
Interview with Joan Baldwin

The interview was conducted by David Welborn in Alexandria, Virginia on December 18, 1997

Audio cassette 5
DW: This is an interview with Mrs. Joan Baldwin, also known as Jody Baldwin. We are in Alexandria's House of Antiques, in Alexandria, Virginia, and the date is December 18, 1997. Thank you very much for having us into this interesting and festive antique mall to talk about past days in the United States Senate.

JB: Happy to have you here.

DW: Would you describe for me the route you took that led you to a staff position on Capitol Hill.

JB: Let's see if I can remember...it was so long ago. I worked at the Library of Congress when my husband and I were married, and then I got a job on the Senate Republican Policy Committee in 1959, when Stalls Bridges was the Chairman. I started out as a secretary, and then shortly thereafter, because I guess I had some brains and political sense, I was promoted to the professional staff, and I stayed on the Policy Committee then until Bridges died and Burke Hickenlooper took over, which would have been 1961, I believe. Then after that I worked for Lynn Jordan of Idaho, Senator Lynn Jordan of Idaho, for Senator Jim Pearson of Kansas. Then I had a political appointment at HEW and the beginning of the Nixon Administration, working as Special Assistant to Patricia Riley Hick, who was an Assistant Secretary of HEW. She had been with John Mitchell, Nixon’s co-campaign chairman in 1968. Then, when she went back to California, John Tower had just taken over as Chairman of the Policy Committee, and although I remembered the White House was just wonderful in sending me to all these executive branch departments to look for jobs, I preferred to go back to the Hill, and contacted Senator Tower and he hired me.

DW: And that was in 19.


DW: 1973. Did you have much dealings with Senator Baker and his staff before Baker became the Republican Leader?

JB: Only as far as he was another senator. One of the reasons that Tower hired me when he took over the Policy Committee was that Senator Jim Buckley of New York, in answer to a questionnaire that Tower had put out as to what they wanted the Policy Committee to do, at that time we were getting hundreds of amendments, lots of times, to bills that were up on
the floor. And the senators and the staff just couldn't keep up with all of them. So Buckley had suggested to Tower that he do something on the Policy Committee that would help all the Republican senators. So I was hired to do what was known as the "legislative notice." That carried a small synopsis of the bill itself, the Administration position, the cost as set forth by OMB, and then I listed all the amendments that had been introduced or that might be introduced. You had either printed amendments or unprinted amendments. Printed amendments were introduced and printed in the record; unprinted amendments could be called up from the back of a piece of paper to any piece of legislation in the Senate. So in that capacity, yes. That was a long answer, I'm sorry.

DW: No, that's the kind of answers I like. I know you continue to do the Legislative Notice all the way through your career on the Policy Committee.

JB: That's right.

DW: Were there other responsibilities that you assumed as time went by, or –

JB: I became Deputy Staff Director under Richard Thompson. When Dick took over as the Staff Director, and I can't remember exactly when that was.

DW: I think that was in 1979.

JB: Okay.

DW: Friedersdorf went to the FEC that year.

JB: Okay, I couldn't remember when Max left. And then I would have some responsibilities of going to Policy luncheons, although I think I only went one time, and other things as the Deputy Staff Director. But basically, it was the legislation and the notice that I did.

DW: Was the Legislative Notice put out daily?

JB: Daily, and sometimes three or four times a day, depending on what was pending on the floor and how they changed what was pending at the time.
DW: How did information come to you about the unprinted amendments?

JB: Basically, I was on the floor almost all the time. And you would know by talking to other staff people what they planned to do, and fairly quickly it got to the point that the staffer and the senators wanted their amendments printed in the notice, and they would tell me, and then I had an assistant who would help me, and we would make telephone calls. You would call the people on the Committee, the senators on the Committee, their offices, the senators you knew that were interested in a particular issue that was coming up...and you just sort of got them from everywhere. And sometimes the Democratic Policy Committee, they started doing this after a year or two, naturally, playing "copy cat." And when Ted Kennedy called our office and wanted to know if he could have a copy of ours and we said, "No," that's when the Democratic Policy Committee started doing it. That was against the law. We couldn't give it to him, even though we did give it to Harry Byrd. But Harry Byrd was an independent.

DW: Yes. Why would it have been against the law to give a copy to Senator Kennedy?

JB: Because I think of the way the Legislative Reorganization Act was set up. I'm not quite sure about that. But anyway, that's what we told him. We only spoke Republican. Then sometimes the girl, whose name I can't remember now, who was doing a similar thing for the Democrats, she and I would talk to each other. I would tell her about some amendment that she wanted to know, and she would get information from her.

DW: It must have been a terribly difficult job to produce that each day.

JB: It was. It really and truly was.

DW: And could you talk about the simple matter of producing it, what was involved, particularly when you had to do it 2 or 3 times a day.

JB: Okay. Initially I typed up a rough draft and gave it to a secretary, who typed it onto stencils, and we mimeographed it. Then somewhere along the line, we got into the computer age, and I had a word processor on my desk, in my office, and I'm a good typist, and I would do some of the work there. Then I would call from the floor lots of times, back to the office, and my assistant and I, more or less, later, well, I had two assistants, but we did the same
thing, one after the other. We divided up certain responsibilities. I liked to do defense, finance, tax matters...that sort of thing. And I sort of suggested to whoever she was would do energy, and agriculture, and the things I didn't want to do...and you could work ahead of time, once the Committee report came out. You could work ahead of time finding out about things. It would only be supplements that we would put out that might be 2 or 3 in a day, and that would be calling back to the office and having them type it up, mimeograph it, distribute it to every Republican senator's office, and put a copy on every Republican senator's desk on the floor.

DW: Beyond the Legislative Notice, what were the other major functions performed by the Policy Committee during the time you were there?

JB: Basically it changed a lot. When I was first there, under Tower, I'm not talking about when Bridges and Hickenlooper, Tower initially didn't make much change for the first couple of years, with the exception of adding me to do this Legislative Notice. And at that point, the people on the Policy Committee...the staff people...worked at the request of individual senators...for speeches to be written, research papers to be done on specific issues of interest to that particular senator, sometimes at that time we would put out at the end of each session...only the end of the first session, that's right, not at the end of the Congress...all legislation of major importance that was still pending in committee, and its status, and when it might be expected to come up in the second session.....and that would be a big thick book like this. After Max came on board, after Carter had won the presidency in 1976, Tower made a change in the way the Policy Committee worked, and it was completely up to the chairman, because what was set forth in the Reorganization Act that sounded the Policy Committees, I think it just said that the staff would work for the various Republican senators. Tower then wanted to do it more in actually setting policy. You see, the Policy Committees of both parties operate better when they do not have the presidency...because when you have a Republican president, then you are not formulating or even trying to formulate that much policy in the Senate itself...certainly not as a Policy Committee...because you are doing what the president wants. But when you have a president of the other party, then you are freer to come up with ideas of your own. Two of the things that Tower was particularly interested in at this time was Energy Policy and Tax Policy, and this was just sort of the beginning of the supply siders making some impact in policy. He set up two separate task forces....among senators, I'm talking about. The Energy one was chaired by Cliff Hansen, who probably was the ranking Republican on the Energy Committee....I don't
quite remember for sure.

DW: I think that's correct.

JB: And the other was chaired by Jacob Javits, who was the ranking Republican on the Joint Committee on Economics.....he might even have been chairman, because those joint committees would switch chairmanships from Democrat to Republican. I just don't quite remember that. And Tower thought that was a big coup, to get Jake Javits, because basically that was the way Javits was the most Republican, was in his economic outlook, but he was not a supply sider....and neither was Tower, I don't think at that time. So they came up....these committees worked and came up...the drafts were written by the staff of the Policy Committee....the different ones that had expertise in either energy or financial matters, at the suggestion of the senators. Then those drafts were reworked until that subcommittee or that ad hoc committee was satisfied with what they wanted to put forth to the full Policy Committee. And the full Policy Committee, which was all the ranking members of the standing committees, I believe, in the Senate, and the minority leader and the minority whip agreed...and then it had to go to the Conference. Everything is done in the Conference on the Republican side, and they were agreed to after some changes were made in the drafts at the Conference level. Then Baker, at that time, was the Minority Leader, and he put at least the Energy Policy paper in the Congressional Record, which is probably one of the first times that you saw actual policy coming from the Policy Committee. And it wasn't an easy job to get the various senators to agree. There is a big difference in the way the Democratic leadership and Republican leadership in the Senate handles its different positions. On the Democratic side, the Democratic Leader is chairman of the Policy Committee, Chairman of the caucus ...they call it a caucus.....he is at least those three things. On the Republican side, it's always been divided.....there has always been a separate person in each of those positions. How Daschle is doing it now I'm not quite sure. But that's probably the way they started out was because Lyndon had to have everything under his power. Before Lyndon Johnson was elected Vice President, at one time, he decided the Democratic Policy Committee was, the staff, had to go on 24-hour alert, so he had some staffers in there around the clock. And they never did anything....because they would come and tell us they didn't do anything. You know that didn't last too long. OK. Tower and Baker, working closely together, came up with these two Policy papers or positions that the Republicans agreed to. Another thing....Democrats in their caucus are supposed to be bound by their caucus. Republicans in the Conference
are not...they are considered individuals, and they have a right to vote....there's not much party discipline. All right. Jimmy Carter at that point was trying to get targeted tax cuts....what was he trying to do as far as taxes are concerned. And then of course, this Energy Policy was just a complete failure. I remember reading in this one book on the Policy Committee, which reminded me of it, that Baker made the comment, after Carter's Energy policy had just fallen apart, that if he'd paid attention to the one that was written by the Republicans, he'd have been a lot better off.

DW: Am I not correct that in addition to these two initiatives set forth by Senator Tower, through the vehicle of the Armed Services Committee he produced a similar study on defense and national security. Rhett Dawson and some of the Armed Services people put together.

JB: Yes. And at that point he was probably working with...was Scoop Jackson still alive?

DW: I think so.

JB: Because he worked closely with Scoop Jackson. And of course Stennis, I guess, was Chairman at that point, but was getting sort of old....I'm talking pre-1980s, when we took control of the Senate.

DW: That's correct, yes.

JB: But Jackson and Tower....Tower used to say to me they pretty much ran the Committee, and they thought very much alike, as far as national defense was concerned. See, we didn't have that much contact with Armed Services.

DW: Yes. All right, we've mentioned the legislative notice of these Policy studies that were done in the late 1970s. What were the other functions of the Policy Committee then?

JB: Again, whatever a senator wanted done. And we'd get requests from senators for a such-and-such studies. One that comes to mind under this circumstance was....and I don't remember exactly when this was, but it was further along in the 1980s.... probably 1983 or something or other like that....maybe 1984. Baker was Majority Leader, and they were thinking about doing TV in the Senate. And of course, the House had had TV for several years at that point. And Senator Baker particularly... and I can't remember who on his staff....called me. Asked that I do a study on the pros and cons of TV in the Senate. And
my personal point of view, to begin with, was I didn't think we ought to do it. But by the time I finished, I thought we should. But that's the type thing that senators would do from time to time. I did not get many requests like that, because of working on the Notice all the time.

DW:  Did you get many requests that you had to turn down because they seemed to ask for things that were not appropriate for the Policy Committee to do, or did people generally understand what the Policy Committee was there for?

JB:  I don't know of anything that was ever turned down. That would go through the staff director, primarily. And if it was for a particular senator, even though it might not follow the general party line, we would end up doing it, I would think.

DW:  So the Policy Committee was essentially a service organization.

JB:  That's right. Yes. Now, another thing that they did....they wrote up all of the votes that were taken in the Senate....the roll call votes.....the essence of what the vote was, the debate for the amendment or the bill, the debate against the amendment or the bill...and then they printed out from the official record how each senator voted including whether he was absent, whether he was paired, whether he had given a position, or no position, or whatever. And this was more or less the official record that was kept. And of course all the senators were listed...whatever the vote was.

DW:  Of both parties.

JB:  Yes. Yes. I mean it was just a straight vote.

DW:  Right.

JB:  And that was done pretty much without partisanship...because you simply took the record, the Congressional Record, and you summarized the debate for something and the debate against something....not showing any political preference.

DW:  Well, that sort of thing could be useful to a senator, then, in helping him recollect what he had done, in fact, on a particular piece of legislation.
JB: Very useful. Also helpful to their opponents, to find out how they voted on something.

DW: Right. When you first went to the Policy Committee staff, were they weekly Policy luncheons being held?

JB: When I went there with Tower, yes. I can't remember back....I think so, under Bridges and Hickenlooper. But yes, I'm pretty sure there was.

DW: What's your sense of the significance of what went on in the Policy luncheons for what happened in the Senate in the larger sense?

JB: It could be very important, although I would say generally 75% to 80% of the luncheons are luncheons....get-togethers, and the Leader will talk about what may be coming up, and so on. But from time to time, they talk about strategy and urge Republicans to be sure that they vote a certain way, and so on....but it's more just for camaraderie. It was then. How Dole particularly did it, he probably told them jokes. And how Trent Lott does it, I'm not.....well, that's not what you're interested in, anyway, you're interested in what they did when I was there. And they come and go. You know....sometimes they would have speakers. George Bush almost always attended....and Reagan came up from time to time. Nixon, I think a few times, when he was President.

DW: And you commented about your attendance at Policy luncheons. How frequently would you?

JB: Oh, I don't think I went more than once or twice the whole time.

DW: Is that right.

JB: Because the staff director always went. But in his absence I would go, but he was never absent. And I was busy on the floor anyway.

DW: During the time Baker....this is an impossible question to answer, so I'm just asking for an impression....during those 8 years that Baker was the Republican Leader, what would be your guess as to the number of formal conferences that were held in addition to those for the election of the leaders at the start of each session?
JB: I'd say not very many at all. But that's not unusual. Baker, I think, was a person who liked to work more one-on-one with people...and so did Tower. Baker, as I saw him...I disagreed with him on a lot of positions that he took as Leader, but I could never dislike that man. And it was his personality and his ability to be very honorable: number 1, if he gave his word, he'd keep his word. That made him such a good Leader, I think. Because people just liked the man...that's all there is to it. And he liked you. And you could feel this.

DW: He knew who you were, and what was your role in the scheme of things. I've been somewhat amused in talking to even senators, who were there during that time. The confusion that exists in people's minds as to the Policy luncheons and the Conferences. When you ask a senator about conferences, odds are he'll start talking about Policy luncheons. And there's no distinction there that gives....a meeting's a meeting.

JB: A meeting's a meeting. But the Policy Committee chairman presides at the beginning of a Policy luncheon, and then can turn over the gavel to either the chairman of the conference, if he has something to say, or to the Leader, if he has something to say. The Conference really didn't do much. I don't mean staff-wise, but I mean as a whole bunch of senators....they don't meet that often to decide things.

DW: Yes. I understand that during the period you were talking about, that the Conference staff really became a vital element on the political side, in providing assistance to senators.

JB: That's right. That's after Packwood took over. They went into videotaping and sending out press releases on how Democrats had voted. In other words, if they knew Mayor Such-and-such was thinking about running against a Democratic senator, and that Democratic senator had done something stupid on the floor or had voted wrong, they would send out a press release to that mayor so that he would know ahead of time. Now that's another thing that I did take part in....and this was so much fun. The last couple of years before 1980, the Republicans were really beginning to build up steam in the Senate. We had more conservatives. Jesse Helms, for instance, he was elected in 1972, I think, but he was really beginning to.... and Republican senators....and the Democrats knew it and couldn't do a thing about it....would purposely call up these amendments on school prayer, busing...what else can we think of....abortion ideas. All these controversial things. And you know, most of the time without unanimous consent agreement....a senator can call up any amendment to
any bill at any time. And they purposely would do this all the time. And force a roll call vote...so that all the Democrats would have to vote a certain way. And you had a list of the Democrats that were up for reelection, and when they voted what you thought was wrong, it was part of my job from the floor to immediately go call the Campaign Committee and tell them, "Senator so-and-so, a Democrat, just voted wrong on the school prayer amendment," and they would get out a press release. That was fun. I have always thought that certainly helped us win control of the Senate in 1980, because that went on for a good year and a half.

DW: And also, there were the votes that were precipitated by Senator Roth and others on taxes and the budget.

JB: That's exactly right. But those were more serious. Those were more serious votes. These others...I won't say they weren't serious, but they were strictly for political reasons. And the Roth-Kemp position....of course, Kemp-Roth, if you're from the House....they really wanted to push that. And at the same time...was Armstrong there at that time?

DW: Yes. He came in 1979, I think.

JB: OK. Indexing of the tax rates. He was so big on that. So we had....and we finally got that through.

DW: Talk a little bit about Max Friedersdorff and Dick Thompson as staff directors of the Policy Committee.

JB: Oh boy. I always felt that Max just took that position as a place to wait until he'd go on to something else. Max is an extremely likeable person, but never particularly got down into substance that much. At least that was my impression. But he had a very good staff. He brought in a whole bunch of new people that were very good in what they knew, and more or less turned the place into sort of a miniature think tank. This was before we were doing the energy, and the taxes, etc. Max....all the senators liked Max and knew him, because he was an outgoing type person. Of course they had known him from when he had been at the White House with Ford, if they hadn't known him before then. Dick, on the other hand, was much more...just shy. Didn't particularly get to know senators that well, but was much more interested in substance. And was more conservative than Max, although I certainly would say Max was conservative. Dick's more of a social conservative, too, I guess you would
say. Dick has been one of my very best friends since 1958. He handled my husband's publicity in my husband's campaign for the state senate here. And Dick and I were always good friends on the Hill. I helped him get a job with McClure when McClure was on the House side. Dick helped me get a job with the Goldwater campaign....you know, this sort of thing. In fact, Dick was one of my partners in the lobbying firm that I set up after I left the Senate. To me, Dick was a much better Staff Director. Maybe not from the standpoint of getting to know the senators and working so much with them, although I think they respected him. But he was very good with people. Max tended to hide behind his administrative assistant, who was a great big fat woman who could be mean. Max could never be mean. Max could never assert himself.

**DW:** I'm going to ask this not because I'm curious....I've never been able to develop a sense of it. Robert Wolthus was on a staff.....I'm not even sure that's the correct pronunciation.

**JB:** That's not it exactly. Wolthius.

**DW:** Wolthius. And I've never understood what his role was.

**JB:** He was the deputy staff director under....oh, who was that admiral, who was the staff director that Tower inherited....have you come across his name?

**DW:** No, I really haven't. And he was there really under Friedersdorff's predecessor.

**JB:** Yes. Wolthius was. And then I guess Friedersdorff kept him as Deputy until he got some sort of position in the Defense Department, as I remember. And he did absolutely nothing.

**DW:** What kind of Chairman was Senator Tower? What kind of relationship did you have with him?

**JB:** Oh, I just loved him. And I don't mean any of this stuff that you.....he and I got along very, very well. Everybody who worked for that man basically thought he was one of the best bosses they had ever had. And I know I felt that way about him. I just could go to him with anything, and he would tell me all kinds of strange things, like he was going to get married.....you know...and all this sort of thing. And one night when we were in session, until 4 o'clock in the morning, about 2 or something, he said, "Let's go get some breakfast downstairs." And we went downstairs to the Dining Room, which was still open then. And
he started telling me all these marital troubles, and I was so glad when Jesse Helms came in and sat down with us so I didn't have to hear it any more. You know...that kind of thing.

DW: How much time did he devote to Policy Committee matters?

JB: Quite a bit until he became Chairman of Armed Services, which was in 1981....when we took control of the Senate. Then, much less...because Defense was his major love. And most of his energy, then, to a large extent, was going into the Armed Services Committee....plus...we had Reagan in the White House, and we were no longer trying to set any policy ourselves.

DW: Why does a senator want to be chairman of the Policy Committee...or Chairman of the Conference?

JB: For the prestige within the Senate. It also gives them more staff.

DW: And they get to go to meetings in the White House, someone also said.

JB: Oh, yes. Sure. They're part of the Leadership, yes. They get to go to the White House.

DW: Did the Policy Committee, in your time, ever meet as such as a committee?

JB: I believe they did, when they were working on these two projects that I mentioned.... the tax bit and the energy thing. I'm pretty sure they did then. But most of the time when they had what was called a Policy Committee meeting or a Conference, it was in the Policy Committee where we worked, and we left, and the senators took up the long table. You've probably seen the big room.

DW: I've heard descriptions of it....I've not seen it. I do need to see it. Did the staffs of the senators who were members of the Policy Committee take any kind of special interest in the Policy Committee as distinguished from the staff of non-committee members on the Republican side?

JB: Some would and some wouldn't. I'd say most didn't. Because, as you say, I think in the minds of just your ordinary staff person, they were a little bit confused about what was the
Conference and what was the Policy Committee. We worked closely with Tower's personal staff...particularly the first few years that he was Chairman, until he became Chairman of Armed Services. But I can't particularly remember any staff person who took a particular interest.

DW: What can you tell me about the relationship between Senator Tower and Senator Baker?

JB: I think they were very good friends and worked very well together. I'm sure that....all right...back when Scott was the Minority Leader, there was practically no communication that I was ever aware of, between the Leader's staff and our staff, or Tower and Scott, for that matter. But there was a lot, I believe, between Tower and Baker. And I think it was because they were good friends. In fact Tower said to me one day that Baker was one of his best friends. And Max put it about right. I was irritated one time, and I can't remember what it was about. It was something that Baker had said that seemed to be taking credit for something Tower had done....that's all I can tell you. I don't remember what it was. And it was probably fine with Tower that he did it. And I said something to Max about it, and I'll never forget what Max said. He said, "Tower's a work horse, and Baker's a show horse." And that's fine, when you're a Leader. And I thought...that puts it right in a nutshell....I understand what's going on there.

DW: How would you assess Baker's effectiveness as Minority Leader...leading up to the 1980 elections, as compared with what you had viewed on the Republican side of the aisle during previous periods?

JB: A lot better than Hugh Scott, who was his predecessor. I can't speak for how Scott did with senators particularly....individually. But Scott turned over the running of the floor to Bob Griffith, who was his whip. And you only saw Scott more or less when the votes came, or a major issue came. Baker was there all the time. And I don't know that Baker particularly coordinated any of these ultra-conservative amendments that I was talking about. Do you know? But he certainly had no objections to them.

DW: Didn't try to stop them.

JB: No. Didn't try to stop them. No. Was he Minority Leader when we did the Panama Canal Treaty?
DW: Yes.

JB: That was bad for him. That was very bad for him. And he didn't believe it at the time, and a lot of people didn't believe it.

DW: How was it bad for him in your view?

JB: Because the majority of the Republicans throughout the country did not want us to give the Panama Canal back to Panama. And Baker took the lead for the Republicans, supporting Carter. And Paul Laxalt was the one that took the lead against the Treaty. And it's the only honest work Paul Laxalt ever did.

DW: He was not one of the heavy lifters in the Senate.

JB: No, he was first friend.

DW: First friend. That's alright.

JB: But a lovable person.

DW: What about the relationship between the Policy Committee staff and Senator Baker's leadership staff...both in the Minority and in the Majority?

JB: I don't have much recollection about it...which I think is good. Because if it had been an adversarial relationship, I would have remembered that. I just remember the various people that worked for him from time to time that I had contact with whenever I needed to. But as I say, I can't remember one way or the other. That's how I got to know Jim Baker's son. That's how I got to know Rob Mossbacher, who just lost for the Houston mayor....and I can't even remember all of them at this point. Oh, there was one guy that rather rubbed people the wrong way. Jim...

DW: Jim Range?

JB: No..I liked Ranger. His top chief of staff.
DW: Jim Cannon?

JB: Jim Cannon. He could drive you crazy.

DW: How could he drive you crazy?

JB: He thought he was the Leader. And I always wondered if maybe Baker didn't have him around for the same reason John Kennedy had Bobby around...to be the mean guy. Cause Baker could never be mean. A lot of people did not care for Jim Cannon. But I didn't have that much problem with him. But Hildebrand was the same way. They were two cut out of the same piece of cloth.

DW: Well, if not considering themselves in their own minds the Leader...at least the 101st and the 102nd senator, perhaps someone observed.

JB: Yes.

DW: Somewhat a cut above mere mortals who occupied staff positions.

JB: And then you had Howard Baker that everybody loved. So that took care of it.

DW: Well, sometimes I've gotten the sense that...this may be incorrect, but....there was considerable tension in relationships between Baker's staff and the staff of the Policy Committee....staff of the Conference...and Steering Committee staff, because these staff groups tend to be fairly conservative in their make-up. Whereas Baker's people were essentially pragmatists, since some might have been suspected of taints of liberalism.

JB: Yes. But I think there were more than taints with some of them. Maybe there was, but by the same token, I didn't feel that, because you see, my job, basically, was factual. Even though I had my own preferences as far as politics is concerned. What I did was straightforward....is that amendment coming up?...what does it do....etc. and etc. And I am sure that people on Baker's staff probably looked at Dick Thompson as too ultraconservative for them.
DW: And Margot Carlisle at the Conference was no shrinking violet.

JB: Oh no, no. Byrd got up on the floor one day and wanted to know what a Margot Carlisle was.

JB: Yes, he did. This is Robert Byrd, now.

DW: I've had just one reference to this. In that 1981-1985 period....apparently I've been told that Howard Green would host periodic meetings of the staff directors of the Conference, the Policy Committee, the Campaign Committee....do you know anything about those?

JB: No, I don't remember anything about those.

DW: I have developed the impression, based upon some things that are said, that at least some members of the Policy Committee staff worked in a proactive way to advance the...

JB: Their own agenda.

DW: Well that and conservative positions on issues.

JB: That's right.

DW: How did this occur?

JB: Alright. Have you talked to Bill Gribbin?

DW: We're seeing him tomorrow.

JB: OK. Don't tell him I said this. He was the main one that had the social conservative agenda in mind. He did work for....against abortion, I'd better say. For school prayer, etc. Sort of not on his own, but particularly under Dick. Dick would just let him do this. And he would be working closely with Senator Helms' staff, for instance. He came from Buckley's office. Buckley was the first one that hired him. And then he came straight to the Policy Committee, I guess, when Buckley left. And Bill has been the one who has written the original draft of the Republican platform since 1984. And I have been his Deputy Editor.
But my job, again, has been that of amendments. The amendments that are offered to the first draft, and then amendments that are offered from the full Platform Committee. I have to be sure they get in the thing at the right time. So he has been very effective in working behind the scenes. And Bill never cares, particularly, whether he is given credit for anything or not....he's just a devoted social conservative....staunch Roman Catholic, and an extremely capable guy.

DW: So he would work with Senator Helms' staff, Senator East's staff, and _____ amendments and deciding what the strategic time would be to offer.

JB: Yes. Yes, that's right. Yes.

DW: To offer them, etc. Well, that's interesting. Did the Policy Committee staff see much of White House staff people when Reagan was President? I'm just curious, because you had a couple of alums who were really Congressional liaison.

JB: Pam and Nancy. I saw a lot of them.

DW: Pam Turner and Nancy Kennedy. David Swanson also.

JB: Oh David. I forgot about him. But I would see them because they would be over outside the Senate chamber....and would be lobbying for different things. I don't know that they had that much contact with other staff people. I'm sure they had some contact with staff people of the Policy Committee. But they wouldn't be over in the Policy Committee.

DW: What about contacts with your counterparts on the House side? Was there much in the way of communication there?

JB: None, as far as I was ever concerned. And I don't really....I can't speak to whether there was that much. You see, the House doesn't have, or didn't have at that time, a Policy Committee set up under an act of Congress. [That's] the history. And that Legislative Reorganization Act of 1945 or 1946, the Senate passed a bill setting up Policy Committees for both parties and something called an Executive Committee. And it was supposed to be in the House and the Senate. And Sam Rayburn didn't want the Executive Committee because he thought it would take powers away from him, so they knocked it out for the House. I guess they
knocked the whole thing out, and then later the Senate, through an amendment, set up their Policy Committees.... an amendment to an Appropriations Bill, if I remember. I forgot about the House. Now there was a House Policy Committee, but I think it was, at that time, David Abshire was one of the first people I knew that was the Staff Director of the House Policy Committee. And this goes back to the time of Stiles Bridges. But they took a certain amount of money from the different House members' staff allowance, and paid for theirs. It was not set up the same way ours was. Now whether they have changed that or not, I don't know.

DW: I think at some point within recent years they have changed it. But the Democrats during that previous time had....what was their organization called....

JB: Steering?

DW: No, not the Steering Committee. I'm ashamed that I don't recollect the name of it. But it was along the lines that you described.....members contributed from their offices allowances, and the Republicans followed suit on that. And then I think both have been institutionalized in recent years.

JB: It could be, yes, because I really have had very little contact with the House Policy Committee.

DW: You mentioned a little while ago that you shared information from time to time with your counterpart on the Democratic side of the aisle...with the Democratic Policy Committee staff. Any other contacts...any other relationships there?

JB: With Democrats?

DW: Yes.

JB: Yes, we would call Democratic offices and ask them what their amendment to such and such a bill would be. And we found the staffer, and most of the time they would tell us, because they would want people to know. And sometimes if I couldn't get the word out of the staff I'd walk up to the senator on the floor and ask him what. They would put forth lists of amendments that would be in order under a unanimous consent agreement, and you
would know that Senator Ford, Senator Bradley, Senator so-and-so on the Democratic side was going to offer an amendment to this bill. And they would be locked in on this bill as allowable...that's not the exact right word....and you would have to go find out what they were, because they might have one word after. So there would be contact that way. Sometimes members wanted to keep their amendments sort of secret ahead of time, but they were never real successful about that.

DW: Let me ask you some questions based upon what you saw on the floor. What was your sense of the relationship between Senator Baker and Senator Byrd?

JB: As far as I ever saw it was a good one, although I'm not sure anybody ever had a real good relationship with Senator Byrd. Because he's very much the Senate. But I'm sure as far as keeping their word was concerned, it was fine.

DW: What about the role Senator Stevens played in Republican leadership?

JB: When he was Whip?

DW: He was Whip.

JB: He was the bulldog. I'm not so sure that there was that much good working relationship between Stevens and Baker. I don't really know about that. But lots of times that's the case between the Whip. You can have a very good relationship with him, or sometimes he's adversarial....looking to push himself on up.

DW: Talk a little bit about how Senator Baker handled himself on the floor....particularly in difficult circumstances or stressful circumstances. Or frustrating circumstances.

JB: Very calmly. I never saw him get really excited that I can....you know what I mean. A good speaker, not the kind of his father-in-law, but very few people ever were. When Ev Dirksen came to make a speech, Senate filled up. When Albert Gore came to make a speech, they all left. That's a partisan comment.

DW: Is this Junior, Senior, or both?
JB: I don't remember too much about Senior. He was well liked, and he had such a good personality. And I don't think the Vice President was disliked; he was just boring as all get-out. Baker would work the senators. Do you know what I mean?

DW: What do you mean by that?

JB: They'd get in the Cloakroom.....Tower and Baker, and I guess Stevens sometimes... and whoever else was interested in the legislation itself, or whoever was managing for the Republicans...the legislation. And they would divide up...the senators. They weren't sure as to how they were going to vote. And then they'd hit them when they came on the Senate floor. I guess I can tell this story....they're both gone. Larry Pressler had the reputation of being a flake....very nice man but a flake. And Tower made the comment on some big issue. "Leave Pressler to me. He always votes the way the last person asks him to." And this was very funny. I had been privy to this conversation between Baker and Tower and all of them, and they had divided up, and "I'll take Pressler," he said. So the vote came, whatever it was. And Pressler walked onto the floor, walked up to the table and voted one way....I don't remember whether it was 'Yea' or 'Nay.' And Tower went right up to him and talked to him. And Pressler walked back to the table and changed his vote. And as Tower walked up the aisle, he winked at me. Just like that...."See I told you so." Well, that's the type work I mean. In other words, they would walk up to the different senators or the senators would come up to Baker or to Tower or to the person who was handling the bill, and ask, "How should I vote on this?" When Bob Griffin was the Whip and basically doing all the work on the Senate floor for Hugh Scott, he found the perfect simple way to tell Republicans how to vote....if it was a Kennedy amendment. That's all he ever said. He'd say, "It's a Kennedy amendment." And he knew they'd vote against it.

DW: Did you have Cloakroom access?

JB: Yes.

DW: What goes on in the Cloakroom? And what is the significance of what happens in the Cloakroom for the way the Senate operates?

JB: I think now staff is not allowed in there, particularly. It can be very important, because that's a time when one senator hasn't been able to find another to ask him about what his
amendment is going to be...or to talk to him about it...or get him to change his opinion. And
after a vote, most all of them go in to the Cloakroom and they sit around and they talk, and
they have strategy sessions; staff people will be in there with them....when I was there.
From time to time, the staff that is staffing that particular bill, and a lot of actual work goes
on in the Cloakroom....a lot of pleasure, too.

DW: Joking around and kidding one another?

JB: Yes. That's right. I've got several anecdotes about that, which you probably don't have time
to hear.

DW: Oh yes, I do.

JB: OK. Goldwater was sitting in one of the big chairs in there. Have you seen those.... they're
the big overstuffed brown leather chairs? And he was all stretched out and he was asleep.
And I was the only other person in there, smoking a cigarette, because you couldn't smoke
on the floor, with the exception of the people who answer the phone. And Strom Thurmond
walks by. And he looks at Goldwater and he says, "Barry, shut your mouth. A fly's going
to fly in." And Goldwater came up like he was going to fight him. Packwood and John
Heinz used to play chess in there. And they would watch ball games. This is more at night,
when we would have the long sessions. And their offices were basically closed, and that's
when you would see a lot of the social bit. A lot of them....not a lot at one time....but they
would have dinner sent up there on a tray. If they were handling a bill and couldn't leave the
floor, they would send for things from the dining room. Again I think of Strom Thurmond,
who put vinegar on his French fries. You know, this sort of thing.

HS: Like the British.

JB: Yes, like the British. A lot can go on in the Cloakroom.

DW: Did Baker spend a lot of time in the Cloakroom...as opposed to being in his office when he
wasn't on the floor?

JB: I'd say a fair amount, yes. And I can tell you two other stories about Baker in the
Cloakroom.
DW: Yes!

JB: Baker had been out in the Reception Room talking to Teddy Kennedy, and Baker would come in and announce this to everybody in the Cloakroom when he had some thing funny to tell them. And somebody, whoever was handling the bill for the Republicans, needed Baker on the floor. So the Cloakroom sent this little page, little girl page out and she was a little black girl. And she went up to Senator Baker, and said, "Senator, they need you on the floor." And she had been taught who all the Republicans were, and Kennedy turned to her and said.....see, sometimes senators don't know whether a page is a Democrat or a Republican, and pages are told to answer any senator...although most of the time they stay on their own side. Kennedy turned to her and said, "Would you tell Senator Byrd that I will be in in a minute." And she very politely said, "Yes, Sir. Who are you?" And Baker came in and said, "Can you believe that! A little black girl didn't know who Ted Kennedy was. And the other one that I remember so much. Strom Thurmond's wife Nancy had just had their fourth child. And Baker was kidding Thurmond out on the floor or somewhere, and congratulating him on the birth of I guess this was their second boy. And Baker walked in the Cloakroom and said, "You will never believe what Strom just told me." And everybody said, "What?" And he said, "I was congratulating him on the birth of the baby and asked him if they planned to have any more. And you know what he said? He said, 'No, he didn't think so. Nancy's health wouldn't take it.'" And of course everybody, including Baker, just roared at that. See, that's what I mean about Baker. You just couldn't help but love the man. That's all there was to it.

DW: Do you have any other particularly sharp recollections of life on the floor...whether or not they involve Baker...that come to mind when you think about those years?

JB: One that I thought was very interesting. Tower had a persona of being a bit standoffish unless you really knew him. And even if you really knew him, sometimes you could sit....he wouldn't say a word for 15 or 20 minutes. This was probably soon after Dole had come to the Senate. And I had worked for Pearson. So I got to know Dole fairly easily....very quickly. Because of the work antagonism between the two of them at times...which was mostly Dole's fault, I must say, although he's one of my favorite people. Anyway....Dole asked me to ask Tower something. He came up to me on the floor and asked me to go in and ask Tower something. So I went in and asked Tower whatever it
was, and got the answer and went back out, and told Dole what the answer was. And Dole asked me another question. And at that point, Tower walked out of the Cloakroom right behind me, and I had started back to Tower, and I sort of got disgusted, and I said, "The two of you talk." Well...one other thing. No, 2 or 3 other things. Goldwater was...I worked for Goldwater in the 1964 campaign, and he was always just one of my very, very favorite people. I remember, I guess it was Reagan's first State of the Union. Yes, that must have been what it was. And for some reason, Goldwater had not gone. Well, he didn't always go over to the...his hips were probably bothering him. And I was sitting in the Cloakroom, and he was sitting in the Cloakroom, and he said, "Jody, turn the TV on. I want to hear what he's got to say. You know, I started all this." And of course, he did, as far as conservatives are concerned. Another memory I have was just a few months later, when Reagan was shot. Again I was sitting in the Cloakroom, and Arlen Specter, who I hardly knew at all....I think he had just been elected, to tell you the truth....was sitting on the other end of the same couch with me. And the television was on, and it was when the General, Haig, made his famous, "I am in control" statement, and Specter and I looked at each other like this.....couldn't believe that the man had said it. Another memory that I have, and this is not in any way to criticize Senator Helms, because basically this was typical of senators...a lot of them that didn't work directly with the budget process. I was explaining to him, when we were doing a budget resolution, that nothing that we did, as far as the amounts...the things that were assumed in the amounts of money in the categories under the Budget Resolution, meant anything....because it was just an amount of money....that all these things we assumed were not written into legislation. And I don't remember what the issue was. But I was explaining to him, "It's not really there. Go look at the bill. It is a category number so-and-so, and an amount of money. That's all that's there." And he didn't quite believe me. Well, Dole's staff man on Finance.....Bob –

DW: Lightheiser?

JB: Lightheiser. Was sitting on a couch across the narrow Cloakroom. The Cloakroom is very narrow. And I said, "Bob, tell the senator how it works." And Bob did. And Helms did not understand that. But as I say, that's not to criticize Helms, because his assumption was pretty much the same as the majority of the senators....that that Budget Resolution didn't mean diddley squat....except for the amount of money that was in each category.

DW: Let me see if I understand it. The important point was the total.
JB: That's right.

DW: And the categories....the amounts in the various categories could change.

JB: Well, no. The total in the categories is what was important. Any assumptions that were made that a certain amount of, say, national defense would be spent on R&D, or on....that would come out later in the Armed Services authorization bill. It was just totals.

DW: So to put it in the Helms context, I'm sure he was concerned, perhaps mainly, about the Agriculture Committee situation.

JB: Right. Probably, yes. I don't even remember what it was. And it would get up when they were doing a Budget Resolution.....and they'd talk about all this that was going to be in this category and that category. But it wasn't there.

DW: Yes. Right. Were you ever in a position to view Senator Baker in a negotiating situation?

JB: Not except as far as in some of those Cloakroom meetings would be concerned.

DW: How would you describe Senator Baker's leadership style and skills?

JB: A personal one, and very good one. Because, let's face it, when the Republican senators as a whole were becoming more and more conservative, more and more of them were being elected that were conservative during that period. And Baker was not a hard-core conservative. He's not a liberal. But as you say, was a pragmatist. But yet, the staffs of some of these senators may rail against Senator Baker for some position he had taken, but the senators got along with him fine...because they under-stood. Of course, they were the true politicians. The one thing that I remember Baker being criticized the most about was after Reagan had become President. We heard....I never knew this for a fact....that Baker is the one, and probably rightly so.... that had persuaded the Administration not to go for abortion and school prayer, etc., when we had the momentum of having elected Reagan, but instead to go for the tax cuts and for the more substantive type things. And that caused some feeling among staff people in the Senate....that Baker had let them down on that.
DW: What is your personal view, then, on the charge that some would make, that Baker really impeded his time as Majority Leader "progress" on the social issues?

JB: I think to a degree that's true. But I don't think he necessarily did it so much because he might not agree with those social issues, because I think some of them he probably didn't agree with. I don't even remember what his position was on abortion, to tell you the truth. Because he felt like other things were more important.

DW: But looking at the record, there seem to have been plenty of opportunities to, for interested senators, to offer amendments and have them voted on.

JB: Sure. There might have been instances, and I don't know whether this is true or not. When the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader can always get the floor, as you well know....Majority Leader first, then the Minority Leader. There may have been instances when Baker used that position to put in a substitute amendment that might knock out something that had been done that had been put up on a....you know how they fill up the Amendment Tree, etc......that may have happened. I can't remember specifically if it did. But those that would be more concerned about that would have remembered.

DW: How much real power does a Republican Leader have, and how much power, in your estimation, did Baker have as Republican Leader, particularly as Majority Leader?

JB: I think he had quite a bit of power. I think he was always sort of willing to share that power....at least I certainly felt like he did with Tower. And probably with other senators, too. Baker was always laid back. He was born that way, I guess. I don't ever remember him abusing his power, like Lyndon Johnson could....or even like Bob Byrd could. He probably did, but no leader in the Senate has as much power as, say, the Speaker would have in the House.....simply because you've got 100 egos that you have to deal with, and you've got to keep on good relations with the Democrats. You've got to keep your word. As Dole would always say, and it wasn't original with him, "Your word is your bond." And it certainly is true.....in the leadership of both parties.

DW: And although the majority leader can control the scheduling in a certain sense, he doesn't have the advantage of the House Rules Committee, that the House Speaker has.
JB: That's right. As you know, the Rules Committee in the Senate just does administrative type things. Assigns rooms....

DW: On particular bills the Senate makes up its rules as it goes along....to a certain extent.

JB: Well, they could abolish the United States by unanimous consent.

DW: Yes. Talking about the power of leaders.....does the different ways the Democrats and the Republicans structure their leadership mean that the Democratic Majority Leader is going to be more powerful in the caucus than the Republican Leader?

JB: That's right. Yes.

DW: You would agree with that.

JB: Yes. And the Republicans have always prided themselves...I think I said this earlier...that they're not bound by a Conference vote. Whereas the Democrats, at least while I was there, were supposed to be bound by the Caucus vote.

DW: Yes. So the fact that the Democratic Leader chairs the Policy Committee and chairs the Conference, whereas the Republican Leader does not does make a difference.

JB: That's right.

DW: Well, we've covered a lot of fascinating territory. Are there any other observations or recollections that occur to you that would fit in here?

JB: Only a very personal one. And you probably don't want to write this up.

DW: OK.

JB: But this is indicative to me of Howard Baker as a person. I was interested, at one point, in becoming a Federal Election Commissioner. And I had written a letter that Tower had first signed, and then I wanted Baker to sign it. And I had practically the whole Republican Senate.
DW: Was this during the Reagan...

JB: Reagan Administration. And Jim Cannon and Bill Hildebrand....this was funny. They knew what I was doing, and Bill Hildebrand was still pushing Joan Aiken, who was still on the Commission. And we had heard that she was going to retire. And that was the position I was going after. Scott had appointed her...from Pennsylvania...to the Commission. And I think she's been a very good Commissioner. But I always thought that Hildebrand got Joan to say she wasn't going to retire, just so I wouldn't get the job. Because Hildebrand....I would never knuckle under to Hildebrand. And I had run into Baker in the Cloakroom and explained what the letter was, and he had read it....it was a very short letter. And he had signed it. And I was in one end of the Cloakroom, and Hildebrand and Cannon came running in, and they got Baker over in the corner, and all I heard Baker say was, "I've already signed the letter for Jody."

DW: And that was the end of that.

JB: And that was the end of the two of them. I didn't get the position because Aiken decided she wanted to be reappointed. And I was just as glad. So.

DW: Your mentioning of Hildebrand reminds me to ask another question that I'm curious about. It may have a unique insight into this. And I have been led to believe that at least for a period of time, there were some problems in Baker's Leadership operation resulting from Bill Hildebrand's desire to continue to perform some of the functions of the Secretary to the Majority after he had become Secretary of the Senate.

JB: Yes, that was probably true. Because when you get to be Secretary of the Senate or Sergeant at Arms you're pretty much cut off from the Senate and the floor.

DW: And that's what Hildebrand really loved.

JB: That's what Hildebrand really loved. He started it under Scott when Mark Price was the Secretary to the Majority. But Mark had been there for years and years and years, and all he did was housekeeping....he never got in to amendments legislation, etc. So Scott put Bill on the floor as his Floor Man, to do the bit that was concerned with the legislation and with the positions. And then when Mark left, Bill became Secretary to the Majority, and
Howard, who had been Mark's Assistant, stayed on as Hildebrand's Assistant. A lot of people wanted Howard to go for the position himself. This was before my daughter was even up there. So I've known Howard for years. And I know Howard came and asked me what he should do, and I said, "You should go for it." But he said, "No, I haven't been under Mark for a year (or 2 years), and I'm young. I think I just won't bother." It might have been better for the Senate if he had, because a lot of the senators had wanted him to. A lot of people didn't like Bill Hildebrand....including me....at times....although I got along well with him. I'd give him as good as he gave.

DW:  Well, with that, let me thank you very much for your time, and a fascinating conversation.

HS:  Another comment or two, I hear mentioning that Panama Canal Treaty was one of Senator Baker's....

JB:  Waterloo.

HS:  Well, yes.

JB:  As far as the presidential nomination is concerned.

HS:  That was just exactly what I was curious about. [Was your] implication.

JB:  Yes. Yes.

HS:  Why do you think he did it?

JB:  Because I think he thought that it was the right thing to do. He probably did it against the advice of a lot of advisers....I don't know that.

DW:  I think that's true.

JB:  But it was very obvious where the Republicans were going on this thing. And I myself wonder what's going to happen in 1999 when we turn over that Canal and maybe we have to start going along the Cape of Good Hope.....or is that in Africa. Anyway....but I think he thought.... But now, also, Baker has always been very much for Democracy, and self-rule of people. Remember, he has wanted Puerto Rico to be a state for a long time. But he didn't
push that...I never saw him push that so much in the Senate as he did in his campaign. He would always talk about Puerto Rico should be a state. And I think he won the Puerto Rican primary when he ran. But I have seen in the Virginia Convention, which was very embarrassing, to tell you the truth. What year did Baker try for the nomination?

DW: In 1979 and 1980, when Reagan and Bush...

JB: I couldn't remember that. I guess I was a delegate to the state Convention, and people were making speeches for different people. And seems to me Wiley Mitchell, who was our State Senator, was the one that put Howard Baker's name in nomination. Maybe it wasn't the state Convention....I guess it was this District Convention. And somebody got up and made this railing speech against Howard Baker, because of the Panama Canal Treaty and the position that he had taken on that. And people within the Senate felt it.

DW: Whatever cost he experienced in the context of the Senate seemed to pass away fairly quickly.

JB: Oh yes, yes. That's because of him personally. People throughout the country and throughout the Republican Party didn't have the personal contact with Howard Baker to know what type person that he was.

DW: Well, in addition to everything I've heard indicates that he did that because he did think it was the right thing to do.

JB: Yes.

DW: But another thing about Baker is that he has always had a strong inclination to support the president of whatever party in foreign policy matters.

JB: Right, yes. That's right. And that was Carter, of course.

DW: Yes. Alright.

HS: One other question. Did you ever see Senator Baker with his camera? Did he ever bring it around when you were....
JB: Yes, a few times, I think.

HS: Could you make a few comments on Baker with his camera, if you remember any of them?

JB: No, I don't remember any anecdotes about that. I know I've got at home his book of all the pictures that he took.

DW: In Washington _____.

HS: Which we can't find any more copies of.

JB: Oh really...you need one?

DW: Well, we'd like to have one.

JB: Oh well, you can't have mine.

DW: No, no.

HS: If one comes walking through here, please.

DW: Well, these things keep occurring to me. Some people have commented on his practice, particularly on important votes, and going down and sitting on the table.

JB: Yes, he would do that. So he was easily accessible for the senators to come up and ask him how they should vote.

DW: And it seemed also to indicate the seriousness of his interest in the senator casting a vote in a particular way...about that posture.

JB: Yes. That's what I meant about working the floor...and seeing that the senators kept their promises. You know how a senator, lots of times....both parties....both philosophies....they'll tell everybody they'll vote for them. So Baker wanted to be sure that everybody who told him they'd vote with him on that, he was there to see that they did vote with him.
DW: Well. I guess we're done now.

[HS: Be quiet.]

DW: Thank you again.

JB: Rattled on.

DW: No, we love it. We love it.

END OF TAPE