

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk FFFF

John S. Candler, II interviewed by Richard Rusk and Thomas Schoenbaum

1985 June 13

RICHARD RUSK: Let's start off by asking in what capacity you knew Dean Rusk. At Boys' High School?

CANDLER: We met each other when we were twelve years old and freshmen at Boys' High School.

RICHARD RUSK: Let me pull this table up here, Tom. There you go.

CANDLER: In the fall of 1921 both of us was still in knee britches. He was a very freckle-faced little boy.

RICHARD RUSK: You're about the same age, huh? Seventy-six?

CANDLER: I'm about six months older than he is.

RICHARD RUSK: I see.

SCHOENBAUM: In the fall of 1921. He would have been an entering freshman then?

CANDLER: That's right. And I was, too.

SCHOENBAUM: You were both entering freshmen?

CANDLER: That's right.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you remember specifically the day that you met?

CANDLER: No. Boys' High School wasn't that big. It was right in the middle of downtown Atlanta. If you don't know about it, it was a very unique institution, particularly as a public school. We had four public high schools in Atlanta then: a Boys' High School and a Girls' High School; then we had Tech High School, which was technically manual training, but what it did was to get all of the boys that didn't want to go through rigorous training that was required at Boys' High School; and then we had a Commercial High School which was coeducational but primarily girls who wanted to be stenographers and people like that.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you have classes with Dean Rusk or what activities did you have with Dean Rusk?

CANDLER: We ended up with numerous activities and frequently in the same ones. He edited the annual; he was associate of the paper of which I was the editor. I was business manager of the annual. He was a cadet colonel in the ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps]. We debated together and against each other.

RICHARD RUSK: So you knew him pretty well?

CANDLER: Oh we were pretty--there were lots of other things we did together.

RICHARD RUSK: What can you tell me about my dad as you knew him as a student back in Boys' High? Any stories of a general nature? Any impressions? Any specific stories you might recall? What kind of fellow was he back then?

CANDLER: Well, I think probably what was summed up in the class prophecy in the annual, written by somebody else by the way, which referred to him as first and all-round student and first in his classmates' affection. He was president of the class. He was, I would say, a little bit of a late bloomer. He was a reticent type of person when he started out as a freshman and always self-effacing, in very much demand as a leader and accomplished it by leading, never forced himself on anybody. He was the type of person-- I've known very few youngsters who could avoid all of the temptations of youth and be respected by his contemporaries for doing it.

RICHARD RUSK: Hah! That's interesting. That's interesting.

CANDLER: Because he commanded the highest respect for his sincerity and his beliefs.

SCHOENBAUM: So he was looked on as having a higher standard of principle, would you say, even at that time than the main--?

CANDLER: Oh, very definitely. Very definitely.

SCHOENBAUM: Were these religious principles?

CANDLER: Very much so. So much so that I can refer to the prophecy again. They predicted that he would be a minister. He was very big in Hi-Y. He was president of what they called the Federated Hi-Y Clubs; that was all the high schools in Atlanta. And by the way that job as colonel of the ROTC unit was colonel of the Atlanta High Schools, because we just had a battalion at Boys High.

RICHARD RUSK: So he was colonel of all those units back then?

CANDLER: He was colonel of all--

RICHARD RUSK: How was he as a colonel of ROTC back in high school? Did he come across as a leader?

CANDLER: Oh, very much so. He was a cadet officer his junior year, which would indicate ability right there because there were a very small number.

SCHOENBAUM: What ability did it take to become a cadet colonel or an officer in the ROTC at that time?

CANDLER: The same kind of ability that it would take to lead your class. It was academics as well as--

SCHOENBAUM: Academics?

CANDLER: Well, I mean the same principles as academics. Now as a late bloomer, he was a little late coming along in athletics. But bear in mind he was a good year younger in his class than the vast majority and at that age it makes a big difference.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you have Greek with Preston [H.] Epps by any chance?

CANDLER: He did. I did not. That might be a little side light there if it would give you an idea of what kind of school Boys' High School was. It focused on the academics. Everything else was secondary. They still taught Greek and Latin. Latin was required of everybody. Greek, if you took it, the credits were accepted at the University of Georgia as if you had had Greek at the University of Georgia. We had in our class, there were ten members of that class that came to the University of Georgia. At the end of the freshman year seven out of the ten had averages over ninety; the average of the averages was over 90; three of them graduated in three years; five of them were Phi Beta Kappas. And if you think that was a bunch of bookworms--there were seven letter men out of the ten including a captain of the football team, the conference golf champion; the conference tennis champion. Now I give you that not to brag about what those boys did at Georgia because that was typical of what the same group did wherever they went. And that's the kind of training that they got at Boys High School.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you expect Dean Rusk to go to Georgia and were you surprised when he didn't?

CANDLER: No. I knew what he was gon' do. He stayed out of school between high school and college a couple of years to make the money to go to college and he then went to Davidson. He played basketball at Davidson. He was never big enough to play basketball which he was in high school.

RICHARD RUSK: Uh, huh. He was growing later on.

CANDLER: He was trying to do some work on the track team. He was on the track squad his senior year. But there again, his physical development was not as fast as others were at that time.

RICHARD RUSK: What was he trying to do off the track?

CANDLER: You know, I don't know. All I know is that he was on the track squad because I was swimming at the same time and I don't have any recollection of what he did there. He also, while he was in school, he was for the *Atlanta Journal* the editor of their school page.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. He got paid forty dollars a month for one day a week work and that was pretty good at that time.

CANDLER: Forty dollars was a lot of money at that time.

RICHARD RUSK: I'd take it today!

SCHOENBAUM: Do you remember any specific incidents, funny or otherwise, about Dean Rusk?

CANDLER: I don't think anybody can dig up anything that would be funny about him because he just wasn't that kind of a fellow.

SCHOENBAUM: He had a good sense of humor--

CANDLER: Great sense of humor. He could laugh at what somebody else did as well as any of them and he could enjoy what a mass activity might be that would be fun, but I've never known him to be the point of anybody's jokes. I've never known him to do anything that would be considered funny.

SCHOENBAUM: What about the social--it was an all-boys high school. I went to an all-boys high school, too. In what capacity did one meet girls, go out with girls? He didn't have a girlfriend at that time?

CANDLER: Oh yes he did.

SCHOENBAUM: He did?

RICHARD RUSK: We've got to get to her too, Tom. Put her on our list.

SCHOENBAUM: He hasn't said anything about that.

RICHARD RUSK: I've got her name tucked away somewhere.

SCHOENBAUM: Oh you do?

CANDLER: She was a very attractive girl and I can't remember her name. You see, in the ROTC all the unit commanders had sponsors.

RICHARD RUSK: The girls were sponsors, huh?

SCHOENBAUM: Oh, is that the one from the West End Presbyterian Church?

RICHARD RUSK: I think so.

CANDLER: It could have been.

RICHARD RUSK: I think so--the same girl my dad was to present at the ceremony and the reporters wanted to substitute a better-looking gal who was Miss Atlanta or Miss Georgia and he refused to go along with it.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you know about that?

CANDLER: That would have been--I don't know about it, but that would have been exactly what he would have done. He would have put principle first, even at twelve years old.

RICHARD RUSK: Was he universally liked by virtually everyone there at Boys' High? Was there a faction there that maybe didn't care much for Dean Rusk?

CANDLER: No, he commanded not only the respect but everybody was just crazy about him. He was president of the class. Now the faculty selected him as the best all-around student with a tie with another for the cups at the *Atlanta Journal*. They're still giving them in the high schools for the best all-around students.

SCHOENBAUM: He got that cup?

CANDLER: And he got that cup. It was the first time they'd ever had a tie for it. They gave two cups.

SCHOENBAUM: The *Atlanta Journal* gave a cup for the best all-around student at Boys High?

CANDLER: And the other one was the captain of the football team.

RICHARD RUSK: And his sister, Helen, got it for the girls. Two out of the same family.

SCHOENBAUM: What explains that he could do so well academically because he did well academically?

CANDLER: He was on the honor roll all the time.

SCHOENBAUM: Yet he was working more--would you say he was working more than the usual student at Boys' High School with his *Atlanta Journal* job and also he was working as a delivery boy and various other things during that time.

CANDLER: He was working more, far more, than the average boy. Now there were several others that did the same thing.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you have the feeling that--was it evident that his family did not have as much in material things as the average Boys' Higher at that time? Not that it would make any difference, but was that evident?

CANDLER: Only if you wanted to stop and think about it, because Boys' High School was a real melting pot. And nobody paid any attention to what your status in life was. Everybody was treated on equal footing and everybody associated together just exactly as if they were on equal footing.

RICHARD RUSK: Sounds like a pretty good school.

CANDLER: Well, it had people from all walks of life, contrary to the way Girls' High School was because you had two very fine private schools there that got a lot of the better students among the girls that would have gone to Girls' High School. But the private school as far as boys in Atlanta were concerned were people who couldn't get along in other schools. The well-to-do families sent their sons to Boys' High School if they could--if they could get in. I was a third generation at Boys' High. Both my grandfather and my father--

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have the feeling back then that my dad was going to go on to do something special with his life? Did he really stand out in that sense of, you know, here was a kid that's going to go on to do great things.

CANDLER: Oh, I don't think there was any question that people recognized that he had the capacity, the ability, the personality, the integrity and character, and everything it would take to be a great success. Now I don't think anybody ever conceived of placing him in the political world or in any particular posture other than, as the class prophecy said he'd be a minister. I think if there were any two things that would be possibly predictable as of that time would be his journalism and his devotion to his Christian religion.

RICHARD RUSK: Did he ever talk about the future with you?

CANDLER: No. I don't think any of us talked about the future beyond what we were going to do on Friday night.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, some things don't change after all these years.

SCHOENBAUM: I'm still interested in his career and the fact that so many of the people from Boys' High School went to Georgia. Did you not talk to him about why don't you go to Georgia? I mean, wouldn't it seem natural that the top student, especially at that time, would come to Athens--get a scholarship or something?

CANDLER: No. By no means. The truth about it is that Georgia Tech probably came close to getting the top students than Georgia did. And if Georgia Tech didn't get them, Emory University got them. Bear in mind here's a class of 100 boys in the senior class. Thirty of them are on the

honor roll at that school. And they scatter out. And also bear in mind that Georgia Tech and Emory are in Atlanta and they would attract a lot of boys that wouldn't go off to school. But that didn't keep them from going to Harvard, Yale. They went all kind of places. Actually, from the athletic end of it, Georgia had more athletes from Tech High and Georgia Tech had more from Boys' High. That might tell you something about comparing the existing scholastic standard--relative scholastic standard of those two schools at that time.

RICHARD RUSK: I've got an unfair question for you, but I know it's been, what fifty, sixty years since you fellows went to school together with each other. But if you think back to the various things you did together for the yearbook, for the newspaper, athletics, ROTC--I presume you were in that too--can you recall any little incidents that may have come out of those experiences? Is there anything at all that strikes out? Tom and I have done a real good job of gathering the reminiscences and the impressions of people as they have known my dad over the years, but what we're constantly on the lookout for is these little stories, these little anecdotes, these little incidents that might reveal traits of his character, illustrations of his sense of humor, that type of thing. If you just think back to those things you did together--what we really should have done was set you down with my dad. Gosh, he was in here this morning, and that might have been a lot of fun for you both.

CANDLER: No, I doubt seriously if even together we would come up with anything that involved him. We could probably come up with maybe two or three stories about the class clown that both of us would remember. But other than that, I doubt seriously if there would be any one particular instance that either one of us would remember.

RICHARD RUSK: What was he like in debate? You debated against him?

CANDLER: A very formidable opponent!

RICHARD RUSK: Who would get the best of each other in those things? You debated indirectly, did you, in your debate?

CANDLER: Everybody at Boys' High School had to participate in debating once a week in the classroom.

RICHARD RUSK: Everybody, huh? Isn't that something?

CANDLER: And then they had periodically the assembly where you did the same thing in front of two classes. They generally put the seniors and sophomores together and the juniors and freshmen together.

RICHARD RUSK: So you would debate individually in front of your whole class out there?

CANDLER: Oh, yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: And everyone went through that?



CANDLER: Everyone went through that.

RICHARD RUSK: Isn't that something?

CANDLER: You went through it in your own small classroom to start with and then you had to be selected to go into the other. And then they had the annual Christmas exercises, which was the big thing where they had four declaimers, one from each class; and they had three debaters, on two teams--it'd be two from each of the top three classes. And there were three of us, including your daddy, that in those three years each one of us was on it twice. So it was pretty steep. Your dad ended up the senior year being the two there. And the third man, after he lost out in the selection on that, he turned around and went into the declaiming side of it and won that. So it ended up with all three of us on it our senior year.

RICHARD RUSK: You made the comment earlier that my dad was one of those rare people who would not succumb to any of the temptations of that period and still maintained the respect of his classmates. Were there temptations back there in those years that you people at Boys' High would run into?

CANDLER: Well number one, from 1921 through 1925 when we were at Boys High School was the height of prohibition.

RICHARD RUSK: So there was a lot of bootleg liquor out there?

CANDLER: And as you well know, students, anything you ban makes it very attractive to them.

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah, I sure do. You got that right.

CANDLER: And the result is-- and they also are experimenters. And the result is, I guess really they don't get exposed to that until maybe about the junior year. I think the freshmen and sophomores, particularly as young as he and I were, we'd be scared to get involved in it. But there was that. Smoking was considered to be a terrific evil in those days. And as far as I can remember I never saw him with a cigarette.

RICHARD RUSK: You used to roll your own, type cigarettes?

CANDLER: You had them, but I never do remember--you had to learn that.

SCHOENBAUM: His Christian beliefs and his religion--he's not the kind of a person that is very demonstrative about that kind of thing. How did people get to know his deep principles? What kind of person-- how did he exhibit his religion at that time?

CANDLER: By participating in his church activities and his Sunday School activities. The Hi-Y that I was referring to. Participating in those activities without making a show of it.



SCHOENBAUM: So he didn't in conversation talk constantly about his beliefs and that kind of thing.

CANDLER: No. No.

SCHOENBAUM: He didn't wear his religion on his sleeve.

CANDLER: He didn't wear it on his sleeve, but if you had a meeting in this room of what can we do to promote Christianity in this school? His ideas would be among the better.

RICHARD RUSK: You got any stories about H. O. Smith, principal back then? I understand he was a strict disciplinarian but a real good academic. He had high standards for Boys' High.

CANDLER: Well, he carried on the standards that were there when he got there. And he was a strict disciplinarian and he had a faculty, all of whom were disciplinarians. He insisted on it.

RICHARD RUSK: How would they enforce the discipline then?

CANDLER: There were two or three of them, all they had to do was speak. There was a great big wide oak hall on the second floor of this old building and there was an English teacher that sat at the end of the hall and he could look out of his door and see anybody that was out there. If you went to a locker or were loitering around out there for any reason while classes were going on, you could hear him say, "B-o-y-e-e-e!" That tone to die. You could have heard it all over Atlanta when he did that. And it got the attention.

SCHOENBAUM: Was Dean Rusk known as an especially eloquent speaker at that time?

CANDLER: Oh, yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: Even then, huh? As today, Tom and I have found out with these interviews that we do with my dad that when we play them back to type up the transcripts, they're grammatically correct. He speaks in complete sentences, complete paragraphs. They read as finished prose, as if he had sat down and composed that stuff. There's very few people around who can do that. And other people who have looked at his speech copies have said the same thing. We just did twelve hours worth of taping with Edwin Neumann and the film crew from New York. They only had to stop once in twelve hours and correct something my dad had said. Did he have that kind of capability back then? Obviously this is something he's refined over the years. But was he really noted as an eloquent speaker then? Did he really have a command of the English language?

CANDLER: Well, he definitely had it. Now I do not remember whether or not he had it in an extemporaneous way like you are pointing out.

RICHARD RUSK: That's what I'm referring to.

CANDLER: But I would have no reason to deny it. And I would speculate that the Greek, Latin, and English training at Boys' High School could have contributed substantially to that faculty.

RICHARD RUSK: He had it at Davidson. The people who knew him at Davidson College said he had that ability then and I'm just wondering how far back it was.

CANDLER: Well there's no question that he was articulate even then. But if you ask me just off hand as between the oral and the written, I would give preference to the written in those days.

SCHOENBAUM: So he was known, and you worked with him on the yearbook, he was known for his writing? You were, in fact, about him on the newspaper? You were the editor and he was-

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CANDLER: He was associate editor. He could write a damn site better than I could. That I'll tell you.

RICHARD RUSK: It would sure be fun to get hold of those old newspapers. I tried looking for old-- you don't have the old Boys' Highs do you--*The Tattler*, I think they called it.

CANDLER: I had a set of them at one time and the moths and paper things got into them while I was away in World War II.

SCHOENBAUM & RICHARD RUSK: That's a long time.

RICHARD RUSK: What was your reaction to his appointment as Secretary of State?

CANDLER: Well of course I wasn't surprised because I had been keeping up with his career. I knew about his having been Assistant Secretary of State and also having been over in the War Department. And I had followed his career in the Army. I well remember one night I was a duty officer and didn't have anything else to do. I was reading the Army and Navy journals and they published a list of promotions in there and I saw where he'd been promoted to major.

RICHARD RUSK: So you weren't surprised? Do you recall any other specific reaction to that appointment. Did you think he could do the job?

CANDLER: Oh, I don't think there was anybody of his old friends that had any doubt about him being able to do the job. My goodness he had had training at Oxford with the Far East emphasis. He had been with General [Joseph Warren] Stilwell hot in pursuit.

RICHARD RUSK: He was as well-trained as anyone we've had for that position.

CANDLER: And he'd been in government. He was with the Rockefeller Foundation. What more could you ask? I did not know until some years later that he had written an order that brought [Douglas] MacArthur home.

RICHARD RUSK: He was in the quonset hut with Harry [S] Truman and MacArthur at Wake Island. He was there for that meeting.

CANDLER: Well the incident that I'm thinking about, as I remember it, he was with General [Omar Nelson] Bradley and somebody else. I would have thought it was in Washington with the President.

SCHOENBAUM: That was the Blair House meeting probably.

RICHARD RUSK: Where he was given the order to draft that telegram?

END OF SIDE ONE

CANDLER: --the detail of that from him.

RICHARD RUSK: Because he hasn't volunteered that to us.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. He said he's in the Blair House meeting and, in fact, he argued in favor of firing MacArthur.

RICHARD RUSK: They all did. Virtually everyone advised Truman back in those years--gave him the same advice.

SCHOENBAUM: We'll ask him about where they drafted the order.

CANDLER: Well my recollection is that he said that General Bradley was looking over his shoulder when he wrote it and that General Bradley made some contributions to it, but that he wrote it.

RICHARD RUSK: He wrote the letter that recalled MacArthur. I'm gonna ask him. And speak as candidly as you will, I would hope, I'm sure you will. Was there any aspect of my dad's performance as Secretary that surprised you in any way, based upon your earlier knowledge of him as a student at Boys' High or based upon what you had come to know of him over the years. Or was everything consistent with what you'd known earlier?

CANDLER: Well a lot of people didn't agree with some of the positions that your father took and there were times, even in high school, when he and I had different opinions about things. I mean, it would have been perfectly normal for it to be that way. I've never known of anybody that may have disagreed with him, including myself, that didn't have the highest respect for his opinion on the other side of whatever it might be. Well, for example, my wife thought I exaggerated because she didn't agree with more that I didn't agree with. But when she found out that he was not speaking Dean Rusk's views when he was Secretary of State, he was speaking the views of his boss, the President for whom he was a staff officer, then she began to understand.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you really think that's the key? That, for instance, the later Vietnam

period--you had the distinct impression at the time that he was speaking pretty much straight what LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson] wanted and it was not Dean Rusk, it was more or less LBJ?

CANDLER: Well I've got the advantage of looking at it with some hindsight.

SCHOENBAUM: Your opinion is what we're asking.

CANDLER: I'm looking at it with some hindsight and having discussed it briefly with him. He very quickly let us know as how he was a staff officer and the President was the Commander-in-Chief and that it was his job to espouse the Commander's views, irrespective of what his own views were; which would suggest that some of the things he was talking about he may not have agreed with.

SCHOENBAUM: And you, in fact, thought that at the time--that he probably was saying some things that he didn't agree with? Just your opinion is what we're asking for.

CANDLER: I suspected the possibility.

SCHOENBAUM: That's interesting. You don't have any-- he didn't say anything-- he never said anything about that?

CANDLER: I would try to recollect any specific thing that you could put your finger on.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you think this is a weakness of Dean Rusk that he perhaps is too loyal, almost, to the principles and the people that he believes in? There comes a point that we all have to--principles only go so far and then there's another principle that may take over. There comes a point at which even loyalty is excessive?

CANDLER: Well now let's look at that in two different views. Number one is if we're going to look at Dean Rusk the man dealing with his friends, dealing with his employees, dealing with his superiors, if it's a personal situation loyalty is going to come second to character.

SCHOENBAUM: What is second to character?

CANDLER: Loyalty. Loyalty is going to come second to character. He's not going to let friendships and loyalty to people to whom he doesn't have a duty to be loyal to stand in the way. Now we get over in the other category where he is a staff officer for a commanding officer. One of his duties is to be self-effacing and to promote what the commanding officer wants. And in that case the loyalty become the paramount thing. And I think he recognized that very quickly; all of which demonstrates this type of character that I've been talking about all the time.

SCHOENBAUM: Were you surprised that he, perhaps, didn't resign some time, for instance in the Johnson Administration--that he didn't resign? He was Secretary of State for eight years. That's a long time for anyone. Were you surprised that he didn't resign, for instance, at some point?

CANDLER: It never occurred to me that he might. I would think that if he undertook the job at President Johnson's request that he would consider the loyalty to President Johnson as long as President Johnson wanted him: to be what he had committed himself to.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have any contacts with my dad as Secretary of State?

CANDLER: No. If there had been an opportunity to have had any kind of contact with him--if I had thought that our friendship might be an (inaudible), I would have leaned over backward not to have.

RICHARD RUSK: I see. Well you're the same type of guy my dad is.

CANDLER: We had the same training!

RICHARD RUSK: Did you live in West End?

CANDLER: No. I lived on the other side of town.

SCHOENBAUM: On the northside?

CANDLER: Uh, huh.

SCHOENBAUM: And how did you get to school?

CANDLER: Streetcar.

SCHOENBAUM: Streetcar!

CANDLER: Except when my father was going to work, he'd drop me off if he was going that day. I came home on the streetcar every day. And Dean rode the streetcar too.

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah, sure did. We got my dad down quite a bit on this growing up in Atlanta. He's got a good memory for a lot of that stuff.

CANDLER: We had dates and carried them on streetcars wherever we went.

RICHARD RUSK: Did his reticence also carry over into his social life at all, as far as the girls were concerned? Was he reticent that way? Or are you saying he did have (inaudible) girlfriends of his own back, well, certainly as a senior in high school.

CANDLER: Let's stop a minute and clear up something, I think. West End had just as fine a people in it as the areas in the north side of town did. Lee Street School produced just a many fine sociable people in Atlanta as any other school did. I could start naming names, but we haven't got that much time. And it's probably better that I don't name names.

SCHOENBAUM: It's been an interesting interview. Rich do you have anything more?

RICHARD RUSK: Oh, that pretty well takes care of it. If there is one thing that you would like said about my dad in the two books that we're writing, what should his epithet be?

SCHOENBAUM: Or is there anything else you want to add to the picture?

RICHARD RUSK: Anything we didn't ask you that's worth injecting in the tape right now?

CANDLER: We've covered it pretty well.

RICHARD RUSK: Did we?

CANDLER: If I were going to write Dean Rusk's epithet, I would sit down and put some words down and probably rewrite it a half a dozen times before I came up with a condensation of all the superlatives that I would start out with.

SCHOENBAUM: Isn't this man, Dean Rusk,-- you know, all three of us know the man and I believe what you say, and Rich, of course, is prejudiced; but if I didn't know the man and if I was up in Spokane, Washington and I suddenly came in, I'd be skeptical. I wouldn't believe that any man could be this perfect, almost. Even as a youngster he never seems to have had anything-- every quality is immensely attractive and perfect. How can a person be that way?

RICHARD RUSK: I could amend that slightly!

SCHOENBAUM: I mean--it's a picture of almost perfection.

CANDLER: I think you're saying the same thing to me that the New York newspaper reports.

RICHARD RUSK: That's right. It's the same darn thing. How can a guy really be--

SCHOENBAUM: But I believe it. I'm not asking you in a skeptical way to drag out some dirt because I've been over this and I've known the man for two years on a very close basis I think, relatively speaking, and I believe it wholeheartedly. I still think there's almost no one you could find that's like that. How can that be? It isn't very frequent in this world

CANDLER: I think what we're saying is that he's a human being and there naturally are some foibles that exist somewhere along the line.

RICHARD RUSK: Are you aware of any?

CANDLER: They are so small, and so insignificant that they don't stay in anybody's mind if they notice one.

RICHARD RUSK: I've been researching my dad's life for six or seven months now and I've grown up with him for thirty-eight years in that same family and I'm not aware of anything. I haven't run into anything--any hint of impropriety or suggestion of questionable character or anything. I'm not looking for this stuff, but with the kind of digging that we both have been doing, one would expect to run into something along the line and there's nothing there. The same thing you said to this New York reporter. I'm aware of a few more sides to the coin than you are, growing up in that family, not that I'm going to be writing about any of that.

CANDLER: I'll bet you that if it happened yesterday that all of us could probably come up with an instance when maybe he had a short temper or some little thing like that. But two days later you wouldn't remember it. He's human. I don't think that any of us would make a Jesus Christ out of him. He was not. You might could compare him to Robert E. [Edward] Lee.

RICHARD RUSK: Interesting.

SCHOENBAUM: That's interesting. Go on with that. Why? How would you--please go on with that.

RICHARD RUSK: You boys studied about Robert E. Lee quite a bit I take it.

SCHOENBAUM: That's his great hero.

CANDLER: Well, we're both Kappa Alphas.

RICHARD RUSK: You're a Kappa Alpha too?

CANDLER: I'm responsible for him being.

RICHARD RUSK: Is that right?

SCHOENBAUM: How do you see the parallel with Robert E. Lee? Any basis to that?

CANDLER: The unblemished character, loyalty to principle.

RICHARD RUSK: Would it affect your judgment about my dad at all if we were to tell you that we think that the majority of what my dad said about the war in Vietnam, which is really the only real potential blemish on his official performance, was really Dean Rusk speaking? He was not a mouthpiece for the President. That was really, as far as the majority of the important decisions of that war were concerned, that that was Dean Rusk. Would that affect your judgment in any way?

CANDLER: No. No because I think Vietnam was a mistake, but I think Vietnam was honestly prosecuted.

RICHARD RUSK: That's pretty much the same thing we've come up with.



CANDLER: And I say that because I had a son over there.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you? Did he come back?

CANDLER: He was the only one that did.

SCHOENBAUM: One of the things we want to-- one of the things that I think is wrong is this view of Vietnam as a--either as number one, a fraud perpetrated on the American people, or number two, as Barbara [Wertheim] Tuchman's phrase, a folly. I don't think it was either of those and I agree with you that it was a mistake, but it was a very honest and upright mistake. Perhaps more upright than we thought at the time.

CANDLER: Well as I recollected we made a commitment. When the time came we fulfilled our commitment. We probably overestimated our ability to accomplish something that the French had tried for a century to accomplish and couldn't.

SCHOENBAUM: It's ironic that Dean Rusk is probably more associated with Vietnam than perhaps any other public figure other than perhaps LBJ himself and the picture that the general public has of Dean Rusk is colored by Vietnam to such an extent. Do you agree?

CANDLER: That's natural. That's the only big, real big, international event during the eight years while he was there in which our country was involved. And he was intimately associated with the policy. Now it well may be--this is something you have to get out of him. You could distinguish between the initial decision to fulfill our commitment and doing those things that are necessary to follow through. Now it may well have been that that commitment and the decision to go through with it, if I remember correctly, was all on the boards before he got there.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. Well the commitment was that the question of how far, how many, how you fulfill a commitment that was still up in the air when you got there. The commitment, as Rich knows, he actually opposed the commitment: the SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization] treaty. That's another one of the ironies of Vietnam.

CANDLER: Was he Secretary of State when the SEATO treaty was--

SCHOENBAUM and RICHARD RUSK: (speaking at same time) No.

SCHOENBAUM: That was [John] Foster Dulles.

CANDLER: That's what I thought. I thought he inherited the policy.

SCHOENBAUM: He inherited that commitment.

CANDLER: He inherited the policy; he inherited the problem.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. Right. Right.

CANDLER: And then we had another situation. We had political decisions being made which were like tying boxer's hands behind him and putting him in the ring as far as our military capability was concerned. You don't send an army out to lose. You don't send them out to have a hole in there. If you commit them, you commit them to win.

SCHOENBAUM: Would you agree that there are perhaps two lessons to Vietnam? One is that, on the dove side, that you don't find your national security in every corner of the globe that you can't hold up, you can't support every far away place and call out the troops. But on the other side there's the lesson that once you determine honestly and you're compelled to determine your national security is involved then you go in with both six-guns blazing. You don't--just so to that extent perhaps the gradualism was a mistake.

CANDLER: Well, we had an idea then which we've still got to some extent that our destiny demanded that we stop the expansion of communism wherever we could and by whatever means. Our means was not adequate.

SCHOENBAUM: The means was adequate. The will of the American people was not.

CANDLER: Well, that's the most essential factor in the ring. But you can't--if you're going to fight a war, you've got to fight a war with everybody fighting.

SCHOENBAUM: That's what I mean.

CANDLER: That's where your problem is. You can't fight a war over here and have life going on every day it's fighting without changing. You're not in a state of war if that's--

RICHARD RUSK: When's the last time you've seen my dad?

CANDLER: Oh, I expect it's been a year or so.

RICHARD RUSK: About a year? Are you in touch with each other in any activity there in Atlanta?

CANDLER: Occasionally.

SCHOENBAUM: Well, thank you very much.

RICHARD RUSK: You gave us a good talk, a good interview. Thanks a lot.

CANDLER: I appreciate it.

END OF TAPE