

**Bob Shaw interviewed by Bob Short**  
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**Reflections on Georgia Politics**  
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**Reflections on Georgia Politics**

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BOB SHORT: I'm Bob Short and this is Reflections on Georgia Politics, sponsored by the Richard Russell Library at the University of Georgia and Young Harris College. Our guest is Bob Shaw, a stalwart in the Republican Party who has helped to make his party the majority party in Georgia. Welcome, Bob, we are honored to have you.

BOB SHAW: Thank you, sir, glad to be here.

SHORT: Before we get into your role in building a two-party system in Georgia, let's talk about you. Tell us about Bob Shaw.

SHAW: All right. I was born in Bronwood, Georgia, in Terrell County, August the 21st, 1929. My father was a one-legged mechanic with a service station, and doing some farming, and we did right well there until the Depression knocked us out. We moved to Marietta, Georgia, in 1934, where he took a job with Brumby Chair Company as a truck driver. Well, if you one-legged truck driver I guess you've ever seen but he was very interested in music.

He loved gospel music, he and my mother both, and they taught me to sing at a very early age. And got involved in southern gospel music; we'd go to all day singings with dinner on the ground or afternoon singings in church, or any other special type. Go to the singing schools that might be conducted in your area. And by five I was already standing on a box at these singings directing music—I could learn to read shape notes before I could even read the words. So that was in my system and quite naturally, my whole goal was to be able to sing in a quartet and travel the country. That came to pass in 1949. The Homeland Harmony Quartet from Atlanta was one of the top gospel quartets in the nation, and they had a position as a lead singer that came open, and they hired me. And I sang with them and loved it. We were on WAGA radio—that was before TV got started—and I loved every minute of it.

My future wife, while I was singing with them, she was a model at Rich's. And we became engaged and I was looking forward to a great musical career when the Korean War started. Being a member of the 116<sup>th</sup> Air Force group at Dobbins, we were called to active duty on October the 18<sup>th</sup> of 1950. So I had to finish that up. We moved the group from Dobbins Air Base to Victorville, California. Christmas night, 1950, my wife and I got married and she came out to live with me in a little apartment that we were able to secure until we were sent overseas to Japan. And our hospital group was too large to be moved around with the planes so we were stationed in Misawa, which is up in northern Japan. And I stayed there and aided the administrative group for the hospital until 1952. Harry Truman was president and signed a bill that said that if you were surplus to your unit and had less than six months to serve on active duty, you could apply for discharge. And being in charge of administration I made sure that I was surplus, and someone else that they learned that they didn't like took my place, and I got discharged early and came home. That was in the middle of 1952.

By September that year, Big Jim Waits—who I sung with in Homeland Harmony Quartet and

who was one of the leading figures in the industry at that time—he and I got together with a fellow named Dan Huskey, who had been with the Blackwood Brothers Quartet, and we formed the Revelaires. And we begun singing and traveling immediately and we went all over the country. We were on the Arthur Godfrey Talent show in 1954 and gospel music was in its heyday. But my first born child came along in October of '54 and after that I just couldn't stand the road—I just didn't like leaving my wife and daughter—so I decided I would come off the road. And I announced to the quartet in early '55 that I was coming out and they talked me into staying one more year. And I lasted until the middle of the year and decided I couldn't go any further. So I left the group, came off, and entered a career in insurance business with the Mutual of New York.

SHORT: When did you first get interested in politics?

SHAW: While I was in the insurance business—I was always interested in politics because history was a natural to me—but I became interested in politics as I was in business. And naturally being in the insurance business, you're aware of any government encroachment and what brought me into politics was I continued to see that government was encroaching on small businesses. I had to believe because I was studying all of the books on how to better yourself and you can accomplish whatever you'd like, the books thinking grow rich and all the how to succeed in business. So I was dismayed when I started to see what I felt the Democrats were saying was that what was good for the group had to be good for you. And I didn't feel that way. I felt that an individual should be allowed to go as far as his own initiative would take him. So I begun to feel that the Republican Party was more in tuned with those beliefs and I felt the Democrats were squashing us alive.

So I became interested in 1960. I started to try to join the party to help Richard Nixon get elected as president. And I got involved trying to carry all my precincts in northwest Georgia—I mean northwest Atlanta where we were living—and succeeded in doing that. But he lost and I become involved in the local party. At the time, Rodney Cook and Richard Freeman were the two of the men and Q.V. Williamson was seeking city council post. Dan Macintyre was coming along for running for the state senate and Jim O'Callaghan had been running for congress a couple of times. And I became intrigued with it and joined the party at that time.

So I did warden precinct work. And little by little, little Julian Lecraw, the son of the former mayor, was one of the vice chairmen of the party, and he and Bowden Dobbins got me on the Finance Committee with him and I helped formed a club that was raising money for the party month by month. And then I decided I'd run for office and I ran for the state senate in 1964. And I had no trouble winning the Republican primary but I would have thought I would be running against Oby Brewer, Sr.—he was president of Mark—what was the name of that firm? Not Neiman Marcus but whatever his group—I thought I would be running against him but at that time Horace Ward, a young black attorney, decided to get in. And the way the district was, divided about fifty-fifty white and black, and Horace beat Mr. Brewer in the primary, and then I ran against Horace in the general election. This was a time I was running with Goldwater and he was running with Lyndon Johnson. And quite naturally in that district the votes came out solidly for Lyndon Johnson and elected Horace and I was out of it.

So I came back and got back within the organization working within my house district. And then in 1966 in our convention, Earl Patton Jr. was elected the chairman of the county party and I was elected first vice chairman. And after his term—Earl didn't want to run again—I was elected as

chairman of the county party and was then reelected in 1970 but went on to be elected as first vice chairman of the state party. Wiley Wasden Jr. had come along to replace Paul Jones as chairman. And Wiley was out of the country most of that time and by the early 1971, after we had the election and Hal Suit, who they were backing, lost the election, Wiley resigned and I was elected chairman in his place. I served that term and was elected again. I served three terms as chairman—was also elected vice chairman of the Republican national community while the senior George Bush was chairman and served with him for two and half years. So then, after that, Mack Mattingly was elected chairman, and I came back and got more involved with the county politics. And I think I've been chairman of the county party about five times since then. But during those early years in 1969, I was able to help recruit Paul Coverdell to come on as—we ran him as a state senator and he lost the first race, but it brought his district with him the second time and he was elected. Then one of the fellows—when I was chairman of the party, Bo Callaway was national committeeman—and one of the young fellows that was doing so much legwork for us was Newt Gingrich. And Dick Williams had a picture of me with Newt as we signed him up for his first congressional race in 1974. So that was two of the biggest stalwarts that we were able to get kicked off in their early years.

SHORT: Let's go back to 1964 when Goldwater swept Georgia. Don't you think that was one of the turning points for the Republican Party in the state?

SHAW: It was and the reason was just not so much Goldwater but the fact that the people who were enamored with Goldwater throughout the state realized that there was very loose organization within the Republican Party and most of it was up in the metropolitan area. It was not scattered about—there were just a few that were in the party from maybe down in Savannah, and Columbus, and Macon, and some other places but it was not widespread. And when they realized that in the Republican Party, in our primaries, you have to—it's not going to the convention and everybody decides—we have our own individuals who are elected to their positions locally and then come to the conventions. So the realizing that they needed that power base, the Goldwaterites begun to organize throughout the state in each county. And so when we had the convention, we had many new people who had never been in the party that was elected who came on board as members, and it was from that organization—even though Goldwater lost—the organization was there. And we continued to take that skeleton and build on it to you see what it is today.

SHORT: Goldwater success, I think, enabled Bo Callaway to become the first Republican congressman in Georgia for—gosh knows how long.

SHAW: That's right. Well, he served in congress from '64 to '66 and then decided to run for governor. He lost that race and—

SHORT: Well, he won it but he lost it.

SHAW: He won it but, back then, the state legislature was given the responsibility of selecting which candidate would be the governor and they selected Lester Maddox. I think many of them had to hold their nose at the time in spite of the fact that Lester made a fine governor I thought. They had to hold their nose because it was the patronage element. They could realize all the

patronage that would float this young flourishing Republican Party and Bo Callaway if the Republicans took over.

SHORT: Well, during your generation, most of the Georgians were Democrats to begin with.

SHAW: Mmhhh.

SHORT: What do you think the Republican Party did to appeal to those Democrats who changed parties?

SHAW: I think the idea of the individual being able to make his own move as opposed to just trying to take that group philosophy. I think folks throughout the state wanted to have more personal involvement and not be controlled from the top down but—and the conservative element was being challenged often by the liberal and the left was becoming stronger in Georgia. And I think the more the moderate and left blossomed, the more it invigorated the individuals and the conservatives throughout the state to band together for their self-protection. So I think it was a conservative move.

And now many will say, and many historians may say, that at that point before 1964, many of the blacks had voted in the Republican primary and had voted for the candidates. Nixon even got a good number of black votes; he didn't carry the state, but he got many black votes at the time. But when Goldwater came along I think the blacks saw this as a situation of where there was going to be a race issue from there on out. And if the Republican Party had no place for them, and their place was in the Democrat Party, so consequently there's been that differentiation that was born then. And it's only been until today that we're beginning to really get blacks to come back in the party and see that there's a place. We had one recently that did not win statewide but Melvin Everson was a fantastic black representative for Gwinnett County—started out on the Snellville City Council and then went to the state legislature—been well loved and respected everywhere. But it's hard for our blacks to win because they can't find other blacks that will come out and vote for them in the general election.

SHORT: One rap you hear on the Democratic Party in Georgia—well, nationwide too—is that it's too dependent on minorities, it's too liberal, and it depends also on labor unions.

SHAW: Right.

SHORT: Do you agree with that?

SHAW: I agree with it whole-heartedly. That has been the base to me of the national Democrat Party is the minorities and the labor unions. I saw throughout my years of observing and participating I would notice the different groups come along. I remember Hubert Humphries was one of the finest politicians I ever saw and I saw him as he would placate to the different minority groups; whatever your need is, you elected us; we're going to provide it. Seniors watch out, they're going to take your social security away unless you elect us and let us protect you. So they were after the elderly—anybody with any problems what so ever, just come with us, we'll take care of you. And it was this coalition of minorities as a—defeated us in a number elections nationwide and in the state. Now in Georgia, even though the Democrats were not that closely

attuned to the national, they did have that feeling until about '68 when Alpha Fowler, Jimmy Bentley, and Jack Ray, and a couple of others—

SHORT: Crawford Pilcher.

SHAW: Crawford Pilcher and then one of the others left and came with the Republican Party. Then you begun to see that locally there were others—they would go about Democrat name but their actions would show more in line with the Republicans. So we started building even more at that time.

SHORT: There was a rumor, I remember, that when Jimmy Bentley—who was a very close friend of Senator Talmadge—switched parties, there was some agreement with the Republican Party that he could run for governor, is that true?

SHAW: That was his plan. I spent many hours with Alpha Fowler and Jack Ray, who became very close personal friends—they already were but we came even more so—and they had gotten together when they left Chicago and decided they were going to make the switch and they were going to make the announcement. And they kept fussing it—Jimmy for riding the fence. Jimmy didn't know whether he wanted to make the change or not and they finally said, "Jimmy we're going to make the announcement. If you want to come with us, come on. If not, stay out of it." And Jimmy finally came on and joined them.

Now there were feelings that if he came on that he could run. I know that Bo Callaway was solid behind his campaign. But when he came on board, Oliver Bateman, a senator from Macon, and Paul Jones, who was the state chairman—Wiley was the new—and later became chairman—all of them was for—they started out wanting Oliver to be the gubernatorial candidate. And Oliver saw that with Bo's backing for Jimmy that he was not going to be able to get the money he wanted so he pulled out and they backed Hal Suit. So that was a fight between Bo and the others of them.

And as it turned out, it involved in the county and the state party at the end in talking with Jimmy's campaign people who would talk with me. I'd said, "Running a primary in the Republican Party is much different from the Democrats. With the Democrats, you've got to run in 159 counties. Our votes come from basically twenty-two counties. So if you want to win, you got to really gear your campaign to those twenty-two counties and win the primary and then let leaves you a little time to go out and get to the rest of the 159." But Jimmy's problem was he had those school buses running around all over the state and he was running the general election. He was appealing to folks all over the state but he was not appealing to the Republican ranks, which Paul Jones, being the state chairman of all of them, you got to play that. And they were going to the different counties where our strength was and they voted Hal Suit in.

SHORT: Hal was an Atlanta newsman who was certainly well known.

SHAW: He was on WSB-TV. He started out down in Albany and he was doing the news and Joe Sports, another Democrat figure, was doing the sports down there. I don't know how long they kept them both on but Hal finally came up here, went with WSB. But he was a well-known figure and was a nice guy. But we laughed about our candidates. We had three candidates running at the time, Judge Jephtha Tanksley, and Hal, and Jimmy, and neither one of them had

two good legs. So we talked about our cripple candidates for governor.

SHORT: Well let's talk about now the election of Republican congressmen. I remember in I guess it was 1966 that two were elected, Ben Blackburn from DeKalb County and Fletcher Thompson in Fulton. That was also a major breakthrough wasn't it?

SHAW: Very much so. Fletcher got a godsend when Charles Weltner, the sitting congressman from the fifth, decided he would not be on the same ticket with Lester Maddox and pulled out. And then the Democrats had the opportunity to replace him and they put County Commissioner Archie Lindsey on. Well, Archie had no—had a good name as a county commissioner but he did not have that input into Washington politics like Fletcher had started out with. So Fletcher was able to defeat him. And Ben was in a tight race with Jim Mackay in the fourth district, which was basically DeKalb. And they got behind him solidly and that old organization that we created during the Goldwater years in '64 came in and elected him. And he was—both of them came on board.

Now Fletcher stayed until Senator Russell died and then he wanted to run for his seat. I wanted him to stay in congress. I even went to Gerald Ford, who was minority leader in the House, and Gerry was trying to help me talk Fletcher into staying in the House. All the House leadership wanted him to but then he was beyond determined he was going to run. So he kicked off to run for that seat and there was about six Democrats running—Sam was just one of them. There was six or seven—the fellow that had been the state treasurer—

SHORT: Bill Burson.

SHAW: Bill Burson, they had voted his position out, and—

SHORT: Governor Vandiver.

SHAW: Governor Vandiver—all of them were in there and Sam ended up winning the primary. And I was very pleased to see that even though I've always loved Governor Vandiver and got along great with him. I got to know Sam well too and he was a great candidate. And when they ran, we had a great race. And believe it or not, in that race Fletcher got forty-seven percent of the votes statewide, which is much greater than—most folks we thought we'd get the normal thirty-five percent but he didn't lose by too much.

SHORT: Let's talk about the Republican candidates for governor over the years and discuss them as we get to the election of Sonny Perdue in 2002.

SHAW: All right. Where do you want to start?

SHORT: Well, let's start with Bob Bell.

SHAW: Bob was a great state senator and he was a great chairman of the party. But Bob was unable to get enough statewide organization and raise enough money. We still—even though people used to say we were the country club set, that was not necessarily so—we did not have the money flowing back then and Bob was unable to pull in enough money for that campaign.

Now I think even before Bob ran—after I was chairman, Mack Mattingly was chairman, and Rodney Cook replaced him—Rodney ran for governor but he got less than twenty percent of the vote against Busbee. And of course, he couldn't get the statewide appeal or the money, and then Bob Bell comes along and he's got the same problem. Great guy and would have been a great governor but we had not gotten to the point where we could nail our statewide forces together to get them all behind a candidate, and push him, and raise the money to fight the bigger group.

SHORT: Johnny Isakson ran.

SHAW: Johnny was a good one. Johnny—I remember so well when Johnny came along. And I remember in 1974 when I was chairman of the state party in charge of trying to accumulate some funds and Mike Egan was a good friend, and he was representative then, I said, “Mike, let's divide this money up carefully with our candidates.” And the worthy Senate candidates would get five hundred dollars and the worthy House candidates three hundred. Then we took other monies. Johnny was running in Cobb County for the commission seat and we gave money to him—we saw that he was going to be a great candidate. But today you talk about giving thousands to candidates—that was a measly little ol' three hundred, four hundred, five hundred dollar contribution from the party. The candidates didn't—

SHORT: Isakson ran a good race against Zell Miller.

SHAW: Yes he did, he did. Johnny was a great candidate and still is. There are some that think that he was—some of his stances were too moderate in running with Zell. And Zell is a great guy. I got to know Zell well when I was first started state chairman—he was executive director of the Democrat Party—and we'd go out campaigning a lot and debating. I remember debating him one night to a rotary club in Fairburn I think it was and the next day the paper came out that Fairburn heard a debate by two men of which one is going to be our next governor. I thought it'd be me, I didn't know—I told Zell Miller, I said, “I didn't think it'd be you.” But he was. He just came along when he finally ran and he's a great campaigner. And so was Johnny. And I was glad Johnny didn't give up at the time, that he came back, and stayed with it. And Zell was gracious in bringing Johnny back in through the education level. And I always appreciated that move because there's not a more decent man on the face of the Earth than Zell Miller; and Johnny's another. So that's two very decent men and I was glad to see what Zell did for us.

SHORT: What was your reaction to Zell Miller's decision to keynote the Republican convention?

SHAW: I was elated as if they'd come back and said they did a recount and you actually won that state senate seat in 1964. I was just totally, totally elated. I wanted to stand up and shout when he did that. I always felt there'd be a great place in the Republican Party for him. Of course, he never joined the party but when he came along and started to even siding with us openingly where a number of them had secretly done so in the past, I was very appreciative of that.

SHORT: Then there's Guy Milner.

SHAW: Guy was a great fella and he had a lot on the ball. He was able to raise the money but Guy had a problem in convincing the populous, I think, that he was just a regular guy. I think the Democrats may have tried to portray him as moneybags and not in line with the basic ideals of the working man, the unions, the teachers; others never would come along and pick up on him. And he ran, bless his heart, he gave it all he had, and he was as sincere as he could have been. Would of made a great governor but was just not able to gain the acceptance of the populous so that they'd vote for him.

SHORT: Let's go now to another milepost in the rise of the Republican Party and that was the senatorial election in 1980.

SHAW: I guard my words. I don't want to do anything that would publically be an embarrassment to Mack Mattingly. Mack served with me when I was chairman, he was one of the vice chairman, we worked so closely together and—this is the race you're talking about, the Mattingly—

SHORT: Talmadge race, yes.

SHAW: Senator Talmadge, with whom I had worked so closely with and let me give him accolades in it. During the time I was chairman of the state party, I was in charge of out patronage. We were responsible for making nominations and suggestions for many of the judgeships and other federal jobs but the senator always had the option of dropping the pink slip in and stopping it. I would meet with him and Colonel Lowell Conner—who was his right-hand man—we'd get together and talk about these people and the senator never tried to stop me. There was one time when we were talking about a possible judgeship and he said, "Bob, you're going to have to come along and help me. My folks think all I'm doing is helping you, you got to give some." And we decided on a judge in Rome that we would both support. And there were many time when I was going back and forth to Washington that he and Betty would say, "Now, when you're up here you don't have to stay in the hotel. Just come stay with us." And I said, "Betty, can you imagine what would happen if somebody from the Atlanta paper found out we was doing that and took a picture of me going over to the Hill and you handing me my lunch sacks, sending me off?" It would be a ruination to the senator and to me too so I never did, but it was a close relationship. But as it kept going, the papers begun to report about the overcoat, the money and the overcoat, and so forth and they got on to Senator Talmadge. It was the paper that beat him. I remember so well the quote that Newt Gingrich gave when somebody asked him, said, "How did Mack Mattingly defeat Herman Talmadge?" And Newt wisely said, "Because his name wasn't Talmadge." Indicating back then that Mack—while he did well and was a fine senator—if it hadn't been Mack, it could have been somebody else that was with admirable qualities that could have been elected because the media had downplayed the senator so much there wasn't a way he could win. They had destroyed the public's confidence in him.

SHORT: What is your opinion now of the Democratic Party in Georgia?

SHAW: They don't have near the strength they had. Their organization I think is much weaker because once again, they've relied so much on the black majority giving them support and the

unions giving them support. After so many years, the blacks are waking up and realizing that “hey, we’ve been taken for granted. We give all our support; they’re not giving us anything.” And so there’s dissention in the ranks among the blacks as far as the Democrat Party. Some of the labor leaders who used to be so strong—Herb Mabry and those people who were so strong within the party—Herb’s kind of gone into retirement and the ones that replaced him don’t carry near that much strength. I don’t think they have the input into national politics and certainly, there is an amount of disarray within them locally. And I think since some of our leaders—Tom Murphy helped hold them together a lot while he was Speaker but when Tom went off the scene things begin to play away. The strength left, the Republicans then came on the scene and we were able to take over, and I think there’s been a decline in the Democrat Party in Georgia since.

SHORT: Do you think the Republican Party in Georgia will maintain power as long as the Democrats did?

SHAW: If they don’t self-destruct. I remember so well when we were very active when I was state chairman and going to Washington with the other chairman in the southern district, which made up thirteen states. And we would meet there in Washington and we would always have the members of the cabinet, the heads of state up there meeting with us because we had a lot to offer them and they made a lot to us. And I remember so well the writer Kevin Phillips, who wrote a number of books—it was sold well then—I remember him telling us one time that the Republicans were in a position to stay in power for the next forty years. But then along came Watergate—stupid Watergate—I will never forget the feeling I had. I almost fainted along with Tommy Thompson, the chairman from Florida, when Kevin came back and spoke to us, said, “Men, the prediction I made to y’all once is gone. The only way this party will survive is Richard Nixon resigns.” That did never cross our minds. We didn’t realize how serious it was but Phillips was right. Here we had the option possibly to stay strong for forty years, then we came along and stepped on our own toes, and killed ourselves. And with Nixon, because of that, Ben Blackburn lost his seat—so many of our people lost their seat. And then Ford was blamed for giving Nixon a pardon so that he was not able to win reelection when he ran and Jimmy Carter won. The public had to give us a whipping and they did, and we paid for our sins, and been starting to rebuild ever since. Yes, the Republicans in Georgia can stay strong if they keep their nose to the grindstone and keep plowing the ground. And keep doing the basics and serving the people. And we don’t make any of the mistakes like—stupid things like we did with Watergate. We killed ourselves.

SHORT: Let’s talk for a minute about Newt Gingrich.

SHAW: Newt started out working for a senatorial candidate over in DeKalb County in 1966. His name slips me right now but—and I can’t remember whether he was elected or not, he was a nice guy—but Newt was working in his campaign. He was at West Georgia and he begun to work within the Republican Party some and by the time I was chairman and Bo was national committeeman, he came on board and begun—he was always an idea man. And he’d travel the state for us doing white papers, telling us what people were thinking, and how we were doing, and what we had to do, and he did a masterful job of that. And then I made him chairman of one of our convention committees in ’72 and he attracted even more attention. And he decided he wanted to make his move and run for congress in ’74 and he did. The problem was he chose a

stalwart like Jack Flint to oppose and oh, lord, the president couldn't have beaten Jack Flint. But Newt gave it a try not once but twice. And then Jack retired and the third time Newt won. I remember so well in the early 1980s I was doing consulting with small businesses and working with banks who wanted to do small business loans with the SBA. And I was with a bank out in Douglasville and they were all behind Newt who was their congressman. And Newt was working up a trip for them out there to bring a planeload up to Washington and give them a tour and take them through the House and have them meet various and sundry members of congress for briefings. I remember when we got to the airport, we started back in—I was on the bus with Newt at the time – and we're going back in. Just being inquisitive, I said, "Son, what's your goal? What do you really want to do? You know whether you wanted to be a lifelong congressman, whether you wanted to think about governor, or what?" And here's another time I almost fainted. He said, "Well, what I really want to be is Speaker of the House." Well, that fooled me. I'd never—it never conceived of me that any young Republican, and especially from Georgia, was ever going to be Speaker of the House. And I patted him on the back and I said, "Well, that is a very worthwhile goal to achieve." And it was amazing watching him do just that. And when we became Speaker, I was so proud of him I couldn't stand it—it's just like seeing one of your sons make it when you really didn't think he was going to do it in the first place. And ever since, I have been prodding him to run for president. Bo Callaway and I were with him before the last presidential election and we kidded him—years ago when we started, somebody gave you a hundred dollars for your campaign that was big money, and I told Newt then, I said, "Newt if you're going to announce, Bo and I both give you a hundred dollars apiece." So we laughed about that but he didn't do it that time; I think he wanted to but he waited a little longer than he should. But I think for sure that next February, March, he's going to announce that he's going to run for president. And I think he's going to be our leader.

SHORT: You like his chances?

SHAW: Oh, yeah. He was on Fox News the other day with—and Howard Dean was on the other side and Dean even admitted that Newt is an ideas man, that he had more ideas than anybody that—I forgot how Dean phrased it but I thought it was very complimentary to Newt. But we've always known that Newt had the ideas. He was an ideas man and so was Paul Coverdell. But Newt even more so. And he came up with the Contract with America and that was what really emboldened the Republican Party back then, got us going. And I think his ideas are what America would need now and I think he could sell it to the public and they'll buy it and elect him if he'll qualify.

SHORT: Let's talk about Bo Callaway. He didn't get elected Governor of Georgia but that did not by any means end his political career.

SHAW: No, Bo, Bo was—after his defeat, got involved in the state politics and then ran for national committeeman. And Roscoe Pickett was running for reelection from the fourth, and Bo beat him, and succeeded to that position. Then he got more active with Washington in that position. And there was a time when Agnew was stepping down, there were time people had thought about asking President Nixon to make Bo his nominee and there were others that were trying to get George Bush as his nominee. But that didn't happen; he selected Gerry Ford. And then when he stepped out and Ford came along—wanted to run—he appointed Bo secretary of

the army and asked Bo to be his national campaign manager. And so Bo went into that full blast hoping to get him elected.

And during all this time with politics, Bo's business interests were not only Callaway Gardens but they had Crested Butte in Colorado and it was not going well. One of their relatives was over there running it and it was not going well at all. So after the campaign for president, Bo and his family moved to Crested Butte to take that over and reorganize it, which it did. And he got involved in politics there, and he later ran for the senate out there, U.S. Senate there, and became party chairman. And he served there until they decided to move back to Georgia to let some of the younger generation take over Crested Butte and he came back to Callaway Gardens where he's been ever since.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute if you will about the real crowning victory of the Republican Party when Sonny Perdue was elected governor in 2002.

SHAW: Sonny ran a good campaign and he was well known within south Georgia, not as well known in north Georgia, but he had statewide contacts. Most of the time when we were running candidates like Milner, Milner was from Atlanta, Bob Bell was from Atlanta—all of our candidates were up here. Now while the big vote is for Macon north, there's a lot of votes in south Georgia. And if you take and split any of the votes in north Georgia and you can add to it the majority you're going to pick up in south Georgia, you're going to be a winner. And that's what was happening to us. We were getting snuffed out by the south Georgia votes joining what they would put together in north Georgia. Sonny was able to move into that center down there and pull in some of the votes. Many of the votes we had not been able to pull up until that time. Roy Barnes also had stepped on his toes with the flag issue and with the teachers; and he had upset them tremendously and they chose to back Sonny. And, as it turned out, Sonny just comes along and—it was not as alarming as when Mattingly beat Talmadge but it was a shocker to many people that Sonny eased across the finished line with all of that help—with the help Roy gave him with his mistakes, plus our being able to circulate more and organize better in south Georgia area than we ever had before.

SHORT: Well now we are at the end of Governor Perdue's administration. How do you rate it?

SHAW: That requires a lot of thought. Personally, I like Sonny Perdue; he's always been nice to me and I appreciate his efforts. I don't think he has always listened to our side and I don't think he's been as strong a Republican governor. I think because he had lived in the Democrat Party all his life until he's made his switch there was some feeling that well maybe some of Sonny never crossed over the line and became one of us. He would probably never had—he was not as strong a Republican as would Bo Callaway had been or even Milner or Johnny Isakson if had he been elected. Many of our people felt left out of his administration, and the things he did, and that he was not listening to our people as well. So while he will have a good history, it's not the sparkling image that I would like to see him have and go out with a blaze of glory.

SHORT: Do you think politics in Georgia is too partisan?

SHAW: Hadn't thought about that. Coming from a time when we were the minority party—we were just struggling in trying to build—I'd hate to think about it being too partisan because I

realize we could switch back and forth. I think it's more the ideology behind it. The conservatives and then the ultra-conservatives on this side, then bringing in the moderates, and the liberals and the ultra-liberals over here, it's whichever umbrella they want to choose to be under. Now, if the Democrats all of a sudden selected somebody that was too conservative, many of the folks in the Democrat Party would go along with that—of defeating that conservative and selecting someone else—so I'm not sure if it's more a difference in ideology than it is too partisan. Now, you could have a point though.

SHORT: Two questions. First of all, how has reapportionment affected the Republican Party in your opinion?

SHAW: It has been a godsend and I'm looking forward to a better godsend when we reapportion in the next two years. There were times when they would go in to reapportion—I remember when Tom Murphy was so upset with Newt that he even kept reapportioning it until he just got him out, his district all together. Whereas over here in the seventh and so forth—and then when they go to reapportion the House and Senate seats, they'd draw crazy conglomeration of districts just to get the people in there that they knew would vote Democrat. My own associate Rusty Paul, who like wise was a former state chairman, was a member of the state senate and was the one who helped talk Governor Perdue into joining the party. Rusty was having a great career and would have gone—and still could be a great state leader—but when they had an opportunity in reapportionment, they stuck him in a district with Tom Price. Well, he and Tom were very close. And Tom wanted to move on up and run for congress and Rusty knew this, and he wouldn't stand in the way, so Rusty stepped aside and supported Tom for that seat. But the Democrat reapportionment just got him out of his seat. And I look forward to being able to adjust those when we have reapportionment this next time.

SHORT: Do you favor party registration?

SHAW: Yes, I do. I started pushing that years and years ago. And some of my close friends that we've talk about today who are Democrat elected officials didn't want that because they don't like the idea of going into the primary and you having to go in and, because you're a registered Republican, you can't vote for them. They like the idea if they're running, you to be able to switch over and cast your vote. And so they fought us on that. Harry Geisinger now had begun to push for party registration back in the seventies but couldn't sell it because mainly the Democrats didn't want it.

SHORT: How about a straight ticket voting? We used to have that in Georgia but for some reason it was changed, you can't vote a straight ticket now.

SHAW: I'm opposed to it because I saw election after election where people, who didn't even know who was running for what, was given a sheet and said, "You go vote this. Just pull this one lever and you got it all taken care of." And I've seen good people washed out on both sides just with that straight party voting. Neither side is going to have the greatest people all the time. And if a person—if you or I want to—well let me use you instead of putting me in there. If you want to run for office and you are willing to give it your time, effort, and money, and take away from all the other things you're doing to offer for office, to serve the people, you are entitled to

have the voter come down the line and see your name. And the person is either supposed to select you or that other person; I think you deserve that right. And the idea of just being on the ballot and all you have to do is have somebody strong up here—you could have a bunch of idiots on the bottom of the ticket. As long as the top person was the one you wanted, everybody going in to vote for that one votes a straight ticket and you get a bad mix. So I think that the public needs to go in—and they don't study the candidates. So many of them go in—and I'll have to admit to you that I went to this time, and I went to early voting, and I got in there and saw who was running for secretary of education and hadn't done my homework and I was flabbergasted. I had no idea who in the world to select. So I did what so many voters do. I said, "Well, I'll just take the top man." And I did—it happened to be Barge and that's the fellow that ended up supporting. But that happens in so many races. Nobody knows whose running, and they go in, and they stand in line, and somebody says, "Well, you ought to vote for so and so and okay." They don't have any idea who they voted for. So the public just should take—they won't ever do it—but they should take time to study who's running. It's their government and these are people who are supposed to represent them. Why should you grunt out and complain about how your government is operating when you won't even look at whose running and go vote for the one that stands for what you want. So I am against straight party.

SHORT: Well, you've had a wonderful career, you've been a great contributor to the rise of the Republican Party, and as you look back on your time in politics, is there anything you would change?

SHAW: Well, if I had it in my power I would certainly change Watergate. If we had not had Watergate, things would have been much rosier and we would have been much better off than we are. I liked Spiro Agnew; I thought he was a great guy. I enjoyed him so much and I hated to see him go by the wayside. I liked Nelson Rockefeller when he came on as a vice-president for Ford. I didn't agree with some of our leaders at the time. I know Mack Mattingly was state chairman and Bo was national committeeman and they were both after him to—no, Bo wasn't national committeeman—but Bo was opposed to Rockefeller being on the ticket. I thought he was great; I enjoyed working with him. But that election was a fiasco. And then we lost to Jimmy Carter, and came back later with Reagan, but all that did not have to happen if it had not been for Watergate. So that's one of the things I would change. I'm sure if I had enough time to think about it there are other things I'd try to change, but that's the basic one.

SHORT: Well, Bob Shaw, we've covered a big subject in a short time. Have we left anything out?

SHAW: Well, I can't remember if we have. I'm surprised I was able to remember all of this.

SHORT: Well it's been a great pleasure having you and we invite you to come back anytime you can

SHAW: Well thank you, sir, I enjoyed it.