CLAIBORNE PELL

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I waited in his Capitol office while he voted on the balanced budget amendment. He came back. "It passed. It was one of the toughest votes I've ever cast. I did not know how I was going to vote until the roll call started. Emotionally I wanted to vote for it. But intellectually I just couldn't. Politically I know I should have voted for it. My entire staff was against it. I sat and listened to the debate for an hour and a half. I hope I did the right thing. (later) I'm sure it was wrong politically. I'm considered too liberal in Rhode Island, and it would have given me something to point to (he thrusts his arm out and points) in my election campaign. I can explain to him why I voted against it. But politically it would be better to have something positive to point to... Well it's over. One thing I've learned is to put it behind you once it's done. I worry like the dickens about something before I decide. Once it's over and done with I erase my copy book."

"Nobody put any pressure on me. I have the reputation of wanting to be left alone. If I get pressure my tendency is to go the other way. People know that. I have a very low key style (puts hands in front of him, palms down like an umpire signally safe.) I'm not as flashy as a lot of people here. But then since I've been here I've watched a lot of people flashier than I am come and go." He shrugs.

I asked him if the five guys in Congress before him didn't give him a sense of the long view. "I think I have more forebears who served in Congress than any member extant. Jamie Symington had the same number, 5. Theodore Green had five. That's where I got the idea for the panel. He had his forebears arranged the same way. I guess the tradition does matter."
At least I've always tried to decide what's best for the country--as I did in the last vote. I've tried to act in the tradition of Theodore Green. If I have, that means Rhode Island has had the same kind of Senator continuously since 1938. We both had our independence.

How is it going with you. "It's going very well. The work continues to be hard, but after you have been around you learn to skim the material. You go over the same ground so many times that nothing seems very new."

"Time goes by so fast. I'm 62, but I feel just as energetic as I did when I came here at 41. I measure that by the number of laps around the track I run every week. My memory may not be quite so good as it was. But you learn not to use so much waste motion."

"I'm thinking about running again. No I've decided to run. I'm getting ready to run." (I reminded him that right after his election he said he would run again. 'Did I?') A year or two ago I toyed with the idea of leaving office. I wanted to take up archeology and go dig somewhere. I'm very interested in that. I want to write a biography of my father. I want to write my own autobiography. I've gotten very interested in para psychology--extrasensory perception, perceptions of dying, life after death, those sorts of things. I'd like to take some courses in those subjects. If God denied me the opportunity to serve again, I'd have a whole list of things to do. I would be busier than ever... But what I'm doing is too exciting to give up. Everything else pales beside it. Congress gives you a platform that you can't get anywhere else. So I'll have to wait till I quit to do these other things.

Do you feel election year psychology coming on. "A little--in my family life. My wife is a little less keen about my running than she was 20 years ago."

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She's important to you, isn't she? "Yes, very important. She's important to my emotional health. She has excellent judgment. And the people of Rhode Island are very fond of her. She gets along well with people of all kinds."

Then he said "It's been a very slow summer--not like other summers. We haven't had as many clambakes as usual." Then he asked me if I didn't think the summer was slow. I said, yes, it was--in Congress; and so the subject got diverted from his sense of not campaigning.

On the matter of this Congress (the subject with which I opened our lunch) "The difference between this Congress is that it's impossible to pass any creative legislation. And I've also had to watch while the things I have created--like museum services and sea grant colleges--are slated for extinction. They haven't been abolished yet, but the administration is trying. And they are cutting back on other programs I authorized, like student loan. It gets you down; and I'm feeling a little down right now. My drunk driving bill will probably be vetoed by the president because it costs 50M... My corrections education bill--to educate people in jail, a very important subject isn't going anywhere. It's a bit discouraging.

Then he went on to talk about a treaty on environmental impact assessments that he got through the Senate and admin is not implementing. That bothers him.

"On the other hand, I enjoy my work on the foreign relations committee. I downplay my foreign policy activity in Rhode Island. It is no help to me politically... I think we've been a pretty effective minority. We've got some very good people, Biden, Glenn, Tsongas, Sarbanes. They are very
smart." (Who do you consult with?) "Nobody in particular. I keep in close
touch with Biden--he's next in line, and Glenn. And I rely very heavily
on Jerry Christenson, head of the minority staff. He's excellent... Chuck
Percy has turned out to be an excellent chairman. The only trouble with
him is that he talks too much. But then I talk too little, so it balances
out. But people on our side get upset because he makes such long opening
statements that we don't have enough time left."

On relations with the press. "I have very good relationships with
the press. They trust me. They all begin by assuming you're a liar and
you have to prove otherwise. I guess I've proved that over the years. I
think I'm the only politician in Rhode Island that has not criticized the
Providence Journal for 22 years. That's a record. They've been fair.
They haven't always given me the publicity I want; but then they've given
me some breaks I didn't deserve, so it all irons out in the end. I don't
make a lot of public comments. I know that's not the way to run for Presi-
dent. Carl Hayden said you'll never get into trouble for something you
didn't say. The national press calls me a lot for comments. But if I
don't have anything to say or if I don't have any obligation to speak out
I don't. Yesterday, for example we had a luncheon with the Israeli
Ambassador. I was asked for a comment before the luncheon and I said 'no
comment.' We had quite an unsatisfactory lunch. But I saw no point in
saying so. When I was asked to say something after the lunch, I said no
comment."

After the lunch, when we went out on the "green triangle--according
to Bill Bryant" for him to make a statement on balanced budget, someone
wanted a statement on situation in Beirut. He said to Bill. "No, I've
said enough on Israel." Bill told the guy no. Then walking back Bill said someone (UN?) was proposing sanctions on Israel for moving on West Beirut. "That's a good idea, but I can't say that."

His behavior on the TV statement was interesting. When we left his office to go to lunch, ("Can I offer you a spot of lunch?") he called his secretary and told her where he was going and to tell "Bill" where he was and to tell Bill to come over when he had the statement ready for him. Halfway through lunch, Bill came with a page and a half, doubled spaced press statement. Anyway he read the pages very carefully and decided to cut out the last sentence. Then he started to change it; then Bill talked to him back into cutting it out. Then Bill said he had a channel 6 guy waiting at the "green triangle" outside the Senate. Bill gives him the familiar nickname, as if everyone knew where it was; and Pell asks "Where is it?" Bill explains. "How soon do you want me?" "15 minutes." He looks at me and I say 15 minutes will be plenty of time to finish eating. Then he says "OK - 15 or 20 minutes." Maybe you'd better come back and get me in 15 or 20 minutes. Bill says "OK 15 minutes." We go back to the interview. As he reflects on the vote, he says to himself "Why don't I just say that emotionally I wanted to vote for it but intellectually I couldn't. I've got to fix that. So he gets up from the table, goes to a phone and tells Bill he wants statement changed. Bill comes to pick him up. Pell says "Did you get my message? Why can't I just say 'Emotionally I wanted to vote for it but intellectually I can't.'" Bill says fine, but you will be asked to explain why you couldn't vote vs. it. Bill tells Pell the name of the guy from Channel 6. "He's new. He's an amateur. So you can expect some bumbling from him." Pell stands there, waiting his turn at the camera.
He's got a cord jacket, light summer pants, blue shirt with white collar, brown shoes all scuffed up. The heels have 2" square scuff holes that have removed all the brown leather. Danforth is there with coat slung over shoulder like he's about to have a campaign picture taken, Hatch is impeccably dressed. Thurmond has tailored black pinstripe on. And there's this funny looking duck Pell. He's very awkward with the public relations staff.

When we walked back into the Senate, he said that anytime he could be of help, that he was just at the end of the telephone line and that I should not hesitate to call him. He was being very nice. We parted. I stayed by the elevator to say hi to Bill Cohen, who was coming through the door. Pell came back and said that I could use his Watts line anytime to make calls or use his office if I wanted to. And he asked me to keep his biography in mind. He was being kind—his own awkward, halting. New England type way—warm without being offensive.

"I haven't paid much attention to the labor committee this year because not much is going on there. I have trouble working with the likes of Denton and East. (How about Quayle?) He's better than the others. He's more elastic than they are. He and I even cosponsored an amendment. Of course, I can't forget that he defeated my friend Birch Bayh. And I can never forgive D'Amato, who ran such a dirty campaign against Javits." (we were interrupted at that point.)

Talked about '68. "I wanted to be Vice President in 1968. " Muskie got it. But he and I had the same credentials, same background though we had been here two years longer than I had. Oh and he had been governor. He was a better speaker than I am and it was probably a good choice. But I was very keen on it at the time. We spent 800 to 1000 on it. We had a couple
of people going around to the different delegations and we sent out a letter to all delegates. But it wasn't to be. I had to erase my copy book on that... It was a terrible convention. I was a member of the platform committee working on the peace plan. For two weeks, I never worked any harder in my life. I was a strong peace advocate. I was called a traitor by people in my own delegation. The entire experience left me so depressed I couldn't do anything for two weeks afterwards."

He went on to talk about his secret visits to Europe to talk to North Viet Namese "in probable violation of the Logan Act" to try to help arrange peace—and it was there that he said Senate membership gave you a platform from which to do such things and you couldn't give it up.

"I dread the thought of the Democrats winning back control of Senate. I would have to be Chairman of Foreign Relations, Chairman of my Education subcommittee and I would have to campaign for reelection at the same time. I don't know how I could manage it. When you are chairman you have to go to all the meetings and it takes so much time. I don't think it will happen, though. ("I could.") That would be awful.

Two Fred Hashway stories. Fred goes to pick up CP for a day of campaigning. He gets to Pell's house. Pell comes downstairs half dressed to say to Fred "You're late." Then goes back upstairs to get dressed; and they go.

Fred is leaning on a pile of books in the office and they tip over with a big crash. Pell turns to Fred. "Fred, did I make you do that?"

"No, Senator, it was my fault." "Well, usually it's me." Fred sees this as being "humble." It's also part of seeing himself as a bit of a misfit in his business.

Fred repeated the silk purse story—but with a somewhat different message—that he works at getting along with ordinary people. "For some
people the problem is making a silk purse out of a sow's ear. For me the problem is making a sow's ear out of a silk purse."

His office is an incredible clutter of pictures, awards, mementos, books. He pointed out the highlights to me—his father before he died, his father as a young man, a picture with Prince Charles, a big portrait of the ancestor who was VP, a land purchase document signed by Thomas Jefferson, etc. He asked me again if he'd given me a copy of his father's biography. And we began our luncheon conversation.

His five ancestors were:

(1) William C. Claiborne - Rep. from Tenn in 5th and 6th Cong.
(3) George M. Dallas, Sen. from Pa., 22nd Cong. and Vice Pres.
(4) John F. Claiborne, Rep. from Miss. 24-25th Cong.
(5) Herbert Claiborne Pell, Jr., Rep. from NY 66th Cong.

I asked if he was more comfortable committee or more intimate. But when I manage a bill on the floor, that's very exciting. I'm comfortable in both places."