
Interview with George Dunlop

The interview was conducted by David Welborn in Richmond, Virginia on September 23, 1994

Audio cassette 14
DW: This is an interview with George Dunlop at the offices of Christian, Barton, Epps & Chappell, in Richmond, Virginia, and the date is September 23, 1994 and the interviewer is David Welborn. Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to get out of Washington and go south for a little excursion, on a very beautiful day—the first day of Fall, as a matter of fact.

GD: That's right. I hadn't thought about it this way.

DW: Let me ask you, first, to briefly describe the path you took that led you to a Senate staff position in 1973.

GD: Well, I began to have an interest in politics as a very young person, maybe 12 or 13 years of age.

DW: Are you a North Carolinian?

GD: I originally am from North Carolina. And was active throughout my high school time—I first became involved in the Barry Goldwater campaign in—actually, shortly after 1960. And my first overt political act, I guess you'd call it, was attending the July 4, 1964 Independence Day rally to draft Goldwater for president. So I was always a part of what is now come to be called the conservative movement. I was active in high school, in Young Americans for Freedom, and in college likewise. Of course, that year I went to college in 1964 was the Goldwater year. We carried the county. I was active in the county where I went to college in Salisbury, North Carolina. We carried that county for Goldwater—one of the few counties in the nation that in fact went to Goldwater. So I felt that I'd gained some political experience. I subsequently worked in different ways, with different people, with Volunteers for Congressman James T. Broyhill, in his campaigns; for Congressman Earl B. Ruth in his campaign, in 1968—I was the chairman of Youth for Ruth.

DW: Has a nice ring to it.

GD: Yes. So the bottom line is—oh, and in 1968, I was also Vice Chairman of North Carolina Students for Reagan, and we went to the 1968 Convention, where we were thoroughly thrashed by Richard Nixon. So that was my role to be active in politics. My credentials for being somewhat skilled, I guess, as much as anybody else, in the arts and the sciences of electoral politics in the United States, as well as having a strong conviction about the
principles in which I believed. So, in 1972 I was in graduate school, working on my Ph.D. at BI University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. I got a call from a friend of mine who said, "Would you come down and help me in a campaign I'm running this summer?" And my friend was several years younger than I, and he was a nice lad and everything, but he was—I didn't realize what kind of a campaign he was running, but I had done all my course work for my Ph.D., and had decided that, yes, it would be great to take the summer off and get back into some politics, a little bit—just for the summer—and then I'd go back and finish my work. Well, it turned out that—so I didn't ask him what the campaign was.

DW: You didn't?

GD: No. He just said he was running a campaign, and I knew he was a conservative. He told me he was in Eastern North Carolina, and I assumed then that it was for a Democrat. So when I got down to North Carolina, I found that this wasn't a state senate campaign—I mean he had told me that, that it was a senate campaign. I thought he meant for the General Assembly of North Carolina. And I just assumed it was for a Democrat because it was in Eastern North Carolina, where I was going. There weren't any Republicans in Eastern North Carolina at that time. There aren't many now. And when I learned that this was a campaign for United States Senate—on the Republican ticket—I nearly turned around and went back.

DW: A waste of time.

GD: Well, you know, yeah! Nevertheless, I met at that time Mr. Helms—I had heard of him, and knew of him. When I found out who the candidate was. And so I stayed, and lo and behold, by the time it was time for me to go back to school, it looked to me like we were going to win this election. So I stayed through, and after the election, Senator Helms, Mr. Helms then, that he was Senator-Elect, offered me a job in Washington. And I declined it, because I felt that what was needed, that I had learned in my campaigning is what I think Tip O'Neill subsequently said—maybe he said it before, or whenever he said it—at least I instinctively knew this—that really, nearly all politics is local. And I'm a Jeffersonian and a Madisonian, and I believe that government is as close as the people's best. So I said to him, "No, I don't want to go to Washington. But, how about if you let me run your operations in North Carolina?" And so that's what I did for the first 2 years. And the long and the short of it is two years after that I felt, "Well look, I'd better go back and finish getting my education and get a real job." But at any rate, he prevailed upon me at that point to come to
Washington. So in 1975, March of 1975, I went to work in Washington. I went up there actually to handle a problem we had. And this is the fact that they weren't able to answer the mail. Senator Helms had become so well known, so famous, in such a relatively short period of time, that that office was just overwhelmed with correspondence and other types of things. And I then went up there to put together their correspondence operation—thought I'd do that for 6 months or a year and then go. Well, the bottom line is, in politics it's always another campaign. It's always another opportunity, another cycle, and you see a light at the end of the tunnel, because the time frame in politics is only two years. And when you lose in politics, it's not like—in other [worlds], you get transferred, or you lost an account so you have to go to work on another one. I mean it's like the equivalent of dead. So you don't think in terms of long terms—you think well, it will be over soon. And so, from one thing to the other, I began to handle other matters for Senator Helms. And then in 1976, Reagan began his run for President again—in fact it was being run out of Helms's office, because, if you'll recall at that time no United States senator had endorsed Reagan for President. The entire Republican party infra-structure was opposed to Reagan. All the regular Republicans, including the dear subject of our conversation today—thought Reagan was a crackpot, and didn't want anything to do with him., and so we were out there trying to use the skills that I had learned, that others had learned, grass roots politics, to nominate Reagan on the Republican ticket, in spite of the fact that the Republican party regulars were not in favor of him. I might say parenthetically that my wife at that time was running the political operations of the American Conservative Union, and the ACU grass roots organization really became the Reagan infrastructure for nominating. And then subsequently in 1980, electing Ronald Reagan President. So we were involved in all this. On a day-to-day basis. I was working, of course, for the constituents of North Carolina, but it was—when you are working in Washington in these Congressional offices, it is all a form of politics, even when you are doing things for the government, it has a tendency, well it's public policy oriented. So, in that year, a fellow by the name of Charlie Black was on Senator Helms's personal staff. Charlie was the one I had actually worked for in the 1972 campaign—I was a field representative, and he was the director of the day-to-day field operations of the campaign. Charlie had gone to Washington and was handling, among other things, agriculture. Which is very important in North Carolina. So when Charlie left to do the Reagan campaign, I was assigned to take over, temporarily, until he came back, to handle the agricultural issues. And so I did that. And the long and the short of the next thing is that Charlie didn't ever come back—the reason being—I know you don't remember all this, but in that campaign in 1976, there was a big dispute between a guy by the name of
Sears—John Sears—he was Reagan's campaign manager. And he'd go out in the field—the worker bees—the people running the grass roots operation. And Charlie had sided in these battles with the guy that was employing him, i.e., John Sears. So, because of a falling out they had, Charlie was not welcome to come back to Helms's office. And he went on subsequently to form the company now known as Black, Montefort & Stone. Charlie became one of the most successful prominent and effective political consultants in the country. He had become extraordinarily wealthy, and very well married, and just has a great family, a great life, a fine Christian fellow, and all that. But the point is that I'm trying to convey here is that I began, then, to take the responsibility for things that led, in 1979, by another interesting turn of events, for me to leave the Senator over this personal staff and go over to the Senate Committee on Agriculture as the Staff Director for the Minority—that is, for the Republicans. In the 1978 elections, there were a number of changes—some retirements—I forget exactly all the people—I'd have to research it to refresh my memory. But people like Senator Eastland, I believe, left the Committee. Senator McClellan, and who was the fellow from Arkansas—I guess that was McClellan.

GD: What was that old bird from New Hampshire—

DW: Norris Cotton.

GD: No, the other one. I can't remember his name. But at any rate, all of these guys left the Senate. And Henry Bellman, who was then in line to become the ranking Republican of the Senate Agriculture Committee—Helms was way down at the end of the table—Henry Bellman decided that he was not going to be on the Agriculture Committee anymore. Senator Dole, who was then next in line to be the ranking Republican, decided that no, he would rather be ranking Republican on the Finance Committee. And so, boom, all of a sudden Jesse Helms had come down from the end of the table and found himself to be the ranking Republican, and therefore the responsibility or the authority to appoint a small staff—out of the 34 people on the staff—the Democrats weren't fair about it—we were allowed, I think, 6. But we took that, and that's what I did, then, from 1979—January of 1979—until January of 1981, I was the minority Staff Director for the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. Now this had to be the very best job that any human being who was interested in politics and in public policy, and cares about natural resources
and agriculture could ever want to have. Because here you were, staff of six people—you could hire, nice little budget, competent, capable people. You could deal and fool with all these issues, get involved with all the things you wanted to—not only in North Carolina but all over the country, and you did not have any responsibility whatsoever to make the government work. You know, every time there was a bill, or a mock-up or something, all you had to do was pull the pin on the grenade and throw it. [You'd just watch the clock fall from the table and everybody had to do the mayhem]. Great job. I enjoyed that. I would like to have been in the minority the rest of my life, if I was in it for sport. But what happens then was, of course, in 1980, the Republicans took the Senate in those elections. And so in 1981, then, there was this turnover. And just one little story. I know this isn't about Howard Baker directly, but I'm going to show and tie all this in in a second.

DW: Okay.

GD: I went to Senator Helms, and said, "Senator, now listen. This is a serious job. This is a big deal, here. We're going to have to run the country." And agriculture policy in the United States is one royal mess. I mean, the Congress fooling with this has ruined American agriculture. We've devastated farmers; we've created competition for us overseas. It needs fixing badly. The other programs at the Department of Agriculture are skyrocketing out of control. The cost of the Food Stamp program had gone from virtually a few hundred million a year to—I think at that time—about $8 billion a year—I mean just a straight line up—just totally out of control in every regard. And so I said, "This is going to be very important. Why don't you let me go to work and try to identify 5 or 6 people who could be competent experienced staff directors of this committee?" And he said, "Well, I appreciate your offer to do that, but I think I have already made a decision." And I said, "Well gee, gosh." You know, I work with him, and, "Who is it?" And he said, "Well, it's you." And I said, "Well I can't do that. I'm just a political—I mean, this isn't a real job for me. I have to leave. I have to go back. I haven't finished getting my degree. Don't make me do that." He said, "Well, you just handle that." So the bottom line is, I did that, and then that's when my direct nexus with Howard Baker began, because of course he became the Majority Leader of the Senate.

DW: Majority Leader, right.

GD: Now, I want to say a little bit, now. That's how a young man who comes from really no—I
mean, my family was not a prominent family.

DW: What was your home town?

GD: I was originally born and raised in Salisbury, North Carolina. A little small town with a small college—no Ivy League school. I did well in school, but it wasn't a great intellectual institution. Just a fine, good, solid school. The openness of our Democratic system—that somebody on merit, and as I had tried to show you, circumstances just beyond my control—unplanned—I mean, now I did not set out like little Bill Clinton did, when he was 13 years old and decide that he was going to become president, and he was going to do anything and everything he did, whether it was ethical or not, to get there. I found myself in a position which is arguably because of the breadth of the jurisdictions of the Committee on Agriculture—extends to virtually all of the jurisdictions in the government—I can explain it if you want—a position of real power and influence over public policy. Just because our system is open and accessible to people who are still, but also have the good fortune to just be in the right place at the right time and associate with the right people. And I think that's a beautiful statement about Democracy. And, of course, nobody gets there, to any of this, without a lot of help and indulgence—particularly in politics. It takes a lot of indulgence of your principles—people like Senator Helms and Senator Baker, to put up with staff people, because we all make mistakes, and it's their heinnie that's going to get fricasseed, not the staff. They go off somewhere and double their income by being a consultant or something, or a lobbyist. It's these guys whose fortunes rise or fail by the virtue of the staff. And the fact that you have people who are willing to help young people like that. Now keep in mind again, the young—now I was a little older than most, because I had spent some time in the armed forces in the Marine Corps, and of course, I had been to graduate school. But I was still in my twenties. And was in charge of a major chunk of the U.S. Gross National Product, public policy congressional division.

DW: Kind of scary, isn't it?

GD: Yes. That's why I went to Senator Helms and said, "You better let me recruit somebody who can do that." It didn't occur to me, some 27- or 28-year-old--

HS: [Akin to the frog, do you think?]
GD: No, in earnest. Now the other thing is this. Because I had been active in politics in the Piedmont part of North Carolina, which is more connected to the western part of North Carolina, and therefore to Tennessee, than the eastern part of North Carolina, I had known and was aware of Howard Baker as a Congressman—Jim Broyhill and Earl Ruth had introduced me to him, in fact, back when I was working as a volunteer in those campaigns. And because I had worked running Senator Helms's offices in North Carolina, which included an office that we had in the western part of the state in Hickory, and because we shared jurisdiction of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and therefore some of those issues, I had a dealing and a relationship with Senator Baker's office almost from the time that I went to work with Senator Helms. Not with Senator Baker directly, but with his staff and his people. And we built a good relationship and a great deal of respect. And I say that because obviously Howard Baker did not come from the same—and never was, I don't think—accommodated to the same philosophical conservative principles that brought me into politics. Not to say that he was one of these ultra left wing Liberals; I mean, it wasn't that—but he was obviously a moderate liberal Republican who never—I don't even think to this day has bought into the essence of supply side economics and—I mean, Howard Baker is a person who is willing to give more ______ toward the government in the lives of people than I am—I'm kind of what ______ would have called an anti-Federalist, back in the colonial era. I just think that if the government would drive toward the administration of justice for the national defense than we dispense, then we'd dispense with it, and we'd have the states would be in charge. But Howard Baker is a man who believes that—he's the party of government, and I'm not. But nevertheless, he's obviously a wonderful person and a wonderful human being. And 90 percent of what he thinks and what I think are probably the same. It's just that we differ on that crucial thing. And I recognized that as a young person, and so we always thought that it was a special [coup]. A special, wonderful thing, when we could have an opportunity to work together. Somebody like Senator Helms, who the left would always try to push out of the mainstream if they could—I think he's very much in the mainstream—but you know, any time we could have a relationship with Howard Baker, or other moderate people in the Republican party, or a national government, it was a thing that we regarded as nice. It's always nice to be part of the team, instead of having to sit off in the corner somewhere. And I would say that I have recollections, and I can't remember the exact issue, but I remember as a young person, going to Washington, dealing with constituent matters, and Senator Helms would arrange for meetings with our constituents, and Howard Baker was an influential person—obviously in those days, even before he was Majority Leader—and I remember, and I can't remember the circumstances,
but I would remember that we would have these meetings, and from the earliest recollection that I had, Howard Baker was always the kind of person you would want to work with. He was kind; he was considerate; he was thoughtful; he seemed to be interested in what these little whippersnappers were saying and doing—in other words, he worked well with staff. So it was always a very positive thing, although we always kept a suspicious eye on these liberals, because we knew they'd cave when the time came. And they generally did. So, when he became Majority Leader, and I became Chief of Staff for the Senate Committee on Agriculture, that began a more direct relationship that I grew to value greatly.

DW: Let me back up a little bit, and ask you two or three questions in regard to the pre-Majority days. First of all, what were you doing your graduate work in?

GD: Well, I was studying—you know, when you get a PhD in history, which was what I was doing, in history—you have to have three major areas; so I had Colonial American History; I had Early 19th Century Politics, that is, the development of the political party system in the pre-Civil War era, and I had actually written my masters thesis on the role of evangelical Christians in the early party system in the United States; and then in Medieval English History.

DW: Do you know Lee Verstandig?

GD: Yes. How do I know him?

DW: Well, he was Chafee's AA and then Assistant Secretary of Transportation with Drew Lewis.

GD: Mm-hmm. Yes.

DW: Well, you know, he's a colonial historian, too. That's why I mentioned that. He got his degree at Brown under Forrest McDonald, as a matter of fact.

GD: Yes, yes, great, great.

DW: You came to Washington in 75. In 1977 there was a race for Minority Leader—Senator Baker against Senator Griffen of Michigan. Do you have any recollections of that, particularly in regard to Senator Helms' role and who he was supporting in that contest?
GD: I do not. I would probably have to read articles of books and it might get me to recollect, but, I would think that remembering that time—you know, that was right after that Watergate stuff and everything, wasn't it?

DW: No, Watergate was 1972-73.

GD: Yes.

DW: Then we have the presidential election of 76. Senator Scott of Pennsylvania does not run for reelection, leaving the leader's position open. Robert Griffen was a whip, and sort of the heir apparent. And Senator Baker challenged him, and then won in 77.

GD: Yes. The only thing that I could say, knowing that, fashioning myself as a son of the South, and as I said, having developed a relationship with Baker, to the degree that I was involved, and I probably was—I'm certain that I was in the Baker camp.

DW: And that would mean that you would suspect that Helms would have been in the Baker camp.

GD: I would suspect so. Because I wouldn't obviously have done anything without his saying—but I don't know exactly how he ended up voting, or how that was. But I couldn't imagine that it would be different than that. I just remember that Hugh Scott—I mean, he just actually gave us fits. And see, I originally—I didn't tell you that part, but I had spent—I went to high school in Pennsylvania, and I actually knew Senator Scott, and he was responsible for me being named a page in the Congress, which, it subsequently turned out that my parents would not let me go—they weren't going to let any youngster go down there and be a page in Washington, DC and --

DW: Be corrupted.

GD: And be corrupted in that city. They thought that decent people didn't get involved in politics. That was for your horse thief cousins and stuff—not decent people. So I couldn't do that. But, despite that—I don't recall that, but I bet you that was a great time. I'd like to read about that.
DW: After you became Minority Staff Director on Agriculture, did you recall having any working relationships with Senator Baker's leadership staff? Howard Lievengood, Jim Cannon, principally, I would guess.

GD: Yes, I became very good friends with all those people, and count them as my friends today. Now Cannon not so much, but Lievengood, certainly, and I mean, I knew Cannon and all, but he looked at me as some kind of little guy. But Howard was somebody I worked with very closely. Keep in mind that a lot of the issues that we really had to work on were tobacco issues, and while there are distinctions between the kinds of tobacco grown in North Carolina and that grown principally in Tennessee, Helms was made the de facto protector of tobacco. Well, you can't do anything in Washington by yourself, so I spent a lot of time working not only with those people in the leadership operation with Senator Baker's personal staff, it was also looking after those tobacco constituents. You see, this made us mindful, because we had to look after tobacco, and had very few friends, this served as a leverage that the leadership had on Senator Helms. And you know, that meant that we, meaning Helms and myself, had to be very mindful that if we didn't get Senator Baker's help for that matter, Senator Dole's and all the others, when they piped a tune, we—unless there was just some highly principled reason that we couldn't, we'd better learn to dance to that tune. In fact, I remember and think it's worth repeating, that as we were dealing with these types of needs to accommodate the interest of the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader and these other people, had to make compromises. And Senator Helms told me one time, he said, "Now George, when you get involved in all of this business about politics, you have to understand that politically they're right, and they say politics is the art of compromise. And you have to be prepared to compromise on your preferences. Never, never, never compromise on your principles. It's better to get beat—better to be destroyed. You can always come back. But you have to know the distinction between your principles and your preferences." And I think that is what has made Senator Helms such a survivor, which frankly has made him very agreeable than agreeable working relationships with people like Senator Baker, because they knew they could count on Jesse to help them and to be flexible, and to back away if they needed to—particularly if they could persuade him that this was a matter of preference rather than principle. And Howard Baker, as you know, is quite an effective in his interpersonal relationships, and more than once I can remember him, putting his arm around me and squeezing real hard, reminding me that this was a preference, wasn't it. He didn't put it that way, but that's the way I was hearing it.
DW: That's interesting.

GD: But maybe this is the time to tell you one little story. Right after Howard Baker became Majority Leader. I had been very active in a lot of areas, and was always on the floor dealing with things, because there was some particular issue that was up that involved me, or agriculture or something, and we were really intense on all of this. So I had a pretty constant presence in the Senate chamber. Now Howard Baker was elected Majority Leader, and then about 2 days later, I was over in the Senate chamber and there had come an urgent call—I think maybe from the White House, the Vice President needed to talk to George Dunlop—well see, I was negotiating and arranging something. And a page went up to Howard Baker and said to him, "Are you George Dunlop? The Vice President's calling." And I happened to be standing nearby, and everybody—they had a lot of little sofas there in the Senate chamber—and of course all the other little staff just broke out. Baker was furious. He was kind of a short man like I am, and he didn't like to be—and from that time on, he always knew who George Dunlop was, because by golly, that was somebody that he wasn't going to get compared to anymore.

DW: I know that Jim Range, along with others, had weekly meetings more or less regularly of staff directors, after you were in the majority. Correct?

GD: Oh, yes. And I don't remember that Range was in charge of those meetings—wasn't it Cannon and Lievengood?

DW: Well see, that was what I was going to ask you. Cannon, in particular. Lievengood, I think, had these kinds of meetings for the minority staff directors, and during the time that you were minority staff—

GD: And then we just kind of picked that up.

DW: Then Lievengood became sergeant at arms, and Range sort of slipped into and took his portfolio.

GD: Yes.

DW: So I was going to ask you if you have any particular recollections of those meetings that Lievengood ran, and what they were like, and --
GD: Oh yes, yes.

DW: And their usefulness, etc.

GD: Oh absolutely. Those were the real day-to-day—and they were weekly, but oftentimes sub-functions would be daily, and of course, we coordinated with the Republican Policy Committee, too. Oftentimes those meetings were held in the chambers of the Republican Policy Committee. Sometimes they were held over in the Majority Leader's office. It really wasn't until Dole became the ranking Republican that they were actually frequently held inside the actual sanctum sanctorum of the majority leader. These, as I recall were mostly held in the back offices of the Republican Policy Committee. But, they were substantive, well-run meetings, and the role of the majority leader is a tough one, because he's got to keep all of his senators—and frankly, all of the senators to some degree, but all of his senators—under some form of discipline. And as you probably know from basic management things that you read, it's very difficult to effectively control large numbers of people yourself—that is, direct report. The smaller number of direct reports you can have, the more effective you are in controlling events. So, as a practical matter, the committee chairs—there are 13 committees in the Senate, or at least there were then, or substantive committees—the committee chairs become the means by which the majority leader—or for that matter, the minority leader over his people—but the leader can exercise command and control. And so, the best way to think of it, I think, is kind of like King Arthur's court. The king is the leader. The Knights of the Round Table are the committee chairs. And then the Knights of the Host are the other senators. So the majority leader will accord privilege, deference, influence, and gratuities to the committee chairs. In return for the committee chairs' loyalty and expectation of cooperation, and of course, if the Knights of the Round Table don't like the leader, one of them can't do any good, because he'd just be disaffected, be in snit, but if 3 or 4 or 5 of them don't like him, they can cause the leader real trouble. So, it's a relationship in which the leader needs to constantly make sure that he's got a commanding majority of people who are his 13 Knights of the Round Table happy with him. He has to cooperate with them. But he also, to remain in control, must demand respect and allegiance from them about what he wants. So there is a system set up where—there are actually two things going on at these meetings that we had. Of course, I'm now speaking at the staff level.
DW: Baker had his own meetings.

GD: He had his own meetings with the chairs. And he handled that himself, and he did that very well. In fact, extraordinarily well. I think by all accounts—I have never read or heard any account that Howard Baker was not successful. He would certainly have to go down in history as an extraordinarily successful leader—in those terms of keeping his people under his command and control. Because all these senators have enormous egos, you don't command and control them with a stick. You have to do it very artfully. You have to get them to want to be under your command and control. That's what I'm trying to say. Well, Baker did that well. But these meetings that we had with his staff were partly designed to keep the squires of the committee chairs of these Knights of the Round Table happy, because we'd create a lot of mischief if we weren't happy, you know, writing memos and otherwise going around engaging in disingenuous activities that makes the life of the leader uncomfortable. So by the same token, these people had to listen to us. They'd prefer not to; they'd prefer to have just gone and done their own thing. So I often got the feeling when we were in these meetings that, in conducting the business of these meetings, that sometimes they wish they didn't have to do it and we were being indulged, they were trying to keep us happy. Other times those meetings were used to discipline us, and say, "Look, the leader needs this; we expect you to do this.” And it wasn't ever threatened, but you know if you don't, life will become very unhappy. So, this was business. This was business in the realm of politics where every senator envisions himself as the one that really ought to be president of the United States and the majority leader. And every senator's staff believes that their senator is the senator. Have you ever been up there against that? I mean—we all worked for different senators. We would all sit there and have lunch. We'd all talk about the senator. Well, we would all—everybody would know that when we were talking about the senator, we mean our senator, not their senator. You know—that's the arrogance of the place. And so this constant dynamic is very real. This isn't fun and games. When we are talking about Washington, DC being the capitol of the universe, we're talking about every person who is interested in government politics, and who's ambitious, comes to Washington. You don't go to Nashville or Raleigh, I mean, those are somewhat ambitious people—the ambitious of the ambitious come to Washington. And they find themselves here all in one room. You're talking about serious business going on here. This isn't sport. And you're there because you believe you're running the country. I mean, these people are not cynical in the sense that I believe that none of these people didn't care about their country—they did. They cared about public policy; they cared about being conservatives or
liberals, or what they thought would work. And they cared about their bosses. They're very loyal in politics—intense loyalty. Many, many of the people who worked at bat level for their bosses would have sacrificed all—maybe even their lives, if necessary. I mean, you're never called upon to do that. But, you know, certainly all their fortune and their honor, for their boss. So, when you're talking about having these meetings, you're not just talking about people down at the widget factory worrying about whether their market share is going to be one or two percent greater this quarter than it was last quarter. I mean, we're talking about the ultimate decisions which can determine who's going to have their hands on the throttle of what goes on in the universe. And as I had described, when we were going through how I got to be in that room, it's dicey! There's nothing guaranteed about any of that. I mean, it's chance, to a certain degree. Now I think that that could be the hand of the beneficent God who played a role in my deal. In fact it says in the scripture that all people who are raised up to be in authority are doing so under the direction of the Lord. Particularly if you're a Calvinist. I think a good Tennessee person probably has a lot of good Calvinism in them. I don't know Howard Baker's religion, but it's bound to be inspired with a lot of Calvinism, as many --

DW: I'm not sure. I think he is a Presbyterian.

GD: I think he probably is. So, at any rate, what I'm trying to convey is that, yes, we had these meetings, and these meetings were intense. And these meetings had to do with the governance of the Senate, which was very important to these people, because this is their nest, and their respect, and their pecking order. Very important—pecking order is very important to them. And in the Senate of the United States, and all these ambitious people, their respective pecking orders to one another. So that's going on. And then you have public policy to run the country—soundly—is going on, and people's political ambition. All that's in that room, and it's all going on, and people are interacting, and I thought—and my recollection was all handled competently and fairly and very impressively. I was very impressed with the level of competence and dedication to people carrying out good effect to what they were doing. [Appropriate] effect to what they were doing. High level of ethics.

DW: Did you feel, personally, after you became Staff Director, that you personally were—although your immediate principal was Senator Helms—that you were involved in an endeavor of which Howard Baker was the leader?
GD: Yes.

DW: And did you feel a sense of loyalty to him?

GD: Yes.

DW: How was that elicited? Maybe I'm asking you to --

GD: I think it was understood. Like I was saying earlier. Look, you're a player by virtue of the fact that Senator Helms appointed you to this. But he's a player by virtue of the fact that he was elected by the people of North Carolina. But I mean that he's a player inside the tent—inside the inner circle. He's in his sanctum sanctorum, because of these—not directly articulated and contractually signed agreements, but these daily understandings that we have about the role we are going to have with one another. And that if you're going to operate as somebody that is going to be one of influence, and have what you think—if you are going to be invited to the meetings—I mean, not everybody went to all of the meetings—now Helms was of such influence that he was—and also because he created a lot of mischief he wanted, and they knew he would, because he's a tough cookie—so we were generally invited to the meetings just to keep track of us. So we'd feel some sense of loyalty to this. Yes, I think that if you understood that if you were invited to be part of the inner circle—if you go to the meetings and you're involved in the decisions, then you're buying in to that process. And if you can't participate in that process, then it's your duty, your obligation, your ethical responsibility to walk out—I don't mean storm out in a snit—but I mean, just to say, "I can't be part of this. You guys are going to have to take it and run it, because we're going to be on opposite sides in this." But if you go to meetings where decisions are going to be made, and you are part of the process, you have to have a certain degree of honor you are going to stick to. You see, in politics—and keep in mind all of these people—Jesse Helms, Howard Baker, all their staff, all their people—they came up from the grass roots in politics. Very few of these people were hired to this because they had some kind of degree from some university. It's because they worked up in the trenches. And in politics what you learn—you've really only got two commodities. There are only two assets you've got. You've got your word, and the degree to which your word is credible to others, to which you have veracity. And not everybody has complete veracity, and everybody makes mistakes. Sometimes it's not that you were untruthful or you didn't keep your word. Sometimes you're just too ignorant to do it, or you made a mistake, or you overspoke, or you spoke beyond
what it was your capacity to—look, everybody understands those. But ultimately, people build their reputations on their integrity and their character, and their verity—their word. Now this is what Howard Baker had. And has today—I don't mean to speak in the past tense. I can't think of any circumstances where if Howard Baker said we were going to do x or y or z, in all of these dealings, and his staff, to a certain degree, to a lesser degree, because they didn't have the majority and judgment and character that he had always—that could be depended upon. The second thing in politics that you have is loyalty. You have to be loyal to your friends. And if you aren't going to be loyal to your friends, then you're dead meat. And you ought to be. And now, I'm not talking about a blind loyalty where you help your friend break the law—now we're all talking about being honorable and decent and ethical. And you know, Howard Baker was honorable, and decent, and ethical, and loyal to Richard Nixon. Probably to a fault, except when Nixon crossed that bound and engaged in activity that was no longer ethical and appropriate. And then he, as an independent person, chaired that committee and engaged in that activity that was very responsible in operating unethically. It's like Reagan and North. Reagan didn't tell North to go out and break the law; he assumed that all the things that North was going to do would be legal, and honorable. Well, they weren't. So, you have to understand in the context of these relationships you're talking about, people have to assess the other individuals on those criteria only—loyalty and verity, integrity.

DW: Talk about the relationship between Senator Baker and Senator Helms in those terms.

GD: Well, I think you're talking about two people who are just totally impeccable in their ethics. They had this understanding. Honest people can deal with honest people, with a whole lot of shortcuts. And the way that Baker, and I think even subsequently Dole—I might say—you see, I became much more influential and much more involved and experienced by the time Dole had become Majority Leader—so my working relationship with Dole was extremely close.

DW: Well, you knew him personally as a result of his membership on the Agriculture Committee.

GD: That's right. I worked very closely with him, and also Dole was very interested in agriculture, and so he was over there all the time, and Dole is very much a hands-on guy, and he'd call us in on Saturdays and make us work for him, even though we worked for Helms. I mean, he was just insatiable in his work. Baker wasn't that involved. But a lot of
the relationships were similar, because the role of being Majority Leader and Minority Leader—the leader of your party are the same. The dynamics are the same, I mean. You'd asked me a question, and I got off on a tangent.

DW: Well, you had talked about trust and loyalty—the two.

GD: Oh, and then the Helms relationship with Baker.

DW: [In that context].

GD: Yes, and I just think that they communicated very, very well. And that it was under-stood that any time that—Helms made no secret of where he stands and where he's coming from, and what he thinks, and what he would like to accomplish. Baker had never made any secret of that either. The differences that Baker and Helms have are probably not really over policy, but over where they want to end up with the country. It's just that Senator Baker, by definition and character and political philosophy is one who believes in compromise. Who fashions themselves, as I understand it, as the good government crowd. And we've got to make government work. And that means we've got to accommodate ourselves to the interest of the Democrats and the left, even if we believe it's destructive to the country. The fact of the matter is, we can't have government come to a halt because after all, we are the party of government, and therefore, government's got to work. Well, Helms isn't of that school. We're better off if government doesn't work. We're like what Ronald Reagan says, "You know, you can be thankful we don't get all the government we paid for." You know, we're not here to make government work; we're here to make liberty work. And the quicker we can disassemble the government and disengage the government from being involved in the lives of the people, the better we'll all be. We'll have more liberty and more prosperity. Helms never made any secret about that's where he's coming from. Baker never made any secret of the fact that he was from the good government crowd, so he was going to compromise. So when the time came for the compromises, either Baker would disinvite Helms, or Helms would have the good sense not to even ask to go—he didn't want to be present for the slaughter. And Baker recognized this. He often said—he's a great story teller, you know—and Baker, I think, on of his favorite stories was talking about how you knew if you loved the law, and you loved sausage, you never watched either of them being made. Well, you know, Helms and I and the rest of them, conservative, we'd leave the room when they started the slaughter. It was disgusting to
watch.

DW: Let me outline with you an impression I have developed, and get your reaction to it. In regard to handling the so-called social issues during that 1981-85 period. I was going to outline an impression for you in regard to the so-called social issues, when Senator Baker was the Majority Leader. My impression is that he and Senator Helms had an understanding. I don't know whether it was spoken or unspoken, but that if Senator Helms would exercise some restraint in regard to the propounding amendments on busing and school prayer and abortions—in light of the implications of the pending legislation, or the importance of the impending legislation, the urgency of the impending legislation, so as not to bring things to a stop. At some point, Senator Baker would give him the opportunity, the time, to make the case that Senator Helms wanted to make on the Senate floor, under circumstances that, from Senator Baker's point of view, would not make his life unduly difficult. Does that make sense to you?

GD: Yes. And I played a key role in all of those things, even back before the time from when I went to work on the Senate Agriculture Committee, and I must say that all this was a source of conflict. And I think that both Senator Helms and Senator Baker managed that conflict well. Because, Helms understood and appreciated that Baker had a Senate to run. And he, Baker, was going to be evaluated by his peers and by history, and by his own good assessment, to the degree to which he was competently able to run that Senate. And I think that with Senator Helms being a friend of Senator Baker—I think being a close friend of Senator Baker—would be always mindful not to want to make Senator Baker's or Senator Dole's or anybody's life intolerable. I think that the operative word is intolerable. [Uncomfortable]—well, you know, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. But I think that the nature of that conflict really arose from what, as an observer, I would characterize as a lack of appreciation or understanding by Senator Baker—and other liberals. Particularly Senator Baker's staff, which tended, to a certain degree, to be more liberal that he was. He'd recruited a lot of these people from the Washington scene; they were very ambitious and they knew that if the party of more government advanced strongly, then their star would rise more than if the party of less government rose. And they weren't always, in my judgment, as meticulous about keeping their verity as Senator Baker was. But at any rate, there was a misunderstanding, it seems to me. Now I think maybe if you interviewed Senator Baker, he would say, "No, that's not true." I mean, I didn't fall off the turnip truck yesterday; I knew exactly what Jesse was doing. It's just that I wasn't in a
position to help him as much as he might have liked, because maybe I didn't agree with him, as much as he might have wanted me to. And B, because it was just beyond my control; I had a Senate to run. I had my own agenda. I wasn't going to turn into the subaltern for Jesse Helms. For crying out loud, he had to do it himself. So, here's the distinction. Senator Helms pioneered a series of legislative strategies and tactics that revolutionized the Senate of the United States, and has had a lasting impact, to this day, and in fact resulted in the election of Ronald Reagan and the taking of the Senate by the Republicans, which resulted in Senator Baker being Majority Leader. I don't know that Howard Baker ever appreciates that or understands that. But it's true. And here's how, and here's why. Just to the point you were getting to. When Senator Helms came to the Senate in 1972—keep in mind he had worked for 2 or 3 years as an Administrative Assistant to Senator Will Smith of North Carolina, who died in office, and that's why Senator Helms then went back, and never became part of the Washington yeomen. Smith, of course, was a Democrat, in those days. They all were. I think Howard Baker might even have been.

DW: No, never, never, never. An East Tennessee Republican from birth.

GD: I might say parenthetically, and you shouldn't speak parenthetically on these things, but see, Senator Helms having been a Democrat most of his life, and never really was in total sync with all these mountain Republicans—they always seemed to be a little too—their trunks are a little too long for his liking—but at any rate, what Senator Helms did when he first came to the Senate—he had kind of a Ronald Reagan type view of things, and that is—I mean operational. And that is, you can't do everything, so why don't you try to focus on 3 or 4 or 5 things and be, to a certain degree, a Johnny One Note on that. And if you focus on 'that' then you will achieve success in that area. And of course, that's exactly what Reagan did. Many people wanted him to be involved in a hundred different things. He said, "No. I want to have less regulation. I want to cut taxes, and I want to destroy the international communism. Defeat the Soviet Union." He achieved all three, because that was his focus, and people said, "Well, hey, he should have done more about AIDS, or he should have done more that 'that.'" Well, that wasn't his agenda. When Helms came in, he said, "My agenda is going to be to deal with these social issues." And he immediately found out that he could accomplish a much larger goal to help a broader conservative, that is, less government agenda, by making life very difficult for the Democrats by offering amendments. Because he knew that the social issues had never been considered because of the committee system of the Senate and the House. Prohibited is a practical nullity, I guess, didn't prohibit in the
Senate—did prohibit in the House, because you have to have a rule. But in the Senate it made as a practical nullity that these issues would ever even be considered. And the way the Republicans had operated throughout the 50s and the 60s and the early 70s, was they never wanted to get beat. So they always compromised. And there were never any votes. The EPA was established by executive order—never a vote on the EPA, because it was ruining the country here with all those excessive federal mandates—destroyed the 10th Amendment to the Constitution—they were working hard on the 5th and the 2nd Amendment. So it was just dreadful what the EPA has done. OSHA the same way. There was never a vote on it. The Republicans just went along with it. Because they didn't have the votes, and they didn't want to force the votes, because there were a few of these liberal Republicans, the remnant of which is Chafee and Durenburger, and Danforth—but in those days there were a lot of them. You were talking about Hugh Scott and all these people. They ought to have been Democrats—what the heck were they doing in our party? They weren't conservative. And so, at any rate, Republicans and the Republican leadership, and the mainstream Republican people—of which Howard Baker was tradition—he was probably the right wing of the mainstream Republican—were very uncomfortable with going on record on this stuff. So along comes this man from North Carolina and he begins to say, "Well, we're going to vote on this stuff." So Helms went up there, and they indulged him, and he offered his amendments, and he was beat on all these issues I've mentioned—forced busing, prayer in schools, balanced budget amendment—I think those were the big three he was working on. And he'd offer them here and he'd offer them there, and he was beat every time, and he was very dejected. And a man by the name of Jim Allen of Alabama came up to Senator Helms, and he said, "Jesse -- and this was in 73 -- you know, you've been offering all these amendments, and you've been beat on these things, and I don't want to discourage you. I'm going to help you learn how to have your amendments adopted. Not necessarily because you have the votes, now, because you don't. But through the parliamentary process." And Allen told Helms that, "If you will come to my office at these appointed times," and I forget exactly what they were—you could ask Helms the story, but this is about Baker, not about Helms, so I won't go into it any more in detail than that, "I will teach you, and we together will learn all there is to know about the parliamentary rules." And that's how Helms got to be such a good friend of Bob Dove and all the others. He was the Assistant. Parliamentarian at first, and I forget who the first one was, but his predecessor helped him as well. And gave a school.

DW: It was Lloyd Reddick.
GD: Yes. And so all those birds, [Al and] Reddick and Dove and Helms went to school. And Senator Helms learned how to offer amendments and get them considered. And it's the 1st degree, and the 2nd degree, and the 3rd degree, and all this.

DW: The Christmas tree.

GD: That's right. And rarely had this been done. It had been done in 1832 once, and 1907 once, or something like that, but never record. So they got together, and they learned, and they did that. And this, by definition, made the job of Minority Leader and Majority Leader very difficult. Because Helms knew the rules better than any of them, personally. And in fact Robert Byrd, and if there was ever an egotistical person on the planet it's Robert Byrd, at one point in time said, "There is no one," and apparently he included himself in that, he probably meant no one other than I, "who knows the rules as well as Jesse Helms." And so Helms used that schooling during the early 70s to learn how to tie up the Senate. Now the practical effect of this was to put the Senate on record. And nobody understood this until it was over. You know, if you voted against forced busing, or these other things we talked about, prayer in the schools, or balance the budget once, well, you could say that there was a technical flaw in that. It wasn't just exactly right. Or twice, or three times. But twenty-six times! You vote against prayer in school twenty-six times—never once for it. You know, maybe then, your constituents might believe that you're not in favor of prayer in the schools. And likewise with these other issues. And these are issues that liberals and moderates of both parties—or all parties—really were uncomfortable in dealing with, and they wished Helms wouldn't do that, because that means they aren't going to get all the vote. The great flaw the people make in politics—almost to a person, irrespective of whether Republican, Democrat, or conservative or liberal—they somehow feel that to have credibility or to have a mandate, they have to get all the votes. Well, that isn't the way it works in a democracy. You only need 50 plus 1. Fifty percent plus one. Helms never intended to get all the votes for his own election. Nor did he feel that anybody else had to get all the votes. And it ended up that when you compromise, and you become, as what George Wallace said, "Not a dime's worth of difference," you become all things to all people, so you can't tall the parties apart, then what happens is a large chunk of the electorate said, "Well, a pox on all these people. Doesn't matter how I vote. I'm going to vote and I'm going to elect a Republican, and I'm going to get the same big government—all this other stuff as if I vote Democratic—and vice versa." So what you have happen, a large chunk of the electorate
stays home. Well, by causing these votes and raising these issues, and identifying these senators who were voting for and against this stuff, that caught the attention of these millions of people who had frankly just opted out of the system, they weren't voting, or only occasionally, or never voted with much enthusiasm. This is what elected Ronald Reagan. Those people came into the political process because Helms had brought them there. And it caused them to defeat these liberals, most of them Democrats, who were on the opposite side of these issues. And the people who saw what Helms was doing, who were in the Senate and who didn't agree with that because they didn't want all these new people in here—"Oh, you know, all these people, sometimes they vote Democratic, they don't belong to the country club, they're unwashed. They're uneducated. We don't want these people involved in the American political system. It's untidy." They didn't like that. They didn't like that the process of doing all this identification of voting and role-call votes was time-consuming. I remember to this day, and I won't call any names, because all these people have made up, and they are good friends now, and it is not Howard Baker—but one particular time, it was about 3 days before Christmas. I remember a United States senator get up, and Helms was making them vote on some series of amendments back to back, 2nd and 3rd degree and all the rest, 15 times on the same subject—and he got up, "This is outrageous. I hold in my hand a ticket to Vail. I need to go on vacation. And here we have to stand around here and vote!" And I was sitting next to Helms, and Helms turned to me and said, "You know, what does this guy think he's being paid a salary for? Their vote. As long as we're—"Vote us into adjournment, if you want to go home. Don't take away my right to have votes on these things under the Senate rules." Well, all of this is to say, Helms was not to be deterred because he had an intention. And his intention, yes, was to affect public policy. But more directly, and he made no secret of it, to put these birds on record. And they didn't want to be on record. So you have all these liberals coming up to Howard Baker saying, "Oh God, what can you do to keep us from having to vote on this stuff? You know, I'm going to have to start voting on this stuff back home. My friends at the country club aren't going to like it. You know, the wine and breeze set. These wet Republicans are going to cause me a problem. Make him stop that." So they were putting pressure on Baker. I think that it is remarkable and a great testament to Howard Baker's good leadership that all that happened, and that Helms got his votes, and that we ended up taking over the Senate and all the rest. I mean, Baker could have quashed Helms. And he didn't. He didn't agree with him all the time; he didn't agree with his pushing it so hard. I mean, "Come on, Jesse. What's the difference between 26 votes on this and 34. We got the point." And Helms would say, "I'm going to make them bleed again." And that's what it ended up,
taking up the Senate. Now I don't know that Howard Baker would ever agree that that's why he ended up being elected Majority Leader or not, but that's the facts. So that's the dynamic that took place, and yes, there was a great deal of tension. And yes, many times Senator Helms would be very dejected and very disappointed, because the leadership—and usually the leadership's staff—had chased senators away and told them not to be around when Jesse was doing these amendments. So he didn't have the back-up. Now, Howard Baker never dealt dishonorably with him; he never told him an untruth, to my knowledge. He never deceptively made arrangements with the other side, but I'm sure, on many, many occasions, he shushed people out of the way and told them not to come, to stay away, and, you know—cooperated with other people to frustrate Senator Helms' designs. I'm sure that happened.

DW: Well explain something. What is this shushing—shooing people away. How does that benefit—I'm assume you're talking about suggesting to other senators that they not come to the floor.

GD: Yes. You see, senators need seconds. You need other people to do things. If you're going to start offering amendments, 1st degree, 2nd degree and 3rd degree, you've got to have somebody to offer it in the 1st, so that you can do it in the 2nd or the 3rd. You need cooperation; you need people to do that.

DW: Yes. You can't do it by yourself.

GD: No.

DW: OK. I understand, now. This may have been the situation you were referring to a moment ago. I don't know whether you were involved in this, but in December of 1982, I've forgotten what the, there was a filibuster on the gas tax increase. Do you recall anything about that?

GD: Oh yes. Yes.

DW: What do you remember about that? Particularly in regard to Senator Baker's role in trying to manage that situation and get the Senate out.
GD: Well, the only thing that I think I can recall is that the struggle was not only—this was the Reagan Administration, and we had a guy the name, I think, of Ray Barnhart, who was the Secretary of Transportation, or at least the head of it.

DW: Yes. He ran the federal highway.

GD: Yes. He was the head of federal highway. And Ray was a great friend of ours—an old guy who had been in the trenches—

DW: He was a Texan.

GD: Yes, Texas trenches, for Reagan from Year One. And Ray came in there and said, "Well look, I've been put in charge of building highways, and I want to build roads, and I'm in favor of this tax." Well Helms wasn't in favor of any tax. "We've got enough taxes. We want to build highways, we'd have to cut spending somewhere. I'm unalterably opposed to that. We're very disappointed that Ray came in and bothered us with all this." But this was part of the deal that was being cut, to which we were not party, but I'm sure, I'm just speculating, that Baker was. He was part of all of this group of people who were trying to persuade Reagan to raise taxes. And if you'll look at the literature of the era, you'll find that he was constantly tied in with Darmon and Gurgen and James Baker and all that gaggle of people who never believed in the supply side.

DW: We'd _____ asked the Secretary of Transportation if this was his --

GD: That's right. We're all friends. We all like one another and all that, but we ______. And they never quite got it, that if you feed government, government will grow. The only way to preserve our liberty is to starve government so it will shrink. And don't tell me about if you want more taxes, we're overtaxed. So Helms was just unalterably opposed to that. Never voted for a tax and never will. Baker was in a position where he felt that if things were going to move forward, that there had to be this tax element in it. They'd cut a deal with the House. Lots of other things they were interested in were a part of this agreement. And they were pushing that. And there were filibusters and at the end of the sessions, the tempers get very testy because, as I said earlier, everybody's got their vacation plans, and they don't want to miss their plane. So they get tired and they get testy. And any number of issues like that. And I remember that tax issue was a big one, because it really got to the very core of all
supply side revolution. You see, Baker called, as I remember—isn't he the one that said, "Look, this supply side thing, this Reagan tax cuts here, this is a river boat gamble." Isn't that his quote? Well, Reagan never thought it was a river boat gamble. We never thought it was a river boat gamble. We thought that the course that we were on _____ of more taxes and more regulation and more inflation was going to destroy the American economy. And our liberty with it. So you got to raise taxes because you can't get these Democrats to cut the spending. So you got to raise taxes.

DW: Were you ever present when Senator Baker was really working on Senator Helms, trying to get him to do something? Or nothing?

GD: Often.

DW: How would he do that? How would he approach Senator Helms?


DW: What kind of appeal would he use?

GD: Every one you could imagine. He was just a very artful _____. To my recollection, we're talking about a dozen years ago, so I hope that I'm not imperfect in this. But my recollection would be that it would be every kind of personal strategy you would use. You know, I can remember occasions where—now keep in mind the main distinction—Senator Helms is 6'4", and Howard Baker is what—5'7" or 5'8"?

DW: Well, at best.

GD: Yes. And so, you know, you have this situation. You've got a very tall man and a relatively, looking up, and you know the dynamic that creates. And so it's a little bit difficult to look eye to eye. So, depending on the circumstances, if Senator Helms did not want to be persuaded, well, he would stand up to his full height, and make that difficult. If he was trying to be accommodating, then he would go sit in the chair—they had these big sofas there inside the Republican Cloak Room, and he'd slouch down—and Helms can slouch better than any human being I've ever seen—almost turn into a piece of spaghetti.
DW: So he'd be at eye level with Baker.

GD: Right, right. So, it was this kind of relationship that—it's kind of like a little dog, when you take a dog—you pick up a little dog and turn it on its back, it will be subservient to you. Well, you know, people place themselves in those types of circumstances. And I can remember Baker talking nicely to Senator Helms, and joking and bantering. When they were agreeing or disagreeing, even. When they were working on a particular amendment. They were often allies. I mean, very often—working with other people. You know, Baker was artful in bringing people in, and getting people to carry his load. He had to, as we talked earlier. You can't do it all yourself. He needs his Knights of the Round Table to do this. I remember when they would be annoyed and ill. I mean, people get short with one another. And, "Damn it, Jesse." You know, throw something down and walk out.

DW: This is Baker throwing something?

GD: Yes. You know. Banging the table. Yes, human being. You're talking about a live, dynamic, personable guy who is willing to have a hands-on thing to make things work. He loved it. We were running the Senate of the United States. And you know, the thing about Baker is, there were all these people around. We were like the confidential staff, but you know, he would deal personably with people, in the presence of other people. We weren't treated like we were the servant or the slave who was like a piece of furniture. And it was part of this. But Baker was, and I'm sure is, the kind of person who could deal with people using whatever interpersonal relationships that were necessary. And when it came time to roll them, he'd say, "I'm going to roll you, Jesse."

DW: Meaning what?

GD: Meaning. "I'm going to go out there and use every stratagem to beat you. Don't make me do that." And Helms would say, "Well look, you do what you've gotta do. I understand." And I'm sure he dealt with all these other people the same way. In our conversation, what might be coming across is that somehow the only the only thing that was going on in the United States was this tug-o'-war between Jesse Helms and Howard Baker, and one was a liberal and one was a conservative. That would be an incorrect—I mean, Baker was dealing with these liberals who were worse than Helms to deal with. He was in the middle. Howard Baker was a man of the middle. He wants to make it work. And ninety percent of the time
they agreed. I don't want to come up with that this was the opposite ends of things. But we focused on the times when they agreed and when they didn't agree, and how they dealt with one another, and then those things—the dynamics came forth. And I look up in this book by Reagan, *The American Life by Ronald Reagan*, and the substantive words that he says about Howard Baker, he said he was smart, fair, personable, savvy, savvy about Washington, and a decent man. What Ronald Reagan said about Howard Baker summed it all up. That's how he dealt with people. In every one of these ways he would use each of these personal characteristics to get what he wanted. Very good. And when Ronald Reagan needed a Chief of Staff, he went right to him. Because he knows that that's what gets things done in Washington, and Howard Baker could get Helms to cooperate by using those character traits. And I saw it almost on a daily basis for years. And grew to have a tremendous respect for Senator Baker because of it.

DW: Two small questions. One, this just occurred to me, and may be completely off the wall, but basically in the way you characterize Senator Helms as a legislator. And his skills in that area. Did the presence of John East as a colleague in the Senate make, in some sense or another, life more difficult for Senator Helms?

GD: Oh, quite the contrary. East is a man of great intellect. Great education. Thorough knowledge—a trained political scientist. Philosophically sound, and utterly and totally 110 percent devoted to Jesse Helms. In fact, John East, who is a close, dear personal friend of mine, actually, and I mean this in a complimentary way, saw himself as like a staff person for Helms. "What can we do to help Jesse?" And he used every resource at his command to do that. In fact, the newspapers in North Carolina used to, "We've got two Jesse Helms in the Senate. Jesse Helms got two votes. His and East." No, East was great. Now East, being a lifelong Republican, East being much more comfortable in the country club set than Helms, East being educated and Helms not, he got along, I'm sure, very, very well with Senator Baker, and was more of a party man. I think it would be very interesting to think about those people's relationship.

DW: I asked that because sometimes, at any rate, senators from the same state of the same party, and who are philosophically much alike, despite their intentions, perhaps, find themselves in competition with one another.

GD: Not in the Helms-East deal.
DW: Last question, and this perhaps is even more bizarre. I have been told, and this may not have been the case, when you were there, but that, at least for years, Bailey Guard, who you recall was the Staff Director of the Environment and Public Works, played a special role on a continuing basis in tobacco legislation. Is that—and as it was explained to me, he had started out working for John Sherman Cooper. And he became Cooper's expert on tobacco. And there are not a whole lot of people who really understand the technicalities of the tobacco program. So even after he was gone from Environment and Public Works, he was still turned to when the authorization time came up, etc.

GD: Yes. And of course, I can't know everything about what everybody did about all these issues, because they were very dynamic. Circumstances meant that, because of the positions I had, and that Helms had, and I as his proxy in these matters for carrying out day-to-day matters, was the de facto commander-in-chief of the tobacco forces. Now I might say parenthetically as one who doesn't use tobacco, and thinks that people who do are not using good judgment—I mean, you could find the—why am I spending half my time working on that. This is awful. But at any rate, I was the de facto commander-in-chief of the tobacco forces, and was orchestrating lots of people, but lots of people did things on their own, because they had their own constituencies and everything else. The role that I regard with Bailey Guard was that he was an old hand. And one thing that I learned very early on is, there's always somebody smarter than you are. You think you're smart? You don't have to look very far for somebody smarter. So I've tried to learn—I don't do a very good job of it—but I'm mindful for me to listen, and Bailey Guard was the kind of guy that would come up in an unassuming way and give me counsel and advice. And I learned quickly that it was very shrewd of me to take that advice and not to be disdainful of it just because he was of the old guard liberal school of things. He went out of his way to be very helpful to me, who was in a position that I had not asked to be. I didn't want to be the commander-in-chief of the tobacco force. The last thing in the world I would have signed up for. But he was very helpful, and we could not have achieved the successes we did, which were masterful—we saved the tobacco program. We put it on a free market basis, which is what Helms believed in—get the government out of running its day-to-day affairs. I mean it was just a masterful stroke of genius, what Helms accomplished in 1983. Of course, with the help of all the other people. You don't do anything single-handed. But yes, Bailey Guard played a major role in all that, and helped me in my education. I would like to go back and think more of that, because I think probably he has had a greater role in that
than if you had said that I would have been willing to give him. But you're right.

DW: Well, at that, let me conclude this session, and I trust there will be others, because this is so fascinating. And with our sincere thanks, and we wish you bon voyage on your trip to Mexico tomorrow.

GD: And on your trip back to Washington. You know, I might say, you know, one of the things I did about for a year, really, I spent—I was going to do about a third of my time—ended up spending all of my time—I put together the operations of the Jesse Helms Center Foundation. And we have his papers down at Wingate College, and we're engaged in bringing all that together in much the way you are doing for Senator Baker. So I have a special feeling in my heart for what you're doing --

DW: That's great.

GD: And I think a great man like Senator Baker deserves this to be part of the history of his papers, and of the country, because there is no question that he has had a masterful impact on our country, and is a great man and a warm, personable fellow who's had a profound impact on me. I mean, I watched Howard Baker operate. And I learned to respect people who are skillful at the art of compromise. I'm personally not as willing to compromise as much as he is. But by watching him and learning how to do that, he has had an impact on a lot of people in the running of the government in the way that I think Howard Baker would like to see the government run.

DW: What specifically did you learn from Baker that was of the greatest importance in pursuing the art of the compromise?

GD: Well, the art of dealing with people with whom you don't necessarily agree, to come to closure, to come to decisions about policy and about operations—about making things go, that causes there to be progress. And to have interpersonal relationships with people. I mean, 90 percent of the world's problems, 90 percent of the problems in business—I mean, even this little law firm in my own little rinky-dink fruit and vegetable business I run—I wouldn't have many problems if it weren't for interpersonal relationships that get out of kilter. And I just can't—you can be firm, and kind at the same time. Maybe that's what I learned from Howard Baker. You can have your hand on the throttle and not get tiring—
not be a jerk. There are a lot of jerks in the world—and a lot of jerks in Washington, and nobody would ever use the term jerk and Howard Baker in the same sentence meaning—you just couldn't do it. They are mutually incompatible terms. He's a great guy. Wonderful person.

DW: Well, that's a good note on which to close.

END OF TAPE