

FIRST CAMPAIGN FOR THE SENATE

Interview #7

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RITCHIE: When did you decide to run for the Senate yourself?

ELSON: Well, how that all came about was that I went to a reception at Senator [Vance] Hartke's home. There were a number of members, and Eugene Pulliam was there. Of course, I had gotten to know him from Carl Hayden's campaign, and this would be some time in say September of '63. He took me aside, and he said, "Have you ever thought of running for the United States Senate yourself?" I said, "Yeah, my whole life." The reason I said that was that the first Boys' State they had in Arizona, when I was a senior at Tucson high school, I went to our first Boys' State and I was a senator there. I sort of always wanted to be a United States senator. That, I thought was one of the highest goals you could have. There were two things I wanted to be, either Secretary of State [laughs] or a United States senator—but really a United States senator.

I said, "Yes, but it's impossible"—I'm talking to Eugene Pulliam now at this reception. I said, "It's impossible from a staff position. No one in the state knows who I am, outside of the professionals and people that we deal with. I don't see how it can be done without going back home and working my way up and getting exposure some way. It just can't be done." He said, "I'm not so sure about that, let's talk about it." Pulliam then talked to Carl Hayden about it. Then that fall we had several meetings, and when we were out home we met again with Pulliam and this Jack Moore that I told you about.

I think the reason Pulliam was interested in finding a Democrat that he could support was that Kennedy had been assassinated, and Pulliam was a big supporter of Lyndon Johnson, and thought he was going to be a great president, and he knew he would carry the southwest and Arizona really big when he ran in '64. So he could see that Barry Goldwater, who was still in the Senate at the time and up for reelection, and I don't think he thought—no one did—that Barry would actually get the Republican nomination. He could see that whoever the Democrats nominated had a very good

chance of beating Barry because of the coattails Lyndon would bring to that race. Lyndon as it turned out didn't carry Arizona, but against anyone other than Barry he would have, I think, the same way Eisenhower had carried it in '52. I think—in fact, I'm positive that Pulliam's thinking was, "Well, here is someone I could support." He would be hedging his bet, and he would have a United States senator that he could work with.

This sort of accelerated during that fall. Then I wrote a very critical self-appraisal, the pros and cons of what I thought my chances would be, as I had done for Carl Hayden. I think it's probably one of the most honest things I ever did in my life. I laid out all my weaknesses, personal weaknesses, and strengths, and then pointed out how difficult I thought it would be to do from a staff position, getting in late. It wasn't finally decided until probably by the end of the year, say between Thanksgiving and Christmas, after discussions with Carl Hayden and Jack Moore, and Eugene Pulliam. We decided that we would start planning for my somehow making this race. I think Carl Hayden of the three was the one that I had less chance than any of the other two. He read that memorandum that I wrote and thought it was pretty candid. Yet he thought it was possible. I think Jack Moore influenced him more than Pulliam did in saying, "Yeah, it could be done," and there was really a good opportunity here. The senator urged me to go ahead and give it a try.

Well, a lot of things happened between that time and my announcement for the Senate that I think were very fascinating. I remember one meeting we had with Pulliam, this would have been in the fall of '63, just Carl Hayden, Eugene Pulliam and myself. At that meeting, where I think if anything coming from Pulliam influenced the senator was that Eugene Pulliam told Carl Hayden that for three years he had had Don Bolles—who was the reporter who got blown up, subsequently, out in Arizona—had him checking into all my background and everything about me. He said, "I probably know more about Roy Elson than he knows about himself." I'll never forget this comment he made, he said, "Since I left DePauw and founded Sigma Delta Chi, in my whole journalistic career I have never heard as many stories about any person in my life that were just incredible. If the stories that I have heard were true, this young man would have had by now to be a billionaire and to have screwed every woman west of the Mississippi. We know that's not true in either case." I know that Carl Hayden respected Don Bolles as a reporter, and when Pulliam told him that it impressed him.

It sort of surprised me because I didn't think anyone was checking on me. This had to be going on from the time I first became acquainted with him, that he had Bolles keeping an eye out and digging into my past and all that.

Why I say some of this background is because some things were happening during the Kennedy administration that led to an unusual campaign, which Pulliam said at the end of his campaign that he had never seen a dirtier one in all his career, going back to Indiana politics—which had some good ones themselves. Carl Hayden said the same thing to me later, and later I will mention what he told me the night I knew I had lost.

In the Kennedy administration there was a comptroller of the currency by the name of [James T.] Saxon. There had been no national bank charters issued in many years, I forget how many, twenty, thirty years or something, for new national banks. So they opened up the chartering of new national banks all over the country. Well, Arizona is a branch banking state. We only had three national banks at the time and they had branches all over the state. The senator, as well as I felt that we needed some more competition in the banking industry. There were two groups that were trying to get a charter in Arizona. I helped both of them. One in particular was headed up by a guy by the name of Joe Haldeman, the son of an old Arizona family. I never thought too much of him, but he had an interesting group of people that had put together this charter. So that fall when I was out there I met with them, told them how they should go about it, helped them every step along the way, both of these two groups, but this one in particular. Even through the regional office I told them how they should do the whole damn thing, and every step of the way I consulted with both groups, although again more with this group than the other because I knew most of the people in there.

That was going through sailing, and it came back to Washington for final approval and I was checking it back here. Well, on Christmas Eve I was out in Arizona and I had my family out there, and because I was running around I hadn't done any Christmas shopping. I was out finding a gift for my wife on Christmas Eve and I'm walking through this department store and I ran into an old friend I had known for years who was head of the securities division of the Arizona Corporation Commission, a guy by the name of Joe Sotello. Joe pulls me aside and he says: "Roy, what the hell are you doing back there in Washington on this Liberty National Bank charter?" I said, "I'm trying to help them get a charter." He said, "Don't you know who these people are?"

I said, "Well, yeah, what's wrong?" He said, "My God, we've had them under investigation for months." He said, "Do you know these other two men," who were not members but they were financial advisors, I thought. I had met them. He said, "My God, they're hoods, they're crooks, they're Mafia type." I said, "Joe, I know tomorrow's Christmas, but after you open your gifts do you suppose we can meet and you tell me what the hell is going on." He agreed, so on Christmas day we met and he laid out their investigation.

Well, I nearly had apoplexy, because I had Carl Hayden's name out there so far pushing this charter. What they had been doing, they had been taking the garbage out from under these two guys' place, and here they had copies of "twixes" from me saying this is being done, and that, and where things stood, and all this correspondence and junk like that that they had been picking out of the garbage. Then he told me that the corporation commission, because these were some pretty powerful people, they knew about the investigation and they were trying to suppress it. Well, this started a nightmare for me. Immediately I told the senator and I confronted the principal, who then denied everything and said that's not true. And I got lots of pressure from some of the people that were trying to put this bank together.

It turns out that to move money internationally you have to have a national bank, and the way this was going to operate was from here to Liechtenstein, from there to Tokyo. They were going to rape this damn bank as soon as they got it started and it was going to be a money laundering thing, according to what their investigation was revealing. Well, of course Joe Haldeman and the others denied it. Then I had, as I said, some real pressure put on me to not do anything, just let it go. I said, "Jesus, I can't do that." Then I started getting threats from Haldeman and these people saying that I was trying to shake them down for stock for the senator and myself, just ridiculous. But this went on quietly for a while, and I'm still making plans to run for the United States Senate.

Early in the next year, while things were still going, this charter kept moving through the system, it came back to Washington, and I finally was on a trip out in Arizona and met again with this Joe Sotello. He was concerned because his investigation was stalled. They had gotten to the commissioners and it wasn't going anywhere. So one night I got some of my lawyer friends and Joe Sotello and we went

to the vaults of the Arizona corporation commission and took all their records [laughs], sealed them, kept the chain of evidence, and I brought them back to Washington and then made copies. Then of course I was really getting heat from some of these people because no one knew where the records had gone. I turned that over to the comptroller of the currency's office, the FBI, and I think Internal Revenue, or the Justice Department in general.

The day I turned it over to the comptroller of the currency was the day they had planned a big press release because this charter was so well prepared they wanted to give it as an example of how a charter application should be handled and turned out and everything else. The only reason they didn't have the press release and Saxon sign the charter was because he was out of town and didn't get back on time, something came up that they had to delay it a day. Then I dumped all this stuff on them and the thing really hit the fan. Then there were all these charges and countercharges and the FBI was investigating me and all this other stuff. The reason I'm giving you this background is how it affected my campaign later.

There were all these charges, and about this time, or shortly thereafter—I can't remember the exact sequence—I announced that I was running for the Senate. Well, I hadn't announced publicly, it wasn't a week or ten days later that the first law suit hit, and it was by this Joe Haldeman against Carl Hayden and me, to the tune of something like fifteen million dollars. The charges were that we were trying to shake them down for stock. I sort of laughed about it at the time, but in the meantime as I was getting this campaign organized I was worried about how I was going to get name recognition. I had signed contracts for outdoor advertising and we were planning a lot of radio spots just mentioning the name: Elson, Elson, Elson. We had designed some great billboards and signed a big contract for billboards, and paint boards, and all the rest. Well, it turned out that name recognition was going to be the least of my problems.

When these law suits started hitting, a week later there was another one for seven million dollars or something like that was filed against the senator and me. I remember walking down the corridor in the old [Senate Office] building with the senator, I think the lawsuits had amounted to about twenty-seven million dollars by this time, two or three of them. It really troubled me, because I had gotten the senator

way out in front on trying to move this charter along. He knew what I had done, getting the records and turning all of that over, which was to say the least highly unusual, [laughs] stealing state records. Anyhow, I was walking down the hall with him and told the senator that I had gotten a lawyer and did he want me to get a lawyer for him separately or did he want to use the same lawyer, and that we just couldn't ignore these lawsuits, we had to answer them somehow. And of course there were headlines all over the state about this. He stopped and looked at me and said, "How much are the lawsuits totaling now?" I told him. He said, "Well, if you can't pay it, I'll pay it." [laughs] I knew from then on I didn't have to worry about what he was thinking. He said, "Well, why don't you get whoever you have for me." I had a very fine lawyer out there in a law firm that took on these things for us.

As a result of all this, there were some more law suits filed against me personally, not the senator, accusing me of all sorts of things. So overnight my name was well known all over the state. In fact, we had done our first survey and I went from zero recognition to almost 99.9% recognition, not that it was all very flattering! I should mention another survey that we found out. . . well, that comes up later because I also had another law suit against me, it was just a horrible campaign.

I might say about campaigning, it's one thing to be a campaign manager and to run campaigns and be involved in them, and then to be the candidate yourself. I made two errors that I knew better but there was not much I could do about it. The two worst mistakes that any candidate can make is to try to be his own campaign manager and his own financial chairman. That's one thing that I did for Carl Hayden, he believed in me and ran with me, and I got to make all the decisions. One person had to make those decisions. Well, I tried to get some talented people who knew how to run a campaign, and they were already committed to someone else, because I got in so late. I really didn't have a campaign manager that knew as much as I did about running it, and that's always a mistake. And then I couldn't find someone who knew really how to raise money both back here and at home, a financial chairman, which really caused me some great difficulties and I know helped contribute to my loss. We went with what we could put together at the time. And of course I was still working back here as the senator's AA on the Central Arizona Project and everything else that was going on, and still trying to be a candidate.

Now, I did resign from the senator's staff for those months after I announced. I left the staff and that's really tough when you don't have any money coming in and you're poor. I mean, I was just a salaried employee. Particularly maintaining two places, and I had small children and my wife. I had one person to get me started in the campaign, back in the fall of '63. When I told him, we had a meeting over in Joe Duke's office with him and a guy by the name of Keith Linden, who represented one of the aluminum companies at that time. Keith was a good Democrat and also a good fundraiser. When I said I was going to run, he said, "Okay, I'm going to give you right now five thousand dollars. If I catch you spending it on anything but renting yourself a place out in Arizona for you and your family, buying yourself some decent clothes—a wardrobe in other words—this money is for you to get yourself ready to be a candidate. The only thing else you can do with that is to get copies of your petitions printed. But if I hear that you've spent any of it for anything else than this I'll go out of my way to beat you." That's how I got started.

Raising money became a problem. I had a fundraiser, well, I borrowed some money from the then Arizona Democratic treasurer and two other wealthy individuals. I borrowed twenty-five thousand dollars from them with the understanding that if I had raised the money from a fundraiser in Washington I'd use that to help pay them back. Well, I didn't raise that much back there, and that ended up later in another law suit by the treasurer against me. We didn't have this agreement in writing and that got to be a mess too.

So the campaign starts and I'm out there, and when the filing date closes and we all file our petitions there were seven or eight of us in the race. There was a corporation commissioner and a supreme court chief justice by the name of Ranz Jennings. It turned out to be a race really between him and me in the Democratic primary. But as this went on all these law suits were going. It wasn't very flattering but the least of my problems was name recognition.

We had made all of our plans to run against Barry Goldwater, and as the summer wore on and the conventions came up—I didn't go to the '64 Democratic convention because I had this late primary and I was out campaigning. Then there was the Republican convention. I think I knew Barry backwards and forwards. We had so much information that we had taken from the Record. We were well organized, had

just really depth, notebook after notebook. Of course, I had been there so I knew most everything in there. We were really anticipating that this could be fun. We were going to do to Barry what he had done to Ernest McFarland. We knew Lyndon would be carrying the state, and the other thing I had as an ace in the hole was Eugene Pulliam told Carl Hayden and me at this same meeting—no, it was a subsequent meeting—that if I got the nomination that he would endorse me. Knowing that I would get decent treatment in the paper, we felt we really had a good chance.

It never dawned on me or any of us that Barry would get that damn nomination. When he got the nomination, then [Paul] Fannin became the Republican candidate. He announced that he was going to run for Barry's seat. Paul Fannin was then a three-term Republican governor. In those days we only had a two-year term, it's since gone to four years. He was sort of popular with motherhood, apple pie and the flag, and highway safety and those sort of things. It really screwed up all our campaign plans, because all of a sudden we had to make plans to run, if I won the nomination, against Fannin.

Well, it was a bloody campaign. My opponents all started picking on me, attacking me personally. They kept repeating all these charges that were filed in these law suits. So my name was in the paper all the time, but not very flatteringly. They were all running against me. The one advantage that I had over the others, I think, is that I was able to raise money, even though I had to do a lot of it myself, particularly in the primary. Because we had inherited the vice president's payroll, I had a lot of people that were on Carl Hayden's staff working for me in Arizona. In those days you could do those sort of things. What I did is, everyone who stayed in Washington was on the vice president's payroll and everyone that went out to Arizona to help in this campaign was on Carl Hayden's personal payroll. I think at one time I had fifteen staff members out there that were not only working officially but also involved in helping in the campaign. I was able to have automobiles and airplanes and all this stuff in kind, headquarters, and typewriters, and everything.

In fact, the issue of the staff became a big thing because they all attacked me, and the papers would list them. All the candidates would always bring up about all these people from Washington trying to help me. It got so bad that when Carl Hayden came out just before the primary to support me—because this was probably the only time that

Carl Hayden ever supported someone in a primary. There was no question that he was endorsing me. They would list the staff by name and their salaries—salaries that sounded pretty big to what salaries were in Arizona. I'll never forget, when the senator flew out I tried to get a hold of him before he left Washington to let him know that the first question he was probably going to be asked was about these staff people, because it was becoming quite an issue. But I couldn't get him before he got on airplane. Sure enough, here was a mob of reporters when he arrived in Phoenix. Coming down the steps they were shoving mikes in his face. The first question out of one of the reporters' mouths was: "Senator Hayden, is it true" and he went down the list of all these employees, "that they're all out here helping Roy Elson in his campaign for the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate?" The senator sort of looked quizzical at him, and he said, "Yeah, by Christ, they'd better be or I'll fire them!" [laughs] And that was the end of that! It never becomes an issue after that. He took care of that in a hurry.

But it was a nightmare of a campaign for the nomination. Trying to campaign, still trying, even though I was off the payroll I was still advising the senator on lots of stuff, we were still having meetings. I was running around the state and every place I went the other candidates were always attacking me. Then just before our primary another law suit hit me, which was really bad. I had heard that they might try bringing up this accusation against me. I had met a woman—and the reason I told you the story about the bank charges—through Joe Haldeman I had met a woman who had come over from Los Angeles, in the fall of '63, a gorgeous woman, God, something else. Anyhow, I met her at the bar at the hotel where I was staying and we got to know each other. She was there for about a week and I never thought anything about it other than she was. . . . well, I did think a lot about it, because of what she was and who she was. Anyhow, it turned out that originally she had come over specifically because they were trying to set me up so they would have something to keep me in line if things didn't go right, I found out later.

I received a rumble through some of my sources that they were going to bring this woman into Arizona and hold a press conference and accuse me of all sorts of things publicly. I got wind of it, and I remember getting laryngitis real quick with this one day and canceling my speaking appointments for that day. My brother, who at that time was head of the FBI in Nevada was on vacation over in La Jolla, California, where

Hoover and Tolson used to stay. I got one of the airplanes that were available to the campaign and my wife and I flew over there. Of course, I didn't tell my wife what I'd found out. So my brother and I took a long walk on the beach. I told him what this group who had been frustrated in all their law suits—because I had either got judgments on the pleadings or they were dismissed with prejudice—I told him what I had heard they were going to do. He said, "Well, you go back and relax."

I had learned just before I went over to see him that the actual woman that I had met refused to come in and they beat the holy hell out of her. I remember talking to her on the phone, she said, "Please, don't call me again. I'm not going to come in, I'm not going to do anything, but I'm not very pretty now." They had beaten the holy hell out of her, in fact, I'm not so sure that subsequently she didn't end up somewhere bad. They were playing some mean ball. When I went over to see my brother I had heard that since she refused to cooperate they were going to bring in a showgirl from Las Vegas. I was flattered by all that. My brother told me, "Don't worry about it, Roy, go on back and continue campaigning and I'll take care of that." He put the word down through his sources that if something like that should happen someone was going to go to jail for either perjury or the Mann Act or both. He would go on the warpath. So then I heard that had been scuttled. I went on campaigning and thought I had had handled that situation quietly.

We were campaigning in southern Arizona and coming back after a three-day swing into Sky Harbor, to the transient terminal there, and it was dusk. We were on an Aerocommander, which is a high-wing, two-engine aircraft, aboard the airplane was the pilot, a photographer, my P.R. man, my wife, myself and I think my campaign manager. We're taxiing up to the transient terminal and we look over there and there are all the cameras and lights and a mob of reporters. I thought, "Ooooh, what has happened?" We get out of the airplane and my wife and I are shoulder to shoulder. We had just barely gotten out from under the wing of the airplane and all the cameras and lights come on. It was Don Bolles again. It wasn't the *Arizona Republic* that was handed to me, but it was another paper that went defunct later but was a liberal paper at the time. He put in front of me this headline, as big as you can print them in a newspaper, in red letters, front page, and they had found a picture of me with a cigarette was sort of dangling out of my mouth and I was pointing at someone. I looked capable of doing

a lot of things. The headline read: "Elson Sued On Call Girl." My wife was standing there and I could just feel the beads of perspiration start dripping down my face.

Don said, "Say, Roy, what's your reaction to this latest accusation?" I remember thoughts racing through my mind. What do you say? Because this did catch me by surprise because I thought I had taken care of this issue. I looked at that, and I said, "Christ, Don, I didn't even know I could get it on credit!" Well, the cameras are rolling away. Then the next question was, "Well, it says here in this complaint that you engaged in unnatural sexual perversion." I said, "What?" He said, "Yeah, unnatural sexual perversion." I said, "Gee, that sounds like a contradiction in terms. I must have been in the missionary position." And the cameras are going. Of course, on the television and radio that night, those were great lines. The worse part of—nothing came of it, I got that law suit dismissed—but it did cause a strain, it started the beginning of the end probably of my marriage.

The interesting thing about that, we were doing a survey at this same time, and it was right before the primary, the timing was beautiful. We saw all of a sudden that my popularity with the women went up incredibly, just went shooting skyrocketing. With the men, now, I don't know what the reason for that, it sort of went down a little bit. Even with the little old ladies in tennis shoes my popularity went up, and with the middle-aged housewife I guess I came through on television pretty well. Maybe it was some sort of secret romance or whatever. But it was incredible. With the little old ladies, they must have said, this can't possibly be true because Carl Hayden would never have a person like that around him. But my popularity among women went skyrocketing.

But it was just a nightmarish campaign. I'd be off campaigning and would come back in on Friday and my P.R. man would say, "If we don't come up with x thousands of dollars by Monday at five o'clock we go off the air." That was not so much true in the primary as it was in the general, because of the lateness of our primary date. Well, I ended up winning the primary against all those other opponents. It ended up being a race against Ranz Jennings, this justice of our Supreme Court, and I beat him by almost the same number of votes that I lost the general election. I think it was close to 13,500 I beat him out of the whole group. After the primary, the big problem was then preparing for a race against Paul Fannin, who obtained the Republican

nomination without any difficulty. I don't even think he had an opponent. Now we didn't know how the state would go since Barry got the nomination and we weren't going to have these coattails that we were relying on.

It was this time that we had another meeting with Eugene Pulliam, who made a commitment to Carl Hayden and to me, just the three of us again present, that he would publicly endorse me only the Sunday before the election. I sort of had that ace in the hole, I thought. Well, both Carl Hayden and I relied on it. I didn't tell any of my campaign people this, we just went as if we had to run a hard race.

I spent the rest of September and well into October trying to heal wounds in the Democratic party because there was so much bitterness over all the charges and countercharges. I wasted a lot of time meeting with my opponents. I might say about Ranz Jennings, he was never the same after that. I know his son still to this day blames me for his demise, because he sort of became something else, he was never quite the guy he was prior to that. But I met with every one of my opponents and party leaders trying to heal wounds. Sam Goddard was running for governor again on the Democratic ticket, and he subsequently won that year. But it was a nightmare of frantic activity. When I look back on it, I don't know how I did everything I did. I'd be out on the campaign trail all week, get back and then have to spend the weekend raising money, getting on the phone, calling people, begging. That to me is the worst part of campaigning, particularly as the candidate. That's where you really need a guy who knows how to raise money, a good financial person. Because of the time element, and because I just didn't have anyone really good to do that for me, I ended having to do that myself. And I was exhausted. But somehow, say I needed fifteen thousand dollars, I'd come up by Monday at four o'clock with fifteen thousand four hundred dollars and we'd be good for another week. That went on right up to the general election.

Fannin and I had a couple of debates, I don't know that you want to hear about those. It was really strange because Pulliam in his papers and others—I had endorsements in the primary from the major papers in the state, both in Tucson and in Phoenix, and pretty much around the state I had support. It was no question that Carl Hayden's endorsement of me helped with a lot of that. Again these charges would come up about this bank thing and the call girl, but one of the best campaign ploys I'd

ever seen pulled happened to me—the timing was perfect, it was about ten days before the general election. A black man in turban and robe, flew into Phoenix from Chicago. He must have weighed 300 pounds. God, he was big, black, with this turban. From some religious sect that no one had ever heard of. He came in and called a press conference at the Phoenix Press Club. He claimed he had come out there to publicly endorse my candidacy for the United States Senate because Roy Elson was a man of vision and courage, and he was going to use the bonds from this bank, or this Pinal County Development bonds—Pinal County is the country just south of Maricopa County, more farming type county—but he was going to use these Pinal County Development bonds, which were part of the way this bank was going to be chartered originally, way back the year before, but since they still existed, he was going to use them to make a home for all the disadvantaged blacks from Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and New York. There would be a home for 300,000 blacks in Pinal County. Well, everyone sort of laughed, on the surface, but at the same time this guy was having his press conference, in every black precinct, every Mexican-American precinct, Chicano precinct, and on all the Indian reservation, fliers were being distributed saying I was going to do this.

You've got to understand a little bit about Arizona minorities. Three percent of our population is black. We have many Spanish surnames, about a third of the population has Spanish surnames or can trace their ancestors to Mexico or Spain. And then you have the largest Indian population in the country in Arizona on our reservations. None of them get along very well together. All they could see, the disadvantaged blacks, and the Chicanos, and the Indians could see that any employment opportunities would be gone. The population of the state at this time was only about 1.7 million, and we were going to have 300,000 disadvantaged blacks coming into the state of Arizona! Well, when I heard about this, I was not at the press conference but I had someone there, and I got this report. I said, "We just lost the election, because there is no way I can say I'm going to denounce all the poor people." I said I had nothing to do with these bonds, but the message would never get out to all these poor precincts.

That very same day I called up a well-known, high-powered senior partner in a law firm there who was a good Republican. I called him up, got him on the phone, and said, "I want to congratulate you. It was one of the shrewdest moves I've ever seen." He said, "Why are you calling me, young man? Have you lost your mind?" I said, "No, honestly I'm calling you to congratulate you. I know you're responsible." He said,

"You've got to be out of your mind. Has this campaign gotten to you." I said, "No." After about the third time he denied any involvement, I said, "Look, the only reason I really know it was you is that back in 1927, in a mayoral race in the city of Phoenix, you and Jack Moore"—the same Jack Moore that I've been talking about—"pulled the identical thing in this mayor's race." I said, "It's going to be the election, I just have that feeling, it's all over." Finally, after a long pause, he said, "Well, I'll pass that on, son." [laughs]

It did, all our spot surveys near the end showed it was neck and neck and I had closed the gap rapidly between Fannin and myself. Sometimes when I look back on it, if I had spent another \$50,000, or if Eugene Pulliam, who had made this commitment to me and Carl Hayden had kept his word and endorsed only me in that Sunday edition before the election, I think I probably would have won that election. What he did do, he didn't endorse just me, he endorsed both of us, in a front page editorial, which was not the agreement. And Carl Hayden was really pissed. So was I, of course, because we were anticipating that as our final little trick that would have done the election. But I think if I had borrowed maybe another \$50,000 for some last minute spots, because we had momentum, we had everything going.

Then Lyndon came into the state—I mentioned this before—we went to church on Sunday. Both Fannin and I went to my so-called church. Then we tried to get Lyndon to come back into the state at the tail end, but he I think didn't want to embarrass Barry because he overflowed and went to New Mexico and then out to Las Vegas for Howard Cannon's race, and bypassed me where he could have stopped in. But I think he didn't want to embarrass Barry by losing his own home state. I can't prove that, but I know he didn't come in, though he sort of indicated to Carl Hayden that he would come in, and Carl Hayden tried to get him to come back in. That could have made the difference. But as it turns out, Barry didn't win the state by very much, and Fannin ended up beating me by thirteen thousand, about the same amount that I had won the Democratic primary. I knew I was going to lose the absentee ballots, I predicted that within a hundred votes of the way that would come out. If we had been ahead by five thousand votes when the campaign was over, instead of behind by five before absentees were counted, I think maybe I would have won a very close election [laughs], but instead I lost. We didn't get close enough.

Pulliam and his wife came by to see me and Minor that next day at the apartment where we were living, and told me, "If it's the last thing I do, I'll see you in the United States Senate as a senator." And I remember saying to him, "Mr. Pulliam, you just had your chance, and you didn't keep your agreement." I subsequently learned how Fannin and his group of Republicans were able to get to Pulliam to endorse both of us rather than just me. It turns out Mrs. Fannin, Mrs. Claire Booth Luce, and Nina Pulliam all went to Main Chance together, you know they all go there for whatever, and Mrs. Fannin got to Mrs. Luce who got to Nina, and Mrs. Luce got to Henry, I guess, and they all got to Pulliam. I verified this pretty much again through Jack Moore, who also knew about the commitment. So he reneged on his commitment, but he did endorse both of us. I did better than any other Democrat had ever done in year and years with Pulliam.

When I look back on it—and as you know I ran again in '68—but the trouble with losing a close race like that, and I think any politician would probably tell you this, is that you are haunted by all the things that you might have done, or should have done, the mistakes you made. See, I had never really run for any public office. I had never made speeches. I remember when we went out to make my announcement. We flew out, I had my kids and my wife and we must have had a thousand at the airport. I remember getting up to say something and I froze. It seemed like an eternity, but for a whole minute or longer I couldn't say a damn thing, and people were getting antsy. Finally it came and then it just poured out. From then on I had no problem, in fact, I loved campaigning. It was just so much fun.

Where I was really at my best was probably answering and fielding questions, because when you had worked as long as I had back here, and you're into everything, you knew it. And most reporters don't know how to ask the second question. And you can always spot an expert out there who wants to make his point, and you get away from him in a hurry—you learn how to do that. But I loved the give and take, and that's probably where I was best.

I was only thirty-three, I had a crew cut, I looked too young probably, but when you lose a close one like that, I really went through a deep—not a deep depression, but I was rather depressed because I came so close but yet so far. There's only payoff one way that way. I went back over it and thought if I had handled this differently, or if I had

gambled in borrowing some more money, if that black hadn't come in. You know, you just go back over any one thing that could have made the difference. I think any other politician who's run more than once will tell you, if you're going to lose, you just as soon have it substantial, so there's no doubt and you don't have that nightmarish reaction to what might have been. It certainly affected me that way.

RITCHIE: I'd like to ask a couple of question to follow up some of this. You were the first Senate staff member, that I know of, who ran for the Senate. Now it's become more commonplace, about ten of the hundred senators today started out on the staff. But you were the first. What was the reaction of everyone else here on Capitol Hill when you let it be known you were planning to run for the Senate?

ELSON: Well, that was what impressed me. I don't think I realized how much power, or what a powerful position I was in. But I had great support from a lot of fellow AAs. They all gave me money, it wasn't much, fifty, a hundred dollars, but a lot of it. There was also some envy, because every one of them—I don't know of anyone that's around here that doesn't want to be one of them, a United States senator. Anyone—you must feel the same, if you're here you think you ought to be one of them. You know you can do the job as well.

I was going to get to that, because when I first announced and ran there was all this enthusiasm. In fact, to this day a lot of them think that I blew it. And I did, I guess. But I had a lot of support. I had a couple of fundraisers back here and a lot of advice. They were all hoping that I was going to be successful, because I believe I was the first one to try it and maybe that would inspire some of them to go ahead and give it a go. Where the difficulty came was the senator wanted me to come back on his staff and I did, mainly because of the Central Arizona Project. And I was in debt, again it doesn't sound like a lot of money, but I think I was about ninety thousand dollars in debt and had to pay off twenty-five thousand of it real quick.

Did I mention the story about learning to play golf and raising the money? Well, the day before Thanksgiving, in 1964, I'm still moping around and trying to clean up things and raise money to pay off this debt. To get my friends off the hook, I had to come up with twenty-five thousand dollars within sixty days. So the Monday before Thanksgiving I had a call from Joe Walton, who was former state Democratic chairman.

He said, "Roy, I want to have lunch with you and talk about your political future." I said, "Joe, I don't want to talk to anyone, I got these problems." He said, "That's what I want to talk about and I think it will be important if you just meet with me. It won't take long, let's have lunch. Let's meet on Friday, day after Thanksgiving." So I agreed to it. We went out to Mountain Shadows, which is a resort there in Scottsdale and has a little executive golf course. We ate over in the golf restaurant. We had a couple of Margaritas and we're sitting around and had lunch. I kept waiting for him to start telling me what he had in mind. We talked about the campaign and things in general. After a while I was getting irritated, because I really didn't want to listen again to what might have been. Finally we finished lunch and got up, he paid, signed the check, and we start to leave. Now by this time I'm really burning. I'm not saying much, but I'm burning.

We were walking back through the pro shop, and he said, "Roy, this is your new set of golf clubs. You are now a member of this country club. You have a golf lesson in fifteen minutes, now pick out a pair of shoes and get your [expletive] out there." Well, it's probably the nicest thing that ever happened to me in my life. I never played golf, always wanted to, I wanted to learn. I took the lesson, and from that day until two days before Christmas I played golf. Most of the people that stayed at Mountain Shadows were from out of state, particularly from Illinois, the Chicago area, and the east. They had all been out there during the campaign, but not one of them a registered voter in the state of Arizona. Well, I'd take my lesson—he'd paid for ten lessons—and then I'd go play this executive course with someone who was staying there, I met them there.

Within that month I raised twenty-five thousand, eight hundred and some dollars, learning how to play golf. We'd go in there for a drink afterwards, and they'd seen me on tv and all that. The largest I got, I remember, one guy wrote me a check for five thousand dollars. I took it, and I said "I'm sure this is probably all rubber, but I'm going to take it." Every one of them was good as gold. Anyhow, I got that initial debt paid off real quickly. It just boggled my mind. I thought, God, why didn't someone tell me about this game of golf, I'd have taken it up a lot sooner! Anyhow, that was one of the nicest things that anyone had ever done to me. I've loved golf ever since.

To answer your question about the reaction of my friends, I know that they would tell me, or they would tell the senator's staff back here, because apparently when all these charges were coming out, and that call girl law suit came out, and all this was coming back here, they were all reading it over on the ticker on the floor, coming in on the wire services. There would be some new charge, it was sort of crazy. In raising the money during that campaign, I would indicate to some people, "Look, I don't care what money you may be giving to Paul Fannin, but I think you ought to consider giving me some money, too, because you're either going to have me back there as a United States senator, or I'm going to be back with Carl Hayden, and I'm going to have a long memory either way it goes." So I was successful in raising money—I guess that almost sounds like extortion [laughs].

The difficulty came when I came back on the senator's staff and we came back to Washington. I became the staff director again, or AA, whatever we called myself then. There was an entirely different relationship almost. It was extremely difficult. I felt very isolated because senators treated me with a great deal of respect, but I wasn't one of them. Staff members sort of thought of me a little differently and thought I was getting ready to run again. Now, this caused some problems for Carl Hayden, because everything I did for him others thought I was really doing it to line myself up for running again, which the senator wanted me to do, and so did a lot of other people, but that was a long way down the line. It was very, very strange, and strained, my relationships. Then as we got into this fight on the Central Arizona Project and all that, I really became suspect.

By this time I was well-known, and all these stories had circulated around. I'm not sure what the image was. I think I at least had an image of having some talent and being a good AA and all that, and still powerful because of Carl Hayden and his position. And then I had made the race. When you ask about other staff members, I think they were probably secretly, some of them, glad that I didn't make it. Others I think were genuinely disappointed, but I know there was a lot of probably sighs of relief that I didn't win.

But I always look back, having been trained by Carl Hayden, and his being on the Steering Committee, you know damn well that I would have had good committee assignments. I'd also been clerk of the Patronage Committee, so I knew where a lot of

bodies were. And I was a creature of the Senate to that extent too, so as a freshman, had I won that election, I would have been a very, very powerful freshman, particularly with Carl Hayden still being here. What a one-two punch that would have been! I think.

RITCHIE: You mentioned how the Senate staff reacted. I was curious about how the senators reacted. I'm sure that some of them must have to look over their shoulder at other staff members.

ELSON: I never thought of that at the time, but I did later after others have tried it. But see this was a little different because I had the total endorsement of the man I was working for. It wasn't as if I was going against my boss or running against him or anything like that. I thought about that later, that there could have been some thoughts along that line. I don't know how to answer that other than it occurred to me that that could be true.

I know my relationship with a lot of senators was much different than it had been. I felt like I was in limbo. I was not really any more a staff person and recognized as a competent staff person, but now a politician, almost one of them. It was a strange sensation, and I could feel it. I really felt isolated in many ways. Then I was still trying to do a staff job for Carl Hayden. And as those years went on up until his retirement, the senator gave me more and more responsibility, more and more that I was speaking in his name. He would send me to committee meetings which in those days staff people didn't speak up at a committee meeting or anything like that. That was really awkward. I remember going to the Rules Committee a couple of times when he had one of his urinary infections and he had to be out at Bethesda for a few days, oh on the reorganization, remember when [Mike] Monroney had a reorganization plan. Carl Hayden wanted me to kill some of that for a while. I went over and I was sitting there with the members, but speaking for Carl Hayden. Well, you just didn't do that in those days.

I remember once going to another meeting when they were talking about setting up a separate Veterans Committee, and Carl Hayden was always opposed to that. Again, I had to go over there and I'm fighting with Howard Cannon, who's the chairman of the damn committee. That was awkward. And then sitting in with him on all the stuff

on the Central Arizona Project, with members of the Interior Committee. Well, no staff member in those days was permitted to do that. So it was awkward. But everyone so respected the senator that they permitted it. Scoop Jackson was wonderful that way. And yet, I knew that I'm just a staff member and I'm back where I was. I went out there and got my [expletive] shot off, and now I'm back trying to do the same job I did before, but it wasn't the same, it was very strange.

RITCHIE: When you first announced, what was the reaction in Goldwater's office, and from his staff people?

ELSON: Well, I think initially there was probably some concern. His AA, and his people and the senator always, I think, had respect for the work that I was doing for Carl Hayden. I think they knew what we were trying to do. I mean, it didn't take any genius to figure out what was going on. I'm sure they also heard that Pulliam had helped get me into the ballgame, so they knew that that might be a real problem, because Barry was older and we could make him into an old man. So I think there was some genuine concern, particularly with Johnson running—this was all of course after Kennedy was assassinated. Then, of course, Barry was so busy running for the nomination, and I don't think they ever thought for sure they'd make it.

I used to run into [Richard] Kleindienst and [Dean] Burch and all of them. It seemed like every trip I made to Arizona, either they were going west or I was coming east, and we always met in Chicago at the airport. I don't know how many times. A couple of times I met them over in L.A. I ran into them when I was taking the "red-eye" back. We were always running into each other, have a few drinks. But this was before the Republican Convention.

As I say, we had made no plans at all to run against Fannin. We just were sure that Barry was not going to be able to get the nomination. Well, it just came as a real jolt when he did. That changed everything. I knew then that it was going to be a real toss-up. I felt very confident had he not gotten the election, that man, because I would have had no problem debating Barry on anything. I knew him and his record backwards and forwards. It would have been fun—whether or not he would have debated me. He never did when I ran against him in '68, I couldn't get him into a debate. If I was in his position I wouldn't have debated me either. With Johnson and

with Pulliam and the whole thing, and I think the Democrats would have gotten behind me, even the Udalls would have really gotten behind if they knew it was against Barry. A lot of things might have been different and there's no question that Lyndon would have carried Arizona by huge numbers.

RITCHIE: The other question is what was your relationship with Paul Fannin, after he came to the Senate as a senator and you came back here as a staff member?

ELSON: Well, because of some of some of the things that happened in the campaign—in one debate in particular I found out he was sort of petty. He tried grabbing the microphone out of my hand. I think we were in the Jewish Community Center, and we were on water, and he was talking about the Arizona Power Authority and going it alone, and I was saying it would never work. Someone had asked a question from the audience, the place was packed with a couple of thousand people, and here was the governor of Arizona and me fighting for the microphone. You know, we're pulling it back and forth [laughs]. And he said something to me while we were on the platform, while Sam Goddard and the gubernatorial candidates were debating, and he said to me personally, "Who in the hell do you think you are, running for the United States Senate? You're just a little staff person. What right do you have to run for the United States Senate?" That really got under my skin.

He was a likeable sort of person, but not particularly swift. And it was a little difficult when we came back, because he still resented my almost beating him. And then there were tremendous disagreements on approaching the Central Arizona Project. I think he found it more difficult than I did. I don't know how many times we sort of ran over him on the way it was going to happen. He was always pleasant, but the relationship was always pretty strained, when it came to personal relations, though I got along fairly well with all his staff. But with Fannin, I didn't particularly respect him, and I'm sure he didn't like me. So it was strained.

RITCHIE: When you ran in that campaign, especially in the primary, did you run as the conservative candidate? Did you use the judge as the liberal candidate? Where did you try to steer your course through that campaign?

ELSON: Mainly as the most qualified and most experienced, but I look back on the speeches that I made in both campaigns and I've got to say, I think I was way ahead of my time on a lot of things that I was talking about. Then the water issue had been so critical. Thanks to Pulliam's help and the senator's, and being thrust into it, I certainly had that image of being an expert—which I don't think I was—but I certainly had the image that I knew what was going on back here.

I personally felt I was very progressive, but no one listened to a lot of speeches I made, where I thought I was outlining something new and innovative. I would say they were pretty progressive. But I didn't really have to. No one questioned my Democratic credentials, but they all were attacking me personally, so there weren't that many discussions of the issues. I was able to take the high road. I just let them blast away at me. It was hard at times, being there taking some of the cheap shots that were being made. It was more of a personal attack on me, trying to make me out to be something evil. I was able to talk about the things that I wanted to talk to, and no one else was, so from that standpoint I felt like I was progressive. I wouldn't call it conservative.

This was when, early on, where in a couple of places I knew that I was going in a different direction than Carl Hayden was. I was not a clone of Carl Hayden. And I always told the senator, "I'm going this direction." He said, "Do what you think you have to do. We can disagree." It bothered me because I had worked with him so closely, but I knew that I didn't feel quite the same way. On most issues we weren't that far apart, because I think he was one of the most progressive men that ever served in the Senate. As far as the image, I think some papers called me a liberal, others called me a middle-of-the-road, but they judged me more on my experience.

I think my opponents really made a mistake in attacking me personally, because I got a lot of sympathy. And my wife, though she never made a speech, she was an incredible campaigner. Everyone loved her, everywhere she went, all the little coffees in the outlining counties. With that little southern drawl, she was just wonderful with people. I don't know how many votes she obviously got for me.

RITCHIE: What's interesting about your campaign is that usually when the fresh young face appears, the one thing that he doesn't have is experience. He's going to

challenge the old-time politician. You were coming in with the old-time politician's experience, but you were the new young candidate. You really reversed all of the traditional roles.

ELSON: Well, one of the things in that memo that I told you I wrote, and in the discussions with Jack Moore and the senator and Eugene Pulliam, was that very thing. I thought that would be a very strong asset, and they all thought so too. They said, "Harp on it." What we were trying to do, particularly when we thought we were going to be running against Barry, was showing that I probably knew more about how the Senate operated than Barry did, though he had been here for two terms. I had the experience, and yet I was younger. I would be there to carry on in the Carl Hayden tradition, to fight for all those things that made it. We had really put together a beautiful campaign to go against Barry. And I was so eager. I had the enthusiasm, I had the youth, and I could claim—by this time I had gotten that image—of having the experience. So we had eliminated Barry's advantage of being a two-term senator, because a lot of people knew that he sort of played it haphazardly. He was not a hard-working senator as such, and he was interested in other issues rather than looking after the state. We definitely wanted to take advantage of that, and I think we were able to sell that.

Even later when I ran against Barry, everyone gave me credit for having the experience. I had been trained to be a senator, you might say, and trained by a master. That doesn't get you elected, but it was fun.

End of Interview #7