

# Leonard Ballard

Inspector, United States Capitol Police (1947-1984)

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## Interview #4

(Tuesday, September 20, 1983)  
Interviewed by Richard A. Baker

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**BALLARD:** Joe Duke made up his mind that he did not want another Senate [patronage] appointment down in that captain's office. Another Cavness down there whom he couldn't buck (see page 29). So, he looked downtown [in the Metropolitan Police Department] and he brought up Bob Pearce. That was the first official we had away from the Capitol Police. He gave him the rank of deputy chief--he had that downtown--but he let him bring it up with him. And he let the chief bring his own captain, a retired Metropolitan [officer] who'd been captain downtown. They spent all of their time on the Senate side. Pearce was the deputy chief--the head man--and [Jeremiah] Flaherty was the captain. They never went to the House side. The members didn't even know who they were. Then when the appropriations came up, they questioned them [on their competence and ability to bring discipline to the force] and they withheld their pay for a couple of months, until somebody got it straightened out.

Later, Pearce left in ill health and they appointed a man named Sullivan. Now Sullivan was smart. He was from Massachusetts and the morning didn't pass that he didn't pay his respects to Tip O'Neill. Now, of course, Tip wasn't the [party] leader, but Tip was in the leadership. And Sullivan had coffee with Tip and kept his skirts

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completely clean. At the same time, he was over with the Senate Sergeant at Arms whenever he wanted something. He ran a good ship. No problems. A man from Metropolitan has a problem up here anyhow. After he has spent ten years in Metropolitan, this place is a completely strange operation to him. We had a fella up here, I think Sullivan brought him up and made him captain. Retired Metropolitan. He was a good man, but he didn't learn the Hill. For instance, if you are loading senators to go to a funeral or out of town, there's a trick to it and you have to do it in a way that they don't know it. I was pretty good at that for the simple reason that I studied the members. I knew about them. Well, in other words, in those days, I wouldn't put (deleted) and (deleted) in the same staff car. Cause (deleted) would probably be drunk and rolling over (deleted). There was one particular southern senator and his wife . . . I wouldn't put them in a staff car with a colored driver. But I would stand out there as they would come around and I'd say, "You're supposed to go in this car, senator," and I'd lead 'em right over and put them in the car. Joe Duke thought I was excellent at it, because he always got compliments.

One day they were burying a mid-western senator at Arlington and Chief Sullivan came down and said, "Mr. Duke wants you to go with Deputy Sergeant at Arms Bill Cheatham and me over to Arlington

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Cemetery for that burial today." And I said, "Chief, I'll go wherever I'm sent, but you'd better leave me here today to load those senators, because there's twenty-seven staff cars coming. There's nothing we can do over at Arlington. Once that hearse arrives there, that's all for us. The military takes over immediately." He checked with Joe Duke and came back and said, "You're to go." We went. We came back after the funeral. Sure enough, we sat in a parking lot over there and watched the danged thing.

The next morning, Sullivan had to go to Duke's office. He came back down and said, "I've got to transfer (deleted) to the House side and keep him on the House side." I said, "I'm not surprised. He screwed up yesterday loading those senators?" He said, "Yup, Joe Duke doesn't want to see him again." And they did, they transferred him to the House and he never came back. It wasn't his fault, but they wouldn't listen to my little bit of experience. You weren't going to put Senator (deleted) and some southern conservative in the same car. They had nothing in common.

Mrs. (wife of a southern senator) . . . I've stood outside that Senate wing [of the Capitol] and frozen my hind end off trying to find a Diamond Cab for her. In those days, Diamond was the only cab company with white drivers. There wasn't any use in me taking any

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other cab under the arch for her. She was a pistol. "You know, I don't want a black driver!" And I'd say, I know Miz (deleted), I know what you mean." When you are in the Capitol Building and dealing with members, and you know them, you won't have any problem. Joe Duke kept me there himself for thirteen years. He promoted me from sergeant to lieutenant to captain, all the way up, for the simple reason that I did what he wanted done and didn't create any problem for him.

In the mid-1950s more and more Senate employees were moving to the suburbs and the Senate had to start a parking system. Joe Duke called me and he said, "I want you to set this up. You know everybody on this Hill, you know where they work, and you know what they're entitled to. I won't interfere with you." I said, "Well, if you have a case where you think I'm not doing the right thing, you let me know." Joe Duke never said one word to me the whole time I had the parking responsibility.

**BAKER:** When did you begin?

**BALLARD:** It must have been in about '55 or '56. When they tore down the old buildings on the site of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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**BAKER:** Schott's Court?

**BALLARD:** Yes. You could tell that people were beginning to move to the suburbs. Virginia tags, Maryland tags. It used to be that they all came on streetcars.

I sent each office a form explaining the system. Then I sent blank forms for them to fill out in the order of priority and the senator [for each office] had to sign it. Well, that kept me in the clear. No staff member could come down and say a word to me. I could say, "Go back up and talk to your senator, he's the man who signed it." I had one [problem] case. That was with the office of Senator [Herbert] Lehman of New York. His administrative assistant was a fella named Sid Edleston, who later went to New York and got into politics up there. Anyway, Sid's name wasn't on the list [for the second year]. Lehman didn't drive. He had a chauffeur-driven car. And I thought that Sid was going to take his place in the legislative garage. But on the list, it said "Assign Space 85"-that's right across from the door of the Senate Office Building--"to Vera Beach." Well, I knew she was in the office, so I did. Well, about two weeks after the session started, Sid came in the office. He said, "Why'd you deal me out, Ballard?" And I said, "I didn't deal ya out Sid." He was a dickens of a nice fellow. "You dealt yourself out." I looked on the list and said, "Here it is, 'Assign Space 85' . . . that's your old space . . . 'to Vera Beach'." He

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said, "My God, I've learned one real thing today." I said, "Do you want me to move her?" And he said, "No, I'll move her, but I've got to be more careful about what goes out of the office over the senator's signature." So the next morning, I told Vera she couldn't park there anymore, and I assigned her to the lot. She got upset. And I said, "Sid's the fella who told me to do it."

**BAKER:** You mentioned "the lot." Which lot was that?

**BALLARD:** We had the space by old Schott's Court. That was the first lot. That took care of about 300 automobiles. And then, this was a park /pointing/ so that while they were building the new Senate office building, they were going to move those cars off [the old Schott's Court area] and surface that lot with the airplane matting down so that when the building is completed they can take the mat off . . . you know the old story and restore the park.

**BAKER:** Sure, sure.

**BALLARD:** Well, everybody knew that wasn't going to happen. So we used that lot down there. That was the first lot. We assigned that to senators. A lot of them didn't use it, but you assigned them. Actually, it wasn't a hard job. I put the

permits on myself. Not let them put them on, because they would put them in the glove compartment [and pass them around to more than a single car]. And I wrote to the various [state] motor vehicle divisions to find out the

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best place to apply the permit, and they suggested that I put it right behind the rear view mirror. And that's where I put them. That was convenient for the men working the drives [surrounding the Capitol]. They could stand in the drive and when a car entered, they could see. If a car didn't have the permit, they could whistle it on through.

But, now they've turned it into a multi-million dollar operation. They've made work for themselves. It used to be just a simple placing of the permit and going on about your business. If you had one, okay, and if you didn't have one, okay. Now, the men in the drive, if they had a couple of spaces, they'd park somebody in there. Nobody cared. You'd get a few Christmas presents. That's the name of the game.

**BAKER:** What problems for the police force did the opening of the new [Dirksen] building create in 1958?

**BALLARD:** No particular problem. Chief Sullivan and I came over to see the building and we found that they had made no provisions for telephones at any of the doors. (Laughter) There were provisions for desks there, but no telephones. So that cost \$200 per door to drill for the telephone jacks. But the rest of the building . . . You see they don't ask you anything when they build. When there's a stone wall in there, there's not much you can do about it.

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In the Rayburn [House Office] Building, when they built it, they were supposed to make provisions for police in that building. In fact, I went before the House committee and got fifty [new] members for the Rayburn Building. That wasn't enough, but it was all that it was a good idea to ask for. Fifty privates, a lieutenant, and a sergeant. I was told not to ask for any more than that and we got them. They [those in charge of designing the building] were to build a guard room in the Rayburn Building. Plans were drawn up in Philadelphia or somewhere. One day the girl from the Architect's Office brought the plans around to the office for the chief to look at for a new place for the police. Well, [Chief] Sullivan, who was not a comedian in any way, shape, or form--he was a former commander in the Navy--and he ran the ship apparently just like he did out in the ocean. At the desk when you came in, you came to his desk and you stood there, and if he wanted you to sit down, he'd tell you to sit down, but don't sit down until he told you to.

He called me in, and he was down in the supply room with the plans and he was laughing . . . and I knew something was wrong. He said, "You won't believe this; the provisions for the men!" I looked at them. There was a room, as you go up the

steps from Independence Avenue and turn left. There was a room. You entered and there was a sofa, two lamps, and a chair! You go through a door, and back here is the locker room. It had fifteen lockers and a bench for the men to sit on. Out in the entrance room there wasn't a place for a

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telephone, a desk, roll call--nothing. Just fifteen lockers for fifteen men. Well, we called the girl from the Architect's Office back to come pick up the plans and we told her, "You might as well assign this to somebody else, because there's no way we can use this. There's no place for telephones, or file cabinets, and we will have at least fifty to seventy-five men in this building." So they gave it to the House photographers. It was just fine for them, and they have it today.

**BAKER:** And what did they do for the police?

**BALLARD:** Kept us in the Longworth Building, where we are.

**BAKER:** (Laughing) That solved that problem!

**BALLARD:** When they draw plans, they never consult the police for the simple reason that nobody knows we are here. This is the most silent majority you've ever seen.

**BAKER:** You are always the last to know.

**BALLARD:** That's right. Then they tell us and you go along with the program. You can't fight it.

**BAKER:** Well, in 1958, they added twenty new members to the Senate detail. Did that create any particular problems?

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**BALLARD:** No. Of course, later [in 1968] they did away with patronage, except on the House side. They kept twenty-two spots.

**BAKER:** And they still have them?

**BALLARD:** Still have them. But a lot of them are filled with appointees from the committee. They are professionals. It is just that you can't take everything from a congressman. You may not be giving him anything, but he thinks he's got something, and as long as he thinks that, it's all right. He's not going to create any trouble.

The Senate didn't care. You see, police patronage meant so little to the Senate . . .

**BAKER:** Why?

**BALLARD:** Well, maybe they got one student, but the student didn't help them much [politically] back in the state. Where they wanted to use their money. You had no trouble borrowing [police] patronage from a senator. He didn't want it. It used to be these fellas [looking for jobs] from the east coast, the fellas that were here, all they had to do was to hunt a senator from west of the Mississippi River. And they had an appointment [to a position]. A lot of times senators have had bad experiences. They have brought policemen here who have fouled up. The senator had to see that they

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got home. Their families had to get home. When I came here, they had had some bad experiences. Not many of them [senators] wanted it. They wanted committee jobs.

**BAKER:** Where they could have people who would be . . .

**BALLARD:** They could send a professional back in the home state . . . There was only one man who held onto his patronage, that was the old fella from New Mexico, Dennis Chavez. Chavez appointed nobody but students. And their grades had to go to Chavez. And if they began to drop on their grades, they got a call from Denney. They had to go and straighten them out. Or they went back to New Mexico. He kept a lot of professional men in that spot. He told me one time he didn't have to go back to electioneer. He said, "I haven't been back in years. I have educated enough professional men back there that they keep me in office." That was a good idea.

**BAKER:** They were up here as students and then they graduated and went back.

**BALLARD:** Law students, dental students . . . Of course, naturally, they were beholden to the old man and they worked [hard] for him. But overall, senators never cared about police patronage.

**BAKER:** I suppose the same would be true for elevator operator patronage and postal employees and things of that nature.

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**BALLARD:** Yeah. It's swapped around on the Senate side. You'd see an elevator operator and maybe he was from Mississippi, but he was under somebody from Missouri. But the House always held on to it a little tighter.  
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