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DAVID PRYOR

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Had lunch with D.P. Thought I'd talk about the meeting on reform, but we talked more about Senate in general.

"I've been caught up in these reform ideas lately. A few of us got together at my house the other night. It turned out not to be a good night--Bill Bradley called from Germany, he had missed his plane, Paul Tsongas couldn't get out of Boston, George Mitchell couldn't come. It was just our class; but I invited George because he's in between. There were five of us (Baucus, Boren, Heflin, Exon). We had a good discussion about the germaneness rule and the filibuster. One Senator tied up the whole Senate last Friday night by breaking a filibuster. Everybody had to change plans, cancel plane reservations. (He pulled card out of pocket.) I'm going to talk to this man, Murry Zweben, next week. He used to be parliamentarian. I'm going to pick his brains. I had lunch with Doc Reddick last week. We talked about what can be done. He wants us to follow the British system, where you can't deliver prepared speeches in Parliament. He thinks that would save a lot of time. I had an intern study the amount of time spent in quorum calls and the amount of time we spent debating TV in the Senate. She found that we have spent exactly one-third of the session in quorum calls. Maybe we can't improve it. But there is something wrong with the system when one man can hold everything and we spend one-third of the time on quorum calls."

You seem like more of a reformer than most. What makes you a reformer?

"You're right. I am a reformer, aren't I? I don't know where that comes from. I made my first reputation in politics as a reformer. In the Legislature I was known as a Young Turk... (What did you do?) I tried to get rid of the poll tax, things like that. In every country they have what

we call the district highway <sup>Commission</sup> judge(?). They let the contracts for road building in each county. They let the contracts for tax, sand, gravel, cement or whatever. And under the system, they did all this without taking competitive bids. The first bill I introduced in the state legislature required competitive bidding for all state and local highway contracts. The first year I got 4 votes for that bill. Six years later I finally passed it, by six votes. I notice recently that several of those fellas went to jail."

"Maybe it wasn't so much that I was a reformer as it was that I was so opposed to Governor Faubus. I was philosophically oppoed to almost everything he did... Did I tell you my Governor Faubus story of a couple of weeks ago? I was scheduled to dedicate a confederate cemetary and I saw that Gov. Faubus was going to be there too. So I called him up. 'This is David Pryor.' 'Hello Senator, how are you?' 'How are you going to get to the dedication ceremonies on Thursday?' 'I was just planning to drive up.' 'Why don't I come around and pick you up. We can drive up together and tell war stories.' We had the most delightful trip. You would have loved to have been in the back seat listening to the conversation. I had a wonderful time. He's a real historian; he remembers names and dates and places. We were mortal enemies. But, sometimes you can learn from your enemies."

I asked him how many people he thought were truly gregarious in the Senate. "That's a good question. There are an awful lot of private people in the Senate. There are an awful lot of insecure people in the Senate. There are an awful lot of loners in the Senate. When we go home, we are a lot more gregarious. We have to be more outgoing. When we come back to Washington, it's almost a relief. The Senate is our haven. It's not that we want to get away from people. But we can relax more. We have a different function here... One of the things we say to each other is how little time

we spend with one another. Each Senator retreats into his own cubbyhole, his own cave. And we almost never get together as families. Molly and David Boren invited us over last night and we cooked hamburgers. We almost never, never do that. Last week the Nunn had 7 or 8 Senators over. We couldn't go; but Mrs. Nunn said we never see other other. It's true. We don't know one another... A Senator's office is an interesting place. It's your security blanket. When you are at home, you are one of thousands. When you are over on the Senate floor, you are one of a hundred. But when you get into your office you are one of one. The office is your security blanket. There are 20 or 30 people or more who wait on you, pamper you. Today, a button popped off my shirt and one of the women got out her sewing kit and fixed it up. Kaneaster Hodges, the man I appointed to the Senate, said that was the one thing he never got over. He said he went from being a country lawyer to being pampered and back to being a country lawyer all in the space of 11 months." He laughed.

We speculated some about leadership. He thinks that leaders have to keep some distance between themselves and the others, yet it is hard because they must be around all the time. He really stressed being around a lot as a key part of the job.

"My view of leadership is that knowledge is power. You can have a specialist's knowledge or a generalist's knowledge. Robert Byrd's leadership is based on his knowledge of the Senate rules. You can never catch him on a matter of parliamentary procedure. If you try, he will kill you. Everyone knows that. His knowledge of procedure is a powerful deterrent. But he does not stay on the floor a great deal. He retreats into his office, his cave, his cocoon. He doesn't go to parties. To every Republican member of the Senate, Howard Baker is 'Howard.' To the Democrats, Robert

Byrd is 'Mr. Leader.' Even Russell Long calls him 'Mr. Leader.' He's not one of the boys."

"When we sit around and speculate who might get it if Byrd stepped down as leader, there is absolutely no consensus. "

He mentioned Dee Huddleston 'crosses many philosophical lines.' "could work with Ted Kennedy" "Doesn't say much , but when he does, he has something to say. He doesn't waste the Senator's time. People appreciate that." Wendell Ford, Dan Inouye "Everybody likes him. He almost never speaks on the floor. But when he does, people listen to what he has to say."

Dale Bumpers. "He might be a strong candidate. But I don't think he has the discipline and the staying power to sit around on the floor all the time listening to other people talk."

Would you do it? "No. Given the option of staying around after six o'clock at night working out the Senate schedules or dealing with patronage and going home to water the shrubs, I believe I'd rather water the shrubs. Besides I'm not a student of procedure. I think the job requires that you know your procedure. I think that's probably less true now than it was of the old Senate where people would stick a knife in you, cut you up and leave you bleeding if you didn't know what you were doing. It's not like that anymore." Story about Jerry Ford cutting up Don Riegle in House.

We leave the diningroom. A girl jumps out from a group and says I'm from Arkansas." "Where are you from?" "Wynne." "Wynne, Arkansas." And he goes over to the group. Turns out they are all from Oklahoma. The man asks how they get to Howard Baker's office. "We are distant relatives, though we've never met." David takes them down the corridor, out into 95° sweltering heat, walks them to the corner, points out how to get to the

capitol and thence to Baker's office on the second floor. They leave.

"There's a great Wynne, Arkansas story about Winthrop Rockefeller when he was Govenor. He went to Wynne to speak to a group. He wasn't above taking a drink or two before a speech, because he was not very confident of his speaking ability. So by the time he got to Wynne he was a little snockered. He got up and started to talk. Everybody called him Win, you know. Well he got to the point where he said it was the first time he'd ever been in... been in... been in... He couldn't remember where he was. So he turned to an aide and whispered. Where am I? And the aide said "Wynne Wynne." And Rockefeller shouted "I know my name. What I want to know is where am I." Great laughter. Typical Pryor.

When we walked into the Room G211 of the Dirksen Building, "Senators Dining Room" (in which there are usually very few Senators) we went to a reserved table in the back right-hand corner. As we walked by the table at the center rear, David said to the large group sitting there "I see Oklahoma is out in force today." And from his seat in the left rear corner Jennings Randolph called out "That's right, Arkansas, more Oklahoma out of here." A little later in the meal, David looked over at Jennings Randolph, who was now on the telephone. "There's old Jennings Randolph calling one of his colleagues to wish them a happy birthday. That's Jennings' table and his seat. He's there seven days. It used to be John McClellan's. When John died, Jennings took it over. It's his now."

Two points--David's entrance into the diningroom was like his exit. He travels in an envelope of good feeling. There cannot be a nicer man in the Senate. And--his appreciation of the small point about the table is another exmple of his feeling for the Senate and some of its institutional past. You

might say that the older Senate was like that--McClellan to Randolph. You can't imagine Chuck Grassley or Paul Tsongas noticing such a little thing or giving a damn.

Somewhere in our discussion of reforms I said David needed a new theory of the Senate--one that held to the view that the Senate should be different from the House but one which did not depend on Rule 22 to underpin that difference. ( Maybe I could construct one.)

Anyhow, he mused. "Maybe it's too bad that Senators have to vote at all. It might be better if we just debated the issues. We could come up with policies but not have to vote on them. Why should Senators have to prove that they are fallible, that they are human." It was tongue in cheek, but it was a "grope" for a difference.

I told him the Bill Frenzel story about how he said Senators didn't know their district and he didn't care if they ever came home, that they should be abstract thinkers who served a term and then went off somewhere else, no one would miss them, etc.

David replied "You hear Senators<sup>2</sup> say: 'Congressmen are just caseworkers. They handle social security problems and veterans checks. They have to be around every weekend--among the great unwashed. They are no different from city councilmen.'" He chuckled.

When we talked about potential leaders, I noted that none of the people he mentioned talked much. "They aren't the talkers. They are, more the students of the Senate.'