

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 Don Johnson, former Georgia State Senator and a Congressman from Georgia's tenth district. Don we are delighted to have you as our guest.

DON JOHNSON: Thank you Bob, good to see you again.

SHORT: Born in Atlanta, spent most of your life in Royston.

JOHNSON: That's right. My father was in Emory law school when I was born. I was born in 1948 and he was just starting Emory law school. And so the first three years, I lived there in various spots around Emory. And He and I, or he always wanted to move back to Royston and I'll never forget him coming when I was a little boy about three years old and we'd talk about what we were going to do when we went back to Royston. And I'll say stuff like "go fishing" and "go to slippery rock"; that was his favorite spot near where we lived. But moved back to Royston and grew up there; my father was the district attorney. First a solicitor, they called it solicitor general then they changed the name of it in the mid-sixties, I think. My grandfather, his father, had been practicing law there since 1911 and he also was in politics; he was in the state house, state senator. And then under Eugene Talmadge, he was assistant attorney general. So I guess, I've got politics a little bit in my genes from them.

In fact, my great grandfather who was named Judge Jerome Bates; he wasn't a judge but he was a lawyer, but he had the name Judge Jerome Bates. He was in the state house in the 1880s and then again in about 1920. And he lived up there kind of near where you do except a little bit further to the northwest; a place called Spring place. But he practiced law up there and was state legislator and my grandmother—he was on my grandmother's side and she used to tell a story about they went out into Oklahoma in a covered wagon with him. And a bunch of Indians came up on him one time and he told them to get under the wagon. It is a very interesting story about that. I never of course knew him because he died in the thirties but I knew a lot about him from her. She was part Indian and so am I of course, and it came through the Bates family.

SHORT: Tell us about your father. He was a prosecutor at the Lemuel Penn murder trial.

JOHNSON: That's right. That was in 1964 right after the Civil Rights Acts had been enacted. His district included Madison County and Elbert County. He had a five county region but there was a group of Ku Klux Klansmen that hang out over here in Athens. And one night in July of 1964, Lemuel Penn and two other officers in reserves of the army were driving back from Fort Benning and that was before I-85 was built and they were taking the back road. And they drove through Athens and a group of Klansmen followed them out of town all the way up to highway 1-72; they were crossing the Broad River. Bill Shipp wrote a book about a murder at Broad River Bridge and it's about that story. And so as they crossed in to that county, they had entered my dad's district and so he prosecuted that case.

My father and grandfather were lawyers and I didn't know very much about law except my dad would come home complaining about a jury verdict he might have lost and I didn't think I ever wanted to be a lawyer because of that. Because he complained so much about different things that were happened in his practice but he took us all to that trial because it was a big event. It was covered from Washington Post, Newsweek, L.A Times; all of the papers in

American came to converge on Danielsville, Georgia where they had the trial. And my dad prosecuted it; that's when I got interested in the law. Also, became a big admirer of his for his courage because he did a really outstanding job. He brought in another prosecutor to help him with it because back then they didn't have assistant DAs and he handled the whole thing. But a fellow by the name of Wayne, I can't think of his first name right now but he came from Gainesville—

SHORT: Jeff Wayne

JOHNSON: Jeff Wayne that's right. And they tried it together and then at the end, my dad gave a terrific closing argument and among the things that he said was "have the courage to do what's right" talking to the jury. And the state of Georgia is on trial here, do we convict when there is a crime committed in our county? And unfortunately, they didn't convict; they acquitted them. They had some confessions by one of them that he later repudiated the confession but they still entered it into the record. And I've got an editorial about the Washington Post in my office now that was praising my father for the prosecution and quoted from his closing argument so I know that he did a good job. And from that time forward, I became interested in becoming a lawyer. But that had a big effect on me in a lot of ways politically as well as having a conscience about what was going on in the world at that time.

The next big event that happened in my life that had an impact on my political philosophy and outlook on life was 1968. You know that was the year that Martin Luther King was assassinated, and then Robert Kennedy was assassinated. I was a fraternity boy over here at the university and I was interested primarily in drinking beer and chasing girls and just as I had been in high school, I was interested in high school football and other things and this kind of woke me up. Well 1968 was a big year not only because of those two assassinations but also because of the riots that took place at the democratic convention. And it was the year of the—President Johnson deciding not to run after the Tet offensive which we actually won but the results on television didn't look that way. And it really shook my conscience as to what was going on in the world.

Over the years I always became a strong Democrat; and part of it was that even though that was a very difficult time for the Democratic Party and I've never changed. I've—you know supported George McGovern for President. I'll never forget going, walking around, I was a first year law student then and going to a football game in the stadium here with a McGovern button on. You know just out of defiance because there were a lot of people who—you know most people wanted to re-elect Richard Nixon. When I graduated from law school, I had an air force commitment. I was an ROTC student at the university and had gotten an educational delay; I was going to be a pilot but my eyes went bad, at least they weren't 20/20 when I left law school so I got in the JAG program. But before I did I got Phil Landrum who was Congressman from the ninth district at that time to give me a job to work for him until the air force called me in. He was on the Ways and Means Committee as you might remember; he was the third ranking member. I always forget when I went to Congress later, if he had lived till the time I went to Congress, he still wouldn't have been chairman because he was right behind Dan Rostenkowski. And I used to sit behind him and Rostenkowski and listen to Rostenkowski tell his crazy stories. You know sometimes he would forget to turn his mic off and say something kind of raunchy. But it was very interesting time for me because I was straight out of law school and they took up

the Trade Bill of 1974; it was actually '73. It was called the Trade Reform Act of '73 when I was working on it because I moved from his staff to the Ways and Means Committee staff. It was a real interesting time because that was when Watergate was going on. But the Ways and Means Committee, the chairman was Wilbur Mills and very interesting character. He later got in trouble with Fanne Foxe but when I was there, I would watch him closely because he was a very smart man; Harvard law school, he wrote the 1954 tax code but we were taking up this major trade reform bill. And I had been studying under Dean Rusk here at the law school; very interesting international law; that was what I wanted to do. I was driving on campus the day I heard on the radio that Rusk was coming here and I thought "well you know I'm not sure I can get into any other law school, may not be able to get into this one but I want to come here because of Rusk". Even though I was the third time opposed to the Vietnam War, because I felt it was more of an internal revolution as opposed to Chinese Communists inspired activities that was going to create a domino effect throughout the rest of the world. But I had great respect for Rusk and when I was in Law school, he became a great mentor of mine. I considered him to be the most influential man in my life besides my father. Even though he didn't always know it but I learned just by watching him and he helped me with a number of things and I was close to him rest of his life. In fact the last time I saw him was when I was in Congress and had just lost my election. I want to say this about Rusk, we were at the Georgia-Georgia Tech game and I had been invited by Chuck Knapp who was president of the college then or university then, to sit in the president's box. And Rusk was sitting in the back, smoking a lark even though they had prohibited smoking in the stadium at that point especially in the president's box but he was allowed to do it because he was so old and respected. I looked over to him and he looked to me and he said "better luck next time". And he had contributed to my campaign, I didn't even want to cash the check because I thought so much of him and I wanted to save it but I spent it anyway. I just mentioned that as a story about Rusk.

But when I was on the Ways and Means Committee staff, they only had twenty five members of the committee. It's a lot bigger now. It had no Subcommittees and it only had one staff member working on trade at that time. Now they got Republican staff, Democratic staff and professional staff and it's you know just doing trade work. But at that time there was an economist that I worked for when Landrum got me the job working for the committee on trade because I was interested in international law. And I'll never forget one day, this guy was a very quiet guy economist and you know just thought like an economist but I never even knew what his political positions were. We were on the professional staff; of course they were all hired by Wilbur Mills, he was in charge of everything. But he didn't express much political opinion.

But one day, I was over at the Capitol and I saw Spiro Agnew come out of the door. Of course he was vice president at the time and it was nothing. I mean he was a very controversial figure because of the speeches he gave and everything but he was walking out the door and I saw he had kind of a grim look on his face and he got in his limousine and drove off. I turned to the guy there at the door and said "was that Agnew? And he said "yea it was, he just turned in his resignation to Carl Albert" the speaker at the time and I said "my God". I had no idea why he turned in his resignation but I walked back across the street to the Longworth building where the Ways and Means Committee was and I went up to Harry Lamar who was the staff person I was telling you about, the economist. And I said "Harry you won't believe what just happened, Spiro Agnew just resigned". He looked at me and he stood up and said "Hot Damn! One down and one to go". It just totally took me by surprise because he never said anything about Nixon or anything else.

But that whole time was up there and I went over and I spoke to Herman Talmadge because he—my grandfather was a big Gene Talmadge man and my father was very loyal to the Talmadges and I always saw a lot of Herman. I mean he had some flaws like we all do but he was real sharp on that Watergate committee. And so I took the opportunity to go over and speak with him and he was very kind to me. As I walked in the door, I saw the political poster on wall; you may have seen it “Gene Talmadge, dirt farmer”. Of course he was a lawyer and a very astute student of different things but he wanted to be known as the dirt farmer. But also, I got to sit in on some of the Watergate hearings that went on. I saw Eldeman and Haldeman give their testimony and it was a very interesting time to be there. But then I went in the Air force about eight months later after we got the bill passed. I say we, the only thing I did was help the economist and then I wrote Landrum’s speech that he gave on the floor on the trade bill.

So I spent four years in the Air force, my first year was in California at Vandenberg Air force Base, a missile base out there. And most people would have liked to stay out there for the full four years but I was too antsy. My first son was born there; Clete, named after my father. And I volunteered along with the advising consent of my spouse, Susan, and we went to Turkey. We volunteered to go to Turkey for two years and it was really an interesting time to be there. It was right after the Turks had invaded Cyprus and the US congress had imposed an embargo on Turkey. One of my jobs as a Georgia advocate was to visit Americans who had been locked up in Turkish jails. And I remember going down there to the big jail at the city where we lived and meeting the warden and I don’t think he spoke any English except for one word he said to me “embargo çok fena” which means very bad in Turkish. But I really enjoyed that time because we were down on the Mediterranean; it’s right across the border from Syria. My wife and I drove down to Beirut once and then really all over the place. We travelled to Russia, Egypt, and a lot of interesting places from that center. It caused me to become more and more interested in international affairs and international politics.

So when I graduated, I mean I’m sorry, I finished my tour of duty in Turkey, I thought it was time for me to get out. I had served three of my four year commitment and I thought “well they don’t want to pay for me to go to another base and then get out a year later”. But they didn’t go for it, they wanted me to stay. So we went to Denver Colorado; they had an Air force base which is not there anymore but it was where—there was a prison and so I tried about twenty five courts martials during the time I was there. There weren’t many courts martials at Vandenberg or in Turkey, I had a few both where I represented both the defense and the—I was mainly a prosecutor but had so few people we had to cover both bases so that was my most amount of criminal trial experience. I never really tried any criminal cases after that. But I decided I wanted to go back to school and study international law more so I got accepted into London School of Economics which the full name is London School of Economics and Political Science. And they have a law faculty there which is highly respected. I studied international economic law which was mainly international trade law, European law and some comparative law courses because I got interested in International trade while working on the Ways and Means Committee. So that was kind of my introduction to international trade which played a big role later in my life.

After I graduated from LSE, I was wantin’ to go back to Washington. And I had a friend who was in Chicago, we were debating, my wife got this really good job teaching at the American school in London and they paid American wages which back then was a lot higher than British wages. And we were enjoying living in London so I thought “well I might like to stay here a little bit longer”. And I had a friend who worked for Continental Bank in Chicago, he is a fraternity brother here, a Georgian and we were really close friends. And he said “well you

should come—” I asked him if Continental bank which was the second largest bank in the country at the time and had a big branch in London and had a big branch in London. And I was going to see if they hired lawyers in London and he said he found that they didn’t. And I was coming back to Washington to do some interviews and he talked me into coming to Chicago to interview there.

And when I got to Washington, things had changed quite a bit. Number one, Jimmy Carter was president; this was in 1978 and there were too many Georgians in Washington. It was hard to get a job as a Georgian at that time if you didn’t know the right people and I really didn’t. So I decided to go to Chicago and interview there and they offered me a job and said they’ll pay for me to move my furniture back from London and everything else. And it was a pretty, real interesting job and I was interested in International Finance and so that is what I did for the next two years in Chicago. I did international finance at this bank in Chicago.

Chicago I found to be a great town. It’s awfully cold in the winter time and awfully hot in the summer time. But it’s a great city and my wife and I and young son enjoyed living there but decided that it was time to move back to Georgia in 1980. So we stayed there for two years and I interviewed with a number of firms in Atlanta and had two offers. One of them was with Powell Goldstein, Frazier & Murphy which has been absorbed now by another firm but it’s still got a lot of good people there. It turned out that my grandfather was a close friend of Burt Murphy. You remember who that is? He was a good Talmadge man. And Burt Murphy was still alive, He was retired and he died not too long after I go there but he was still there. And my grandfather, I had some correspondence between him and Burt Murphy when my grandfather would associate Powell Goldstein to handle a case that was in Atlanta and he didn’t want to go there and so forth. So I stayed there for two years and I decided that I didn’t like being an associate in a big firm. And they weren’t doing the kind of international law that I was interested in; they were representing German and Japanese investors in Georgia so it was really just Georgia law with a foreign client. That’s what they called international law back in the ‘80s; in Atlanta anyway. So I got to thinking that I might like to move back to my home town. My father and grandfather practiced law there since 1911; this was 1982. And against my father’s best advice, I moved back there. You know a lot of fathers like for you to move back home while he felt I was crazy giving up a good job in Atlanta with a big firm and coming back and struggling as a young lawyer because he was already retired. But what I did was I moved back there and used his name and we formed the partnership of Johnson & Johnson just like he did when he moved back after graduating from Emory in 1952.

So I started practicing and just basically had to create the practice. He was still doing a little bit of real estate work but really not much. He died three years after I got back there which was kind of all of a sudden thing because he was only sixty-nine; a little bit too young to die but unfortunately that’s what happened. But one of the reasons I moved back was because I was interested in politics. And I had some friends who were in politics; Pierre Howard was my really close friend all the way back to the University of Georgia and others. I had—Joe Frank Harris was governor and he had a top aide, Rusty Soule. Rusty and I were in law school together but he also was my cousin. And so I started talking with him after my father died. I had some people come wanting me to run for state representative and my dad was still alive and he said “don’t do that”. He’d been through it you know; he ran for state representative, he had been Mayor of Royston; my grandfather had been Mayor of Royston. I didn’t get to be Mayor of Royston because I moved out of town in 1985 and I was city attorney and city judge and was really enjoying my law practice there but I didn’t really do anything in politics until 1987.

I was really interested in the state senate and Parks Brown who got very ill in the first session of 1987 died in about April or May of that year. And Pierre Howard called me and said “look, if you would like to run for the state senate, I’ve got a fellow who helped me in my last campaign, he’ll help you; and I’ll like to give y’all all the help I can get”. And then I talked to Rusty and several others and I decided “I think I’ll run for office and I’ll just keep my law practice going and then after five o’clock before it gets dark, I’ll get out and start handing out some cards”. That is my recollection of what politics is about at that point because when my dad ran for solicitor general the first time, he actually had been appointed to office by Marvin Griffin. Marvin Griffin was a good friend of my grandfather and he—he asked my grandfather if he would like to be a judge because the judge died in that circuit and my grandfather said “No, why don’t you appoint a solicitor general to judge Kerry Skelton and appoint my son to be solicitor general”. And so that’s how he got to be appointed.

Within two years he had to run for re-election because it was in the middle of the term when he got appointed. And he had a very difficult race against William Oscar Carter who later became a good friend of mine and was a friend of my dad too but they had a vicious campaign against each other. In my recollection of that, I was only about eight or ten years old; this was in 1958 so I was ten years old. I remember going around with my father while he was campaigning and he’d get out and go to the little grocery stores and the gas stations and hand out cards; and I thought that was all there was to that. So when I decided to run for the state senator, I was going to keep my law practice going. I had an associate who could do a good bit of the work and I had this paralegal who was doing a lot and I thought “well I could just take off five o’clock; it didn’t get dark till about eight and I’ll just hand out some cards and get elected”. Well it wasn’t too long after I started I realized that if I had any chance of winning, I was going to have to give up my law practice for that period.

Unfortunately it was a short period because after Parks died—

SHORT: Special election

JOHNSON: They had a special election; you only get six weeks or so to do it so I hit the ground running with Pierre’s friends’ help, we had a pretty sophisticated campaign. Most everybody was making the signs with stencils, you know. And this guy decided we should do it in a much more sophisticated way. So we put up this four by eight signs all over the district and the district ran from Elbert County which was pretty far away from one end to the other. The other was up near Winder; of course it was Jackson County but when you got off at Braselton, you went from Braselton to almost Wilkes County or Lincoln County. So it’s a pretty long way but we put these things up in a matter of a week all over the district. And it looked like I was the man to beat at that point and there were a lot of other people in the race; we had about eight people in the race. I was able to get in the run off with John B. O’Neal who is a doctor in Elberton and is a good friend of Zell. Zell was the lieutenant governor at that time.

We had this run off and fortunately I was able to win and Zell called me right after the election to congratulate me. He said “I want you know I know there were some people that were saying that I was helping John Ben but I wasn’t but—” and I said “that’s fine, that’s over and I’m just looking forward to working with you”. So right away, he gave me some great committee assignments. He made me vice chairman of the Judiciary Committee which may sound like a crazy thing for a freshman to be made vice chairman. But the problem was that they didn’t have many lawyers in the legislature; everybody is always criticizing the legislature being—too many

lawyers and you know. But there were less than 20% of the whole legislature were lawyers and so in the Senate, most of the work was done in the Judiciary Committee because that was the only place you had a concentration of lawyers to help write the bills and everything.

I mean of course we had the legislative council and they did most of the actual drafting but it was important to have somebody that had some legal knowledge on the Judiciary Committee. So Zell said “tell me what committees you want to be on but you have to be on the Judicial Committee because I just don’t have enough lawyers”. And so he made me vice chairman and I became fast friends with the chairman who was Nathan Deal from Gainesville and who of course just got elected governor. But Nathan and I shared a secretary in the newly renovated legislated office building across the street. Our offices were right next to each other and we worked very closely— on the Judicial Committee issues.

Another issue that I was really interested in though was toll-free county wide calling. Back then there were so many different telephone companies in Georgia and each one had their own little fiefdom and if you called outside of that you had to pay a long distance fee. So there were many counties including Franklin County where I was from. I lived in Hart at that time but Hart had the same issue; but Franklin is basically where Royston, most of Royston is. And there were three different telephone companies operating in Franklin County so you couldn’t call a school, you couldn’t call sometimes across the street without paying long distance charge. So that was the first project that I took on in the state senate was to get toll-free county wide calling. And at first, Bell, Southern Bell was on my side. They thought it was a fight against the bells, against the small companies and small independent companies. But in the end, I had to fight Southern Bell also because the bill we came up with affected them in some ways that they thought were— it was going a different direction than they wanted it to go. What they wanted to do was to have charge based on the distance—I don’t remember all the details now but they fought me tooth and toe nail and ultimately the small companies got behind it. So I was just fighting Southern Bell. You know I didn’t give a lot of speeches in the state senate. When I had to I’d get down and give one but the speech I gave on this toll free county wide calling thing was when I was fighting Southern Bell. I had some friends—you know the lobbyists from Southern Bell were friends of mine but we didn’t stay friends during this time because I said—in my speech I said “Southern Bell is like the hog that eats all the feed in the trough and then gets in it when it gets full where nobody else can get any”. And that became the quote of the day in the Atlanta papers. And I used to say after that, I said “you know the only way rural legislators ever get quoted is by using a double negative or saying ‘ain’t’ or have something about a farm animal in it”. You know because they have this perception of rural legislators being country boys who don’t know anything. So they always put their quotes in there if they had a double negative or ‘ain’t’ or something about a farm animal in it to ridicule them in some way.

But anyway, the first time we took a vote on that it failed. And I’ll tell you a funny story about it too. I got more than half of the senate, Republican and Democrat sign on to this bill with me. First we formed a study committee; Zell appointed this study committee that I asked him to appoint. We went all around the state to find out what the issues were around the state. So when we got back, we came up with this report and then introduced the bill and I got over half of the legislature—over half the Senate to sign on to it because it was very popular in the House too because they had the same problem over there. And when I dropped the bill with all those names on it, Southern Bell just went crazy. And one of the people that I had to sign on to it was Wayne Garner. I’d never forget what he said to me because he knew Southern Bell was against it. And Wayne was a very funny guy and a good friend of mine but he said to me “Don’t I’m going to sign

this bill with you but I'm getting off it in Augusta". And what he meant by that was—and this is not to say he was being bribed but the Southern Bell lobbyists used to take a bunch of legislators to the masters every year. And so he said "I'm on this bill as long as I can still go to the masters". He said "I'm getting off in Augusta".

SHORT: Weren't you also in the Appropriations Committee??

JOHNSON: Yeah

SHORT: That really is something for a freshman.

JOHNSON: Yeah, I got on the Appropriations Committee but the big thing for me was when Zell Miller, I mean Zell got elected governor, and then Pierre Howard got elected lieutenant governor. And I had been one of the people who stuck their neck up for Pierre because you remember Joe Kennedy was president pro-Tem at the time, everybody thought he was going to win but Pierre had been my friend for so long and I believed in his progressive philosophy and so I just told him, I said "I'm for Pierre Howard" and eventually he won. Right before he took office, as you know at that time the lieutenant governor appointed all the committee chairmen. And I told Pierre, I said "look, I would like to be chairman of appropriations committee because I had only been in the Senate for three years now. And I know it might be a little bit unusual but I've got some ideas that I think we can reform the budget process and I'd like to bring more people into it and I'd like to start working on the appropriations bills before the House sends it to us". Because the House has to by under the constitution has to initiate the bill but that doesn't mean we can't start working on it.

I remember when we did start working on the appropriations bill before they sent it to us; Terry Coleman who was the chairman in the House came to me. He said "what are you all doing? You don't even have that bill yet, we ain't even sent you a bill yet". What they would do with under Speaker Murphy is they would work on it up until the bitter end then they'd send it to us the Senate and you wouldn't have time to really respond. And so I appointed all these sub committees to be working on different parts of it before they sent it to us. Well back to how I got appointed at that job, there was some controversy because Pierre was going to—word got out and I never really questioned him about this. But he was going to appoint Charles Walker who had been in the House for a long time but he just got elected to the Senate to be chairman of the Health and Human Resources Committee. People like Culver Kidd and some of the older guys who had been around for a long time started complaining. You know "we don't want that, you have to be here—even though he's been in the House for—you can't appoint him to that committee". So Pierre came to me and said "I know you want to be chairman of the Appropriations Committee but look at all these criticisms I'm getting about—and I even haven't decided to do it about appointing Charles Walker to be chairman".

Walker had helped him in Augusta and so forth. And I said "okay well I don't want to put too much pressure on you but I think I'm gonna run for majority leader then if that's the case because I'd rather be chairman of appropriations committee but I think I might be able to get elected a majority leader". I had been assistant floor leader for Joe Frank Harris in the second year I got there and I'd developed a lot of friendships and relationships with people in the Senate and I started calling around. Wayne Garner who I mentioned earlier who was also a friend and ally of mine, he was already running for majority leader. And he thought he had it locked up; he

thought he had Pierre's support. But Pierre said "look, I have not committed one way or the other; if you want to do it, do what you have to do but I am not going to help you".

So I started making calls and I called a lot of the new members, one of them was Sonny Perdue who was the new Democratic member from Bonaire. And I called a lot of other people and started piling up names of commitments for people which support me to be a majority leader and then I decided to call Wayne and tell him about it. When he picked up the phone he said "Whoa man you've been making some calls hadn't you?" I said "yeah I have but I just want to talk to you and let you—I didn't want to do this behind your back". I mean I had started earlier in the day but I was you know—people would call him who had already committed to him you know. But I had gotten up about twenty something commitments and the Senate didn't have but fifty-six members; I forget how many Democrats there were at the time but this is all just Democrats. So I had a really good shot at doing it.

So he said "we need to meet and let's meet with Pierre". So we went down and met with Pierre and Wayne had helped Pierre in his election also. He started out running himself as for lieutenant governor; he dropped out the race and threw a support behind Pierre. So I told Pierre to look I would rather be chairman of the Appropriations Committee and I'll drop out of the race if we can reach that commitment. And so ultimately that's how I got appointed was showing I had support of a majority leader to where it wouldn't be controversial for him. But then at the same time, Nathan Deal decided he wanted to run for president pro-Tem. Now this was an issue because Terrell Starr was running for president pro-Tem. Terrell had been chairman of the Appropriations Committee under Zell Miller and he felt that when Pierre announced that he was going to appoint me chairman of the Appropriations Committee that undercut him because he won't have a place to go if he didn't win president pro-Tempore.

I threw my support behind Nathan. He and I had been close friends and I thought we needed some new blood and some progressive approach and at that time, Nathan was a moderate. Not as moderate as he was because he switched parties; you have to do what you have to do I guess. But Nathan got elected and then Pierre set up a new committee that he appointed Terrell to be chairman of, so that's how that kind of worked out. Nathan and I and Wayne Garner were the sub-committee or the conference committee on the appropriations debate with the House and so the three of us were very closely together. We passed a bill out of the Senate on the reform of the budget process. I had put together a committee of outside experts including Donald Ratajczak who was at that time a very important economist from Georgia State, Tom Loff who is now the dean of the school of Public and National Policy school here, spear was on it and I had somebody from McKenton Company. We had four or five people and they helped us put together this bill for reforming the budget process.

We took really a new approach. I thought we were going to have trouble with the House. At first, there were grumbling about it but then they got together with us and we worked all the differences out and they decided they were for it too. So we passed it in my last year in the state senate in 1992 and it really was a pretty strong bill. But when it got to Zell, he called me after the session was over when he was looking at the bills, whether he was going to sign them or not and told me that he decided to veto the bill for different reasons. I don't remember what they were now but I know that when they took it up again the next year, they started with that bill and then passed another one that was to his liking. So anyway I feel like I was involved heavily with the reformation of the budget process because of that.

And also, I changed what the Senate did in their Appropriations Committee by setting up these sub-committees who really looked in depth into each of the issues; because the way it worked

before hand was when the House sent it over, really the Senate didn't have very much time with the bill. And what they would do is you get in a small conference room next to the Appropriations Committee chair's office and if you wanted to get something in the budget, you had to go knock on the door more or less; people stand outside of line and you go in and talk to the Green Door Committee. I forgot what they called it; that is what they called it in the House but it is a small sub-committee, the only sub-committee they had in the Appropriations Committee. And if you wanted, I remember I wanted to get—they were trying to close Heart State Park was in my district and I went to the Appropriations Committee and got them to add three more cabins there and so it saved the park.

But I'll never get the sort of humiliation you had to go through to speak to this big group about ten senior members to get them to put something in the budget. But that is what the whole process was about. It wasn't looking into the whole state budget, you are just looking into what you could put in different people's districts, and I felt like that was not the right approach. And then later, what we proposed was passed, most of the substantive part. But those were the main things I was involved in. I handled a lot of legislation for Zell. One was the state HABSAT which was creating a crime for public official abuses. I remember at that time, Bob Barr was the US attorney in Atlanta. He had just prosecuted congressman—I can't think of his name right now but from the fourth district; that Ben Jones beat, after he got indicted, you might think of his name

SHORT: Pat Swindle

JOHNSON: Pat Swindle, that's who it was. Barr had prosecuted him and a few other people and we met with Barr to talk with him about this legislation. Zell got me and a couple of other people involved. And so we got that passed; I also did a lot of work with the attorney general Mike Bowers. He had several pieces of legislation I handled for him. Those were the kind of things that I was involved in in the state senate. But I really wanted to—and I have to say that I enjoyed my time in the state senate more than anything I have ever done in my life because it was something substantive, something that you could do and make a difference on, and there wasn't much partisanship going on. I mean I worked as closely with some Republicans as I did with some of my Democratic colleagues. Skin Edge who was one in particular; he and I hit it off very well. Mike—I am getting old and I can't remember names right off the bat. But there were several others, Republicans, who were more progressively—

SHORT: Mike Egan

JOHNSON: Mike Egan. Thank you. I'm glad I brought you along. Mike Egan was very smart guy and progressive guy. Things have changed so much now; you know you don't just have people, Democrats and Republicans working together or anything. If I wanted to do a bill where there was this county wide toll free call in or appropriations or budget process revision, I'd go to Skin and get him to help because he was—he later became the minority leader. But he was—at the time Coverdell was the minority leader and I worked with Coverdell too a lot even when I got elected to Congress, he got elected to the US Senate. We were always very cordial friends. When I got appointed ambassador later, in '98, Coverdell was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee then chaired by Jesse Helms and Paul and Max Cleland both came to the committee and testified on my behalf.

Paul wrote a nice letter, and Helms was very nice to me too. He was a very harsh partisan in a lot of ways but for the job that I had now; we'll talk about this in just a little bit but it was being the chief textile negotiator and that carried the rank of ambassador with it. He was very much in favor of the textile programs and all the textile industries behind me so it was easy for him to support me. He gave me a real glowing introduction. But I say this because of Paul; Paul and I got to know each other in the state senate. And then he was appointed by George Herbert Walker Bush to direct the Peace Corps but before that, we had a good, cordial relationship and he was a good friend of Pierre Howard too and of course Zell as well. And it just shows how much difference there is now between the way it was then.

But I decided that I really wanted to do something more in international national security issues. And also I was having a hard time financially when I was practicing law and spending half my time literally. The two years that I was chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I spent half my time on state senate work. And the pay for that was \$10 thousand a year. And you know the numbers didn't work. And I had some good people working for me in my law office but you know you just really couldn't make ends meet. That is the reason I wanted so many lawyers in the legislature because if a lawyer sells his time and if you're almost giving it away somewhere else, there ain't that many hours in the day. So I decided I wanted to have a full time job in politics. Not necessarily a career but I just felt like I couldn't pay my obligations and still stay in the state senate and keep my law practice and not commit malpractice.

So I decided to run for congress when Doug Barnard announced that he was going to retire. He was from Augusta and had been congressman there for I think about sixteen years.

SHORT: Sixteen years.

JOHNSON: Yup. Along with Ed Jenkins; I think they came in at the same time. And Ed decided he was going to retire. And so Nathan Deal and I both decided to run at the same time. Actually he decided a little bit after I did because Ed didn't announce he was going to retire until kind of late. But Sanford Bishop also ran at that time; he had been in the state senate with us. Mac Collins ran as a Republican of course and all of us got elected. It was a big turnover that year. But that was in 1992 and Bill Clinton also got elected in 1992. Of course we were all very happy that Clinton won; I think my career would have lasted a lot longer if Bush had won; George Herbert Walker Bush had won that year. But I liked Clinton and I thought he did a good job. I mean I still think he did a terrific job. He may not go down as one of the great presidents for a number of reasons but he certainly on budget issues and all of that, I think he did a really good job.

When I was running for Congress I ran like Ross Perot that helped get Clinton elected. You know that we need to reduce the deficit. It was going over \$200 billion. That didn't sound like much now but back then that sounded like an awful lot and of course it was a lot more as a percentage of the GDP. But since I had been chairman of the Appropriations Committee and been heavily involved in reforming the budget process; and living through a time when there was severe budget crisis, not as bad as the one now but in 1991, it was a terrible budget year. We had really—revenue dropped significantly. I'll never forget, we used to go to the governor's mansion, meet with Zell and Tom Murphy and the leaders in the Senate would go with leaders in the House and we'd try to work things out in that crisis. It was in August of '91 and that was before Clinton had announced that he was going to run.

But one day, he showed up at one of our meetings there at the governor's mansion and Zell introduced him to all of us because they had gotten to know each other as you know the Southern Governors Association and maybe Democratic Governors Association. And he spoke very highly of him but I'll never forget that was the first time I met him. So when I got elected to Congress, I had been running on several things but one was to try and balance the budget. And this is where I'll talk about the budget issue and the budget vote I had. Shortly after we got there in '93, the president came up to Congress and gave a budget speech. He said "look we are going to have to do several things; we are going to have to raise taxes and we are going to have to do some severe cuts". And so he tried to balance it out with his budget proposal that went before the Congress. During the campaign, I never took any kind of pledge that I was not going to raise taxes. Every time I get asked about that I said "I think you can't do that, that's not responsible, you have to, you have to". Then I would say I don't think we are going to need to because I think we can cut enough out of the budget to do it that way. Back then, I guess they are still doing it but they used to send everybody to the Kennedy school in Boston in Harvard and where you'd get briefings on every subject under the sun. But of course that year, the big issue was budget because everybody was very concerned about the rising deficit. That's when I found out that it could not be done without some tax increases. Because I was hearing from not just Democratic economists, I was hearing from a broad range of people. And they just said "you know if you look at the budget, we're \$200 billion in the hole and that's not to mention the debt; this is just the annual deficit. And the whole pentagon budget at that time was about three hundred—I think under three hundred billion; I think about two hundred and fifty. And about half the budget was in Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Entitlement programs; that is under the law, you really can't—money is going into those programs from those of us who are paying payroll taxes. You can't really cut that back in a way that would affect the budget. So you have to look at the discretionary money. A lot of people say "we need to get rid of foreign aid"; well foreign aid is about 1% of the budget if that. Fraud waste and abuse was another thing that people used to say; you know "we're going to get rid of the fraud waste and abuse". You know if you took—what I used to say when I was going around talking to constituents about it, after I figured out what kind of problem we were really in is "if you took the entire pentagon and shut it down, just got rid of our national defense altogether, you still would have a deficit.

You can't—let's talk about fraud, waste and abuse, it's not all in the Health and Human Resources Department. Environmental protection you can eliminate that; that would get rid of about maybe just a very small percentage, but you couldn't resolve the problem". And then others would say "we're just going to grow out of it, reduce taxes and then we would grow out of it". Well that was impossible because at that time, Alan Greenspan who was the Chairman of the Federal Reserve wouldn't allow inflation to get over 3% or wouldn't allow growth rates to get over 3%; because if they got over 3%, he'd worry about inflation. And so you'd have to get the growth rate up to 5 or 6% in order to grow out of it so it just was not possible to do it that way. And the only way you could do it is with some tax increases and some healthy budget cuts. So when they presented the—the way it works in the Congress is you pass a budget resolution; and then once you get that budget resolution, that's what you got to work with it. And then it has to be reconciled with taxes and with cuts in the end. So the big vote was on the reconciliation. You hear about reconciliation a lot now because they used it for different things but this is the budget reconciliation bill. And all of us except for Roy Rowland from Georgia voted for the budget resolution, including Nathan. I keep mentioning him because he is—was a close friend of mine; he and I voted exactly alike for the first six months we were in Congress. I remember one

time Sanford Bishop came up to us for some vote and said “how are you guys going to vote on this?” He wasn’t saying like he might walk up to a group and get each one’s opinion; he knew that we were going to vote exactly alike and he wanted to know how the two of us were going to vote on it.

So all of us voted for it except for Roy in the Democratic group and at that time I think we had two Republicans; Newt and Mac Collins and I don’t know if there was any more at that time but most of us were Democrats. So we passed the resolution and that’s when things started getting controversial. At the beginning of the summer, I think the budget resolution passed in the spring but you know with all the rhetoric that was going on, you know the talk radio and everything was just piling up at that point. Nathan decided to vote against the Budget in ’93, in August of ’93. He had voted for the budget resolution which assumed that you were going to have these cuts and these tax increases. But Buddy Darden and I and Sanford and of course Roy he already voted against the resolution even; we were planning to vote for it.

But as things started moving during the summer of ‘93, I started moving away from it because I didn’t like mainly the energy tax you know the gas tax that was put on there. And I felt like that was not necessary but you know you had to vote if things were in a package so I started moving away from it. There were several of us freshman Democrats from all over the country who started moving away from it. Nathan had already jumped ship totally but the rest of us were still debating on what to do. And towards the end, I was moving away from voting for it thinking that we could vote it down and then come back and bring in a few Republicans and get a little bit more moderate package, take out the gas tax. I knew there had to be tax in there in order for it to balance ultimately. It’s not going to balance in the beginning but ultimately, there had to be some tax increases.

So the day of the budget reconciliation vote, I think it was August 5th of ’93. We were getting ready to go on recess, so called district work period and right after that, right after this vote, I was still debating it; but I had—I was leaning heavily against it. I was thinking if I was going to vote, I was going to vote it down or vote no. And during the day, I started getting calls from all over the place. One call I got was from Pierre and Lewis Massey. Lewis Massey was his chief of staff at the time and they said “we’re just calling to see how you doing Don, how is it going today?” And I said “I’m in a state of high anxiety right now”. That was one of the friendly calls I got. I also got calls from—a lot of calls from Al Gore, the vice president. One time I was talking to him and my administrative assistant looked in the door and she said “the president is on line one” and so I said to Gore “the president is on line one, can I take that call?” And I heard him say in the background “hey are you calling Don Johnson?” They were in the same room together. And Butler Derrick who was the congressman just across the river in South Carolina had been there since—he was one of the Watergate babies they called them, the people who got elected after Watergate in 1974. And he had been—he is part of the leadership and he was in my office talking to me about this bill because he comes from the same territory I do. He is from Edgefield in South Carolina but he had been around for a long time. He was sitting there when I was talking to Gore and then to President Clinton and then a couple. And I told—Clinton said to me, “what would it take to get you to vote for this?” And I said “well first of all, I don’t like the Byrd rule, the effect it has on the proposal that we had to put a cap on the growth of healthcare”. You know that was one of the major problems of the budget was the growth—rising cost of healthcare. And we wanted to put a cap on it. In fact, we did in the House bill but when it got to the Senate, the Byrd rule, which named after Robert Byrd from West Virginia said that in a reconciliation package that the Senate you know it would not be germane to have anything other

than purely budget items and putting a cap on the growth of health care cost was not possible under that Byrd rule. So the Senate took it out.

And so I said to Clinton “if they can put that back in there and get that passed because that is really what helps solve the problem”. And he said “well look, I don’t have any control of that, that is the Senate’s problem. Would it help if you could talk to George Mitchell?” George Mitchell at the time was the Senate majority leader. I said not really but a few minutes after we hung out, Mitchell calls me and I could tell he didn’t want to talk to me but he was being forced to because the president asked him to call me. I said “look is there any way you could wave this Byrd rule to get the cap on the growth of healthcare?” And he said “I don’t know, I’ll do the best I can but we are going to take it up in a separate bill after we pass this budget reconciliation when we come back in September. But I can’t promise it, we don’t know what is going to happen; we can’t put it in this bill.”

So we hung up and a few minutes later, somebody else called and Butler was still sitting there in my office and he said “who’s that, that the pope?” because I had already had a call from the president, the vice president and the Senate majority leader. But after a while I called up some of my freshman Democratic colleagues and we had already been talking about what we were going to do. And so the three of us got Eric Fingerhut from Ohio and a guy from Washington whose name I think—I can’t rely on you for this one but the three of us went to see Dick Gephardt and this was about five o’clock in the afternoon and the vote was going to be at like six thirty or seven and we went to see Gephardt and we said “look, we’re sorry but we are not going to be able to vote for this. We think that maybe if we can vote it down, we’re very much in favor of deficit reduction but we think that we can come up with a better bill and if we vote this down, there is a possibility that we can do that”.

And you have to have a budget so if we vote this down, we have to come up with something else. And Gephardt said “look I understand where you are coming from and I don’t agree with you, I don’t think that we can get a better bill at this point because the partisanship is so rife. But I understand”. He didn’t try to twist our arms or anything like that; it wasn’t a time delay type of approach. He said “look I have heard you but we understand”. So the three of us then walked back to our respective offices and got ready for the vote. Chuck Toney who is currently working here at the university, he was my press secretary at the time; he’s a speech writer in the public affairs section here. But he kept coming into my office “have you decided what you are going to do? Have you decided what you are going to do? Because I got this—the press is handling me”. And there is one guy in particular in Augusta Georgia, Mars Newspapers, Augusta Chronicle; guy named Phil Kent, you probably know him. He was the editorial page editor at the time and he was just a vicious, vicious opponent of anything that Clinton did or later anything that I did. But at this time, he was wanting me to say that I was going to vote against it. And so I told Chuck, this was really right before I walked over to the vote. I said “okay you can go ahead and tell I’m planning to vote against it. I’ve already told Gephardt...” and speaker Tom Foley had never contacted me about it; he is a very nice guy but he—maybe this is the difference between Gephardt and Folly and Pelosi and Republican side DeLay and Boehner and those guys. They didn’t get into twisting arms. And since we’d already told him we were going to vote against it, I said ‘okay you can tell Kent that I’m going to vote against it”.

Then I get up to start walking across the street; my office was in the accounting building and I was on the ground floor and just walked straight out. My son, Clete was up there that summer working as a tour guide at the Capitol. He was a freshman in college, just finished his freshman

year at Harvard and he had been up there working. He was off since it was so late in the day as far as the tour guide job but he and several—some of my staff members were going to walk over and watch the vote from the gallery. And I had hadn't seen him all day and he said to me "daddy, how are you going to vote on this bill?" I said "well, I think I am going to vote against it". He said "you are? Why are you going to do that?" And I said "well I think that we can—if we vote it down, I think we can come back with a more bipartisan approach and get a bill that would pass that takes out the gas tax, takes out—maybe lower some of the taxes, increases some of the cuts; you know just make a little bit moderate bill but still have an effective bill". He said "oh okay". So we all walked over together, he goes up in the gallery with the other staff members and I decided to go in; I don't want to talk to anybody on the House floor. So I go sit in the middle of one of those rows far away from—I didn't want anybody to contact me at that point. I already made up my mind what I was going to do. So the unfortunate thing was that I had to sit through two speeches by Newt Gingrich and Dick Armey. And they got down there and were just railing against this thing and said "this is going to put us in a deeper recession. It is going to basically end civilization—western civilization as we know it". I mean I'm exaggerating here a little bit but if you go back and you read their speeches, it was just going to be the worst thing that ever happened in America if this bill passes. It's just going to cause—you know you can't raise taxes during a recession; you can't—you know it's not going to increase the surplus or create a surplus. It's not going to do anything but make things a lot worse and there is no way you can raise taxes at all in this kind of environment.

And literarily, the description of what was going to happen, it was like apocalypse now. And I got to thinking, I am going to be voting with these guys and I'm thinking that they are going to come back afterwards and let anybody on the Republican caucus vote with Democrats, they will raise any taxes at all. You know I've completely fooled myself. And I got to thinking that if I vote against this, it'll be purely political cowardice. I am doing this no other reason than to save my hide because clearly we can't get a bill that reduces the deficit other than this one. This is because the Democratic Caucuses, already very diverse, you have very conservative people on that bill who voted against it by the way; a lot of them did. Some of them who wanted to have a little bit more courage voted for it. I had just fooled myself if I was thinking there were going to be any Republicans who moved over and voted with us on anything that was the least bit of damage to the deficit.

So about that time I get—a page comes over and sees me about halfway down the bench and said "you have a call here". And I looked at the message and it said "the president wants to speak to you on booth two back in the caucus room". So I said "okay I'll go talk to him" because I had decided at that point that the basis for the reason that I told my son that I was going to vote for it had turned out to be wrong, if not a lie". So I went back to him, I got on the phone with him and I talked to him two or three times that day and never said I was going to vote for it, in fact decided to vote against it. And I said "look, the things that are most concerning to me is we need more deficit reduction and I think that you can increase the budget cuts by ten billion dollars without a bill like this and I would like for you to commit that you'll support a cap on healthcare cost rising. And there was one other thing but it wasn't anything like build in a bridge in my district; one time he said "look I'll do anything within my presidential authority to help you get re-elected. And all I could think of was "there is nothing you can do to help me get re-elected; you are so disliked in my district that the only thing you can do is stay away. But certainly I don't want any help from you but I would like to have these commitments; that way I can at least say I got something for committing to you that I was going to vote for it".

So those three things and I have got them written down on the back that pages in my safe at home. I'm going to give them to the Russell Library here. And so I decided and I told Foley and Gephardt that I was going to vote for it when it came up; I had changed my mind and decided to vote for it. So when the vote came up, I didn't wait; I just went right over there and voted and then I left the chamber. Of course it went on for a long time and some of the people were waiting to see how many votes they were going to have before they put their name down. And so it passed by one vote.

SHORT: Your vote

JOHNSON: My vote—you could say it was my vote and a lot of people did. I am really proud of that vote; it took me a long time to get there. There are not many times when you are swayed by the arguments that you hear from the floor of the House, but I was swayed by what Gingrich and Armev said in a negative way that convinced me that I had to vote for it. So after that, I had been scheduled to go jog with the president the next day and when I walked back into my office, people were cheering in there. You know because it had passed by the time I got back and they were cheering that it passed but they thought that I had voted against it. And when I told them that I voted for it, their faces just dropped. I'll never get Beverly Bells in—she was smiling when I got there and she had the biggest scowl on her face after I told her that. And then when I called my wife and told her, she was mad at me and it was—I had a few people who said “look we are proud of you for voting this way” but it was a really tough sweating after that.

I had scheduled at least twenty town hall meetings for the month of August. I had like two or three a week and they were all I'd say hill. A lot of people were out doing codels, you know all these congressional delegation trips abroad, some people down at the beach, some people were home with their family. I was out on a campaign trail fulfilling my promise to do all these town hall meetings and I had the same group of people; these diddo heads from Rush Limbaugh's show. You know they call him diddo heads. They were following me around everywhere I went and just trying to disrupt the meeting. And I will be up there like a school teacher trying to show about the budget and where it all went and how we couldn't just create this by waste, fraud and abuse; getting rid of welfare, and getting rid of foreign aid; it's not a simple thing. And I had one meeting down in Grovetown which is near Augusta, if you know where Grovetown is in Columbia County. And the Mayor down there was a good friend of mine and he was kind of the M.C or going to be the M.C of it. I had another lawyer friend from Augusta Ben Kay down there who also was helping me in that area.

But there was a talk radio guy down there in Columbia County that had this radio show; I can't think of his name right now maybe you can think about it before me. He and I got along very well but he was trying to be like Rush Limbaugh. I would go on his show all the time and field calls and everything and he and I had a very good relationship. But right before that, right after that budget vote, he just whipped up the whole Columbia County and they came like a mob to this old school house and showed up at this meeting. When I got there, a policeman came up to me and said “do you want me to escort you?” And I said “No way I don't want you to escort me”. Because I didn't want to be seen escorted by a police officer much more my constituents you know. And I got in and they just would not stop screaming. They had all these crazy signs and I'll never forget this woman who was right in the front row stood up yelling “liar, liar, pants on fire”. It was just like children that had been—you know—I don't know—in some kind of drug or something. They were just maddening. I tried to start, explain the vote, explain the

budget and everything but this was just impossible.

So finally it ended and we walked out of there my wife and couple of aides and Jane Kidd was there. She was my district director; she had been my campaign manager in the first election but Jane of course is the chairman of the Democratic Party in Georgia now and later became a state representative. But she was there with us and Ben Kay and the Mayor of Grovetown who felt so sorry because most of these people weren't from Grovetown; they come from Augusta and wherever else this radio call guy reached. And the next day on Paul Harvey, he talked about my town hall meeting in Grovetown and he said—I don't know if I can imitate him but—you know how he used to talk. He said "he had to be escorted out by the police" and so of course that was not true and I had my staff call and correct him and everything and so he dropped that before the end of the day. But that was the kind of town hall meetings we had. We had one here in Athens that was pretty raucous too but I had them literally all over the district. And they were all planned before this budget vote happened. I wasn't sure how I was going to vote when I planned them but if I had voted against it, they would have been much more pleasant. Anyway that is some of the issues that—

SHORT: And you were also selected by speaker Foley to serve as a member of the speaker's working group on policy.

JOHNSON: Yeah. Buddy Darden told me that I was selected to be on that committee, to be the token redneck. I think there might have been some truth in that but it was—I had wanted to get, be on the Ways and Means Committee and I made a strong effort to get on that committee. Of course I went and talked to Foley and Foley was not the one who decided but he could have helped me if he wanted to. Main person was Dan Rostenkowski and Ed Jenkins who had been a really good friend of mine took me to meet Rostenkowski. Of course I had met him thirty years before when I was a young staffer but he said "look we need people on this committee who can take some tough votes and we don't know how you are. We don't know how thick your skin is or how tough you are. I was mainly interested in it because of my interest in international trade, the Ways and Means Committee handles stuff like that, but he was correct; there were going to be some tough votes dealing with the deficit and so forth. I think I would have passed that vote if it had been after that. But Foley was looking for some people from the freshman class and I think there were two of us on that policy committee to get input from everybody.

It was very interesting committee to me because I got to hear the old guard talk. Like Rostenkowski and Jack Brooks from Texas and a lot of the other people who hadn't been there that long but they were very influential. Most of the people who were helping to develop policy were on that committee. I'll never forget before the budget votes happened and we had a meeting of that committee, Rostenkowski was saying "Look I know it's tough on some of you young people to vote like this. It's easy for me to say vote for it because I got tenure here". And the ironic—sad ironic thing about that statement was that he lost in the next election. Not because of the tax vote but because of his ethical issues with the post office and a lot of other things. But he was an interesting character; I was sorry to see him go down like that. He had done a lot of good things; he and Reagan had worked very closely together on tax reform and other things so it was a sad day.

And then listening to Jack Brooks talk; Jack had been there for I guess thirty—at least thirty years. He was from Texas and was a founding—I don't know what they called it but a partner, or something, in the NRA. He was chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and another big vote I had was on banning of assault weapons and Jack Brooks decided to vote to ban them. Because he

didn't use—he was a big hunter but he didn't use the assault weapons for that purpose. The NRA came after him and of course he lost also. And Foley had been a founding—I keep saying founding like founding father of the NRA. He was a very strong supporter of the NRA and he lost, too, because, at that time—and a lot of it was because of the NRA. This will be a lead-in to the assault weapons vote which was a big, big vote in my period there.

I had decided to oppose assault weapons or be in favor of banning assault weapons during my campaign. But I had been opposed to the Brady bill and because the Brady bill at that time during the campaign was nothing but a waiting period bill. And I had always voted against waiting periods. I never thought there was any value in that. If somebody—if it was to get you to cool down before you bought a gun, then you just go get a knife I would think. So when I was in the state senate, I had an A rating from the NRA, they always supported me but I didn't like the lobbyists for the NRA. And I was a little bit uncomfortable being endorsed so heavily by them but I did happen to believe that the waiting periods didn't do any good and the Brady bill was essentially a waiting period bill. So I said “okay, I'm going to vote against it. But I am going to vote in favor of banning the assault weapons because I just don't see the point in assault weapons and we already banned machine guns; it's similar to that.

So the Brady bill vote came up before; they actually improved the Brady bill where it was just not a waiting period but it was also a background check bill. So you could either do the waiting or you could have somebody do an instant background check. And I didn't think there was anything wrong with that but since I had already come out against the Brady bill, when it came up for a vote, this is one of the votes that I regret. I felt like I had to vote against it even though it was changed because it was still called the Brady bill but now it was more of a background check to see if you had a criminal record or you had a mental health record or something like that. So I felt bad that I didn't vote for that but I did so because I had made a commitment during the campaign that I was going to be opposed to—I mean going to vote against the Brady bill. It passed without my vote and then I got—some of my friends in Congress were of course southern Democrats, and some western Democrats like from Oklahoma and so on. And they were all members of the sportsman caucus. I think I joined the sportsman caucus; I don't remember exactly but I hung out with a lot of them. I went to a lot of the events they had and I've always been a hunter—you know I'm certainly in favor of hunting and sporting equipment that you have to use to hunt with.

So I got approached by the NRA and they wanted to take me out to dinner and a very nice guy, it's not like the guy that used to be the NRA—I know Zell will remember who I'm talking about. The NRA guy; starts with a capital U, you probably remember him too. A bald guy, I don't remember his name but I always found him a little bit offensive. But the NRA people in Washington were pretty smooth characters. I went out to dinner with them one night and they said “look, we want you to—you've already voted against the Brady bill so you got a great rating with us, we know how you were in the state senate, you had a high rating with us. But, we think you need to vote against the assault weapon ban and if it happens, if there is not a direct vote on it, and it gets put in the crime bill which is where it ultimately went; you need to vote against the crime bill”. And I said “well, I'm sorry...” Before that he said “look, if you vote in favor—if you vote—if you oppose the assault weapon bill, we would support you, you'll be our fair hair boy. We'll support you in every way, we'll send out postcards to all the members of the NRA and we'll give you twenty five thousand dollars...” because that is how much money they could give as a pack to support a campaign. “But if you vote in favor of the ban, we're going to come after you with everything we got”. And I said “Well that's where it has to be; I'm planning on

voting for the ban because I've already committed to that just like I committed to vote against the Brady bill, I've committed to vote for the assault weapon ban and I'm going to do it. I can't be changed on that, I've already staked my position on that". And they said okay. And sure enough, I voted for the ban and they came after me with bullets, guns blazing and they spent the full twenty five thousand, of course sent out all kinds of stuff to their membership, supported every opponent I had. And there is a lot of them in the Republican party that signed up to run against me after the budget vote. And Charlie Norwood who ultimately won the Republican nomination, he said in one radio debate we had that—somebody asked "what do you think about the machine gun ban?" He said "I think we ought to do away with that too" and I used that against him you know and he threw it back in my face somehow but he would do anything for the NRA. And I'm sure that had an impact on me because what the NRA did in their ads, they didn't say "he voted to ban assault weapons", because actually in the polling that we did, there were more people who were in favor of assault weapon bans than who were against it. What they did was they would run ads as one ad, I'll never forget what they had on the radio WNGC here that said—it was like a jeopardy program and they said—they had this one guy asking the question and some body would answer. One of the question—the last question was "who has missed the most Science Committee meetings? "Don Johnson" "Who is Don Johnson?" You know and then you couldn't tell who paid for the ad. And it was nothing about guns, but it was just this negative barrage of whatever they could dig up to throw at me. And on the Science Committee, you know our Science Committee used to have hearings for anybody who wanted to bring somebody from their district who had a new gadget they wanted to show off. So true, I didn't turn up for a lot those. I went to all the main meetings but not—you know you could have a number of hearings I didn't make. So that's how they came against me and I had one reporter tell me who had checked it out and I never checked but she said the NRA put more money in my race than any other race in the country except for Tom Foley. They went after him with a passion. He had been such a strong NRA supporter over the years and they went after him.

I had one television ad that I used this very dinner that I told you about and we did it in the courtroom, Madison County courtroom where my dad tried the Lemuel Penn case. And I said in that—my script was—you know my dad went after the Ku Klux Klan in this very courtroom and I was proud of him. He said—he asked the jury to have the courage to do what's right. And so I thought about that every day since I heard him say that and every decision I make, and this is true; every decision I made on a tough vote or any political thing I did, I'll always think about that. And I didn't want my children to think of me as not having the courage that my father had at that time. And it did take some courage for that because I remember—I'm talking about now though, Lemuel Penn, Ku Klux Klan and all, I'm wondering here because I am going back to that. But when I was a kid at sixteen, that's how old I was in 1964, I came home from school one day and there was a sticker on our back door that said "the knights of the Ku Klux Klan is watching you". They didn't know their grammar too well but it sure knew how to scare the hell out of somebody. And I asked my dad about that; I said "look..." I pulled the sticker off and showed it to him. I saved that sticker; I still got it today but I said "should we be worried about this"? He said "no don't worry about that". He just put it aside.

They were killing people around here and a DA up in Jefferson got killed by a bootlegger; you might remember that

SHORT: Ozzy Ord

JOHNSON: Yeah exactly. And he was a good friend of my dad and so you know it happens. But I always thought about that and so I used that scene to talk about the NRA. And I said they are trying to bully people, they told me that they will give me the full five thousand dollars because they could give five thousand dollars as a corporation but could spend twenty-five thousand in other ways. And they said they were going to come after me if I didn't. And so I kind of used that trial in comparison to the NRA. And I am sure that infuriated them because they spent the whole wad against me. Would that help me if they hadn't? It probably wouldn't make any difference but anyway it was one of the big issues in the campaign.

Another big issue was healthcare. So called Hillary care. They call the president healthcare reform Obamacare but they called healthcare reform in '93 and '94 Hilary care. And I wanted to support them. I told—one of the first times I met her when it was announced that he was going to get Hillary to work on healthcare. I said "I would like to support you on this because I think it's very important that we have healthcare reform". But by the time it was released, the work on her committee, her group I guess I should say, it was just—it just didn't make any sense and it had been so secretive about they way they put it together. It just kind of—you know it didn't seem to me something that I could support and so I came out against it. It never came for a vote but if it had, I would have voted against it. But that was still a big issue in the campaign and people didn't know. They just thought I voted with Clinton ninety nine percent of the time which I didn't. I voted—my voting record was very moderate in comparison to Clinton and the Democratic leadership. I think I had a voting record of around seventy-eight/eighty-percent with them which was similar to what Sam Nunn was in the Senate.

And if you look now at most of the Republicans because they are much more tightly controlled, like Norwood for example, he voted 98/90% of the time with his leadership; and most of the republicans do that. A lot of Democrats vote with the leadership most of the time but not most southern Democrats do. And mine was pretty conservative and pretty independent of the House leadership and the president.

SHORT: Let's talk a minute about party politics.

JOHNSON: Yeah

SHORT: A great change in Georgia

JOHNSON: Well yeah there has been. You talking about today or when I was in office?

SHORT: I think—would you agree that the Republican surge was about to begin in your last election?

JOHNSON: Definitely. Definitely. I always tell people that I turned the tenth district into a Republican district. Maybe not intentionally. Certainly it's true because—certainly at the national level, the Democrats still control the state legislature and the governor's office up to 2002 when Roy Barnes got defeated. But at the federal level, of course people have been voting for Republicans for president for a long time but in '94 you started getting a lot of these Roosevelt New Deal Democrats where they live around where you and I live started voting for Republicans. And it really, it was a vote against Clinton in '94; I mean there is no question about

that. The Polling that we did showed that he actually had gone down. He won Georgia about forty two percent and with what Perot took from George Herbert Walker Bush, that gave him the state of Georgia's electoral votes. But he only had forty three percent then in '92.

In '94 when we were doing our polling, his numbers in my district even in '92 were much lower than forty three percent, forty two percent but in '94, they had gone down even further; they were in the low thirties. The problem I had, my numbers in '92 had been a lot higher than his, a lot higher than Wyche Fowler's. Maybe not a lot higher than Wyche but higher than Wyche's in my district. But in the '94 election, number one, the turnout was so bad. Norwood only got a couple thousand more votes than Ralph Hudgens did in 1992 but I got so many fewer votes than I did in '92 that I got swapped. But it was mainly a vote against Clinton or people just didn't turnout. And so you had the same people voting basically for Norwood who voted for Hudgens; maybe a few more. And some of them—I'm sure some of those people had voted for me in '92. That was really a big change obviously; '94 was a big change in elections throughout the South. And one of the things it did was it got rid of a lot of moderate Democrats; most of them in fact. I mean Sanford Bishop was clearly a moderate but his district was a lot more Democratic than ours was. So I think that was the beginning of the end even though I think if I had been able to hang on in '94, I would have won much bigger in '96 because '96 it was a lot of come back.

SHORT: Do you think that the contract with America made a difference in that election year in 1994?

JOHNSON: You know it gave them something to talk about but I honestly don't. I think maybe most—at least I mean I don't speak for other people but for myself; I don't think it did really because we were already loosing before they even came up with the contract for America. The first poll I did in '94, my numbers were so bad that it was getting closer to Clinton's numbers and even though the Republicans hadn't chosen anybody and most of them weren't getting anything hardly because there nobody knew who they were. But my numbers were so bad before they came out with that contract with America. I don't think it had a big impact; at least here because most of mine was an anti-Clinton vote. And I am not saying that there weren't people who voted against me because they didn't like me or my policies, but it was mainly a vote against Clinton because he wasn't on the Ballot and I was the only one there that they could vote against.

SHORT: Do you think that the party switchers like Sonny Perdue and Nathan Deal and Mike Bowers has brought Democrats into the Republican Party?

JOHNSON: Sure it's brought Democrats into the party. And all of those guys have been my friends; I still consider them to be friends of mine. Mike Bowers comes here at the Law School a lot and I see him and speak to him and we have good cordial relationship. Nathan was very close to me throughout my political career and Sonny was a good friend of mine in the state senate. Even when I've seen him since then, and when he was governor we've had a very cordial relationship. I think Sonny was probably more conservative; being a rural legislature, more conservative than the other two were. Nathan I think grew into a conservative because when I knew him, we worked together so closely; he was a moderate Democrat. Bowers was the same thing. Bowers was moderate and I think he saw an opportunity when he thought about running for governor that he had a better shot as a Republican than as a Democrat.

But that's not to question their credibility because I think that they—if they switched parties, they could have a valid reason for it other than just to get reelected. But I don't think it's fair to say that “the party left me”; that's what you hear a lot of people who switched parties say; “I didn't leave the party, it left me”. You know we are talking about the party of George McGovern in 1972 long before Nathan got involved in politics and long before Bowers got involved in politics. And course that was maybe the national party and it was a little bit off the deep end with McGovern there is no question about that. It wasn't a moderate party. But in Georgia, we still had a lot of progressive people and I will include both Bowers and Nathan as being a progressive when I worked with them in the state senate and Nathan just gradually shifted off to the right.

SHORT: If you are a candidate today, would you still be a Democrat?

JOHNSON: No question about it. I'm Democrat through and through. I couldn't be a candidate here anymore because I think that electorate has changed a lot and the Republicans have done a lot better in the rhetoric war than we have certainly in the South. But I could never run as a Republican.

SHORT: I'm sure you noticed that today's Republican leaders were once leaders of the Democratic Party; Sonny Perdue who's governor, Nathan Deal who will—who has been elected governor and Mike Bowers

JOHNSON: Right

SHORT: So does that speak well of the leadership, past leadership of the Republican Party?

JOHNSON: You mean the leaders before them?

SHORT: To have former Democrats fill those positions

JOHNSON: Well you have to look back at who the leaders were and one of them was Johnny Isakson. John is a good friend of mine and I think does a good job in Washington; same way with Coverdell. Coverdell was a strong leader and back in the days when as Johnny says “it was cool to be a Republican” but when both of them went to Washington, they had to become more partisan. I mean Coverdell was a lot more partisan in Washington than he was down here and same with Johnny. But those two were leaders. Paul up until the time he died was definitely a leader; he was a senior person in the Senate and had only been there a little over one term. And Johnny is I think a very capable guy and has always been a Republican. And some of the old Republicans have passed away or moved on let's say; maybe not die but not in office anymore. So I think that it shows that there is some experience level that Perdue got when he was president pro-Tem as the Democrat of the Senate and of course Nathan when he was president pro-Tem and also serving in Congress. All those years in the state senate he learned a lot whether he was a Democrat or a Republican. But I think their success has been attributed to the fact that the electorate has changed quite a bit.

SHORT: What can the Democratic Party do to regain its former status?

JOHNSON: well I think that if we could adapt a more moderate platform at the state level—I mean at the national level; a more moderate platform, it might attract more people. This is really

a centrist country we live in. Georgia is slightly right of center but it's not off the deep end for the most part and I think that if we can project ourselves as a little more moderate way, we might be able to attract some people back. I think Obama did a good job, he got forty eight percent of the votes in Georgia and that includes a lot of white votes. People think his successes are all attributed to the black turnout but it wasn't entirely. Saxby almost lost against um...

SHORT: Jim Martin

JOHNSON: Jim Martin thank you. Your brain is a lot better than mine. Jim was a good friend of mine for years and still is but it slipped my mind. So Martin forced Saxby into a run off along with I guess the Libertarian but you know it still could be close. That hasn't been that long ago, it's only been two years ago. And so I don't think all is lost with Democrats in Georgia.

SHORT: Let's talk about trade.

JOHNSON: Yeah.

SHORT: You were appointed by President Clinton as the Chief Textile Negotiator.

JOHNSON: Mmhmm

SHORT: Explain that to us.

JOHNSON: Well the Chief Textile Negotiator is in charge of negotiating all trade agreements and all trade issues relating to the textile industry; and that includes cotton because that falls under agriculture but it's all fabric and yarn and everything. And when I was appointed to that job, the textile industry was the largest employer in the manufacturing sector in the United States. We think we've lost a lot of jobs and we have but still in the late '90s, it was still the largest employer in the manufacturing sector. So it's also been traditionally the most protected industry in the country. Agriculture is highly protected or at least subsidized but the textile industry protection goes back to the 1930s when Japan started shipping apparel over here and they went into these voluntary restraint agreements with Japan. But the Textile Manufacturing Association started at the turn of the twentieth century in early 1900's, maybe before that, but not much more, so it's always been a concern of keeping our industry here.

Now one of the big votes I had was NAFTA; when NAFTA came in. The textile industry which is not the apparel cut and sew jobs versus the fabric manufactures. The fabric manufactures wanted NAFTA because they were having to compete with Asia and South Asia Pakistan, China wasn't as big at that point in the early '90s but it later became big, but all of the Asian fabrics—and they wanted to be able to get lower cost labor to sew; to sew the pieces together. So that was the reason they supported NAFTA. And of course now everybody blames NAFTA for all these things which I don't think it's true. NAFTA has been good for jobs in Georgia and also in the nation, but not every industry benefited from it, some of them were hurt by it and there's no question about that.

But that was the kind of thing that I was involved in. I voted for NAFTA when I was in Congress and I got some criticism about it but it wasn't as big an issue in my district as some of these others were but it was certainly a major issue. And so what I did as the Chief Textile Negotiator

was to negotiate trade agreements with other countries on textiles. For example, I was on the team that negotiated China's entry into the WTO and basically they had already phased out—most of the quotas on textile were being phased out and ended after 2004 and that was already in place. But that essential is what the textile negotiator does; is to negotiate trade agreements and you lead the negotiations in that sector.

SHORT: How about some of the specifics? US-Cambodian Textile Agreement.

JOHNSON: Well, that was sort of a landmark agreement that I was involved in and negotiated with Cambodia because it was the first agreement—first trade agreement that had labor provisions in it that was used as a benefit. I'm stumbling with this but basically what it had in our textile agreement with Cambodia was that if they complied with their own labor code which we had helped draft, it was a very good labor code, and if they complied with that labor code, and didn't have child labor, didn't have forced labor, didn't have any violations of labor, then they would get more increased access to our market. That was what the agreement was all about and it was really a landmark agreement because it was the first time that had trade benefits that were tied to labor provisions.

SHORT: Are you now associated with the Dean Rusk Center at your alma mater? Tell us about the center and tell us about your duties.

JOHNSON: Well the center is a wonderful place. It was started in 1977 when Rusk was still here. Of course he was the secretary of state under President Kennedy and President Johnson and came here in 1971—maybe '70 and taught here for nearly a quarter of a century. He also helped bring in big name professors in international law. He brought in Louis Sohn from Harvard and he was instrumental in really putting University of Georgia on the map or the Law School on the map for the study of international and comparative law. So they named the center after him. It was actually created when George Busbee was governor and Busbee put a line item in in the budget for the Rusk Center which is kind of unusual to have a separate line item for some entity that is within the university system. But it has always been used to aid the governor of Georgia and the state of Georgia on international trade issues and other issues.

I've been involved with helping Georgia set up their office in China; I've been advisor to the Department of Economic Development and Sonny Perdue when they opened their office in China. Also, I have given advice to—at the federal level when George Bush was president; George W. Bush was president, I supported the trade agreements that he entered into trying to get them passed before the Congress and I've given advice on various trade agreements to the federal government. But mainly what we do in addition to that kind of outreach advice is we have educational programs at the Law School. For example we have the LOM program, the Masters of Law which where we train foreign lawyers in what American Law is all about. Some of them can then go take the New York bar after they have been to our LOM program. And we have study abroad programs. We have a program in China that I started six years ago where the students study in Tsinghua University in Beijing and Fudan University in Shanghai for two weeks each and these are really great universities. They are top universities in China.

And then we have a program in Brussels that's been going under Professor Gabriel Wilner who unfortunately died last summer. He had been taking students there for thirty-seven years studying European Union law and we are re-organizing and reviving that program, we are going to add Geneva, Switzerland to that program. So we go to Brussels for three weeks to study EU law, and then go to Geneva for a week and study International trade at the WTO law. Then we have

global internships where we have more than thirty students are sent literally all over the world to internships that we find for them; law firms, corporations, NGOs, even governments and clerkships for students literally in all kinds and around the world. And we provide students through a fund that we have to help cover some of their expenses in getting there.

And then we have conferences, international conferences. We had a conference a couple of weeks ago on nuclear non-proliferation; we have one in January on international intellectual property; and one in February on the future of international trade. And then we bring in professors to teach short courses from around the world; courses that aren't otherwise offered here and then people to give lectures on international issues. For example, we brought in Lee Hamilton couple of years ago to speak on the various issues he has been involved in having to do with 9/11 and 9/11 commission. Our best conference that we've had was bringing in five former secretaries of state, Henry Kissinger, James Baker, Madeleine Albright; um I'm drawing a blank again. Five former secretaries of state—oh Colin Powell and the other Clinton secretary. I can't believe I'm having this senior moment here but it was entitled "Bipartisan advice to the next administration" because this was in 2008 before we elected a president and before Hilary and Obama were still battling it out in the primaries.

It is really a fantastic program and it was broadcast on PBS and we have it—we need to give a copy to the Russell Library; I'm sure they have one here somewhere. But it was really a great thing that had actually been started back when Rusk was still here. He started these former secretary of state conferences. But those are the kinds of things that we do. We have an international judicial program that we run here. In fact right now as we speak, we've got eighty judges from Brazil who are here and we are giving them training in judicial administration. So those are the kinds of things that we do.

SHORT: Very interesting. Let's talk for a minute about the Don Johnson Family. You have a son, I know, who seems to be following in your footsteps.

JOHNSON: Yeah. Well I've got two sons and a daughter. My older son is Clete Johnson, he is named after my father, and he is on the Senate Intelligence Committee staff right now. He's been there for about two years but before that he worked for Senator Jay Rockefeller from West Virginia and he was his counsel for International Trade and National Security issues. And before that, he was at Patton Bogg's law firm as a young associate. But he is a graduate of the University of Georgia Law School. He went to the London School of Economics with a Fulbright scholarship, before that. And he graduated from Harvard in 1996 where he was on the varsity football team. He was a starter for three years. He was a letterman for three years but he started the last two as a free safety.

Then I have a daughter who is a graduate of the University of Georgia, married to Matthew Barnett of Atlanta and they live in Chattanooga and they gave us a grandchild last summer. Not this summer but the summer before; she is sixteen months old. And then my youngest son is Alex. He just graduated from the University of Georgia in 2009 and he worked for Jim Marshall, Congressman Jim Marshall for a little over a year and then in the summer, last summer, he joined the staff of the Homeland Security Committee where he worked for the Subcommittee chairman Mary Landrieu from Louisiana. His subcommittee deals with disaster issues such as Katrina hurricane and the oil spill. So that is what my three children are doing at this point.

SHORT: As you look back over your career as a public servant, what would you consider your

greatest accomplishment?

JOHNSON: Well, you know I can't point to any one particular thing, I feel like I made a difference in several different areas. When I was in the state senate, I felt like I made a difference on that little telephone issue. It seemed so small at the time but looking back on it, It's one of the few things that I still have people come up to me and say "we really appreciate you doing that". That was twenty two years ago. But then the budget reform and changing the way the Senate does the budget I think was maybe inside baseball to some people, but to me it was a major accomplishment. There were a number of other issues that I worked on, that I was the lead author of, but I worked on with Mike Bowers, I worked on with Zell and others; the state Hobbs Act I mentioned, there's a sovereign immunity bill that I was involved in with Mike Bowers. You know I really felt like I—I used to tell people what it's like to be in public office. The way I would describe it is first of all, if you get into politics for the money, you are either a fool or a crook. And it's getting harder and harder to be a crook so you got to be a fool mostly. But what I got into it for is what I call the bush hog theory and you have probably ridden a bush hog a few times. When I am on my farm, I used to like to get on my bush hog and drive it around a go through this high weed. I didn't grow any crops on my property, I just grew a lot of weeds and bushes and the only way I had to harvest them was with the bush hog; but you could tell where you been, when you look behind you, you know where you've been. And that's the real gratification that you get from being in public service; is if you can do something like that where you made some difference.

Now I'm not going to say that I was responsible for the budget bill passing in '93 even though it passed by one vote, there was two hundred and eighteen of us that voted for it but I think it made a difference. So the time that I spent in Congress, I have to say that those difficult votes were really important to me and to my heritage and my family. And the deficit was reduced I think it's safe to say because of that bill; and a lot of us lost because of it. You know one time I went back before I got appointed to get back in government when Clinton appointed me ambassador. I happened to be in Washington so I decided to go see the State of the Union address because I still had privilege of going on the House floor. And I went in there and I think it was '98; yeah it was '98 and by that time, the deficit had started to come down and it looked like it was a projection for surplus which it did.

And Clinton in his State of the Union address sort of chided the Republicans; he said "you know some of you guys were saying that the world was going to come to an end if this passed and there are some people who gave up—on the Democratic side, who gave up their jobs for this merger. And all of a sudden, the crowd of Democrats you know as they traditionally do get up and start clapping and yelling and everything but it was more than just normal. And I happened to be in that room and after it was over, I was standing out in the hall behind the chamber and Clinton happened to walk out there. He came up to me and he said "Don they were really clapping for you in there". So it made me feel good. Really I hated to lose and when I did, I'm not going to lie about that. I didn't necessarily want to be a career politician, I wanted to stay in there for about three terms and then run for the Senate and see how that went. I didn't get that opportunity. But those are the moments that I think are important at least in my little political career. I was in politics—elective politics for eight years and then in the White House office for another two and a half years so I had about ten and a half years of public service in addition to my Air Force time and I feel pretty good about that. It was a great experience; I wouldn't take anything for it, I'm not sure I'd pay anything to go back but it was certainly a great experience

and I've had a lot of good friends that I spent some quality time with and still see them from time to time.

SHORT: Well, you certainly had a very interesting career and we thank you for being our guest today and invite you back anytime you want to come.

JOHNSON: Okay I'll be happy to be there. I don't know if I got anything else to say but I'll be happy to come back. Thank you Bob.