

*could you put in JF with
reception phone & copy in post
in school vouchers*

1st dgs *Glenn - happy b8
fusion technology*
2nd *Ch of C. in caty
Transportation*
3rd *EPA*
4th *Auto plant*

*part with
hifish
Luneth*

Mac Collins (R/GA) - February 1998

Book #1

- Ted Jones, Brian Jones, Jean Studdard Betty Munro, Clark Reid, Sari Greenberg
- I flew down on Tuesday, stayed at Hilton, went over to new office late that day. Betty Bush was there and Ted Jones (new constituent service guy). Met Lisa Parrish in airport. She was going to Colorado Springs for "orientation." Shirley picked me up next morning, went to office. Mac came with Brian Jones and we took off. Left briefcase in office. Jean Studdard and Betty Bush met in Meriwether and Jean brought it to Jonesboro office.
- Someone said along the way of Mac, "Without his help, we'd be a lost ball in high weeds." *(a trucker who knows the district by ways)*
- Max Cleland called Mac "the working man's friend."
- Re Eastern, Newt didn't help workers set up an arbitration board. Would you have done so? "You bet I would. I would have been right under their noses." Why didn't he? "Lack of understanding of the problems of uneducated blue collar workers by an educated person who hasn't had any relevant experience. I understand blue collar folks and there are a lot of them in this district. There is a guy who writes for one of the papers who calls me 'Bubba Collins.'"
- "I can go down to the garage and sit there and talk to them and I can go to the board room of the bank and talk to them. And I can make them understand the point of view of the working person. I've been there and I'm proud of it."
- "You've heard of Herman Talmadge. My style is often compared to that of Herman Talmadge. Last year, they dedicated a building (?) to Senator Talmadge. There were two speakers at the dedication, Governor Zell Miller and Mac Collins--at the request of Herman Talmadge. I like Newt Gingrich, but as far as a comparison with Herman Talmadge ~~and~~ Newt Gingrich, I'll take Herman Talmadge any old time." *or*
- Easy to represent? "It's not difficult. I was born and raised in this area. *It's not difficult* I just apply common sense to the issues."
- Could you conceive of one that would be easier? "Yes, I could have a district that was easier, because I have a constituency, 90% of whom would not vote for me under any circumstances. It's not me. It's because I'm a Republican."

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It's not hard to represent them really, because I represent them the same way I represent everyone else. They don't want my type of representation. I will not act like my predecessors in order to gain their vote. They know that. It will take a long time to change. It won't have anything to do with what I do. Family styles will have to change, the courts are now changing affirmative action."

- He prides self on talking the same way to every group. "If I talk to a total Republican committee, I don't change anything I would say to any other group. If it's a total Republican group, the only thing I might say is something about the administration. But I don't use the Republican label that much. If I speak of Congress, I never call it the Republican Congress, I call it the Republican-led Congress."
- "There's a difference between the Democrats and the Republicans in the way they handle problems. We deal with the same issues every year, and the President and his party look at them from a different angle than we do."
- Talking to reporter on his car phone re his decision not to run for Governor, and supporters response that they didn't want him to run, but would support him if he did: "Of course, I get a lot of good support because I'm on the Ways and Means Committee that handles taxes, social security, medicare and trade. That has bought me a lot of support."
- Brian Jones piped up that he liked Mac's line in debate with Chafin. Chafin says Mac voted with Gingrich 95% (or so) of the time, and Mac said, "No, Gingrich agreed with me 90% of the time." Brian thought it was Mac's best line.
- He didn't bite on my what's most important, personal or policy. "What's most important is that you engage in a dialogue with your constituents so that you understand them and will have a better way to explain your vote to them if you differ. Your vote is a record for your entire constituency."
- Going home. "I'm lucky if I stay in DC four weekends a year." What if you only went home one weekend a ^{month} year, would it make any difference? "It would have no effect. I have a good communication system in the office. And I do a lot of phone calls out of the office in Washington. I may come home on a Thursday and spend Friday floating around to the coffee shops and spend a little time in the office. But I see very few people. Their thinking is, I don't see him anyway, so I don't miss him! If I'm invited to something, I go. But there are 700,000 people in the district and I can't get around to all of them--not even all in any one industry. I rely on the (interest group) associations to keep me posted. There are so

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many of them now, I don't have to read all the information I get from their representatives. They tell their people and I learn from them. At lunch today, on the Parker bill, I had never spoken with that guy before, but he heard from his association. The other guy I may have seen before and the guy on my left I'm in touch with all the time. But they had something they wanted to say and I came. I come home every weekend to see family and to see a few people."

- "I float around. In Columbus, Shirley usually gives me a structured schedule that moves me around. Usually it's much more packed than today. We had that one long meeting. Usually it's three or four hours in the morning and three or four in the afternoon and a speech at lunch. I haven't given one speech all this week. In the other end of the district, I'm not so scheduled. I like to be free to float around to the coffee shops where I know more people personally than I do in Columbus."
- How do you describe district? "It's a bedroom for Atlanta on the northern end, rural in the middle and a bedroom for Columbus on the other end. It's very diversified in types of jobs, textiles, military, high tech, airline employees. It's middle income and conservative in morals and values. As for Republicans and Democrats, I don't know. They don't wear uniforms in my district. It's 18% black. And to them, when they find out I'm a Republican, it's like throwing cold water on the conversation."
- Have you had any overtures from black community? "No." Any dealings with ministers? During the election, "I went to a forum held by a group of black ministers in Columbus. Everything they said, every question was slanted toward Chafin. Shirley and I were the only people there in Mac Collins' section. But I answered all their questions."
- Does he see Mimi? "Not as often as I did. She got that crack house closed down. And I think she saved those after school programs."
- Not as enthusiastic as he was before.
- Have you adapted to Columbus? "Yes I have. But it took a long time. The people of Columbus were accustomed to being represented by Democrats. And there were a lot of Democrats in Columbus. A lot of business people were Democrats. The problem wasn't what I did in DC. It was because I came from the other part of the district and they thought I would be more favorable to that part than to them. For five years, whenever they have called with a problem, I'm there--problems with the city, with Fort Benning, we're always right there."

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And the time I spend there--more time there than any other area in the district."

- Talbot County story: "I picked up a little county of 7,000 people in the last election. It is 44% black. The schools are 90% black. I called some of the community leaders and they took me around on a tour. We go by the school to meet the superintendent. I had been told that the 12th graders were reading at a 3rd grade level. So I was ready. When we met the superintendent--a black man--and his assistant, he was waiting with a piece of paper. He said, 'here are the funds we get from the government.' I said what are you doing with them? He turned to his assistant and asked, 'what are we doing with them?' The assistant said, 'getting parents involved.' I said, I understand your high school students are reading at a third grade level. Their parents have been through the system, they didn't make it and they don't care. Forget parental involvement and teach those kids to read. The whole crowd was floored. It solidified the whites and puzzled the blacks. Clinton carried the county 2-1. I won by 30 votes, but our total vote was much smaller than other races. I think what happened was that people said to a lot of black voters, 'he's going to win anyway, give him a chance, if you can't vote for him, don't vote and a lot of them didn't. I couldn't believe that I carried the county!'"

- Then he said, "I drift through Talbotown (county seat). I talk to the president of the bank, I talk to the sheriff--a Democrat, but a good supporter--I talk to the probate judge. I talk to the postmaster. I went to the post office and stood in line while he served other customers. He was as courteous and efficient as any postal employee I ever saw. When I got to the front of the line, I introduced myself and I complimented him on his work. It made a bond between us. Later, I told an official about him, he told (head of postal service) Runyon who sent him a letter of commendation. Those little things go along way to build a bond that overcomes diversity. I have gone to their library dedication. And I have encouraged their area development efforts, because they have no industry. And they have noticed all that." So he has done something to win votes there. Like JF in this little rural area. But it's not typical of the district any more.

- How about Pike? "I haven't paid as much attention there as I should have. I've got to get down there. My outreach lady goes there every month. But I'm going to go down next month and work Pike County."

- We talked about redistricting. To illustrate the solidity of black vote, he says in 1994 he won 66% of vote. Between 94 and 96, he gained 5% more black voters. In 96, he lost 5% of

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the vote. The 5% new blacks all voted vs. him--though he noted that 96 was presidential year and vote increased.

- * votes vs intent D-GA
1992
Kelleher*
- The in-between ¹⁹⁹²redistricting gave him 8 of 16 counties split. Some were small counties--8-15,000. Some had county commissioners and boards split on racial lines so that blacks went to one MC for help, whites went to another MC for help. "You could get the votes. That was no problem. But it was difficult to represent. It was a mess. The final district was much easier to handle." He had nothing to do with any of the redistricting--no input.
 - Mac on chamber group meeting at Commerce Club. Did anyone say anything you hadn't expected? "No. And I didn't hear anything else, either. They'll be here next year and the year after and the year after. They're always trying to stop something. They want to criticize every one else's program, when what they need is a program of their own."
 - At the meeting, "The environmental laws are real. They are not going to go away. You are going to have to comply. That's the way it is. You might get a postponement. But that only means it will be real three years from now. There is no way to get around it. You must comply. There are no answers in Washington. The answers will have to come from here, from the private sector. People here will have to get together and agree on a plan and present it to EPA."
 - In the car he said, "There are pollutants in the air. The law says we've got to get rid of the pollutants--and rightfully so, I believe. So what do you do? Get rid of the pollutants. Get a plan and the plan gets worked out, things will change."
 - Ways and Means: "That's the reason I stayed in Congress."
 - "And I've had some success. Chairman Archer appointed me chairman of a task force on transportation taxes-with a challenge to be about equity and simplicity. It was the only task force he created. We wanted to change the airline tax; but the smaller carriers-like SW Airlines-fought any tax based on number of passengers. We had five Republicans and three Democrats. I couldn't get any agreement, so I took it upon myself and we redrafted the tax structure-so much per passenger and so much advalorem per ticket. It changed gradually. Kelleher and other small airlines fought it hard all the way, but it went through. We changed the tax on international flights, too. I didn't particularly like that, but it was Mr. Archer's part of it, so in order to get my part, I agreed to his part."
 - Then he talked about helping AFLAC with definition of

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duplication-making it OK for person to have regular health insurance, supplemental and stand alone cancer insurance. He got the latter ok'd in the bill.

- Then he got a problem with trade agreement-also involving AFLAC-point is that a Japanese insurance firm is trying to buy into ~~S~~igna in order to get around a trade agreement. It, too, has to do with stand-alone insurance for cancer. "That's why I went to Japan last year, to see if I couldn't help to make the Japanese abide by the trade agreement. I wasn't making any headway here, so I decided to go to Japan. I guess you'd say that's being involved! (One of his themes of the trip.) Paul Sarbanes said to me on the way home, "I sure hope that insurance company of yours takes care of you for life if you get that insurance problem fixed. We were keeping count of how many times you brought that up during the trip. You don't give up do you." I brought that up everywhere we went! And now we're threatening to hold congressional hearings to explain to the Japanese why they are doing what they shouldn't be doing."
- After the transportation meeting, I asked him if it was the most important so far. "It was an important meeting, but the health meetings yesterday were very important, too-the first one. The second one was an exchange of messages. The EPA meeting today will be very important-it's about drinking water in Henry County. The EPA wants the county to meet requirements for wetlands mitigation."
- W&M re his subcommittees-natural resources, social security. He'd like trade subcommittee. "You don't get much money from natural resources, the welfare committee. You don't get much money from social security either. But you do get money from Ways and Means."
- "Well, Dr. Fenno, do you think it's an easy county to represent?" "I only see it through your eyes." "What do you see?" "A big city, suburbs at the northern end and in-between, I'm not sure." (Interruption)
- Later RF, "If it's a strong Republican district, then it is easy to represent." MC, "Well it is and it isn't. Right here in Clayton County, it's mostly Democrats. But I get along with Democrats. They don't throw rocks at me. They listen to me because I listen to them. I'm the only Republican who wins here. And I wouldn't carry it if I had the whole county, with Riverdale."
- "It's a Democratic county now. In one election, the Republicans took control and in the next election, they lost." There was one Republican commissioner left, and she died."

C. J. Fenno
McCollins

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- "Not ready to govern?" "They weren't ready to govern. Just like the Republicans in Washington. We hadn't had any experience. We didn't know how to govern. We're doing better now. Newt has a good grasp of things. He's doing a good job now."
- Turns out MC has 69% of Clayton County. John Lewis has the black section. "John never comes down here." So MC handles all county-federal government business.
- "Dick, have you had enough contact for the visit? (Yes) You sure have seen a variety of issues-from home health care to buying a helicopter." He sees this variety as characteristic
- The new district office was direct result of the fact that Mac got the rest of Muscogee County. This one is at the center of Columbus and right at the original center. Shirley called it "the oldest neighborhood in Columbus."
- His toughest vote is trade. "I voted against NAFTA and GATT, but not for protectionism. That has a lot of appeal, though. Trade is hard to explain to the textile people. Between the textile and some auto workers, there is a lot of opposition. I can see some benefits from it. In fact, I would have voted for fast track. As it turned out, I didn't have to vote. So I could say to people that I would have voted against fast track unless it met my conditions. But I met with the President and I knew that if the bill had come to a vote, it would have met my conditions. His conditions had to do with Japanese effort to buy IWA from Signa." Cyana
- I asked him if anyone vote could kill him and he answered "abortion." "If I voted for partial birth abortion, it would kill me." Gun control? "Gun control would be bad, but it wouldn't kill me. Any vote against tax relief would kill me, that and partial birth abortion."
- He mentioned the meeting with black constituents that Shirley mentioned. "I held a town hall meeting in the black part of the district-at their request. All but three of the questions were about affirmative action; the other three were about minimum wage. I don't support either of them. And I told them so. I said that affirmative action was driving a wedge between people and that it was unconstitutional. I told them exactly what I believed. I did not back down. A few weeks later there was a three part article in the paper saying exactly what I had said-that it is not right. I was shocked. It was as if I had written it myself."
- How did you get interested in politics-from business or what? "A lot came from my business experience. But my mother was a

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member of the city council of our small community of Flovilla. When I was a small boy, I would hear her come in and talk about council meetings. She was in charge of roads and parks. As boys, we would cut the grass for the city. She enjoyed her job. My daddy always wanted to be a county commissioner, but he never did run. He had only a third-grade education. My mom had a fifth-grade education. I felt that if they wanted to do that, then gosh, I did too."

nt a
professional
man

- "When I got to the point in my business when I had the time and enough income, I decided to try to get my feet wet." So he ran in a special election and lost, as a Democrat. The next year, there was another special election and he lost that, too. Third time, he ran in the Democratic primary and won, got most votes and was Chairman of Commission. He ran for reelection still as a Democrat and lost. "The year Reagan was elected, a group decided to form a Republican party. They asked me to join and made me the Chairman of it. I was party chairman for two years. In 1984, a guy came by just before qualifying and asked me to run for State Senate. I told Julie, 'I think I'll run for State Senate.' She was shocked. She went with me. On the last day of qualifying, we drove up to Atlanta and just before the 12:00 deadline, I qualified to run. I had no idea what I was doing. I worked hard and spent a bit of money. And I came up short-with 48.6%. But the lady I challenged didn't run and therefore there was an open seat. I opposed a former Supreme Court Judge. He edged me out by 49.3%. I said I was not going to do it again. But close to the next cycle, he passed a bill on crime. I didn't like it. I said I'm going to make one more try. And I'm going to beat him on crime. People said you can't do that, he's been a judge. I said I will and I did, by 52-53%."

- Running against Ray, "A lot of people didn't give us a chance. He was a conservative Democrat. He was strong in Columbus. The state party chairman didn't think we could win; the RNC didn't think we could win. But a couple of weeks out we did a poll that showed that if we did the right kind of advertisement, we had a chance to win. The RNC kicked in \$50,000 and we won. I saw it as district becoming more Republican and I had a Republican base in the northern part of the district. That's what happened. I carried all of the five northern counties." TV more crucial than with Flynt, ~~me.~~, pivotal.

✓ - I told Mac that JF couldn't fathom Clayton. "It was a bedroom for people who worked in Atlanta-good middle income people. The demography has changed again. I couldn't carry Clayton County if I had the whole county. John Lewis has it." (190,000 people) Again, he told story of 1984 when the entire

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County Commission but one was replaced by Republicans and he switched. "Didn't do a good job. Or the Democratic machine made it look like they didn't do a good job." The large influx of blacks has changed county again, in his story.

"I fish my own cork. The Republicans tend to pack together. But if you want to be strong, you can't do that."

He is deputy whip and has six people in Indiana to check out on key votes. He calls Hoffer and Sander "hard right"-no comment re McIntosh. But he distinguishes himself from "hard right." *Hard right is the no compromise right.*

Anticipating the Ford plant, he said, "You'll hear the union guys holler tomorrow. They know I voted vs. NAFTA and GATT, and they like me for that. So they'll listen to me. But I didn't vote against NAFTA for them. I voted against it because I think we have to make ourselves competitive here at home before we enter into trade agreements abroad." Here he goes with his mantra on litigation, regulation, taxation.

A nice pre-post from Shirley-Fieldcrest Mills, a big employer shuts down. Total Systems takes over the mill-6,000 new jobs. They do credit card accounting for big region. Two prototypes of their time. *(See Columbus brochure)*

After the Medical Center presentation and visit, Brian asks Mac how he kept up so well with the presentation. "I spent thirty years running a small business. It doesn't hurt. It helps you get inside the business view of things." He is a little like Chuck Wiggins with his interest in business-always talking "cash flow."

- The meeting with Chamber of Commerce subcommittee~~s~~ tended to focus on air quality problem now plaguing Atlanta-but it covered the water front. He surveyed the scene briefly and they asked questions about a lot of things. There were a couple of political consultants, Oglethorpe, Piner, Georgia Power, two real estate people, Delta Airlines, Waste Management guy, natural gas, Chamber of Commerce. Sternest talk was on environment; but superfund, unemployment tax, ethanol, Iraq, surplus ("There is no surplus"). This was the meeting I was supposed to be barred from, but I sat in back anyway. Betty ran interference for him.
- One characterization of MC: "a straight-shooter."
- When we got to Medical Center conference room, "This is Mr. Dick Fenno from, where is it, Syracuse-oh, Rochester. He's been coming down to this part of the country for 20 years. He's here to see what a redneck congressman does"

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- Re Newt, I laughed and said, "After all, he was just a professor." And Mac said, "He had too big a classroom."
- *One of the things that comes through during this visit-which had so many issues-is that his business experience comes through and gives him an angle on his work that is critical.
- At one point in Jonesboro, he said, "There goes one of my (our) trucks." I asked him how many trucks he had-37.
- At end of EPA meeting, he said, "I ran a small trucking company."
- After EPA meeting, "I think they really want me to help them with a regional planning effort." So after EPA meeting, he had Brian write a letter to head of ARC (Atlanta Regional Commission) telling them that EPA is interested in some regional planning effort. It was part of the bargain as he saw it. If it helps, Henry County will never know he did it, but it's part of his negotiating skill. He called "Buddy," the chairman of Henry County Commission afterward to set up day meeting. "Buddy" claims that they have all the necessary "buffer" zones. Anyway, here Mac is brokering a deal between Henry County and EPA, a deal which his county people could not have gotten on their own.
- *He seems less "Republican" this time than last. He smiles when he says, "We've got some true-blue Republicans in this district." As if he's not one of them. You probably can't say that because he was a Democrat, it's easier to work with Democrats-because converts are often the most rabid. But something makes him want to be open to Democrats. I'm not sure where it comes from. But it is important to understanding him. It may be that he sees people in their most down to earth way and hence sees rock bottom human qualities instead of labels. But he's got labels of his own, "education guy," "business guy." So I'm not sure I've got it at all. What makes him able to be a little less ^{possibly} on rabid Republicans than others with same very conservative ^{views}. Well, he's a little older than Graham and McIntosh and that might make a difference. A mystery as of now.
- There is another quality of Mac's that I can't quite put my finger on, but it's an outspokenness, a freedom from cant, a sense that he has his own way of looking at things and won't pander. A sincerity that comes across and seems to say, "This guy won't bullshit you or con you. He's telling you straight." In interviews, he holds back and does not give you material easily. He does not, in that setting, shoot his mouth off. So he seems thoughtful-even canny, at the same

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time as he is sincere. He'd be a hard but honest man to deal with. And he will deal, i.e., his flirtation with Dole in last visit, his dealing with EPA this visit.

- Check notes*
OK
- Re business background. At the big hospital in Columbus, "I tell my two sons, I'm phasing out of my trucking business so they can have a business separate from mine-I tell them that you can haul every day as long as you stay in business, but that the one thing that will keep you in business is to go after your money. If this hospital doesn't maintain a business so you can get your money, if you struggle to meet the requirements of your obligation, you won't survive."
 - His bottom line message to the hospital seemed to be that they would have to work changes in the way they present themselves up front to the patient re billing practices. The public will complain to the congressman and/or the media. "If they complain to me, I will answer their calls-every single one. I have to, that's what they hire me to do-and there are 700,000 of them."
 - "In the long run, if we can't come up with a billing system that makes it easy for you to comply and for the citizen to understand, the government will come in and take more hold. And we'll be one step closer to socialized medicine." His pitch is always that solutions are in the private sector. And if private sector won't take hold, government will.
 - He talked a little in the car about how he was bringing staff home. "I want them to get more involved at the beginning of some problems so that we don't wait till they hit Washington at a point that we can't do anything about them and get blamed for not fixing them. If the staff is more involved and if they understand problems back here, we will be better able to deal with them when they get to Washington."
 - Henry County/EPA meeting Michigan requirements re wetlands. "I'm here to see if we can't save my constituents two million dollars and get some drinking water for Henry County."
 - EPA-Hankinson says that "In the scale of things, this is a pretty big impact-124 acres... It is a legitimate concern." Five bureaucrats and three Collins' staff are in the room.
 - Problem (if true): Henry County has no buffers for its streams and no plan for it. Wetland enhancement, 130 acres preservation, 400 acres livestock, 80 acres any one of them will do it-pick and choose.
 - Henry County bought their land before they looked at alternatives. Clean Air Act required that they consider

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alternatives. (MC, "I know where you're coming from. I've been there. I was a county commissioner.")

- Mac is wiggling around to see if he can't get Henry County some credit for environmental help.
- Meeting is amicable-but EPA is not giving in much-they ask him for multi county planning. He says, "I'll make you a deal. I bet you can guess what it is." (laughter)
- Stories at end.
- Hankinson, "I'm not sure we've got to have these numbers or we'll go to war. I want to work this out. Here's where we think you're a little short under the act. If there's a middle ground, we can save them some money. We want to suggest to them that they buffer their streams. We'll make some commitment to put our other concerns with Savannah on another track."
- Mac says, he's glad they are interested in going down to talk with Henry County people. He says "I'll go down and tell them that you are willing to help but that you have your valid concerns under the law."
- Hankinson, "If we can envision something happening, we can get started before this county contract runs out."
- Mac ends up talking about his well water, his effort to get Butts County water ("they never had a plan till I became commissioner"), Jackson lakes condition, sediment problem when it rains.
- "What's a convenient date for you next week?"
- "I sense a good atmosphere and a resolution. I'll tell them these are things they've got to do." Mac will tell Henry County people to get in touch with EPA people. After he mentioned two things he did. "It helped that I came alone and didn't bring in a lot of people." "You noticed I mentioned that I talked with Carol Browner at committee!"
- Subjects on which MC's 1997 views appear in Columbus paper, not from his paper: aviation, Bosnia, School of the Americas, independent counsel on campaign financing, balanced budget, medicare, school vouchers, air quality standards, public/private cooperation development fund, Warm Springs, pay raise (pro), taxes, welfare, highway.
- Columbus 1/12/97: "Collins Named Deputy Whip for 105th Congress. He is important Deputy Whip. "As such, Collins

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will be responsible for helping House Speaker and other GOP leaders organize fellow Republicans on issues and votes."

Book #2

- Re Lindsey Graham, "He's a piece of work. I saw him the other day and I said to him, 'Lindsey, you ought to go down to Hertz and rent a backhoe, because you are dragging a hole big enough to put the whole Congress in.' He didn't say much. He's like a lot of 'em. He's never been in the minority. He doesn't know the difference between getting something and getting nothing. When I see him now, I say, 'Lindsey, you got that backhoe yet?'"
- A similar story. He goes to speak for Bob Barr. Barr gets up and says what a great guy Mac is, what a great conservative he is, and ends saying "He's just like me." "I got up and I said, No, he and I are different. He's never been in the minority. He doesn't know what it's like getting your teeth knocked in all the time."
- From the meeting on transportation, I got a measure of the 1970-1988 change. They have an intercity passenger rail system on the drawing board. One line will run from Atlanta to Griffin to Macon. Federal Transportation Administration has jurisdiction over commuter rail projects. And these projects get designated based on frequency of commuter usage. Griffin qualifies, so there's FTA money for the line from Atlanta to Griffin. Macon does not. Griffin falls in the Atlanta density area now. In old days, people wouldn't go up to Atlanta for the evening. Now, they call it the Atlanta to Griffin corridor. FTA administrator said, "Griffin is part of the Atlanta system."
- When I got into Mac's car at the Jonesboro office, he was trying to reach a woman, Rebecca. He couldn't reach her, but he left a message on her phone re school vouchers. He had voted against the amendment because they were available only to low income people and not to all people.
- "If we have a hard right, she's hard right."
- He turned to me and explained, "I voted against the amendment because it has an income limitation. It only applied to people with incomes at 185% of poverty--lower income people, not to all people. Why should low income people have the opportunity when the same opportunity is denied to the people who pay the bill? Why should one child have a voucher when the child in the next seat--whose parents pay for it--be prohibited from having a voucher. That's wrong. That's just dad gummed wrong! The leadership was putting on a big pitch."

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I was prepared to vote for it till I learned what it was. In the Republican Conference, I asked that question. Why should some students be discriminated against? If it's a good thing--and I believe it is--why shouldn't everyone have the same opportunity! Why haven't we made it available to all children? There was silence (he laughs). The leadership just said that they had decided on this level. During the whip check, I had put beside my name 'leaning yes.' A little later in the conference I was asked, did I want to say anything else. I got up and said I sure do. I want to change 'leaning yes' to 'hell no!' I won't vote for it. A few other Republicans voted no, too. I voted for it in the DC bill because that wasn't making it a national program." He went on to say that vouchers "won't solve the real problem." "Lack of discipline in school. In kindergarten, they are running around like wild Indians."

- An article in Columbus paper said he was only Georgia Republican to vote no.
- The woman he was trying to reach finally did reach him on his car phone. They talked, he rehearsed his position on school voucher and ended the conversation (as we stood outside the front door of the Ford Plant). "That's my position and that's where I stand." There's a lot of Mac in that statement.
- At the Ford Assembly Plant, we went into a large room with big oval table. There were about 15 people there--plant manager, UAW Chairman, Economist from Dearborn, section bosses, UAW officers. We had a welcome, a video, a tour of the plant in little car (I rode with man in charge of body shop section of the assembly). Then we had lunch.
- Most interesting thing was that we would stop and all get out of the car at three different points in the tour. There were groups of workers waiting at each stop (8-12). And he got out and shook hands and before long, they were all smiling, taking pictures, exchanging comments. When I said that to Ford Economist (chief economist) he said, "I noticed the same thing. I commented to the plant manager that I had never seen anything like it. He said he had managed eight different Ford plants and it was unusual. He said the guys really like Mac. I think it's because there is nothing synthetic, no bull shit with Mac."
- During the Economist's overheads briefing, Mac interrupted often with comments, especially his lack of trust in Japanese who do everything to benefit themselves. He thinks we've got to pay up for IMF because if we don't, Japanese will take the money, buy up companies in other Asian countries and then export to Japan and rest of the world and further hurt us.

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- "I owned a Chevrolet dealership once and I put a sign out front, "These cars are not Honda, Toyota, Mitsubishi, etc." (laughter all around) A guy on the plant floor who had gone to high school with Mac said to me, "Mac doesn't trust the Japanese, you know." His relationship with unions is more important than it was for Flynt and he does it better. Flynt sent intermediaries to LaGrange.
- They turn out 1,100 cars a day, 66 cars an hour. Plant manager extolled plant efficiency, interaction between management and union, emphasis on personal relationships, people are key to what he called "one of the top assembly plants in the world... they come from all over the world to ask how Atlanta does it." Exports to 14 countries make right hand drive, sell 440,000 units a year.
- Mac says, "I like your idea that it's the people who make it work, who make it happen... Real answers to real problems are found right here in the private sector, in the marketplace. You are working on the answers here and finding them. I congratulate you!"
- Mac said, "As I told President Clinton when we met for the first time, looked him in the face and I said, 'We have different philosophies. Let's get that out of the way right now and talk!' I like to talk things out. I believe in dialogue."
- We got a lecture on Ford's problems. Right now they center on the Kyoto agreement. They fear more regulation, new CAFE standards, foreign imports without reciprocity (Korea imports only 8,000 foreign cars. Ford gets 2,000 of them.) Now they have greater than ever export capacity.
- Yen drops and they can't make profit. Four years ago they sold car to Japan for \$33,700; now they sell it for \$19,000. He thinks Japan should help; Mac thinks they only look out for selves. No deregulation.
- I got 3-4 estimates of number of workers at plant (out of 2,400) in Mac's district, all guessed 25%-30%.
- Driving to the Ford Plant, I had Mac rate nine things we had done in order of importance. He picked them out as (1) EPA, (2) First Hospital, (3) transportation, (4) Chamber of Commerce at Congress Club. Then he stopped and said, "those four were all important. It's very close among them." Other ranking meant less.
- *"I like to deal with problems affecting masses of people, not

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problems of individuals." That was the blanket he threw over the top four problems. Very different from JF!!

- "Maximus (see folder) was dealt with in the welfare bill; and I had a big role in helping them." i.e, "importance rises and falls with the legislation cycle or, more generally, with time."
- On comfort level, no distinction. "The only time I came anywhere near being uncomfortable was at the police headquarters. I thought to myself, what the hell am I doing here?"
- Several times, at hospital especially, some bill called Parker Bill, Charlie Norwood's bill: He told people, "I'm a cosponsor, but I'm not going to vote for it. It won't solve the problem." Has to do with "transfers" where people may not be able to choose their own doctor. "It sounds good, but it won't solve the problem." He also told guy at St. Francis that, "I don't think it's going anywhere." Man says, "If you think it's moving, I hope you'll let us know and let us talk to you some more." Mac said he would.
- But in other audiences, he told story of how during President's speech, Clinton said that everyone will be able to have own doctor. "All the Democrats stood up and on our side only Charlie stood up. He kept motioning for the other cosponsors to stand up. None did." (great hilarity) He's a cosponsor to help Charlie "It will appeal to Charlie's constituents. Just because I cosponsor it doesn't mean I'll vote for it."
- The meeting in the Clayton Police Headquarters was so that two guys, who are starting a "military aviation" heritage outfit-- of old planes and helicopters that fly--could make a pitch to Clayton police chief and two of their helicopter pilots for the gift of an OH85 helicopter that the department doesn't want.
- "The general was arrogant. You could tell he was a general" said Mac. "They oversold their product." The other guy was too slick, I thought.
- Our first event was a visit to The Medical Center. A number of hospital officials were there, plus "one of the Hospital Association's top Washington lobbyists." (MC) (Tom Titus?) When I was introduced to the lobbyists, he said (without any invitation from me), "It is important that Congress gets the best information." Later Mac said of him, "He lives in Atlanta, so he might have been at home. But if he was in Washington, he would have come down for this meeting." Near the end of the meeting, he took up a string of legislative

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concerns with Mac.

- There is a problem with home health care that has erupted into the papers, and the medical center is getting some bad publicity--some of it deserved. They run a nursing home. And their people sometimes go from hospital to nursing home to home, back to the hospital and nursing home, etc. The first guy gives a long case history of such a patient--but one who had complained about his bill to Mac. Mac has spoken to him personally a couple of times. It's about his wife's bills--who pays what, etc. The guy gets a big bill, hits the roof, goes to Mac. She gets a lot of therapy along the way--is turned from basket case into a functioning person, man just wants his wife out of his way, daughter calls treatment a "miracle," husband gets billed for "600 units of service" and \$32,000. He wants a breakdown, hospital guy explains their costs, their billing, etc. 600 units is not 600 treatments--but bill doesn't say so. But guy goes to Blue Cross fraud unit, hospital spends huge amount of money and two years defending itself. They get their costs back, but they get bad publicity. (Turns out, hospital pays \$70,000 to some provider per month for patient therapy.) As hospital sees it, they gave the person all the care they were supposed to and got killed in papers for it.
- "We did the right thing and we're the ones who have to take the criticism for it." "We did what we were supposed to do to get the person healthy, but everyone is coming at the system." "When the fraud unit gets into it... the mildest mention of us ruins our reputation in this area for years." "Long-term care is a complicated damned process--guilty until proven innocent."
- MC "It's the system that puts that information (i.e, the big complex bill) in the hands of the constituent and he thinks that that is his bill and it's not. People can see those numbers. The big problem is Medicare's billing. I'd like you to take care of that at the front end so we don't get it (constituent complaint) on the back end."
- Mac reminds me of Wiggins in this session.
- Mac thinks that in the interests of efficiency, hospitals will have to keep people in the hospital longer--to avoid the bill hassling over moving people from nursing home or home to hospital back and forth--"in order to keep your cash flow." There's a big incentive to get people out of the hospital early, but there's another growing incentive to keep people in the hospital longer."
- Mac pushes the need for patients to understand billings.

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"When you get the bill from the mailman, that's the worst."

- Hospital guy says they have meetings with the family, with patient, to explain the system and the billing.
- "If you can't change the system, there must be a way to provide an explanation to the individual." Mac has talked to this guy (Mr. Ray) twice. "I'm going to go again. I'll take Shirley's car (laughter)."
- "Everyone has to come forward with a billing system that makes sense so that the patient doesn't see all these wrong numbers. Don't wait for Washington to do it. You've got to do it. The bureaucrats will not."
- Guy says Georgia is going to do that for Medicare--not Medicaid.
- "What are you doing at the front end to explain to the patient what you are going to do." His focus is on the patient. But he understands the hospital's point of view.
- The second hospital guy gets into hospital's problem of financial viability. They do \$2 million dollars worth of "uncompensated care." They have 2% operating margin, treat tens of thousands of patients regionally. "There is no fraud and abuse in this region." They worry about their costs that are "pure overhead costs" and have nothing to do with making people well. Guy protests that they are good and problems are elsewhere.
- Mac, "The problem is, we don't make laws for Mac Collins' district."
- The AHA guys says "HCFA knows they are squeezing the guy who does it right way and not squeezing the guy who does things the wrong way."
- Mac, "You tell me whose doing the squeezing and we'll go after them. I'm not kidding."
- AHA guy, "I think the regulators know who the bad guys are, but they aren't doing anything about it."
- Hospital ^{on this} guy, "Our nursing home has a "no deficiencies" rating from the regulators. They should give us the benefit and go after the others more often."
- Mac is very upset. "The politics of it (as the public sees it) is that Congress is in cahoots with the health care system. You didn't know I was in cahoots, did you. That's

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the politics of it... When it comes out in the papers that you are alleged to have committed fraud in Columbus, Georgia, that hurts this hospital. That's the politics of it... That's why Congress is going slow. Henry Hyde said he'd have something soon and I told him to include me. I am very interested in my hospitals in my district... I'm going to carry that document (?) To Henry Hyde. I'm going to go personally to talk with Ms. Reno. I don't like the way they do business... The new proposal for Medicare is one more step toward national health insurance. Eventually, you'll throw up your hands and say, 'send me a check, I'll work for you!' I hope it doesn't come to that. I certainly don't want that."

- AHA guy, big problem is when local people are "branded" in the press as "fraudsters."
- "The False Claim Act comes into play and no business can resist that."
- Lamar Smith and Mac Collins' bill provides for "safe harbors" to keep hospitals out of false claims act. Mac calls it "anti-extortion" legislation. Need to focus on Justice Department.
- "It's interesting how different people increase their cash flow. The Justice Department has found one--a big stick with a badge on it. They should not be able to label you "fraud without evidence." Then he says he'll talk with Ms. Reno.
- Re "financial viability" of hospital, Mac says, "I know what you're talking about. I ran into the same problems (of cash flow) later in my little business."
- "My mother got out of the nursing home business for two reasons. She got too old. And she could no longer comply with the regulations. She didn't have a nursing home. She had what they called an "old folks home."
- A third hospital woman compliance officer started her presentation with this overhead: "life as we knew it will never be the same."
- Steps of compliance are costly and a big problem, but they pride selves on doing it well.
- "A billing error is not fraud," she says.
- AHA guy asks Mac about Nussle's bill. "I'm not going to go in on it. It's not going to solve the problem. I'm not against the cause, but it's not going to solve the problem."

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- When they got into "the problem," I got lost. "Double billing problem" when people move from one system to another, a "transfer bill."
- AHA guy says, "Maybe we'll talk some more." Mac says, "I like you. You don't give up."
- Then AHA guy goes onto another issue re co-pays, bad debt.
- He asks them if they are going to become on HMO. They're thinking of it; starting with Medicaid. Easier to make local decisions than with Medicare.
- At end, Mac goes back to idea that they should improve the front end of billing system and he thinks they can do more there. He is sympathetic to them; but he also wants them to improve. That's when he ends up saying that he has to answer every call that comes to him "on the back end." He has to give Mr. Ray a lot of time, because that's his job.
- Other items from my notes--especially the guy who talked about costs and regulations, the hospital files 16 separate cost reports every year. All will be audited at cost of \$100,000. They have own auditors to make sure they do everything right, five people year round, three of whom are degree accountants. He shows 18" stack of reports. "We are an integrated delivery system. I'd like to be able to file one report."
- Mac, "Is your staff disallowable costs?" A "72 hour rule" is one well known regulation. "Any work done 72 hours before must be added to hospital bill." The hospital has to hire a lot of electronic help, software help, to code cases, to look at admission procedures.
- There are problems with bundling lab tests. They have to "unbundle" them more, more costly. They are being hit with all kinds of costs.
- The most talked about problem--by Betty Bush and Shirley and Mac was the home health care fraud with blood taking vinicare, people go to nursing home to take blood, as a medical procedure, then they tack on costs of getting dinner, giving baths, etc. which should not be covered. And they are reaping tons of money fraudulently. That is fraud. And it was in the papers. Betty thought there would be real fireworks over it. But it wasn't a big subject at Medical Center. St. Francis guy said he'd stopped it. (But had been doing it.)
- Mac's tongue in cheek solution, "I've got a bill on my desk. It is to grandfather in anyone who has been getting this care and pay for it out of funds already coming to the provider."

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- Re hiring of Ted Jones, Shirley and Mac said how great he was. "We hired him, but not because he is black. We hope people don't think we hired him because he was black. We didn't."
- Mac, "The first time I saw him I said that if we ever had a job, I'd like to hire him for constituent service." Ted is son of Army regular, served two years. Worked for Sanford Bishop. Is a bit of a formal kidder.
- Mac was intrigued by the waste technology company. "They're sitting on a gold mine there." When asked after the tour of the plant, the video and non-stop engineer's enthusiasm, what he'd suggest, Mac said, "The suspicions of everyone who come in here. Protect yourselves. When you get the ability to demonstrate your process, you've got real possibilities."
- *A difference between JF and MC in way they use "redneck." JF spin is that "You might think I am, but I'm not." MC spin is "you might think I'm not, but I am." Or at least I like you to think that maybe I am! In any case, "I'm not your normal eastern Republican."
- In the car, RF, "Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?" MC, "You always have."

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