

CLAIBORNE PELL

November 3 - 4, 1984

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I arrived, was picked up by Leo Skenyon and Jack Cummings. They took me to a neighborhood where Sen. and Mrs. Pell and their son Bertie, s State Rep. Frriedmann, and a few others were walking neighborhoods. They told me immediately that Pell was getting good responses for himself, but not for Mondale, or the governor candidate, Anthony Solomon.

Mrs. Pell opined later, in the car, that she thought Solomon hurt himself badly with negative ads vs. his opponent diPrate--who is apparently well ahead in the polls. I mention Mrs. Pell's remark about Solomon's negative campaigning, because she recalled later that in 1972, "We were way behind in the polls. Everything changed in the middle of October and do you know why--because Chafee began to dump on Claiborne. People don't like negative advertising. But Alan Cranston doesn't agree. He thinks the only way Helms could have caught up to Hunt was by running those awful ads."

Anyhow we whipped around from event to event, in typical urban political style. They have a van and when they took on the Gov's candidate, Solomon, I rode withe the governor's honchos for a while. Then, Bertie suggested I'd be interested in the conversation in the van and I was squeezed back in. No thanks to the senior Pells.

Anyway, the campaign is still squirrely--not the campaign, really, but the Pell phenomenon. And it is really a phenomenon.

He doesn't look like a politician or act like a politician. When he speaks he speaks in a very partisan tone. So people would think of him as a kind of old line liberal Democrat.

When he goes anyplace, it's like a triumphal tour--especially the big party dinner at Burrilville. Everyone knows him, likes him, respects him, glories

in him. He's at a stage where he's an institution. Leo compares him to Pastore and Green. Others mentioned those two, also.

"The press has been lazy in covering this campaign. They have been monumentally ~~uninterested~~ in my campaign." I noticed that in the Sunday Journal ~~of~~ Political Columns.

Contrast between him and Solomon was great. Hearty heavily backstopper "I love to shake hands, I could shake hands all day." versus shy handclasp. "That took incredible physical effort, Nuela." It was a kind of complaint. To which she said something like--"Well you're running and we aren't."

After his talk to the North Providence Senior Citizens Dance - he said "Did my speech go all right?" It was a few remarks of about 2 minutes duration. And he fretted about it. He talked about holding hearings in Washington at which the witnesses had average age of 100, about another hearing on elderly matters "I'm getting very interested in these problems." and about meeting a group of elderly people in Soviet Union over 100 years old, about how he was a senior citizen himself and about how quality of life and attitude were important for elderly.

One possible theme is that Biltmore is like Pell - elegant shabby hotel, old fashioned, (~~no TV in rooms~~), unstuck wallpaper around the shower, peeling paint on all walls and doors, Gorham china plates in dining room.

He is serious, liberal, independent and, in style, the very opposite of a slick modern TV Kerry-like candidate. But it's like an icon. You don't think about him anymore.

It looks after one evening, just like a replay of 1978. No coverage, weak opponent. (this one is calling him "stillborn," "arrogant," "aloof," too. But it doesn't stick.

In the Burrillville introduction, the man mentioned Pell grants. So did the Journal endorsement. That tag helps identify his liberalism and his seniority all at the same time. And that combination, plus personal integrity, seems to do the trick. And he is thought to have (several people told me--Bonnie Cimos husband and Anthony Soloman) a good constituency operation.

Pell going up in the elevator to Cimino's party--"Cimino, Cimino, Cimino, Cimino..." (Simeeno). In the morning, Dan told Shawn about this and about the elevator stopping abruptly on the way out of Cimino headquarters as if they were funny highlights of the evening. The campaign is not filled with hilarity or good spirit and they take what little they can get by way of light moments.

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Pell looks over his schedule, Dan's schedule, his wife's schedule and "the master schedule" of all scheduled Democratic events over and over and over, checking where he should be when, how closely they are adhering to the schedule, fretting and worrying. He spent the first half hour this morning criticizing the choice of events by working from the master schedule "which I've been asking for for four days." He was ~~up~~ <sup>upset</sup> that no representative of his had been designated to go to certain parties that were on the master list. "After 24 years in politics, you learn who gets upset when you don't show up and who doesn't. At the children's disability function no one will care if I don't come because there are no party people there. But at Barryton, their noses will be out of joint if no one shows up."

Shawn: "Up till a week ago, he said 'We should do everything for Claiborne Pell. A week ago we changed everything to 'We should do everything for the Democratic party."

"We all have our own styles. I'm not a very good speech maker."

Re introducing Ferraro. "I was scheduled to introduce Ferraro, but I've

told the others I'm willing to give it up to Solomon. It might be better for Ferraro if I did it, but it will be better for Anthony if he doesn't. I've thrown it in their laps." Nuela "Have you started to think through what you will say if it is passed back to you?" "I've started to think it through. Any suggestions? I'll probably get all primed for it and then not have to do it." Mrs. Pell thinks Gov. Garrahy should do it. Later: CP says "It's getting amusing. When they heard I decided to let Solomon introduce Ferraro, the Mondale people called and said They wanted me to do it. They were quite upset. They said it will seem like I'm trying to distance myself from the ticket. So Solomon will introduce me and I'll introduce Ferraro."

I walked behind him as he shook hands at Archies--our first stop this morning. Everyone said "Hello, Senator" or "Good Morning, Senator". He is known to the common folk as "Senator" and his wife is known as "Mrs. Pell"--in and out of the entourage. Only Bertie calls them something else, i.e., "daddy" and "mummy"!

Discussion of Solomon's smarts - not "educated" CP - "Joe (Garrahy) is smarter than Anthony". Nuela "I don't think so at all. Anthony is very smart." CP "He's street smart but not well educated." Nuela "He went to college. He's better educated than Joe Garrahy." CP - "That's right. Joe Garrahy didn't go to college. I guess Anthony is better educated than Joe."

Re the marathon - "It will be the most fun of anything we'll do today, but it will do me the least political good. Well, one object of politics is to have fun." Afterwards - "It was a complete waste of these hours." They thought it would be a media event. It was not. It was badly scheduled, advanced and executed.

To small boy while walking around the neighborhood, kid says that they are



going to have mock election. "Be sure you vote not according to personality of the candidate but according to the issues. Separate the charm from the ideas."

7th Ward Dem - "Great Senator CP" "Friends - I've been with you so many times." make sure we have a Dem. slate up and down...are we better off under dem. than repub. Do you feel more secure? No things are more tense and difficult with Soviet Union.

Then he goes to domestic security - "Security in terms of war, security at home, we have not had a good time."

Supp for M-F and Solomon.

I talked with Tom Hughes about the campaign - about Claudine Schneider, he summed up "she scared the shit out of us, that's for sure." and about Barbara Leonard. "It all gets pretty boring once she's the candidate."

The interesting fact about Schneider was that she told Pell at a luncheon (she requested) in March or April of 1983 that she had decided not to run. In August she holds press conference saying she will not run but leaving a door open. But she says negative things about Pell--been there too long, etc. And all fall she fans the flame and basks in a will she-won't she climate. Says she's getting pressure from Lugar and lots of other people she mentions. In December, she and her husband are at same party and she runs after Pell who's in his car, bangs on window and says she's not running. "She never did say definitely and publicly that she was not going to run. It just gradually became clear that she was not. Her <sup>news</sup> ~~news~~ that she told the principal that she was not going to run, that she's an honorable person, and that she never changed her mind. But she sure scared the shit out of us."

When <sup>Schneider</sup> Leonard tells Pell in March-April at lunch that she's decided, after long talks with husband, that she's not going to run, he tells her not to be hasty and not to decide that early and to think it over very carefully! An interesting reaction - honorable Pell!

(Schneider)

Tom says the polls showed her to be the strongest candidate and that it would be very close; that it would not be ideological battle because they were both liberal; that it would be a clash of personalities. She was more favored in other district than her own. A media candidate, smart, scrappy. He doesn't know why she didn't do it. They have no record (public) of her having done a poll, but they assume she did have one. Maybe she didn't have the stomach to take on an old friend on non-ideological grounds.

Tom lays great stress, in setting the stage for their outlook on the changes taking place in R.I. politics--particularly the disillusionment with old politics, the fact that R.I. came through the recession better than lots of other states (restaurants full, foreign cars appearing, etc.) and that the economic fortunes of people favored Reagan as well fueled desire for change. Repubs. gained a lot of Senate seats in special election of June 1983.

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greenhouse Part(?) an industrial policy <sup>endured by all leaders</sup> ~~endangered its old ladies -~~  
"felt like a rock" and 81% against. It's the yuppies that did that. "We knew something very important was happening in R.I. politics, that a lot of movement was taking place, and that it was helping the Republicans. The Democrats --even reform group Democrats--were seen as the old way of doing things. Pell may be an institution, but he was becoming an institution at a time when people in the country and in R.I. were turning against institutions. We had a lot to worry about."

Problem early on "as there always is with Senator Pell, getting him engaged enough to do things like raise money. Only he can raise money. But he traditionally waits until the last possible moment before committing himself to run. There was never any doubt that he would run, but he would not let us do anything about it. I would go to meetings of all the administrative assistants

and be amazed at the amount of money those pirates had collected in 1983. This time Senator Pell wanted to run a William Proxmire campaign without spending any money at all. He wanted to validate the idea that he had become an institution in the state. Whether he has or not--and I think perhaps he has--this is not the basis on which to run a campaign. And Proxmire, after all, is in the public eye constantly. Pell is not. Just the opposite. He tends to be out of the public eye for fairly long periods. His support is wide, but think ~~the~~ people like him but they do not know a lot of what he has done. So we had to insert Pell into the state, let people know not just that he is their senator, but that he is candidate for reelection. It was very hard to get him to move. But we did start to raise a little money, from the Jewish community and from labor; and in June 1983 we held our first real big fund raiser in the Biltmore ballroom. And we've been able to raise quite a lot of money, by our standards--about \$750,000."

But they don't seem to indicate the kind of preemptive strategy they tried in 1978. Perhaps the difference here is that in 1978 they were worried about a Democrat running vs. them and this time it was a Republican(?)

The next day, Tom said, after I had read the clips and they gave no evidence of a race. "One factor we didn't talk about last night was the decision by all the reporters of the state's daily newspapers--encouraged by us--that the Senate race was settled and not worth reporting. It was a non-story; and there were a great many other stories to write about. We have ignored Mrs. Leonard. And, whenever she tried to get some publicity, the reporters were always off covering some other event they considered more important--~~the~~ the governor's race, for example."

My morning spent with clips showed ~~4~~ almost no evidence of a race. Mrs. Leonard got more stories that were connected with the race than CP did. He got mostly senatorial duties type of stories. Tom told me last night that this was their

strategy up until nearly the last 2 weeks of the campaign--when he began talking party. They wanted to keep him senatorial as long as they possibly could. And then he toured party functions. My search for a Pell story in 2 sections of Sunday's PJ confirmed the "non-story" aspect of the race. At one point riding around, Pell complained that he hadn't had one "profile" in the papers so far, and that Leonard had had one. "Have I had any profiles yet in any of the papers--a curriculum vitae. I know she has had some, but I haven't seen any of mine."

\*Pell may be my best example of a person who has become an institution back home is not highly respected in Washington. He's hard to touch back home, for reasons that are a little mysterious.

Pell climbed into the back seat with me on the ride down to Newport for the marathon, and we had our interview. As usual, it was not filled with insight--and I'm recounting it from notes a day later. So...

I asked him first if he could go through the campaign stages for me.

"It was not until two years ago that I definitely decided to run. I wanted to run a campaign like Bill Proxmire or George Aiken. I did not want to spend any money on the campaign--no money for TV or anything else. My advisors argued very strongly against it and I eventually gave in. But I tried to tamp them down for nearly two years. We raised money. But we didn't really begin our campaign until September." (That's when he hired most of his 8 person campaign staff.) Tom says they raised money from Jews, labor, Greeks.

I asked him to compare campaign with 1978. "My opponent has conducted the most unpleasant campaign of any I have had. She has begun lately to use strong adjectives like "gutless," "arrogant," "aloof" and words like that. (Leo said she called him "stillborn" just like the guy in 1978) I have not replied to any of her accusations and I do not intend to. That's in keeping with my policy, which I

have observed for 24 years, of running a positive campaign. I have never attacked my opponent or responded to attacks by my opponent. I have a reputation for always conducting a positive campaign, no matter how tough the campaign may be. And I have had two very tough campaigns--1972 against John Chafee and 1960 against <sup>Howard M'Carthy</sup> Dennis Roberts. I know that many of my colleagues feel you must become negative. I don't. To me, positive campaigning is good politics. And I have been very successful. Why should I (pats self on chest) among all politicians be so successful without ever doing any negative campaigning?" I said "because you have a reputation and you are behaving consistently with that reputation." And he said "But how did I get that reputation to begin with?" And I laughed. "I wasn't following you then."

It is a mystery, of course, as I have noted many times. I must have something to do with the tradition he represents. A public service kind of tradition that people of New England do respond to.

I asked him whether R.I. had changed since 1978. He replied in longer run terms. "One change is the movement of the population from the cities to the suburbs. Exurbia is growing. Another is that while in the early days I campaigned by speaking French and Portugese and Italian, I don't do that anymore. It's partly because my languages have gotten rusty; but it's also because the people of the state don't speak their native languages to the degree they did when I started. I'm less comfortable with it; but so are they."

He noted in passing that he had worked hard to develop the Portugese cultural society.

I noted the story on the governor's race which emphasized the desire for change in Rhode Island and which wrote about the impending victory of the Republican candidate in those terms. I asked him how he thought he had escaped that idea that change was needed. "Potentially, it was a good issue for my opponent if she had been able to use it effectively. There is always a desire to throw the rascals out. Seniority can be a big advantage, but it allows your opponent to pick out a few

votes and concentrate on them. (He reaches for his wallet and pulls out a piece of paper) I have cast 8,809 roll call votes during my career. There is plenty of opportunity to find fault with some of those votes. But perhaps I have become institutionalized in Rhode Island. That happened to Theodore Green, who served for 30 years, and was 93 when he retired. I may be in the same position that he was."

If he thinks that way, he's thinking about another run, so that he can do as well as Green. And, as Tom agreed without a second's doubt, he wants more than anything in the world to be Chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Tom says CP has not said anything about 1990, but that he did append a note on top of a set of names of young Jewish leaders he'd met "This would be a nice group to begin with in 1990." Tom doesn't know how serious that was.

Tom Hughes said a couple of times--once in the evening and once in the morning that "Pell is Reagan and Leonard is Mondale." He's being senatorial; he's staying away from the press; he's (my idea) the Teflon Senator; she's trying to get a hand hold.

Tom: "She made a fatal mistake at the very outset. She made the deficit her major issue. And our polls show that no one really cares about the deficit." In any case, that's a hard issue for a Republican to use.

In connection with Pell's aversion to negative campaigning, Shawn Sullivan said a couple of times "he doesn't want to offend anyone." I think that's a clue to Pell. He doesn't want to offend anyone. As he says "Most of what you do in politics is not making things better, it's keeping people from getting angry at you." He's not helping the staff get in to the Ferraro rally, but rather looking back helplessly as they get separated from him in the crush was one example. Susan and Shawn were very upset. Taking the two large Pell signs out

of the windows of the car when we went to the Newport marathon, for fear people along the route (if the van went along the route) would be "offensive" to some people, was another example. I said I would give them "most scrupulous campaign" award if they took them off. And they said "Don't forget." "I'm afraid some people would find it offensive" says Pell. It was the largest crowd we would see that day; and most politicians would find the opportunity to ride into the finish line area with a sticker on the car a publicity bonanza. Not Pell. The mere fact that he raised the issue was indicative of the great case he takes not to be offensive. He's complex. Peavish at one point, solicitous at another. When I left, he said "I'm at your service anytime."

On Pell grants he said "I owe Tom Eagleton a great debt of gratitude. The program was originally called the <sup>basin</sup> ~~Equal~~ Opportunity Educational Grants(?) It was his idea and his suggestion that they be called Pell Grants. In Rhode Island 17,000 students have used Pell Grants and 100,000 have been awarded." They get mentioned often during his introductions.

Tom agreed that they have been a real bonanza for him, but he said most people don't know what they are. "You have to be in a certain socio-economic category to know what they are. We had a group of 8 interns this summer from <sup>P.40</sup> ~~our~~ states, all very smart, mostly upscale, and only 2 of them had ever heard of Pell Grants."

I asked him about his accomplishments during 6 years and he emphasized idea of damage control, trying to keep things from getting worse. But he wasn't very specific--or, he was and I can't recall.

On his committee goals, he said that if he became chairman he would want to work on "arms control," "normalization of relations with Cuba," and exploring extra-sensory perception, para-psychology. "If you believe some people can tell



whether a missile is really a missile 1500 miles away, then you would want to know that. I don't talk too much about these things since people would say he's off the wall. And you wouldn't rely wholly on that one source of information, but you wouldn't ignore it either."

I said he must have a lot of name and face recognition. "Very high" and he muttered something about gray hair not changing much. But he is noticed everywhere--by passing cars, in public places. He never goes anywhere but what people don't say "There's Senator Pell". It's "Senatah Pell "always."

I noted the introduction he got. At K of C Hall--our last stop. "He has given us dignity. He has made the little state of R.I. known around the world."

At Rep. Kushner's party - she said "For years, I've been a Pell groupie."

Justice Michaelson called him "A man of vision, a man of peace, a world leader. You don't know how lucky you are to have Senator Pell as your Senator."

Lieut. Gov. Candidate Richard Licht - said "the greatest treat of the campaign for me is to be on the same ticket with Sen. Pell."

Tony Bucci *at his* pep rally. "No one person in the U.S. has done more for education than Claiborne Pell. Hundreds of thousands of young people have been able to go to college because of C.P. No one in the U.S. knows more about foreign policy than Claiborne Pell. In his own immutable (sic) quiet, professional way, he has performed services well for the people of R.I. In every respect, he is a public servant."

After Archie's restaurant, he said to me--because he found out from that the 2 events he had not been scheduled for last night had 900 people. "The campaign hasn't come together yet. Do you get the feeling that things aren't clicking the way they were 6 years ago--I think the difference is that we don't have the competition this year."

There's a lot of the absentminded professor look about him--he always looks slightly distracted and in need of someone to tell him where to go and what to say.

His clothes run from old fashioned to upscale bowery. He drives an old car, wears rubbers, has shirts with frayed collars, pants too short to reach his shoes with high cuffs, rumpled jackets. There's a kind of eccentricity about him that gives him an image of independence and as being something of a distinctive character in the sense of being both respected and eccentric. Maybe that's what an institution is!

Pell's evaluation of PD's "let's roll", which comes at the beginning of every trip is "right on the button" which comes at the end of every trip. Pell wants to be on time to every event. He keeps track and whenever we get to an event on time, he'll say "right on the button, good job, Dan."

Another characteristic of the eccentric style is the addiction to the Biltmore--built in 1922. "This is a nice hotel, don't you think?" he said to me as we waited at the elevator. I asked "Is this your favorite hotel?" "Yes." "Is this where you always stay?" "Yes." And Mrs. Pell said "In the same room we stayed in in 1960" (1401). They've been staying in the same elegant-shabby hotel for 24 years!

Re Providence Journal. "Their endorsement is very unusual. It's a Republican paper. They've only endorsed me twice. But the paper has been very fair to me in their reporting." When Mrs. Pell got into the car Sunday morning, she said "We got endorsed. But they gave more space to Leonard than they did to us."

Pell in car 1st day. "We don't have the competition this time that we had last time."

"She's attacking me more, but less effectively."

He kept complaining about not having the master schedule. "I've been asking for it for 3 days."

Other 1st day introductions - Burrillville "Thank God for Claiborne Pell. Now, we are (in introductions) looking beyond R.I., because the whole country owes a debt of gratitude to CP. He does it all in a quiet way, an effective way. He is as intellectual as they come; and yet he communicates with all stratas (sic)

of R.I. Look what he's done for R.I. He's done more for education than any Senator in the history of the U.S. He has given us leadership in foreign affairs. Boy, are we lucky to have him; and we ain't going to let him go."

Just before I left Pell's Federal Building office, his secretary said that Senators were calling in to ask where they should call tomorrow to congratulate CP on his victory!

I don't get an awful lot of notes with CP. He does not talk much. He does not elaborate much. He does not bullshit much. He doesn't like small talk (Said at one point he hated to be committed to stay in with a small group for a length of time beyond that which it takes to meet each one. "Once you've said what you have to say, I hate to have to hang around any longer." Or something like that. But you could never picture him sitting around like PD at his last house party drinking beer and not really wanting to go home. You can picture CP wanting to go home to read a book.

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