, the right to vote is a sacred trust.

Now in preparation for our demise, we can all draw up a Will and Testament that projects what's to happen with our car, our cattle, our homes, our money, our stock, our wealth. We can take care of all of the great possessions we've accumulated in a lifetime. Why isn't it fair for a reasonable time to allow a man about to be deceased, or a woman, to by Will and Testate declare for his family how he would vote if he were alive for a reasonable period of time. Two years and then an amendment come in would two and a half years be considered just two years. I accepted the amendment. And of course it got eight or 10 votes, you know, but it was all presented. Now Jimmy has used that many different ways.

SHORT: Yeah.

ROWAN: And that's fine. I'm going to send him a bill one day.

SHORT: You know I saw a sermon preached on that subject not long ago on the internet quoting you and your bill and also your intention. So you should be flattered. It must have been a good idea.

ROWAN: Well it was a rate of -- you know I was part of my role with Peter Zack was to create

some frivolity when I could. Not sure it served me well over the long run because I surely didn't look like a dead serious J.B. Fuqua.

SHORT: Bobby, your friends at the Russell Library want to know if you remember going to the prom with a book on romance?

ROWAN: Now how do they know that?

SHORT: [Laughs]

ROWAN: I -- I had -- and I hadn't had a drink of liquor in 15 years. I don't know. Well I might have. It was sort of hard times. I guess I need to tell the story since all this will be buried for years anyway and even if it ain't I'm not terribly ashamed of it. I'll have to stop short of calling the name of the nice -- my date for the prom. It was my senior -- my junior year.

MALE SPEAKER: Did it start with a G?

[LAUGHTER]

ROWAN: Might have. There was a man lived out in the country who was a moonshiner and he had a stack of girls -- one of them was in my room and she had a little tough time out there. You

know, she didn't have -- maybe it was a little tough for her to have clothes and, you know, her hair fixed and they done the best they could, but I could see beyond all of that into a beautiful girl. I knew she was a beautiful girl and I knew that her daddy was letting me -- my daddy, J. Alvin Rowan, who I thought of -- and he was a little curious about this girl, but I knew that this fellow would let his daughter go with me to the junior/senior. I also knew the family and knew that they would all get together and take some payday feed sacks and things and they'd sew together a beautiful dress. You know, so I invited her to go to the junior/senior with me.

Well I had a first cousin named Wallace Rambases Rowan and he had gone into town and had got -- he was the more adventuresome mainly because he was a year older than us -- and he would go around town and he would get books and he'd charge you a nickel to read a chapter. Was one of the earliest enterprisers I ever knew. One of the books he got was Erskine Caldwell's God's Little Acre. Now y'all wouldn't know this, Bob might, but when that book came out it was considered scandalous, scandalous, scandalous. And it was considered banned in the movies. It was, you know, the Christian community went berserk, and honest to goodness now it wouldn't even -- it wouldn't even get a PG. It would be just G or whatever. But anyway it had a lot of conversation people weren't used to reading about, and the character in it was a girl named Darling Jill and the story was just simply this deeper religious person gave an acre of land to God -- was to be sacred -- and he dug for gold in the rest of his farm. And word would get out there was gold on God's little acre so he had moved God's little acre to another one and dig that one.

And in the book it made it so creative I think it discussed certain things about the activities of

Darling Jill and one of her would be lovers. Nothing real bad but it did discuss kissing. And, you know, we didn't know as much as we ought to about that at that time. I mean it wasn't -- something you just, you know, you -- you know you didn't, you know, things were altogether different, you know. And it talked about Darling Jill had when she kissed a boy, and I don't remember his name, you know, she had bit him on the lip and he kind of he complained about she just gnawed him half to death. And the way that Erskine Caldwell wrote it was right erogenous. It was entertaining for the day. Wouldn't interest people now. But anyway I had gotten that book and had read those chapters at a nickel a chapter from Wallace and I had actually got it for her to read. So she had read that and the chapter I paid a nickel for her to read I don't know, I can't remember the girl's name, but she had read that chapter on Darling Jill kissing. So we went to the junior/senior. Daddy had an old Plymouth truck and we -- it wasn't always reliable to crank, but it was easy to push off. It was a straight shift. And my lady friend was real strong, stronger than me. And she also was raised in a family used to pushing off their old truck. So we decided to risk it and we went out and to Uncle Ralph's tobacco barn which was on a perfect hill. It was up on a hill and either way you went went down hill, so we went around there and parked on that hill.

As we rode out there -- that back then, you know, young people went out and parked and might have smooched a little, whatever. And we was on top of that hill and my friend was a little bucktoothed and whenever we pulled up there and parked on the way out there about a mile from the schoolhouse I was thinking about the same thing that she was thinking about, and that was reading about Darling Jill kissing.

And so when we got that thing put in that safe gear so we wouldn't roll off and got it started and I turned towards her, she turned towards me, both was too anxious, and she just plowed into me and busted my lip with her buckteeth and grabbed a hold and started -- just about killed me. I wanted to cry right there.

But anyway, that I guess is what I was foolish enough to tell somewhere. I don't know.

SHORT: Well Bobby, you've been a great public servant. You're well liked and you're well respected, but I would like to ask you a few serious questions now. No frivolity.

ROWAN: Okay.

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

ROWAN: Well I guess anybody that's honest would have to say that you'd do things a little different if you could figure out a way to either do them better or be more successful in doing them. If I had my career to go over I think I'd wait another 10 years to run. I think in my case for my own best interest as a family man and I hadn't -- I got into politics before I really got a stable professional hold on my own professional life either as a schoolteacher or farmer or whatever, cattleman, whatever. I give that advice to my son now. Different ones encourage him to run. I said wait a minute. Wait until you've accomplished the things you want to do professionally. There's always time to run.

So if I had it to go over I would probably wait a few years. I don't regret those early years because -- I tell you the truth, that's what made me. I wouldn't have been as successful 10 years later. I'm speaking now the personal side of what it, you know, what would have been best for me, Bobby Rowan, and my family, and I think a later entry would have been better. That's one thing I would have done.

I don't regret the stance I took on any issue that I can think of. I pretty much voted without fear. I always learned from my daddy. He told me this the night I got elected -- he said, "When you go to Atlanta always slap up hill. Don't never jump on anybody that's in a smaller station of life. If you want to run and jump on the Governor or the head of the highway department, US Senator, President, that's all right. Never jump on a project engineer, county commissioner, nobody never jump on anybody in a lower station of political life than you." And that's good advice and I can't remember an occasion -- said, "Help them under you. If you want to take those above you, that's all right," and I think that's good advice.

The other thing is I don't think I ever got real angry and I don't know of nothing I'd change about that. When I lost I wasn't angry. When I won I really did feel, you know, lucky. I don't really think I accomplished much by standards of other people that are, you know, went to Atlanta, went to Washington, became great in many ways.

I guess you couldn't say and I couldn't say and I don't desire to say that I accomplished a lot, but I tell you what if you could have told me growing up as I came up going through being an aspired -- first being a state 4H Club officer, first learning to lose my fear of speaking, my WR tire, county agent getting me to be in public speaking, those were monumental changes in my

life. If you could have told me along that time that I would one day be a state Senator and represent 100,000 people, I would have been real proud.

If you would have told me I might have gone on and ran statewide, got elected and served on the Public Service Commission, which nobody knows much what it is, what it does, if they did find out what it does, Bob, they'd beat everybody every race because it's -- but it was good for me. I did run statewide. I did win statewide. If anybody would have told me growing up that I'd run it 18 times and win 16 of those races where the people in the voting jurisdiction had deferred to me to be the best of the choices, I'd have been real happy.

So now that I'm where I am, I'm still real happy. It was as good as I could do and I done it pretty much my way. I was never tempted to be dishonest. Didn't want to be dishonest. I'm proud of that too because Enigma -- I mean politics whether you're from Enigma or Atlanta don't make a crook out of anybody but it gives people that are crooks a bigger opportunity. But I went through public life without anybody coming over and trying to bribe me or do anything, and I -- they wouldn't have been successful if they had, so all in all, Bob, I guess I could say that I don't know what I would have done much different because I was just doing the best I could.

SHORT: What was your most pleasant moment in politics?

ROWAN: Well this is going to sound almost -- this is not going to sound right but it's true so I'm going to say it. You see a politician -- most people would think his greatest moment is the great awards, and you know you could go look on the wall and I've got a few things hanging up,

go out in the pack house and I've got about 100 other things where I've been declared everything from man of the year, to the greatest person living, to all these things. I appreciate all them and at the time they were, you know, they were important to me.

But I tell you, the greatest reward I ever got is award that nobody has ever mentioned to me to this day. I never got a vote for it. I never was accolade for having made a difference. But I made a big difference on something and it went totally unnoticed. It was the beginning of funding for the WIC program. Now what the hell would anybody think a south Georgia redneck populous would be all carried away about the WIC program. That's the Women's Infant and Children program for giving them nutrition and medical care.

You see I learned something that impressed me. The first three months of a pregnancy is crucial. The last three months are not as crucial. So but the WIC program gave nutrition to unwed mothers or even wed mothers that didn't have resources. Milk, healthcare, doctor visits and things.

And one day there was a lady in this town that had -- was pregnant and she had a little boy and after I was no longer in politics and was sitting on the front porch of that house, she had thanked me for getting her the WIC program. She had had the little boy and he was about six or seven years old, and I was on the front porch of that house down there facing the road. I don't know why I was out there. But I knew that little boy because his mother had obviously shared great affection for me because she'd tell other people, "He got me that WIC program." She'd have two or three more children still got the WIC program, and that little boy rode by on a little wore out bicycle that had, you know, he didn't know about it, but I associated with him with the difference

it might have made and he got in front of the house, he quit peddling and held up his hand and I waved back at him. His mother had told him about me. Nobody else knew anything about that. But I felt good about that. I felt good because I'd done it. I'm not noble. Never thought I was, never planned to be, and I certainly am not capable of making good judgments all the time, but that was -- I don't think that's a -- I don't think that's a moment people would think touched me as an individual but it did.

SHORT: How would you like to be remembered?

ROWAN: Well, Bob, I think when it comes to being remembered you -- you really shouldn't request much. I'd like to be remembered in the minds of everybody that knew me as just like I was. I have no problem with those that didn't like me remembering that they didn't like me. I trust those that did like me will remember me. I think there's a finality to death and I think you should not burden those people that have been so close to you as family or friends with any further to do about you or your legacy. We're here. We do these things. I'd like to be remembered in the minds of everybody just like they remember me. No more, no less.

There was some of them wanted to name a road about me and around about me and I said I don't want no road. Hell what am I going to do when it gets potholes in it? You know, why would I want a road? Why would I want a road that's going to be poorly paved and maybe I won't live -- maybe I'll live long enough to see the potholes in it.

This community's done something I'm proud of. Nobody knows about it. It doesn't bother me

at all, but it was my neighbors and friends. After all you see I've never acted like a Senator or Public Service Commissioner here. I wanted to be just -- you know I went to church. I never joined a country club because they'd let me in that I was something else. I wasn't interested in that. I never really wanted a road named after me. But about four years ago somebody said one night at a council meeting he said you know Bobby Rowan has been here all these years, he's paved all of our roads when he was a Senator, he's just been one of us and we're on the map because Bobby Rowan -- keep talking about Bobby Rowan from Enigma so they built a monument to me. It's downtown.

And it's, you know, it -- it's not the monument, it's that a few people would give of their money, put up a small little thing that goes almost unnoticed, never dedicated, never done anything, doesn't have to be. It's made about a four foot square. They brought in some stone, stone that's got one of these historical marker brass plates designating where I kicked off my race for Governor of the state in 1974. And it's a nice little thing on Main Street, and that was pleasant, you know.

SHORT: Bobby, thank you very much.

ROWAN: Well I've enjoyed y'all. You know that. You can tell. Thank y'all for coming. I don't know where this goes but at least it's out there.

SHORT: Well it will be viewed I promise you.

[END]

**University of Georgia  
Bobby Rowan**

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