

# Leonard Ballard

Inspector, United States Capitol Police (1947-1984)

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## Interview #6

(Thursday, October 6, 1983)  
Interviewed by Richard A. Baker

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**BAKER:** Today, I'd like to begin by asking you about the South in the Senate. About some of the major Southern senators you have known.

**BALLARD:** When I came here, the Senate was more or less controlled by eighteen Southerners. They had it lock, stock, and barrel. I will say this. They transacted their business and went home. It was not like it is today with a year-round session. They went home in July. Sometimes they were here as late as August. They had short sessions during the day. It seemed to be operated more as a business than it is today.

Senator Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee, he was president pro tempore and then [1947] the Republicans took over. At that point, he was in his dotage. It never dawned on him at that point that he wasn't leader anymore. For instance on Saturdays, we'd be over in the cloakroom and McKellar would come over to open up [convene] the Senate! He'd come in. We knew what he was going to do. He'd go up in the [presiding officer's] chair and sit down. Well, that was our cue. We would go in and say, "Well, senator, they just called and they are not going to be in today." "Oh, they're not?" "No, not

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today. So he would get down and go to the elevator. But on a couple of occasions, you would find him over at House wing of the Capitol at the elevator. I would approach him. "That elevator is not working today, senator. Let's go over to one that is working." And then, I would walk him through the building back over to the Senate elevator. "This one's operating, senator." Put him on it and go down. And he'd come over to his office. You just had to get him on the right elevator. He was in his eighties then.

You know, he had a battle with [columnist] Drew Pearson. He took to Drew Pearson with a cane. That was in his office.

**BAKER:** What was that all about?

**BALLARD:** Drew Pearson had written something that McKellar didn't receive too well. Then he asked McKellar for an appointment and McKellar granted it. I don't know how Pearson set him off, but McKellar ran him from his office. Of course, we didn't know anything about it until the next day. Nobody notified us, but they wouldn't.

Now [Senator John] Stennis was appointed in [Theodore] Bilbo's place. [Burnet] Maybank was an affable character, but a boozier of the first water. They were having a night session. Maybank was trying to locate an atomic energy plant in South Carolina. It was one of the first ones. Maybank was loaded to the gills. He had the floor, but he wouldn't give it up until they agreed to the location.

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After they agreed, Russell Long got on one side of him and Wayne Morse got on the other side and just eased him off of the floor to the door and onto a couch in the cloakroom. You couldn't tell when you were going to catch him sober. I recall one inauguration. We had a time with him. Couldn't keep him anywhere. It must have been Kennedy's, or perhaps it was Truman's. In any event, we had a dickens of a time with him.

**BAKER:** He wouldn't stay in his place on the platform?

**BALLARD:** Yes. He was a well known boozier though. Of course, in those days, we had a lot of boozers. We had a roomful of them.

**BAKER:** Did they create any special problems for the police?

**BALLARD:** No. Not for us. We were determined to see that nobody bothered them. That was their business.

Joe Duke, when his office was [in S-208 of the Capitol] where Robert Byrd's [Democratic leader's] office is now, before he [the Sergeant at Arms] moved up to the third floor, his back room is currently known as the Kennedy Room. That was the "Key Club."

**BAKER:** Tell me about the "Key Club."

**BALLARD:** That was the name we gave it. Now, Joe had an old colored fellow by the name of Maurice. There was a refrigerator full of booze and mixes and that sort of stuff. And all the Democratic

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members of the Senate had a key to that room. No Republicans. Just Democrats. They could come off of the floor, take the key and go in and have a sociable visit. Quite a few of them stayed in there for a while, you know what I mean?

**BAKER:** Was that the main place that they went for refreshment?

**BALLARD:** That was it.

**BAKER:** What about the Secretary of the Senate's Office?

**BALLARD:** No. Les Biffle had a drink in there for them. He didn't drink himself. But it wasn't a gathering place. The Key Club was a gathering place for them. We all knew it was there.

**BAKER:** Let's talk a little more about those Southern senators. You mentioned Theodore Bilbo. You had some dealings with him about the time he left the Senate in 1947.

**BALLARD:** There was some hitch about his reelection [in 1946] and they notified him, even his friends, that there was going to be a fight about his seat if he did show up. And he didn't show up and in the meantime he died before it could be worked out. More than likely, Richard Russell notified him that there was going to be a fight and he wouldn't make it. But things were beginning to change. The complexion was changing.

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**BAKER:** Well, you had a Republican Senate in 1947, for the first time in many years. That meant new leaders. The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 had just been passed. That was opening the door to more professionalism and more staff and more open procedures. It is interesting to detect the change in mood in the Senate. The old Senate and the new Senate. Maybe Bilbo's departure marks that. You mentioned something off tape about black employees at that time.

**BALLARD:** Yeah. They weren't here.

**BAKER:** Why not?

**BALLARD:** Bilbo wouldn't let them. He made it clear that there would be no black policemen at the time. I think he threatened to take his cane to them. You had Strom Thurmond who was anti all the way. Now he has just changed in the last few years. When he first came here, he was strictly [anti-black]. Joe Duke was afraid to appoint one. Dick Russell never showed it, but Duke was afraid to ruffle the feathers of those old Southerners. Now on the House side in the 80th Congress [1947-49], they appointed black policemen.

**BAKER:** A lot of these people were just getting out the military where it was more and more common for blacks and whites to serve together. So, why not in the police?

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**BALLARD:** Yes. Now the House members, they weren't cut of that cloth. They appointed black men. In fact there was a fellow who was a sergeant on midnights [detail] and we had several around.

They were having a late night session and the lieutenant in charge didn't have too many men, so he stationed a black officer in the Senate gallery. Well! Joe Duke

went by the gallery for some reason. He didn't go up there often, but he happened to go by at 10:30 or 11:00 o'clock. And there was this black officer.

**BAKER:** Inside the chamber?

**BALLARD:** No. We had nobody inside the chamber in those days. Well, we started putting men inside the galleries--plain clothesmen-not too many years ago.

**BAKER:** You never had a uniformed man inside the gallery?

**BALLARD:** Oh, no. He wasn't allowed. Even today. No gun is allowed in there. It doesn't make any difference who it is.

**BAKER:** Do plain clothesmen have weapons.

**BALLARD:** Special . . . Yeah, they have 'em. Even military police with a weapon can't go in there. They can leave their weapon out there with some officer, plain clothesman. Now, they've always wanted to allow a Secret Service man, who's assigned to the vice

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president, to sit up in the Diplomatic Gallery. But to my knowledge, they have never let him in there. At least not as long as I was over there.

**BAKER:** Is that a problem of jurisdiction, primarily?

**BALLARD:** Yes. Now, we would have gone along with it, but it was the powers that be. The Sergeant at Arms and the leadership. They wanted nobody sitting opposite that presiding officer with a weapon. Duke came through there and saw this colored officer. He called the lieutenant. "Get that fella out of this gallery." Of course, the lieutenant made the change and didn't put him up there any more. There was nothing wrong with the officer except that he was black.

**BAKER:** So they kept him on the House side?

**BALLARD:** That's right! That's right.

Now when Bob Byrd came over from the House [1959], he was a congressman who had been elected senator. Now I was in the Capitol and a young fella named Perry Woofter came up from Charleston. He was going to be Byrd's AA [administrative assistant]. Byrd had a woman AA in the House. He came to the Senate office building to hunt me, because he had been told . . . Now, I had relative in Charleston-relatives in the [state] government. In fact, I had a cousin who was

a member of the house of delegates for many years. Perry was a young lawyer involved in politics down there. Some of them told him when he got to Washington to look me up, because "he's been there and he knows his way around." Well, Perry came up to the Senate Door and called me. I met him over at the office building. He told me what he was going to do. He was going to be Byrd's AA. So, I took him around and introduced him to Dick Menefee in old man [Harry] Byrd's [Sr.] office. Jack Spain in [Clyde] Hoey's office. Several of the established AAs. Because I knew they could do him an awful lot of good. Well, Perry came over to the cloakroom one day to see me and he said, "We have pressure on us to appoint a young colored fella, a student, to the police force. I've never seen any around here and I was just wondering what . . . And I said, "Well, Perry, we don't have any."

**BAKER:** As late as 1959?

**BALLARD:** That's right. I said, "We don't have any on the Senate rolls. Now they have them on the House roll. But they tell me it actually goes back to Bilbo. Bilbo notified that he wanted none. And he didn't get 'em." And I said, "I don't know. Mr. Duke . . . whether he's afraid of the Southern leadership . . . but we just don't have them." I said, "Don't notify him to come up here yet. Get the senator to go to Joe Duke." I said, "Now don't

you go, because he's not going to see you. There's only about three AAs he'll see. And you're new. You get the senator to go to Duke and talk with him about the problem. And if he says, 'Bring him up,' then bring him up. But if he tells the senator not to, don't do it, because you'll end up with a part time elevator patronage. That's all you'll get." I said, "Play his game, because he's got a deck of cards over there that's rough." He said okay. Now, the day of Kennedy's inauguration [January 20, 1961], I was standing at the Senate Door there with a lieutenant. Byrd and Perry Woofter came down the back stairs--you know, where the men's toilet is there on the second floor near the Secretary's Office. They called me over. They said, "We just came from Duke's office and he said to go ahead and bring the boy up." Byrd thanked me for the advice I gave him. About three weeks later I went into our office and the supply sergeant called me back and said, "I've got a fella here from West Virginia." I walked in there. He was a light, colored fella. And I said, "Well, by God. Haven't I seen you around Stotesbury at some time?" I'd never been to Stotesbury! He said, "Well, I don't remember you, but that's where I'm from." I said, "That's what I thought." And that was the first black.

**BAKER:** So the first black member of the Senate detail of the Capitol Police Force arrived in 1961?

**BALLARD:** That's when the first one got here. That broke the barrier.

**BAKER:** Were there any problems that you were aware of as a result of black men coming on the force?

**BALLARD:** No. None. You had problems with some of them as individuals. Now, Bob Byrd appointed one I had problems with. In fact, I was acting chief [in 1964]. I went right to Byrd, because I knew Byrd. I went right to him. I went to the floor and called him off of the floor in the cloakroom and told him. He said, "Now you handle it. If you think that he is not the proper person, get rid of him. Votes don't mean that much to me." I said, "All right. Don't see him if he comes to your office." And he said he wouldn't. So I called the boy in and dismissed him from the force. He did go to Byrd's office after that, but Byrd was true to his word and wouldn't see him. So he went back to Charleston and it was the last we ever heard of him.

**BAKER:** So Robert Byrd has the distinction of being the first senator to bring a black man to the police department.

**BALLARD:** He was. I can't think of the fella's name, because we've had so many of them. He was a ministerial student. Byrd had a

habit of bringing blacks. The press painted him with the Ku Klux Klan robe and I think he wanted to show them that he wasn't that type.

**BAKER:** He told me one time that he had intended to vote to confirm Thurgood Marshall to the Supreme Court and then he got to thinking, "If this man were white, would I vote for him based on his record?" And then he said, "No, I wouldn't," and he didn't.

**BALLARD:** I think Byrd is a conscientious person. [Deletion] I used to take a lot of people through the building for Byrd.

**BAKER:** Thinking about some of those Southern senators . . . the tremendous power that they had . . .

**BALLARD:** That was power. Now take Dick Russell. You could tell when something of importance was coming up on the Senate floor. It may drone along for hours, but when you saw Dick Russell move up into the [presiding officer's] chair, watch out. And sure enough. I remember they brought some bill over from the House. It had to do with the South. Sam Rayburn couldn't stop it. It was one of those things that went right over his head. Some of the Senate liberals wanted to bring it to the floor immediately.

**BAKER:** To keep it from being bottled up in committee.

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**BALLARD:** Right. But somebody tipped off Russell it was coming. He got in the chair immediately to put it in committee and that did away with it.

Senator [Walter] George. I don't think many people knew him. He kept to himself. He was chairman of Foreign Relations [1955-57]. And one of the things they accused him of was the he knew more about China than he did about Georgia. That hurt him.

**BAKER:** He'd been around the Senate a long time, since 1922.

**BALLARD:** Tom Connally of Texas. He was chairman of Foreign Relations, also [1941-47; 1949-53]. He was a character. He was a typical caricature of a senator. Like Frank Boykin of the House. They looked like their position. You'd be walking down F Street with 400 people and if Connally was walking down that street and someone said, "Point out a senator" well, you'd point out Tom Connally. He wore dark suits, white tie, black flowing necktie, black hat, and flowing white hair. Had all the appearance of a senator. After he left the Senate . . . he married [former Senator] Morris Sheppard's widow. Didn't have a dime, he didn't. But she had half of Texas.

After he left the Senate, he still came up for his haircut and shave every morning. Chauffeur-driven car. One day he came up and the barber was gone. So he went on over to the House side. Smitty, the House barber, he wouldn't shave his brother free. He was buying

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a plantation down in Mississippi and he was looking out for every cent that came by the line. Old man Connally got in the chair and got the works and got up and started to leave and didn't lay anything on the counter. Smitty said, "Don't you think you forgot something, senator?" "No, I've got my glasses." He said, "You forgot to pay me." Connally said, "You know, I'm Senator Connally. I don't pay." Smitty said, "You got in the wrong barbershop this morning. You pay over here, senator!" And he paid him.

**BAKER:** They didn't pay on the Senate side?

**BALLARD:** Oh, no. There was no charge. They had those shaving mugs. Of course, they've done away with that. Drew Pearson did "Behind the Scenes in Congress." And he did a show and I was assigned to him, you know what I mean? To be sure that he got what he wanted and he didn't get what he wanted. And he wanted those shaving mugs, but Duke wouldn't let him have 'em.

National Geographic did for the Aluminum Corporation a feature on the Capitol and George Mobley was the head cameraman. He wanted those mugs. I finished up with him one day, and he said, "We've wrapped it up, all but the mugs. We'll do that in the morning." I said, "George, if you are waiting on the mugs, you've

wrapped it up." He said, "Oh, no, no, no, they are clearing it with Mr. Hayden." I said, "Well, okay, partner, I'll see you there in the morning." I met George at the door. No *mugs*!! (Laughter) I said, "I told you."

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**BAKER:** Why?

**BALLARD:** I don't know why. There was a beautiful cabinet and it would have made a beautiful picture.

**BAKER:** What did the mugs have on them?

**BALLARD:** The name of the senator.

**BAKER:** Was it the full name or the first name?

**BALLARD:** It was the full name in beautiful old English script. As soon as they got elected, the mug was made.

**BAKER:** Who presented the mugs?

**BALLARD:** Apparently the Sergeant at Arms, I don't know. Or whether it was just placed in the barbershop.

**BAKER:** Every member of the Senate had one?

**BALLARD:** That's right. In that cabinet. And he was allowed to take it with him when he left. There was dignity then. Not now. It's like a McDonald's. It used to be a Delmonico. Now it's a McDonald's. So much of that 's gone. The dignity of the Senate is gone.

**BAKER:** Why, do you think?

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**BALLARD:** I don't know. They used to have a certain dress--it wasn't a requirement. Clyde Hoey, as long as he was here, he had his morning dress. When he was on the floor, you could tell who he was.

**BAKER:** Were there any incidents on the floor that you recall as a result of unconventional dress?

**BALLARD:** No. George Aiken changed the pattern and he had seniority. Nobody said anything to him. Everybody knew that he was George Aiken.

**BAKER:** What if a freshman senator tried to get away with out of the ordinary attire?



**BALLARD:** He would have been snubbed. It is like Hubert Humphrey's first speech [in 1949]. What did they do to him? They completely erased him. He got up and started to berate Byrd of Virginia. Well, Byrd of Virginia wasn't the most popular man in there, but they looked at it this way, "If he does that to him, what's he going to do to us?" It ended up that there was only one other person in the chamber and that was the presiding officer. And he couldn't leave. You could tell, they were just drifting out. And he was in disgrace until LBJ rescued him. LBJ found out that he could use him.

**BAKER:** When did the rescue take place? When Johnson became Democratic leader in 1953?

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**BALLARD:** Yes. He used him.

**BAKER:** As a tie-in to the liberal wing of the Democratic party?

**BALLARD:** That's all in the world he used him for, but he took him up. Now, I'll never forgive Humphrey for cleaning out the vice president's office in the Capitol. I liked those things of history. We had in there the McKinley desk that Woodrow Wilson used. McKinley had used it [at the White House]. When he was assassinated [in 1901] they stored it down in the basement of the White House. Well, Wilson was down there one day rummaging around and he saw it and he liked it. He brought it up and used it his two terms of office. They didn't want to put it back in the basement, so they brought it up and put it in the vice president's office. And they had the sofa that Vice President Henry Wilson died on in there [1875]. The only things in that room were of historical value. And I liked it. Of course, they had the chandelier that Teddy Roosevelt sent up there. I was on leave. In those days, you couldn't take leave except when the Senate went out. I usually took mine in December, because they were out. I went back up about the middle of January [1965] when Hubie had taken over [as vice president]. I went in the vice president's office and I was shocked. Nothing in there but new desks, a working staff, a girl in there

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**BAKER:** In the formal office?

**BALLARD:** In the formal office! Now that didn't last long. Now, the sofa was gone. The McKinley desk had gone back to the White House--Nixon took that [in 1969, and it was returned in 1977].

**BAKER:** There's always been some confusion about that desk.

**BALLARD:** Everything was gone. There was nothing in there but modern desks, typewriters. A working office. It didn't last long. They wouldn't let Humphrey use it as a working office, because too many senators wanted to use that for visiting.

**BAKER:** So they moved the staff out of there, but kept the new furniture there for the four years he was vice president?

**BALLARD:** Yes, but honestly, I was shocked.

**BAKER:** So when Nixon and Agnew came in, did they move back the old furniture?

**BALLARD:** No, no. It didn't come back at that point.

**BAKER:** Well, that new class of 1948, Humphrey's freshman class, it was considered a remarkable class. It had people like Paul Douglas, and Humphrey, and Russell Long, and Clinton Anderson, and Robert Kerr, and Lyndon Johnson . . . That must have seemed like a new breed.

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**BALLARD:** It was a new breed. Now, Kerr was a package by himself. He turned into being the most powerful senator on the floor, regardless of the leadership. He wasn't in the leadership, but he led the Senate. He worked 'em over to just what he wanted.

**BAKER:** What were his characteristics that made that possible?

**BALLARD:** He had money. He had always been, you wouldn't say a bully, but he was a bully in a way. He knew how to work the floor and the first person he got in his pocket was Bobby Baker. Now Bobby Baker was working for LBJ, but Kerr knew how to operate him. If he wanted to know what was going on, he went to Bobby Baker. You have to give Bobby Baker credit. Bobby Baker knew what was going on on that floor. He knew what legislation was coming up and he knew what was going to happen to it. Now LBJ used him for that. "Do you think we ought to continue, or do you think we ought to drop it, Bobby?" Bobby'd tell him to drop it. He didn't lose a battle, but he didn't win a lot of wars. Kerr used Bobby Baker. I don't know about that. But I knew how Kerr controlled the Senate. Now, I have to laugh about a little incident concerning Kerr. I had a man working the Senate steps out there, which was an important post, because you deal with senators. And you have to be sure that senators park. Now there's space against the steps, but that doesn't mean anything. If they come up in a car, they get out of the car and say, "Park it," and you park it. Well, I had a fella out there that

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was a jewel. He knew every one of them, knew how to handle them. I walked out there one morning. It was the day after Oklahoma had voted wet [to end prohibition]. Ralph Scalzo, the boy's name, he enjoyed a drink of booze--immensely. That was his business, because it never interfered with his work. I walked out there that morning and Ralph said, "I can't wait until Senator Kerr comes up so I can congratulate him on Oklahoma." And I said, "Ralph, hold it fella. He donated \$65,000 to the WCTU [Woman's Christian Temperance Union]

last year." "What! " I said, "Yes." A few minutes later, Kerr approached in his car with his big black Routweiller dog that he always carried with him. Of course, Ralph wasn't going to miss an opportunity. So he walked over to Senator Kerr after he parked and got out of the car. He said, "Well, senator, too bad about Oklahoma yesterday!" (Laughter) Kerr took off that big cowboy hat and put it over his heart, bowed his head, "Yes, Ralph, the blackest day in Oklahoma history!" Walked in the building and Ralph said, "Jesus, I'm certainly glad you came out here this morning. I would have been ruined." (Laughter) But he made his points with Senator Kerr.

**BAKER:** He sure did.

**BALLARD:** Kerr had his own plane. Before he would go to Oklahoma, he had a standing order for sixteen apple pies from the Senate bakery. He took sixteen pies with him every trip. Now, we had a baker then, who was a master. He had a drinking problem and he

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would pass out frequently, but he made the best pastries, coffee cakes, pies. When Harry Byrd took over as chairman of the Rules Committee, he fired him on account of his drinking.

**BAKER:** He didn't use the right kind of apples.

**BALLARD:** That's right. I think he went over to the Pentagon's bake shop.

**BAKER:** That must have been a source of frustration for Kerr to know that Byrd had fired his baker.

**BALLARD:** It was. Everybody hated it. We didn't care if he did drink. He had the best pastries . . . rum buns and coffee cake. Honestly, his coffee cake, I've never seen anything like it.

**BAKER:** But nobody was going to challenge Byrd on that score.

**BALLARD:** Oh, no. Chairman of the Rules Committee, you know. But that's the way the cookie crumbled.

**BAKER:** You probably haven't seen too many quite like Robert Kerr.

**BALLARD:** The only one I've ever seen like him. He took over the Senate and you don't see too many characters like that. Walked in and in two days, took over the Senate.

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**BAKER:** I've always been curious about his relationship with Lyndon Johnson. Particularly when Johnson was the Democratic leader [1953-61] of the Senate.

**BALLARD:** Well, of course, Lyndon Johnson wasn't about to get in the way of anything that helped him. And that Oklahoma money helped Lyndon. Lyndon, of course, was still the leader in every way as far as the public was concerned. He was the leader because he knew that when he had something going for him, he didn't stop it. And he had Kerr going for him.

When Kerr died [January 1, 1963], we had sixty-five members to go back there for the funeral. And sixty-five showed up. Which was unusual. Somebody said something to me about it and I said, "Yeah, they wanted to be sure it was Kerr in that casket." That's the reason they went.

**BAKER:** He wasn't very popular.

**BALLARD:** No. A man like that is not popular. They go along with him, but he won't win a popularity contest. He manipulated a lot of that through Bobby Baker. Bobby Baker was a master of that. It's a shame that he got into the trouble that he got into.

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**BAKER:** It is interesting to consider that he got into that trouble shortly after Kerr died, within weeks almost. What do you make of that?

**BALLARD:** Well, I think they were sitting and waiting on him. But they couldn't touch him as long as Kerr was alive.

**BAKER:** So you'd agree that Baker was Kerr's man and not LBJ's.

**BALLARD:** Right. He was Kerr 's man. You'd go down in Bobby's office, it was called [Room] P-80 in those days. And on his desk were stacks of money. On his desk. Drawers full of money.

**BAKER:** Just out in open view?

**BALLARD:** Yes. Now, I used to go in his office there and loaf. It was a good place to loaf. The lieutenant was from South Carolina and a good friend of Bobby's. He and I would go down there and loaf. LBJ would come down and go behind the screen. The booze was behind the screen. LBJ'd come down and fix himself up a hooker [drink] or two. Bobby'd go back and talk . . . pay no attention to us. That's one thing about a policeman. You can hear a lot of things, because nobody pays a lot of attention. They'll talk right before you, because, "He doesn't know a damn thing, or he wouldn't be a policeman."

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Go in the Senate toilet and get in a stall. You'd be surprised what you'll hear. Senators will come down. They use that. They'll stand in there, if there's no one else in there, and they'll give away all kinds of secrets. All you have to do is sit in

there and listen. It is the best listening post in town. They never think that someone may be sitting in there listening.

**BAKER:** That may be why the senators have a private toilet off the chamber.

**BALLARD:** That's right. Old Senator Kerr Scott of North Carolina, I don't know how many times I've taken him down there. He never could find it. He'd come out of the Senators' Dining Room and I'd take him down.

Cranston. It took Cranston months to find the Senators' Dining Room. I don't know how many times I found him on the second floor. I knew what he was hunting, but you had to approach them carefully. I'd tell him, "You're on the wrong floor, senator. Come around here and go down the stairway."

**BAKER:** Speaking of dining rooms, the senators have their own private dining rooms on the other side of the formal Senators' Dining Room.

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**BALLARD:** That's right. The Republicans and the Democrats have their own. And there's nobody allowed in there except members. The public goes into the senators' formal dining room [under certain conditions].

**BAKER:** I suppose there is an informal set of rules that governs those two dining rooms. Democrats don't sit at the Republican table.

**BALLARD:** That's right. There are two different sections. Speaking of dining rooms, one of the oldest political 'gimmicks is the "Nebraska Breakfast." That's the oldest political gimmick on the Hill, and the most successful.

**BAKER:** Why is it a gimmick? Tell me about the background of that.

**BALLARD:** Well, it has been going on for many, many years. It is held every Tuesday in the Family Dining Room [in the Capitol]. Now, when Nebraska senators and congressmen write letters to constituents back there, they put a line on the bottom, as a rule, "The Nebraska congressional delegation has a breakfast every Tuesday morning in the Family Dining Room of the United States Capitol. If you are in town, you are cordially invited to come to breakfast with us." Now, you'd be surprised how many people come up to us and say, "Where is the Nebraska Breakfast?" And as a courtesy, we park the people up

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there. We know they are not going to be there long. They're tourists or they have got business. They pay their own way. It is not free.

**BAKER:** Do they have to make reservations ahead of time?

**BALLARD:** No. You can just walk in. Sometimes, they'll have some kind of convention and they'll have to use another dining room. One of the members will take them on a short tour. A senator will take them up on the Senate floor. House members will take them on the House floor. Now, I went back to Nebraska, my wife's from Kansas. We were over in McCook, Nebraska. We went to lunch at a nice restaurant there and the people I was with took me back and introduced me to the owner of the restaurant. And he said, "Oh, I'll tell you, did you know I had breakfast there with my senator one day. Any person who goes from McCook, I always tell them to go to the Capitol on Tuesday morning for breakfast." The people are impressed with it.

**BAKER:** That's been going on as long as you've been here.

**BALLARD:** Oh, it was going on long before I came here. It's a gimmick and it doesn't cost the member a penny! Except for their own breakfast.

**BAKER:** And it probably has a lot to do with how successful Nebraska members are when it comes to reelection.

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**BALLARD:** They stay and stay.

**BAKER:** Do you know of any other state delegation that does anything like that?

**BALLARD:** No sir, there's none. The members of the delegations have luncheons, but none that is open to the public like that. That's a dandy.

**BAKER:** You were talking earlier about the shaving mugs and how those are off limits to the press and the public. We have also discussed the senators' private dining room and how that is off limits. Are there other places that the Capitol Police have been particularly alert to keep the press and public away from?

**BALLARD:** One thing you should keep in mind is the hideaway offices. You don't tell any person. Now, you know that a specific room is a senator's hideaway, because you see him going in there, but you don't tell anybody that, particularly the press. I was in the captain's office--it was payday--and I came up to the Senate Disbursing Office to get my pay envelope one morning at 9:00 o'clock. I had my pay envelope in my hand and I was going back to the elevator and I met an Oriental in the corridor. I asked him if I could help him, because he was lost. He said, "Yes, I am looking for Vice President Nixon's office." And I said, "Well, you are in the wrong building. His office is in 360 in the Senate Office Building." He

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said, "No. That may be, but I have an appointment to have breakfast with him in his office in the Capitol, but I have forgotten the room number." Well, I knew that he had it then, because they did have breakfasts in there. I said, "Well, in that

case, I think I can help you. Come on and go down the corridor with me." Room 236 was Nixon's hideaway. Well, I knocked on the door and Major Hughes, who was Nixon's AA, opened the door. I said, "I have a man hunting breakfast." He said, "Yes, we've been expecting him." Nixon was standing there. Of course, I knew Nixon real well. I still like Nixon. I don't care what happened /with Watergate/. That's something else. But he always was very friendly. He said, "Come in, since you would probably enjoy meeting this man." So he introduced me to him. He said, "He is now a Baptist minister in California, but he is the captain who led the raid on Pearl Harbor." Well. Sure enough.

He died about three years ago. Now, I'm not an autograph hunter. I have only had about three since I've been on Capitol Hill. But, I thought to myself, "Get this one." I said to him, "Would you mind giving me your autograph?" He wrote his name in English and he wrote it in Japanese. And down at the bottom, he wrote, "Luke 2:23." I took it home and looked it up and it is "Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do."

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Now the other fellow that I collected an autograph from was also hunting Nixon's office. That was Prince Romanoff, the famous restaurateur. The famous phoney. He was a Brooklyn kid. He threw himself at the right kind of people and he ended up in Hollywood and they set him up in a restaurant. Prince Romanoff's Restaurant famous for Strawberries Romanoff. Well, I was standing up there one morning on the Senate side of the Capitol, second floor, next to the senators' elevator. And this fella came around hunting Nixon's office. I told him he was in the wrong building. He said, "The cab driver put me out here. He said I would find it in this building." I said, "Well that happens often," and it does. I looked him over and said, "Aren't you Prince Romanoff?" And he said, "Have you met me before?" And I said, "No, but you do look like him." He was a dapper little character. Jesus. He had on a moleskin vest and the whole bundle. He said, "I'm glad you recognized me, 'cause I have an appointment over in Nixon's office." He opened up his briefcase and took out an alligator card case, and took out a card, and put his name on the back. He said, "If you are ever in California, come to my restaurant and present this . . ." I said, "Well, I appreciate that. I'll probably never get that far." I've never been out there. Of course, he's dead now. I thought to myself, the Hill is loaded with phoneys. But here is the fella who made phoney a business. And was successful.

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And then I collected one from Alfred Hitchcock for my boy who is a movie fan all the way. Hitchcock had an unusual autograph. His autograph is his profile. He was up there with Nixon one day. I never fool with autographs. I could have had a million. It never was my bit.

**BAKER:** Talking about hideaway offices, you said you would never point one out to the press or public. What about to another senator?

**BALLARD:** No. You don't know what he's wanting. You might say you saw him going down the corridor a while ago. The senator will say, "Well, if he'll show somebody that one, he'll show mine." So you just don't. That's his little kingdom.

**BAKER:** Well, it gets back to what you have said throughout this series of interviews of how important it is to have a political sense up here. A sense of discretion . . .

**BALLARD:** That's right. It's the answer. I think it is how I got along. I stayed here through I don't know how many changes of administration. I was the only one who stayed. They left. I'd stand roll call. I'd be the only person there [on several occasions] who was there yesterday. Nobody ever bothered with me. But I will say that Joe Duke helped me a lot. He was a stickler. He wanted things perfect, and I tried to give them to him. As far as I was

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concerned, that's what he wants, that's what he's going to get. He had somebody who would do it so he held on to me.

**BAKER:** I get the impression that he was an incredibly effective Sergeant at Arms. And a very efficient Senate staff person.

**BALLARD:** He was. He didn't hob nob with the staff. AA's weren't his bag at all.

**BAKER:** You mentioned earlier that there were only three AA's that he dealt with. Who were they?

**BALLARD:** Well, Petesy Menafee was one. Of course, that was [Harry] Byrd's man. And [Roy] Elson, who was [Carl] Hayden's. I don't know whether there were any others.

**BAKER:** You mentioned [deleted].

**BALLARD:** No. He wasn't one of Duke's favorites. [Deleted] was an operator. He was into the money end of it. He had connections with housing projects out here and he had a car dealership in North Carolina and he operated through used cars. There was no way you were going to get any taint on Joe Duke. He wouldn't have anything to do with anyone he thought might embarrass him. [Deleted] was an operator. He ended up . . . he never enjoyed it. Maybe he enjoyed accumulating it. I don't know.

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**BAKER:** Well, it must be a tremendously difficult task to be an effective administrative assistant.

**BALLARD:** Oh, of course it is. You are the show. You have to keep the constituents happy. How many constituents see a senator? Not many. It is the



AA. And he has a staff to deal with. The staff is the answer to the constituency. They can ruin you. Senator William Benton of Connecticut. His staff was terrible. You could tell that he wasn't going to be here long. Especially over in the office buildings. You can tell. Visitors will come out of the office and ask where the other senator is. He can't stay long. The word gets back. Like LBJ. He wouldn't appoint a patronage employee from Texas. He was afraid he'd go back and bad-mouth him.

**BAKER:** Well, this might be a good place to stop for today.

**BALLARD:** Well, again, I always enjoy it. I like to reminisce, you know. Of course, the Senate's been my life. I have enjoyed every day of it. And the history, because I liked history in school. I was right in the middle of it when I hit that Senate.

**BAKER:** And you knew it.

**BALLARD:** What I didn't know, I tried to learn.

**BAKER:** But, you appreciated the fact that you were right in the middle.

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**BALLARD:** That's right. I wanted to give the visitors the right answer. I used to tell the men. If you don't know the answer, admit it and find it for them. Don't give them the wrong answer, because they are entitled to know. I tried to do that myself. If I didn't know it, I'd find it out. Oh, it was right up my alley, this Capitol Building.

**BAKER:** You could be here for many years and still learn something new.

**BALLARD:** Every day. If you tried. I did, every day. Of course, the Capitol's changed and you had to change with it. The old Supreme Court room and downstairs in the original Senate chamber. Boy, that's a remarkable piece of history.

**BAKER:** You must have been very pleased when they decided to restore those rooms.

**BALLARD:** I was. All of our history, the main part of our history is made up there in that old Supreme Court room. The Civil War started there, actually.

**BAKER:** Okay, let's adjourn.

[End of Interview #6]

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