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Interview with Martha Pope, Abby Saffold and Marty Paone by Diane Dewhirst

Martha Pope

Martin 'Marty' P. Paone

C. 'Abby' Abbott Saffold

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George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

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Round Table: Martha Pope, Abby Saffold, Marty Paone
(Interviewer: Diane Dewhirst)

GMOH# 107
May 26, 2009

Diane Dewhirst: Okay, Martha, we're on. Okay.

Martha Pope: Is it on?

DD: Yep. Okay we're going to take this baby up 'cause we're going to pass this around. My technical skills are no better than they were before. This is Diane Dewhirst for the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project for Bowdoin College. It's May 26th, 2009, in Washington, D.C., 18th and I Streets Northwest. We are here, I am here with Martha Pope, Abby Saffold and Marty Paone. I'm going to ask each one of them to give some context to who they are, where they were raised, their educational background, and then we'll get on with the questioning. Martha?

MPope: I'm Martha Pope; I was born in Newcastle, Pennsylvania, my parents were childhood sweethearts from Slippery Rock, [a] very small town, middle-class upbringing. We moved to Ithaca, New York when I was three, where my father got his doctorate in biology. We moved to San Diego when I was five-ish – I won't get all these right – and my dad taught at San Diego State. Then we moved to Connecticut when I was in the second grade, and I grew up in Bethany, Connecticut in a rural area. I went to University of Connecticut for my undergraduate degree in sociology, and with a minor in psychology and statistics and a minor in art, and I got my master's degree at Southern Connecticut in art education.

[significant paragraph revision] I taught art for five years, junior high and elementary, elementary art in upstate New York, while my former husband attended law school. We moved to Washington after he graduated. I started working on Capitol Hill and ended up on the Environment and Public Works Committee staff. I was working for Senator John Culver when Senator Mitchell was appointed to the Committee in May of 1980, to fill Muskie's term when Senator Muskie was appointed Secretary of State. When Senator Culver, John Culver, lost in the election in November, Senator Mitchell adopted me as a member of his committee staff.

[p/o] I worked on the committee for him doing public works and [p/o] fish and wildlife legislation, and then moved to his personal staff as his Legislative Director, then became his AA, Administrative Assistant, and then when he became majority leader in – when was that, Diane? '89?

DD: 'Eighty-eight.

MPope: 'Eighty-eight, November '88, I became Chief of Staff to the Majority Leader,

[and] did that for two years. In '90 I was nominated by him to [p/o] be Sergeant-At-Arms of the Senate, and was elected by the Senate in '90, and then in '94, [p/o] became Secretary of the Senate. [p/o] I was Secretary of the Senate until January of '95, when I helped swear in the new class of senators, and then went directly to the State Department as his deputy for the Northern Ireland peace negotiations. At that time [our purpose] was Economic Development in Northern Ireland, [which] evolved into him being a chair for the peace negotiations in Northern Ireland. I did that until the Good Friday Peace Agreement in '98, and left Northern Ireland in the fall of '98. I serve on several boards, and that pretty much brings us up to date.

DD: Thank you, Martha. Abby Saffold?

Abby Saffold: I actually began my life as Carol Reed. How I became Abby Saffold is a little bit of mystery, but my middle name is Abbott and that's where the Abby comes from, my nickname Abby comes from that. I was born in Baltimore, Maryland, we moved to, my parents were all from northern New England and we moved back to New England when I was about two, basically grew up in Stoughton, Massachusetts until fourth grade, and then Framingham, Massachusetts through high school. I went to Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, which is my Maine connection; I majored in history, minored in government, went to a master of arts in teaching program at Antioch College after I graduated from Bates, and picked Antioch basically because their internship was in Washington, D.C. at the time. I took civics in ninth grade, I had always been fascinated by the idea of Congress – not the electoral process, just the process – and I thought, “Well at least the teaching's in Washington, D.C., what can be bad about that?”

So I taught in a junior high school for a year in Washington, D.C., I had mental health days under the contract for teachers in Washington at that time, I took every single one of them and sat in the galleries and watched debates. I was really a hurting puppy. So I quit the master of arts in teaching program, started looking for a job on Capitol Hill, having no skills whatsoever, and I found my first job with a conservative Republican from Virginia, Congressman William Lloyd Scott, who, in his later years, was described by the *Washingtonian* magazine as the dumbest member of the Senate, and it was not totally uncalled for.

It was a wonderful experience for me, though. He was a conservative Republican and from the South, and it exposed me to a whole different way of looking at the world. I had to draft letters as if he would have written them, which was quite a chore. After two years I really realized that I – I know, it's in the *Washingtonian*, I've put this in my oral history as well. He has passed on.

(Aside: He denied he was the dumbest (unintelligible).)

He called a press conference to deny that he was the – it was very interesting, it was an interesting experience. But then I quit, I went to Europe for three months and came back and was looking for a job again, had interviews with all kinds of conservative Republicans, finally got a part time job with Congressman Lloyd Meeds of Washington, to answer a questionnaire that he'd sent out, and then I continued looking for a job and found a job as a legislative secretary for Senator Gaylord Nelson right after the first Earth Day. And I moved to the Senate

at that point, I worked for Nelson for two years, I then worked for the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments for Birch Bayh, was on Birch Bayh's staff from '72 to '79, ultimately ending up as a legislative assistant for Appropriations.

But the critical job that I had for Birch Bayh was, before TV and before there was any audio from the floor, you had no idea what was going on. So they decided to assign a junior person to sit in the gallery and watch the Senate, and phone back to the office whenever anything important was happening. It was heaven. I left the office all day, and I came back end of the day. And a friend of mine was working in the office at the time, Mary Jane Checchi, and Mary Jane left the office and ultimately she became staff director of the Democratic Policy Committee and she was looking for someone to do her work on the floor, and she remembered what I had done, sitting in the gallery – "Pick me, pick me, I'll do this" – so I went to work for the Democratic Policy floor staff in March of 1979, having never met Robert C. Byrd at all. I walked onto the floor of the Senate and was introduced to the majority leader as his new staff person.

DD: What year?

AS: Nineteen seventy-nine, 1979, and I was on the floor staff from '79 to '87 when Senator Byrd nominated me to be secretary for the majority, or Democratic secretary, and I took that position in '87. In 1987. In 1989 Senator Mitchell became majority leader, he asked me to stay, and I stayed on with him through his term, and then I was secretary for the minority when we went into the minority in 1994, and I retired in 1995. And that's about it.

DD: Marty Paone.

Marty Paone: Born in Everett, Mass., grew up in – Martin Patrick Paone, born Everett, Mass., 1951, lived in Revere Mass., mother and father, my father was a federal employee, was a National Labor Relations Board field examiner, my mother was a nurse. They met at Georgetown in the late twenties, early thirties, but then they moved back up to Revere which is where my dad's parents were from, and the family store that kept the family going and it paid for him and his siblings, all their college education.

I went to a small Catholic school, literally twelve room school, six on the first floor, six on the second floor, taught by the nuns, Sisters of St. Joseph, and then went to Boston College, got degrees in economics and philosophy, graduated in '72, came down to Washington in September of '74 to go to Georgetown and got a master's degree in Russian Studies. While I was at Georgetown, my loans were running out so I needed work, so I ended up on the Hill, my dad told me to go see [Torbert H.] Torby Macdonald who was a congressman from Massachusetts at the time – unbeknownst to me, my dad actually knew him, they knew each other – I got a job in the House post office under his patronage, worked there for a year and a half until he died, while I was there.

And then I went on, collected unemployment, ended up working at the Door Store assembling

furniture in Georgetown, finding a bulletin board card for parking lot attendants for the Senate – “Five dollars an hour, must be polite” – which was a buck and a half more than I was making at the time, so I figured I’d be polite for five bucks and went down and got a job at a parking office and started at fifteen hours a week. Within three weeks I was at thirty-seven hours a week, and on the fourth week I was a supervisor on salary, because the parking program was expanding rapidly at the time and it was good timing.

I did that for a year and a half while I got my, while I finished my thesis. Terry Flaherty, the director, had a Darwinian theory of employment, he only kept active students, so once I was finished with the degree we had an amicable parting, I was laid off again and I was out looking for work. And a week later or two weeks later he called and said, “You know, there’s a job opening in the cloakroom, would you be interested?” I didn’t know what a cloakroom was, I knew I needed a job, so he told me to go up and visit with a guy named Patrick Hynes, I met with Patrick, who I’d known before because he had come to our parking office parties and softball games, he was a friend of Terry Flaherty’s, the parking director.

So I met with Patrick, he brought me up to meet Joe Stewart who, at the time, was the Democratic secretary, told me that Byrd wanted a new person in the cloak-, needed a new person in the cloakroom, the person they had there, Charles Kinney was being moved out to the floor staff – to work with Abby – and this was March of ‘79, I had an interview with Senator Byrd a week later, once I convinced him I had no ties to Senator Kennedy, being from Massachusetts, he was okay with me, and I got the job. So I started in the cloakroom in March of ‘79, and I stayed there until January of 2008 basically, in one capacity or another, going out to the floor staff in ‘82, becoming Abby’s assistant secretary in ‘91, and replacing Abby as Democratic secretary in 95, and staying there in that position until 2008, working for Senator Byrd, Senator Mitchell, Senator Daschle, and then Senator Reid. And in January, February 1 of 2008, I retired from the Hill after thirty-two years and changed, went to the private sector and have now, I’m at Timmons & Company, a lobbying shop downtown.

DD: Pivoting to when you met Senator Mitchell and your first impressions, and what business you were, what issues you were working on with him when you first started to work with him. Martha?

MPope: Well, I was on the Committee on Environment and Public Works, and I would have been working -

(Aside interjection.)

MPope: We had lost the Senate, that is what happened. I was working for John Culver, Senator Mitchell was appointed in May of ‘80 to Muskie’s term, and then in November we lost control of the Senate, the Democrats lost control of the Senate, which meant that half of the [Democratic] Committee staff had to be fired. [A committee rule gave the majority party two thirds of the staff], so the Democrats had to drop down to a third. But two things worked in my favor. One was that I had worked, I guess, a little bit with [Senator] Mitchell on Fish and

Wildlife issues by then; also I was the only one, Democratic staff on the committee doing Fish and Wildlife legislation. And it was a very bipartisan committee. Stafford, Bob Stafford was the chair, and it was a very collegial environment, and so there wasn't a slash and burn attempt to purge Democrats [p/o].

And so a combination of things worked in my favor and I managed to stay on, and Mitchell, as I said earlier, adopted me as his, well, Fish and Wildlife staff at the time. Charlene Sturbitts had been working for Muskie on environmental things, pollution issues, what, Superfund, Clean Air, acid rain was a big issue then, Clean Water, and so I did, I evolved into doing Public Works, which put me in touch with a lot of issues for the state of Maine, and also did Fish and Wildlife legislation such as the Endangered Species Act, refuges, wildlife refuges, things of that nature.

And my impression of Mitchell, it's my biggest impression of him to date, which is, he is an extremely intelligent person, with an almost photographic memory. And because of that, he couldn't have been easier to be a staff person for on that level. He could absorb information, I can remember hearings when he would absorb what the witnesses were saying and he would remember all of it and could go back to each one with questions. And really, I always said that Mitchell was one of the few senators on the Hill that made staff look good. He didn't require a lot of in depth staffing – well, that's not exactly the way you would put it, I guess, but he was just so intelligent that he was easy to staff on that level.

DD: What about his -? How -? What did you witness and what was your impression of him dealing with other senators and his dealings with staff?

MPope: In dealing with other senators he was always reserved and judicious. I think he went out of his way to be publicly evenhanded in his approach to them, publicly respectful of them. I think he developed a reputation for judiciousness, I think even, there were, he had been a judge and some people used that as a nickname, "The Judge", and I think it did fit his personality. So I guess I would say respectful, respectful of other senators.

Of staff, I never once saw him raise his voice to a member of the staff, and I never once heard him, in any intentional way, insult staff, either publicly or privately. And other senators, Senator Muskie for example, who was known for his temper, or Senator Culver who I'd worked for, who was known for *his* temper, they would be publicly very demeaning of staff. I never saw Senator Mitchell do that. But that doesn't mean he was entirely easy to work for, and I'll think about, maybe in the next round we'll get around to what I mean by that, let me think about that.

DD: Abby, can you talk about when you first met Senator Mitchell, what issues you were dealing with, and your impressions?

AS: At the time that Senator Mitchell was appointed to the Senate in 1980, I was working for the Democratic Policy floor staff with Charles Kinney, who's not here, and of course Marty was in the cloakroom. So our encounters with him were as a junior senator, a newly appointed senator. He had however, because he had then I believe Senator Muskie's AA at some point in

time, or worked for Senator Muskie early in his career, he definitely had an idea of the Hill and what it was like. It was not like some of the newly appointed senators who either were governors or just not, had never had any practice in, around a legislative body.

So he knew how the place worked, I would say. He didn't come in trying to prove that he was the smartest kid on the block, he kind of did his, pleasant to the older members, you know, judicious of the older members. Senator Byrd was, I'd say, fairly quickly very impressed with him for his intelligence and his manner, which was judicious and thoughtful.

But as a member of the floor staff, mostly my concern was, was he making it to the votes? And that would have been the, you know, you're basically not staffing *him*, you're staffing all of the Democratic senators in terms of telling them what the vote is on and so forth, so I only really saw him during votes.

And the other main focus we had was, I believe he was appointed in 1980 and had to run for reelection in 1982, and at that point, every time a group of senators is up for reelection they're extremely concerned about when the last vote is going to be on a Friday so they can make a plane to their home state to campaign. And that is, actually that whole year of '82, there was pretty much a constant, you could predict it, at around eleven o'clock he would come out of the cloakroom, down to whoever was sitting at the desk in the front of the chamber, "When is the last vote?" Well, we were in the minority, there was no way *we* knew, you didn't want to make a prediction and have him miss a vote, but that was a constant then. So in general, I just had connection with him through working on the floor staff.

When he ran for majority leader in 1988, after he had chaired the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, which was an appointment – going back, that is one of the measures by which you could judge Senator Byrd's impression of him, he chaired that committee for the '86 election when the Democrats took the Senate back over again, we came back into the majority, and Senator Byrd was, I think, extremely pleased and proud that he had made that appointment and it had worked out the way it did. He created a position for Senator Byrd [*sic* Senator Mitchell] as deputy president pro tempore. My connection with Senator Mitchell at that point was a relatively tenuous one.

Senator Byrd was a very formal person, a very formal leader, and at the Democratic conference meetings on Tuesday he had a head table, and he had all of the officers of the Senate sit up there, of the Democratic officers. He sat there, the whip was there, the chairman of the, secretary of the conference was there, the president pro tempore was there, and the deputy president pro tempore was there, and at the end of the table sat I, next to him, eating at this table in front of all the rest of them. I thought he was actually quite funny, but he would be under his breath asking me [] questions.

Senator Byrd always made me stand up and take the roll at some point, for the attendance, instead of just ticking them off myself, I had to actually say the roll, and I would sit down, and he says, "Do you really *have* to do that?" I said, "No, I don't think so, but Senator Byrd wants

me to.” “Do we all really have to be sitting up at this table?” “No, but that’s the way he does it.” So I thought he was really quite amusing.

The race for leader, when Senator Byrd stepped down and said he was going to be chairman of the Appropriations Committee in the Congress beginning in 1989, he announced, I guess, he was stepping down as leader in 1988, the race for leader picked up right then. It was Senator Mitchell, Senator Inouye, and Senator Johnston all running for leader. At that time I was secretary for the majority, and it was an interesting time because you had to be very even, I had to be very evenhanded with all three candidates and make sure I told all of them exactly the same information about how the election was run, and not kind of break confidences and so forth.

I also had no idea that I would keep my job. I mean, a change in leader can mean a change in every job on the, on the fl-, in the leadership staff. And one memorable day, I believe in July of that year, Senator Mitchell walked past me, it was a late session, we’d had a vote but people were basically not around the floor. He walked past me on the floor and said, “Abby, if I am elected leader, will you stay on?” Needless to say, I said, “Yes,” and I was actually then pretty much committed to hoping that he would win. I had no idea about the other two, Senator Inouye’s staff indicated they’d keep me, Senator Johnston’s staff never said anything so I had no idea. So when he was elected leader, needless to say I was pleased, I had a job.

DD: Marty?

MP: I don’t, I was in the cloakroom when he came, so I didn’t have too much, dealings with him. I probably put him in the presiding officer’s chair some. I don’t recall many stories from that, so he must have dutifully served up there in the chair.

DD: Presiding over the Senate.

MP: Presiding over the Senate.

DD: Early impression.

MP: My early memory, the freshmen do one hour at a time. But my earlier memories of him are, as Abby said, the Fridays where he would come in and want to know, “Are we going to have any more votes?” and that’s the biggest arrow in the quiver of a leader, is when you’re going to announce, “No more votes,” they use that to negotiate time agreements, and Senator Byrd would cut your head off if he thought you were telling somebody there were no more votes before *he* had made that announcement. So we were never able to tell him, you know, we’d give him our best guess, but that wasn’t good enough for him and he was worried.

And then, as Abby pointed out, we had the leadership race, and I had – with Johnston, Inouye and Mitchell – I had a lobster tie at the time, which I always told Senator Johnston was a crayfish, and I never did find a macadamia nut pin, and unlike Abby, I didn’t know if I had a job once Mitchell was elected. And he was elected in November, well early December, like

December 5th or something like that, in a party caucus, and it was getting along in lines of about eight days, ten days later, and I still hadn't heard and I was telling my wife to go easy on the Christmas shopping.

And I was babysitting and the phone rang, and he called, at Abby's instigation I found out later, [p/o] I had already turned down a job with Byrd so I didn't know what I was going to get, or if anything, if Mitchell didn't ask me [p/o] to stay on. He did ask me to stay on, and then he himself joked and I told him, "Of course, I'd love to stay on," and that's when he said, "I can remember all those times when you gave me that information about votes on Friday and you were wrong." And then I told him at that point, I said, "Look at it this way, Senator, now when I give out that information, only you'll know the truth." And he immediately got it; he laughed, and said, "Oh, I like that."

And that began a relationship, with, he was as leader a different type of leader versus Byrd, as Byrd was a person that you didn't really need to help parliamentary wise, he knew everything he was doing. Mitchell was a brilliant man, but he was open to counsel on legislative options, and so Charles and I and Abby would give him options and then he would pick, and he was very good at picking it up, and we enjoyed the give and take of what the options were, and he was the type of guy where I could occasionally speak frankly with, once told him he was salivating to file another cloture motion, [whereupon] he exploded at me in the office, just the two of us, and insisted that he wasn't – but he didn't file another one that day, because he realized that he didn't have to file it and that we were able to move on and make progress without it.

DD: Do you remember what bill that was?

MP: No, I don't. But I just know that it was something that Dole was slowing down, and –

DD: Senator Dole –

MP: Senator Dole, who was the Republican leader, was slowing down, but it was, in my opinion it was apparent that we were going to get the bill done, or get an agreement. And usually the most important thing in getting an agreement was plane tickets, Fridays, and getting people out, when you announced no more votes, and we would start working on a Monday, Tuesday afternoon, Tuesday morning, trying to figure out what type of an agreement we wanted to get by Thursday in order to have the bill done so that we could get out of here Friday, and it worked almost every time and you ended up getting a lot done.

But you also had to cast a lot of votes, because Clinton being in the White House was different than when Bush was in the White House, in order to get things down to get signed for the president, you had to cast a lot of votes, votes that people didn't like, votes that [some] people felt that [p/o] [that led to their defeat] in '94. But that was just the nature of the beast.

DD: Can I just do, do your follow up and then could you speak to before Mitchell became leader, the tax bill, anything you might have to add about the tax bill or pieces of that. We are

going to be talking to Bobby Rozen, but environmental issues and any other legislative issues before he became leader, and Iran-Contra.

MPope: This is Martha. My, Marty prompted me to follow up on Mitchell's style, in working with staff in particular, and I said that I would give some thought to that and come back to the interview. And my thought is this, or my, I feel this, and I feel that it was true for, at every level that I worked for George Mitchell, that he very often, almost always, had a sense of what he wanted and where he was headed on something. He synthesized things and decided on a course of action, but he then would consult, he would consult staff, and he would consult his colleagues.

And as a member of his staff I can say, it's my feeling that if he didn't like what you had to say, he was unhappy about it. He wasn't easy in the sense that he would say, "Oh, I see your point, let me think about that." He would come back at you and explain to you why you were wrong, and sometimes he did that in a somewhat [p/o] [dismissive] way. And you would go back at him, and he would come back at you, and that was a pattern from the time I worked on fish and wildlife legislation to the last time I worked for him in Northern Ireland. But he almost always [p/o] did what you suggested. He would argue with you, but generally I think he took [p/o] your advice seriously.

And then one other point, and that is in terms of him being an extremely intelligent man. He was one of the best extemporaneous speakers in the Senate. He just could stand up there without a note and give a speech starting from the introduction to the conclusion, everything flowed, and in fact we did not correct his debate. There was a room off of the Senate floor where most staff [p/o] went and in some instances [would] really rewrite the senator's speech, so that when it was published in the Congressional Record, it was coherent. We never did that for Senator Mitchell, I do not remember a time that I went in there and corrected his debate. He was a brilliant speaker.

DD: Could you speak to the legislative pieces before he became leader, anything that comes to mind, Environmental, Finance Committee, Iran-Contra?

MPope: Boy, certainly not tax. [p/o] Bobby Rozen was his staff person [on the Finance Committee], and Bobby was so capable that I [just] tried to keep the trains running. [p/o] I did not get [deeply] into substance [on tax issues].

DD: Nothing on the committee, Bradley, Moynihan?

MPope: [p/o] Bobby really took care of that. On the environment committee, oh gosh, let me think. You know, I can remember doing fish and wildlife legislation, but I would really have to go back to notes. On the highway bill, we did the Brunswick bypass. The Environment and Public Works Committee had authority over highway legislation, and I remember [Senator] Mitchell [p/o] [introduced legislation to authorize] the Brunswick bypass [p/o]. And the first year that we worked on it, we got it in the bill and we got it through the Senate. And the

conference between the House and Senate to reconcile the differences was going late into the session; the session was about to end, and very, very late at night we lost the bill. It was not authorized, which killed me, just absolutely killed me. Ultimately we did get it authorized.

The other thing I worked on for him, this wasn't committee stuff and, but it was when I was his administrative assistant, I did the boundaries for Acadia National Park, the legislative authorization of boundaries for Acadia. Acadia was formed by a contribution from the Rockefellers and others, and it never had congressionally authorized boundaries which meant, just very briefly, that the towns were upset to see their land being donated to the park, because they lost their tax base. And environmentalists were upset to see land being developed within park boundaries. So for years, including with Senator Muskie, and Estelle Lavoie, his staff at the time, they worked on congressionally authorized boundaries for Acadia. And when I was Mitchell's staff person we ul-, we finally got that authorized. I was actually very pleased about that.

DD: Iran-Contra?

MPope: Oh boy, I'll tell you the one thing I remember about Iran-Contra. Yeah. Let me see, I'm trying to organize my thoughts on Iran-Contra. Rich Arenberg was his principal staff person. I remember two things, one, that Rich came in and said they were planning to call some gray-hair people in, wise men in to testify, and one of them was Henry Kissinger, and I said, "Good, you can ask him about the secret bombing of Cambodia." [p/o]

The other is, I do remember Senator Mitchell asking me for advice on his speech before questioning Ollie North. [p/o] I remember there was tension over it, there was concern. Ollie North was winning the day [with the public], and I remember being fairly passionate in my advice that [Senator Mitchell] needed to take him on, but I'll have to think more closely about the details of that and see if I can prompt my memory. I know he eventually went to Harold Pachios, and I think that's where he felt that he got his line about "God doesn't take sides in American politics."

What was the other topic, Diane?

DD: I was just going to go back to Iran-Contra for a second.

MPope: Yeah.

DD: You had been with the senator for eight, nine years, whatever by then, and there are many who wrote and felt that in addition to him steering, winning back the Senate in '86 that Iran-Contra was a turning point for him in the public eye. Could you speak to that a little bit?

MPope: Well when he did give his statement in the Committee he was [very] eloquent, and there was [p/o] a large audience. And I think that made a difference both in his public image, but also his image in the Senate. Because I remember in the leadership race, the [p/o] Senate

members said that [a major thing] he had going for him was that he could be a spokesperson for the party, which gets me back to my point about him being a brilliant extemporaneous speech, speaker. But I think that one of the reasons he won the leader race, among others, [p/o] was that he had taken Ollie North on, he had been eloquent about it, he had satisfied [a] kind of craving of [some] of the public out there for somebody to take Ollie North on. He'd done it in such an eloquent way, and I really do think it made a difference to his public image. And people remember him for that, too.

DD: Before we go to the leadership race, which you were key to, could you just speak about his relationship with the Maine delegation?

MPope: Boy, let me, once again I have to prompt my memory. I remember when he was in the, in his Senate office before he was leader, I remember – and Diane, I think you can help with this, though you came along a little later – but his relationship with [Senator] Cohen was tense. And the relationship certainly between the offices was tense.

DD: It seemed to improve with Iran-Contra, though. When they were –

MPope: That's right. Was it Iran-Contra? That's right, because the two of them, do you remember that time – can we tell this story? Do you remember that time they were both on Iran-Contra and they went to a dinner, but there was a big basketball game that night -

DD: And they slipped out.

MPope: And they slipped out.

DD: To make phone calls about it.

MPope: And they gave the excuse –

DD: That they had to –

MPope: That they had to do something with Iran-Contra, and they left the dinner. And the press found out that they had said they were doing something with Iran-Contra and all hell broke loose with the telephones.

DD: Right, right, right.

MPope: And it wasn't true; they were just going to watch a basketball game on television. That is true, I think the relationship improved after that, *and* Mitchell kind of laid down the law to his staff, that he wanted things to improve. We got our marching orders, so on the staff level things improved and it just kind of evolved to a better situation. There was tension with Olympia Snowe, am I correct?

DD: Yes.

MPope: Yes. What was all of that about? It was about credit I think, was it, that -

DD: There was also the, I remember working with you, not that this is about me, this is your interview, but I remember working with you on delegation announcements and the race to it -

MPope: That's right.

DD: - and if we were going to do it jointly or not, and if it was in Bangor versus Portland, and Olympia getting out front and -

MPope: Right.

DD: - you know, then you had the whole McKernan piece of that and his piece.

MPope: Yeah, that explains it, I don't need to go into it more, there was tension there. Jock McKernan was the House member there, then.

DD: Looking for future (*unintelligible*).

MPope: Yeah, thinking to run for governor. But I don't remember the tension with him, no. What else? Get me back on track here.

DD: Iran-Contra, his change, and then could you, you were his top aide in the leadership race, could you speak to that, please?

MPope: Yeah, I mean I guess I was his top aide, and maybe I made a difference, but Mitchell was doing a lot of that with Joe Stewart. I think Joe, I have to guess that Joe had a horse in the race and that it was Mitchell [p/o]. Joe Stewart was secretary of the Senate then, and he had worked for a very long time for Byrd and had been involved in a lot of leader races, and he was giving the impression of being evenhanded with Inouye and Johnston, but he [p/o] was helping Mitchell [p/o] [with] the members, in terms of [p/o] their interest in committees and assignments and things of that nature. Joe was giving [Senator] Mitchell advice on that. And so I know Mitchell was working with Joe, and then there were certain core senators, I think, that he was working with.

[p/o] I was raising money. We were working with a number of organizations, I do remember a lot of the health care groups, and we were having fundraisers and directing that money to Senate races in order to garner votes. So I was involved in that. I was helping with the count, the head count, and we were very careful about the count. Mitchell was extremely careful [p/o], and if a senator said, "I think you'd make a good leader," he didn't get counted. The senator had to say, "I'm for you and I'll vote for you," they had to say, "I'll vote for you." And if there was any waver, we took them off the list. So our head count, I have to say, was very accurate, save one

person, which I'll get back to.

But in the days right before the race, Johnston, Senator Johnston, was blowing smoke out in the lobbying community, particularly, that he had it wrapped up, and there was a panic on downtown and I started getting these phone calls from people who had backed Mitchell and were terrified that he was going to lose. And I remember, and I got phone calls from Bill Bradley's staff – What was her name? – Marcia Aronoff, and other staff people that had backed Mitchell, very panicked that we didn't know what we were doing and our head count was off, and I was giving them reassurance. There was a great deal of panic, but we felt we had the votes.

And they went into the first round of votes, and I guess since this is going to be held from the public for quite a long time I can, can I be honest about -?

DD: No, it's –

MPope: This is –

DD: This is public, you should consider this public, shortly [correction: the policy of the oral history project is that all interviews are restricted until such time as the interviewee agrees to have the interview made public by signing a release form].

MPope: Well then I'm not going to be the one to say who lied. Mitchell can do that if he wants to. But he had one, he went into the race, he went into the caucus thinking he had it wrapped up by one vote

DD: But he had twenty-seven, I think?

MPope: It was a three-way race, so he wouldn't have had twenty-seven, would he? If, in a three-way race in a caucus of fifty, he -

DD: (*Unintelligible*).

MPope: Well in any event, he thought he had it by one, and one person had lied to him. And the person had changed their mind at the last minute, maybe because they thought Johnston was going to win. But as it happened, Inouye and Mitchell – is this right? – they tied, and Johnston stood up and suggested that it be done my acclamation. [p/o] [Because no one had a majority,] it had to go to a second round, and Mitchell had enough [votes to win] in the second round. [p/o] [I'm not sure that my memory is correct on this. Abby was there.]

AS: I wish I could remember this better. I think that at the end of the first round, Inouye had the fewest number of votes, and he dropped out and essentially in, at that point, I think, and I think that, at that point, I think after that, I'm not sure we even had a second round. Oh, we did have a second round of voting? I'm not sure that we did. I don't think you did, because I think Johnston knew, and I think Inouye knew and I think Senator Mitchell knew that many of Senator

Inouye's votes were going to go to Senator Mitchell. I think, you may have even had some of them -

MPope: Inouye, I'm told was upset, my recollection, my recollection – this is Martha – is that Johnston asked for the vote by acclamation, and Inouye was upset, that he wanted it to go to a second round and he got boxed in. [p/o] After the first round it was tied, I think, and I thought that it was Inouye-Mitchell, and Johnston asked for acclamation because he was embarrassed to have gone down so low, or he didn't want [the] vote. Somebody was going to be dropped out and he didn't want to be, because he'd blown so much smoke downtown about how he was ahead. [I] can't remember, okay, there you go, it's been too long.

DD: When Mitchell became leader in '89 there were, and George Bush the first was in the White House, there were several big legislative issues: Clean Air, that was particular to Senator Mitchell, and the budget, and Andrews, and the not raising taxes, and what that meant for '92 and the election, Civil Rights Bill of '91 with Senator Kennedy. Abby, can you speak to the, Senator Mitchell's leadership abilities, his working with other members, coalescing opinion, and what he would do when there were disagreements?

AS: Perhaps. I would say from the outset what I always said, particularly from the time I went to work for the Democratic Policy Committee on the floor staff, I do not do issues, I only do process. So bills went past me and I didn't really know much of what went on in negotiations on the substance of the bill, I was more familiar with what went on with trying to get the bill passed.

May I backtrack a little bit to the differences between working for Senator Byrd and working for Senator Mitchell, which I think I said, I have said at time that – and I continue to believe this – Senator Byrd had a reputation, particularly at the time, of being an extremely difficult man to work for. And I would have to say from my experience working for him, since I worked on the floor staff, and Senate procedure was his favorite thing, he loved the floor, he loved managing the floor, he loved negotiating time agreements, it was his playground in a way, I mean he really liked it.

I never, ever had a problem getting to him, giving him information, working with him. You had to be extremely careful not to tell him anything that wasn't true. If you didn't know something, don't make it up, because if you made it up and he found out, you would be questioned in terms of your knowledge for the next three months before he would take your word on something. I mean, you really did not want to, to do it; it's much easier to tell him, "I don't know, I'll find out." And many people had to learn that by practice.

Senator Mitchell, when he became leader, was completely different personality from Senator Byrd. And the best way that I can express it is he was a bit more informal. Senator Byrd was very formal, you would not speak colloquially to him, you would not argue with him. You might give him some alternatives, but you never got into a debate with him. Senator Mitchell was just much more easy to deal with in that sense. And I can remember my shock, when he became

leader, one of the things that he wanted to do was have a meeting with each senator, in groups, all the Democratic senators, and Republicans as well, I think, were invited at some point in time, to talk to him about what – but certainly every Democrat had a meeting with him in, as I say, groups of maybe five or six, about what they wanted to see in terms of different ways of running the Senate, what their concerns were about the schedule, kind of the routine things of the operation of the Senate. Obviously they want to see more predictability on votes, which is never easy to achieve and almost impossible. But he had those meetings as, I think, an effort to reach out to the people, all of his colleagues. It was particularly important to do that for the ones that had not voted for him, because they were people that had not initially voted for him for leader and so you want to also reach out to them.

So I'm organizing these groups and we're having these meetings, and I go in to him one day and he wanted to know who was coming to the next group of meetings. And I, one of the senators was Senator Hollings, and he said, "He's already been to one of them." I said, "No, he hasn't." And I thought to myself, "Where am I? I would never do that to Byrd," you know, I said, "No, he hasn't." And he said, "Yes, he has." I said, "No, he hasn't." He said, "Yes, he has." I said, "That must have been some other silver-haired southern senator, but it wasn't Hollings." And he finally agreed with me, that Hollings hadn't been there. But after I walked out of the office, I was shell shocked, I would never have had that conversation with Senator Byrd. I mean I would have had, gone back to my notes, I would have found the thing, I would have brought it back to him, I wouldn't have just sort of said, "You're wrong." So that was a, very much a different thing.

And that effort on his part to include his colleagues in discussions, I think, was a good thing that he did. Senator Byrd was perceived, and of course he'd been leader for a long time, was perceived as being a little bit more detached from the members and not consulting them all the time. And so I think Senator Mitchell started out by an attempt to be consultative with them.

It didn't take long, though, for him to realize that they weren't all his friends any more. And in fact, they were all in for their own stuff. And certain people would come to him asking for votes not on Thursday afternoon through Monday, or something like that, and I remember him saying one time, "That guy voted for me for leader, what's he doing?" "He's running for reelection, who knows, he doesn't care any more; you're supposed to be the one that delivers the goods for him." But I think pretty soon he began to realize that everybody had their own agenda, and no matter how much he consulted with them, if it was their own agenda, hmm, they'd probably run off the rails occasionally.

I think however, what Martha has said about it, he was such a quick study, and so insightful about stuff that he could be briefed very quickly on something and be able to carry it off in a public meeting, or in the conference particularly.

DD: What about his relationship with Senator Dole?

AS: Dangerous. Dangerous. No, that was an interesting period of time. Since Senator

Mitchell and Senator Dole had served on the Finance Committee they actually did have a history with each other, at least they knew each other. And the thing that always terrifies you when you're the staff of a leader is to know that that leader is talking to the other leader at times and places that you don't know about, and there are always issues that come up that you haven't been able to transmit to your leader about a senator who has a concern about an upcoming amendment or a bill or something. And I believe that Senator Mitchell and Senator Dole had a hotline between their offices, and they, they consulted regularly.

Back to the, when Senator Mitchell became leader, the instruction that we got from the floor staff and from myself as secretary was, he wanted no surprises for Dole. And he was trying to ratchet down the idea that the majority was going to pull a fast one on the minority, and that he would consult with Dole and we would do no surprises.

DD: Can you speak to how the floor changed, and about keeping someone on the floor versus not needing to and having a member there?

AS: Betwee-?

DD: Wasn't that a change that, because of the contact between Mitchell and Dole, can you talk about that?

AS: That's was not actually the change. That's more an issue of, in the, the times that we were very worried about having someone on the floor and someone pulling a fast one was when we were in the minority. When you're in the majority, you always have the presiding officer. They may not like it, but you can get them to put a quorum call in if someone pulls a fast one. I think that Senator Dole was more relaxed about having to keep someone on the floor to protect himself, yes, that was true.

DD: And that would be a member who was on the floor, and why, can you explain that a little bit?

AS: Oh, because the only people that can speak are senators, on the floor. And no matter how much you know what's being done is not what another senator wants done, as a staff person you can do nothing other than to find a senator to speak. So from Senator Dole's perspective, if he wasn't on the floor, they didn't have a presiding officer, he wanted to be certain that nothing was going to be done in his absence that was not agreed to between he and Senator Mitchell.

In point of fact, that actually happened between Senator Byrd and Senator Dole. I mean, you can't operate the place without a certain amount of comity on those things. I think the fact that Senator Byrd was perceived, and was, a parliamentarian in his own right, that they, the Republicans often felt that he was pulling fast ones on them because he knew how to use the rules. And if they didn't understand the rules, they felt they were being taken advantage of. *(phone rings---an aside)* So I mean, but whose ox is getting gored is a matter of perception. I mean if you're in the minority, you always feel like you're being taken advantage of.

But I would have to say that as time went on, Senator Mitchell occasionally had to be reminded, “No surprises.” Because it does become appealing at some point when you’re being frustrated, and the Republicans could be very frustrating in terms of moving a schedule along, that he needed to be in a bit of consulting with Senator Dole, or we need to at least give him a heads up and so forth. I can remember having to remind him about being no surprises. But that’s just, that happens all the time, that’s just the nature of it.

DD: Martha, can you speak to, you can make a point of whatever you want, but could you also then speak to Senator Dole, relationships with the Bush White House, particularly as it relates to anything you want, but Andrews and the budget and Clean Air?

MPope: Just with regard to Senator Dole, when [Senator] Mitchell became leader he really made a concerted effort to establish a [good] relationship with Senator Dole that would be perceived of as fair. So as Abby said, he really, he really, for the most part, occasionally having to be reminded, but he did not surprise Dole. And he did other things. Sheila Burke had wanted [p/o] office space, which Byrd refused to relinquish – Sheila Burke was Dole’s chief of staff – and Senator Mitchell gave them the office space. So he really was looking for ways to calm what was a very tense situation between the minority and majority down a bit.

Now, Mitchell though, I think, developed a reputation with the Republicans [as being tricky]. I don’t know Abby, would you say he developed a reputation? I think it was after Andrews Air Force Base and the no new tax pledge. I’ll get back to that – but as being tricky. And I’ve had to tell people, he never was, he was as straightforward as he could be with the minority. Abby’s going to make a point here.

AS: I think that’s what frustrated the Republicans about Senator Mitchell was that – I’m going back to the leader relationships. Senator Byrd and Senator Dole’s relationship was not good when Senator Byrd was the minority leader and Senator Dole was the majority leader, the last two years that the Republicans controlled the Senate in ‘85 and ‘86, and Senator Byrd was very good about trying to figure out ways to frustrate them.

And Senator Dole began, he was not a parliamentary genius. He knew he wanted to get stuff done; he didn’t know the rules particularly well. And go back with Senator Baker as Republican leader, didn’t even try to contest Senator Byrd on parliamentary issues, when he was majority leader, he said he knew he couldn’t win so he just kind of, and we were making them have Social Security votes almost every week. And so Senator Dole came into the position of leader wanting to change that dynamic with Senator Byrd, and he hired as his personal floor advisor a man by the name of Bob Dove, who had been the Senate parliamentarian, and there became a very contentious period of time there where Senator Dole would do things, they would definitely wire the chair, in terms of telling the presiding officer who to recognize at what time, which Senator Byrd never did and did not approve of, they would stack amendments so no Democrat could offer an amendment.

And there was one very memorable exchange between them during the summer before the '86 election, in which Senator Byrd was having a speech about all of the injustices that were being perpetrated by the majority, and that the minority have rights, and Senator Dole said, "I was not elected leader to lose."

End of Disc One

Disc Two

AS: When we took the Senate over that November, I remembered that statement, and I guess, "Yes, you were." So then Senator Byrd took over as leader with a history with many of the Republican leaders of having been a contentious minority leader. Now he's in the position of trying to move bills along, and they're in the position of trying to slow them down, and their feeling was, "You did it, we can do it." So there was history there, and Senator Mitchell did try very hard to change that dynamic. And did to a large extent, a very large extent.

I think that the reason the Republicans were *as* frustrated with him, this is my own feeling, is that he was not an easy boogeyman to tie down. Senator Byrd had become someone for whom, if he wanted it, they didn't. Senator Mitchell always portrayed in the public, when he would describe what the issues were and what the contention was and what we needed to work our way out of, sounded so reasonable, and was reasonable really. But he definitely put the best face on it for his own needs. They had very little to hang on to. And he *wasn't* pulling fast ones on, as a parliamentarian.

DD: Back to Martha Pope.

MPope: Actually, thinking about it, you might describe [p/o] him as being fair, but [p/o] partisan.

AS: Yes.

MPope: And they didn't get the difference. Mitchell won, he knew where he was headed and he won, and it sort of carried on into an impression of him as unfair, but he never was, he was always very balanced in his approach and very fair in his approach to them. It's just, if, he would do what he had to do to win, and he was partisan in his goals.

I just want to make, I want to get back to one point and that was Abby talking about Mitchell consulting with his colleagues. And I think he did want to consult, and he did want to establish a reputation for being consultative, but, and so he would form task forces, and it was just one after another. If it was a difficult issue, he'd round up the usual suspects and we would have a task force.

Well, that was a form of consulting, but the fact of the matter is, Mitchell at the same, Senator Mitchell at the same time would say, "I don't know why I always have to do everything myself."

– correct, ladies? – “Why do I have to do everything myself?” But at the same time, he really didn’t let those task forces do very much. So he was “consulting”, but I’d put that in quotations. He very much was – Abby’s going to add to this, her thoughts.

AS: The problem is to reach the point at which you’re talking to your colleagues about things that have, that need to be resolved. But they will keep it going *forever*; they never reach a conclusion. And there’s always another point of view, and at some point somebody has to decide, “This is the direction we’re going.” So yes, he used the task forces, they were usually appointed and had a charter of things they were supposed to head to, where he wanted to go, and it gave them a chance to make a recommendation to the leader. He usually took enough of it that they felt they had done, had some impact or input into it, but it’s very hard. And they all, all of them complained. I mean I, if he consulted them seven times the previous week but didn’t consult them this week on something they cared about, then he wasn’t being consultative.

DD: What about his relationship with committee chairmen?

AS: I thought it was okay. I don’t remember with him, with Senator Byrd he used to have chairmen’s meetings every once in a while, he’d call the chairmen in, but we didn’t do that. I think, I think he, I think he was correct with the chairmen. [p/o] My impression was that some chairmen are difficult, some of them want their bills up and you don’t have time to do them right then and there’s always that push, give and take, but I don’t remember chairmen feeling they were being run over by him. There were obviously some more difficult than others, but I don’t think it was a terrible relationship.

DD: I think he had some sort of leadership meeting sometimes before the Tuesday luncheon.

AS: Yes.

DD: You’d, we’d squeeze that in, in the 12:00 to 12:30 -

AS: Yeah.

DD: - piece.

AS: Yeah. Managers of bills that were coming up, usually, yeah, you’d have the managers of bills that were coming up, the whip, secretary of the conference and so forth, yeah. And he did broaden the leadership, that was one of the campaign things. When Senator Byrd was leader, he was Democratic leader, he was chairman of the Policy Committee, chairman of the Steering Committee, he had all of the, all of the leadership positions were his, and Senator Mitchell broadened that base a little bit by making Senator Daschle co-chairman of the Policy Committee, and Senator Inouye as chairman of the Steering Committee, that was one of the outreaches he did to Senator Inouye after that election.

DD: And either continued with or started with the Thursday Policy Committee lunches. Can

you speak to that?

AS: Yeah that, now that, maybe Martha knows more about. My feeling on that was that was more of a Senator Daschle push, to give something different for the Policy Committee to do. The two of them may have talked that out and come up with that as a suggestion, a forum, and the Tuesday meetings were the whole Democratic caucus and focused pretty much solely on the immediate issues on the floor. The Thursday was more of a roundtable; anybody could come, they would bring speakers in from outside on issues that might be coming down the road, more of an educational meeting.

It was also a place to find out where people were headed; depending on their questions you could kind of figure out whether they were supporting or not. I was frankly surprised that that meeting had as much attendance as it did, because it's hard enough to get all these guys in one place at one time, and they'd go to the Tuesday lunch and I thought the Thursday might not be as big a success as it was, but they almost routinely had at least twenty to twenty-five senators there and that's pretty good.

DD: And they still do it today.

AS: Hmm-hmm.

DD: Martha, if you can address the Policy Committee, and then a little bit about relationships with the Bush White House, with regard to Andrews and the budget and Clean Air?

MPope: Let me get back to the Policy Committee, because that really wasn't my thing so much.

DD: Just your observations (*unintelligible*).

MPope: Well, I'll get back to it. George H. W. Bush was president and there was a budget impasse, and they decided the only way to settle it was to go to Andrews Air Force Base and cloister themselves so the media and lobbyists, etcetera, couldn't get to them. So the White House sent representatives, including John Sununu, and the House had people there and Mitchell had people there, and [p/o] Congressman Gephardt, [p/o] [Speaker] Foley, Senator Mitchell, I remember Senator Sasser, Senator Fowler, Senator Byrd. [p/o] There was one memorable exchange where, I think it was Sununu, that was insulting. One White House person, kicked back and [p/o] was popping candies in their mouth, [p/o] [acting] insulting in their demeanor, and Senator Byrd called them on it in a very tense exchange. But anyway, that was an aside.

Just briefly, what happened at Andrews was we didn't reach an agreement. And Senator Mitchell ended up, as I recall – and Bobby Rozen will be more helpful on this – working pretty much alone with the House, Foley and Gephardt, to reach an agreement. And the agreement was not as progressive as some of the Democrats would have liked. It had to do with the capital gains tax, and it may have been doubtful whether Mitchell could have gotten the votes in the

Senate for what he had negotiated but as it turned out, and Abby could be helpful on this, the House had to vote first. Is that constitutional [p/o]?

AS: On the budget resolution, yeah.

MPope: [Yes], the House does the budget first. And Newt Gingrich rounded up the opposition to it and killed it over in the House, because I guess he felt that the White House had gone too far, and the House Republicans killed it, and we never had to vote in the Senate. And that ended up meaning that Mitchell would go down to the White House with other members of the leadership, House and Senate, and talk directly to the president.

And during that exchange, President Herbert Walker Bush backed off his “no new tax” pledge. He was famous for “no new taxes.”

AS: “Read my lips.”

MPope: “Read my lips, no new taxes,” and there were even t-shirts of him saying that. And when Bush backed off of that there was a bit of a firestorm politically with the Republicans, and that is, I think, accepted as one of the reasons Bush lost the presidency, that he had backed off his no new tax pledge after the Andrews Air Force Base negotiations failed. And that is also one of the reasons Mitchell was considered by the Republicans to be tricky. That’s another way that he got that reputation.

Now of course, he was in a meeting, it wasn’t behind closed doors, he didn’t manipulate Bush in any way that I’m aware of, I wasn’t there, but Bush backed off that pledge because of Mitchell, it was in direct response to something Mitchell had said, and that led to a change in his reputation with the Republicans. And probably led, along with a couple of other things, including President Bush’s interest in curtailing loan guarantees for Israeli settlements, that contributed to H. W. Bush losing the election.

DD: Before we leave taxes, as I recall the press accounts from it and what little he talked about it was, there was a line in the statement that said, “It is clear that taxes will have to be raised,” and Mitchell had Bush insert “to me,” and there was a piece: “it was clear *to me*,” in a statement from the president. And in fact, I remember Mitchell saving that piece of paper and it’s someplace, but it was that little carrot of “to me” so that it was Bush personal on the raising of the taxes, which I think gets to the point about the Republicans thinking, “He’s a little too clever and partisan,” whatever. I didn’t mean to interrupt, but just, that’s, okay, Martha.

MPope: [p/o] Oh, here’s what I remember about Clean Air. [p/o] I remember the politics of Clean Air. [p/o] Here are the politics of Clean Air: Muskie of course deserves most of the credit for the authorization of the Clean Air Act but it needed to be reauthorized, and it hadn’t been for years and years. And Senator Mitchell finally forced [p/o] reauthorization of the Clean Air Act.

And that of course meant a few compromises had to be made, and what happened was members

of his own caucus, Tim Wirth and Frank Lautenberg [p/o] agreed [p/o] to the compromises [proposed by Senator Mitchell]. Then they [joined] with the environmentalists and came up with amendments [p/o] on the floor, and they made it look like George Mitchell was less interested in protecting the environment, when he was the one that used all of his chits as leader to get [the bill] to the floor. And there was a certain amount of unpleasantness about that, wasn't there? Abby has something to add to that.

DD: And also we'll come around to Marty also and back to Martha after Abby, of the Byrd relationship in the coal states and acid rain.

AS: There was a certain amount of unpleasantness around Clean Air. One of the problems was that, at the Tuesday conference Senator Mitchell would try to have an open and aboveboard discussion of what the issues were, and then would watch people leaving the conference early to go talk to the press, who was always hanging around, knowing that senators would be coming out of those meetings, and he would try, in vain, I think, probably, week-, several weeks, reminding them that what people say in the conference is supposed to stay inside the conference, you don't go out and say somebody said this, somebody said that, somebody said that. And it kind of never worked totally.

Clean Air was, it was probably one of the biggest issues that was a big change for those of us who'd worked for Senator Byrd, and let me go back a little bit. We had worked for Senator Byrd, Marty and I had worked for Senator Byrd from 1979, Charles Kinney had worked for Byrd longer than that, '70, yeah, '77, something like that, so we were all brought on board by Senator Mitchell on to his staff. And I don't remember very much in the way of testing our loyalties. I think the assumption was there that we were going to work for Senator Mitchell and that was, that's who we were working for. And I don't remember being, feeling like that was always being watched to see if I was really working for him or was I still working for Senator Byrd. I don't remember that at all.

And actually, Senator Byrd was good at that particular point in time, too. He stepped back a little bit. I mean he knew how things were being done, he sometimes, I think, would maybe make suggestions to Senator Mitchell, maybe – and Senator Mitchell did consult with him, I think wisely, about some issues on how to proceed. But, I think more, actually, from my perspective for Byrd, more at a staff level, it was created more at a staff level, personally, but that's just my own personal viewpoint on it.

Where was I going with that? Clean Air. During the time that Senator Byrd was leader, he was always afraid of an amendment coming through, particularly a non-germane amendment, on acid rain, which dealt directly with his coal interests. And we used to have to read all, every House message to make sure there wasn't a line in there on acid rain. Conference reports, House messages on bills, it was just amazing. And so now we were switched completely, pretty much, to the other side. But –

MPope: Because Mitchell was on the environment -

AS: Mitchell was more on the environmentalist side of it.

(Unintelligible).

AS: Absolutely, absolutely, it was a total switch in emphasis. But he did negotiate on that bill, and I remember talking to staff who were in those meetings, from other senators, who were blown away by the negotiating skill that Senator Mitchell had and how he understood the issues.

DD: The other thing that Mitchell introduced on there was really to make it a health care issue as well. One of the first hearings in '87 I can recall is that he did the health effects of acid rain and pollution and had the American Lung Association and the pediatric, and so it changed it, not only in the politics within the caucus, but attempted to begin to change it, or add to the debate, as far as the issue that was perceived. Marty, can you speak to either Clean Air specifically or Mitchell's relationship with members, and Abby and Martha have spoken to this, but his consulting or lack of consulting, and his relationship with Dole?

MP: Well he had a very good relationship with Dole, he and Dole would meet regularly with Sheila Burke and Dole's staff, she was his chief of staff. They were very open, you know, Dole would say he was going to do something because of somebody in his caucus was insisting on it, and Mitchell would say, "Well I don't know why you'd want to do that, but go ahead and do it, that's your call," and Dole would pretty much agree with him; "You're right, it's stupid, but I've got to do it."

The Clean Air bill was an interesting bill because it was something that came up, it was on the floor, almost overnight they adopted, and they had a vote on the initial amendment, and the opponents of the bill were shocked by the large vote that the amendment got, the amendment was agreed to, that amended the substitute which meant that hereafter they'd lost the right to modify the substitute. That sent the bill into the backroom negotiations for like two months, if I recall correctly, and it was, as a result of that amendment and the lack of the ability to modify, that they came back out, back to the floor a couple of months later, and now we had a whole new substitute that we wanted to do, Mitchell wanted to do. But Steve Symms, who was the leader, one of the leaders of the opposition, they wanted to modify the committee substitute and have a new substitute pending so people could offer amendments in the first and second degree. And, of course, the opponents realized that was to their disadvantage and so they objected.

And so thereafter, everything had to be done to, any amendment, you had to offer your amendment; they offered it as a freestanding substitute for the substitute. It was amendable in one degree thereafter, and so anything the opponents wanted to offer, they got a free shot at without a cover vote, as we call it in the Senate, where the majority gets a vote on something first, before they're asked, their members to vote down the opposition. That bill, with its NOX and all the other terms was enough to make your head spin, and thank God he had great Environment and Public Works staff. Kate was mentioned earlier, and there were some others, Kate Kimball.

But we went through day after day of tough votes, that members had to just walk in and vote down these amendments, until finally Symms came up with an amendment that they didn't want to have to cast that vote cold on, and we came up with a motion to recommit first, and that got Mitchell a vote on something in lieu of that to get a first vote, and allowed them to defeat Symms, and that was how that bill finished up. But that was the bill where Mitchell would often talk about the environmentalists being upset with him, and he kept using the term, "You can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good."

DD: And that they would rather go down -

MP: And that they would rather go down, and he would not let that happen. And then of course this was the major, you had the administration wanting the bill, you had Dole wanting the bill – administration being Bush the first – Dole supporting Mitchell, wanting the bill. All of these people lined up against Byrd, and Byrd almost beat them on an amendment to provide for more assistance for displaced coal miners, which they, he assumed there were going to be plenty of, with the lack of coal being used. And some of the same debate now is being resurrected on Cap and Trade; we're seeing the same people lined up. But that came down to an intense lobbying vote to the point of Biden getting a call from Sununu, and the president on the floor in the cloakroom, having already committed to Byrd. Biden takes the call, comes out, votes with Mitchell and the administration, leading to an acrimonious conference months down the road where Biden was trying to claim credit for something and which Byrd then stood up and pointed to him across the room and said, "You forsook me."

[Senator] Byrd [kept] that vote hanging on the wall in back of him so that people could see it as they came in to ask for money for their appropriations projects, and it was kind of hard to go to the "lick log", as he referred to himself, when you knew that you had voted against him on that vote, so you had to spend many a day trying to get yourself back into his good graces.

DD: We're going to go to Supreme Court in a second, and then we're going to do a couple of wrap up questions, but Marty and Abby and Martha as well, a couple of things that were out there as far as Mitchell's style was concerned was his excellent "patience muscle" and "herding cats." In the Senate there's something that's particular with regard to filibusters and filing cloture, which we've addressed a little bit here. Can you speak to those, not the filibuster, but with regard to Senator Mitchell and his style and his leadership with regard to "patience muscle," "herding cats," and anything else you want to add in.

MP: No, he was very patient. I mean, we didn't have a robust majority like they do now, and so he needed to keep everybody together as much as possible, and there would be many a time where you'd think you'd have everything lined up and then he'd get a call that Bob Graham was off the reservation, and he'd have to go, he'd call him and have him come over to meet with him, or he would go meet with him on the floor. [p/o] [Any senator could come visit him in his office, Senator] Conrad, Bob Kerrey, [p/o] Chuck Robb, [et al]. And yet [p/o] there [later arose] this revisionist history [p/o] that he wasn't as inclusive as leaders that came afterwards.

Well he *was* inclusive; his door was always open, people always, had no, and they didn't hesitate to walk in. And his patience was, and he never lost his cool or got upset with a member, he would always just try to work it out with them as to, like, what can he do to accommodate them or at least meet them halfway in order to assure that they were happy and that they were going to stay within the fold in trying to move the bill along.

It was, there was a crime bill, I'll never forget the crime – did you already hit this?

AS: No.

MP: There was the crime bill, it was a conference report on crime. The Republicans for years had cleaned our clocks on being soft on crime. Biden decided they were going to take that issue away and pass a comprehensive crime bill which did hit all the right notes: tough on crime, prisons, etcetera. And the Republicans, Dole leading the Republican charge, knew that they had been defeated every step they took, and the conference report was coming back from the House and most of their provisions, and they had won some on the floor but most of their provisions had been tempered too much for their liking.

So Dole was going to force a cloture vote, and he wanted to insist on votes on a whole series of things, basically reopening the conference report. Mitchell knew that, he had Biden in with him the night before, with Abby and myself and other staff, Martha, and called, decided, "Well what we'll do is, let's offer him one vote as a package, he could package all of his individual rifle shots into one vote, even though he's not entitled to it because the conference report's unamendable, and let's offer him that, and let's call members and see if they would support that, if we offered him that would they then, and he was defeated, would they then vote for cloture on the bill?" And the people he called were Republicans, too, Kassebaum for one, which really got to Dole, when she agreed that this was an acceptable process, acceptable tactic.

And they went through the list and called all these folks, Democrats and Republicans, and tried to explain the – it wasn't an easy process to explain, of offering an individual vote on a series of changes versus a number of votes on a series of changes in a conference report, which is unamendable, etcetera, and asking Senator Biden to make these calls. Senator Mitchell would have his list, Biden had his list, Mitchell would be on his fifth call, Biden would still be on the first one. And finally Mitchell took his list from him and he hand wrote on a four by five card, or four by six card, what, and what *only*, Biden was supposed to say on his call, and gave it to him and said, "This is it, this is all you need to say."

And then that's how we finished the rest of that night. At that point I went home, I was tired, I left Abby and Martha there, I knew this was going to go on for a while, I could see the handwriting on the wall, he was going to get the votes.

DD: Biden then got on the train.

MP: But Biden, no, Biden stayed that night; that was one of the nights where he stayed in town. And the next day though, Dole got word, the place being the village that it is, of what, of the phone calls, particularly to people like Kassebaum, his colleague, and other Republicans -

DD: From his home state.

MP: From his home state, and that they were going to support Mitchell if Mitchell made this offer, and Dole was fried. You could, he was so angry you could see it in his face and you could hear it in his voice, about the offer, and he said, "I can count, I've been around here long enough, I can count votes," and he knew the offer was going to be made, and it ended up, the conference passed, they got cloture, Mitchell made the offer. I don't remember whether we ever even went down that road. Dole may have said, "To heck with it." But the conference report did pass.

AS: Marty, was this the same crime bill – and this is Abby – was this the same crime bill where we were supposed to make Senator Helms filibuster all night, at one point?

MP: No, that was an education -

AS: That was the education conference report?

MP: Yeah, and he didn't come.

AS: And he didn't come, and I can remember, that is one time that I do remember Senator Mitchell in our cloakroom basically backing the two of us into phone booths, pretty much, it seemed like, wanting to know why we couldn't keep Senator Helms on the floor. And also -

MP: [Senator Helms had gone into] their cloakroom for a glass of water or something, and Mitchell came out, we were being tough on Helms, making him filibuster, and he came, he went and took a break. But they had someone else on the floor, if not, he might have been gone for five minutes, and Mitchell happened to walk through and he wasn't there, we were in a quorum, and Mitchell was, couldn't believe that we weren't making him filibuster every thirty sec-, every instant, every second. But we told him, "Look, he's just in the cloakroom, he'll be right out," and he did come right out. But yeah, he was not happy when he walked out and didn't see him out there.

And then that was one where Liz Letchworth (*sounds like*), Liz Green(e), came to me and wanted to know, was there some face saving we could give Helms. And we had had it with face saving at that point, he had already made us walk the plank on a number of horrible votes that people had to cast, and so we said, "No, it's a conference report, we're going to have the cloture vote, this is it. " And so, and that was the one where Dole told Helms that, "Look, these are the" – he showed him his whip check – he said, "These are the votes, they're going to get cloture, why don't we let this cloture vote happen tonight?"

It was a Thursday before a recess; we were supposed to go out that Friday for a recess. And

having given him the information, thought that Helms would be reasonable, the opposite happened. Helms said, "No," and then, because they have staff in their cloakroom, next thing you know Bob Novak's writing a story, a critical column about how Dole is sharing, Helms is fighting the good fight for Conservatives, while Dole's giving his whip list, his whip count to Mitchell. And it was absurd that he was being criticized for this, but in any case they said, "Well, can we move?" We said, "Can we move the vote up?" and he wouldn't let us move the vote up. And so we said, "All right." The vote couldn't be until Saturday.

So we came in at 12:01 a.m. Saturday morning, that Friday night, and we had to vote at 1:01 a.m., which you have to do one hour after you convene, and we got cloture and everybody went off on their recess, and the one guy, one of the people that didn't make that vote that night was Helms, and he had gone home, much to the chagrin of his colleagues who really appreciated – to say the least, we didn't use [any] cloture time [once cloture was invoked]. Dole allowed us to go ahead, right to passage, because Helms didn't even deign to show up.

DD: Before we wrap up can we just talk a little bit about the Supreme Court, and, in particular, of note was Clarence Thomas, and in particular I'm thinking of, although Abby, you may have other thoughts as well, a certain luncheon that Senator Mitchell and Senator Biden were in a bulls eye on?

AS: Well, the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court by George H. W. Bush at first seemed like it was going along predictably. It was, there wasn't much to actually oppose him on in some sense, as he hadn't, he'd been an appeals court judge, or circuit court judge, one or the other, and there wasn't a whole lot there. But then came the allegations of sexual harassment by Anita Hill, who'd been an employee at the Equal, EEOC, I think, when Clarence Thomas chaired it.

And so then we had the hearings that Anita Hill testified, Thomas had to be called back, and it became much more of an issue. There were always going to be some votes against Clarence Thomas, but it became to be a feminist issue, a women's issue, and it was clear there were going to be more votes against him than initially thought, and so we had a, it was a discussion at one of our conference luncheons, and we were getting to the point of having the vote, I think, on him.

And a group of women, congress, from the House, congresswomen from the House, marched essentially on the Democratic conference luncheon, and came to the door of the Democratic conference luncheon, and one of them was Congresswoman Barbara Boxer, who was at that time running for the Senate, I believe she was running for the Senate. And so they knocked, I was sent out to see what this was about, I came back and told Senator Mitchell they wanted to come in and address the caucus, which is kind of a non-starter completely, and he said that wasn't going to happen, to tell them that he would meet with them directly after the conference in his room. And I don't know how many times I went out to tell them this wasn't going to happen. Was it three times, Diane? Yes, and you were out there too? Yes, hmm-hmm.

They were just enraged that the conference would not hear them on the issue of Clarence

Thomas' nomination. And eventually we did, I think he left the conference a little early to have that meeting, because it was clear they were going to be a big problem.

DD: You came in and went up and told him that they wanted to meet, and he said, "Okay, fine, we'll meet after the conference is over." You went back out, there was Andrea Mitchell at the end of the hall with a camera, somehow the camera got on the second floor, away from the stakeout position, you got bludgeoned, you went back in and said, "No, they weren't happy with that answer, they want to meet now." I can remember Bradley coming up to us and going, "You two look like deer in headlights." And while he didn't go immediately, he went out, smiling to the cameras, down to the room, sat down – I thought it was Pat Schroeder who was there, too –

AS: Oh yes.

DD: - and he sat at the end of the table, leaned over, reached his hand over, patted Pat Schroeder's hands and said, "Hi, what can I do for you?" And the thing that really incensed him was that the next day on the front of *U.S.A. Today*, there was a picture that was posed of them marching up the Senate steps, in silhouette, and he was, let's say, upset about why could they alert the press that there was a pic-, so that they could get their picture, but couldn't alert him that they were coming over on that point.

AS: I would have to go back and look at it; Senator Boxer wrote about that incident in a book that she wrote shortly after she was at the Senate. And I know that she thought she was, could get by us, but didn't. We wouldn't let her in, but it sort of became a Civil Rights kind of thing for her, kind of blocking the door to the schoolhouse, kind of.

(unintelligible)

DD: Marty, come here please, and then we'll do closing thoughts.

MP: Well, you do an attendance check every day, so the leader will know how many votes he's got in town, and it's crucial to have everybody in town before you set an important vote, and you don't know when they're leaving, when they're going to be off the Hill. And this was like a Wednesday, middle of the week, it was April 1st, you'd circle in red the person who was going to be absent, of the fifty-three Democrats you had at the time.

And so I gave him this, he was standing at his podium, he had just finished his opening remarks and I went up and handed him his attendance for the day, and I had circled seventeen in red. And he – fortunately the mic was off – went off like a Roman candle, with Abby and Martha and Diane in the back of the chamber watching him, and let out this tirade of expletives which I will not deign to repeat for Bowdoin. [p/o] I said, "Your attendance," I said, "it looks like it's going to be a rough day." He says, "*(mumbling)* Are you kidding me, are you, what do they think this is?" And after, I thought that he was going to have an aneurysm, after about five minutes of this, I finally just looked at him and said, "April Fools." And he was ready to kill me. And he turned around and he saw Abby and Martha [giggling], they were laughing so hard in the back of the

chamber, and he knew he had been had. But he got a kick out of it later in the day when he found out the cloakroom had played an appropriate April Fool's joke on me, and he thoroughly enjoyed that.

DD: Which was?

MP: They gave me a note telling me I had a phone call, and the note was to Marty, with a phone number, and it said MYRA, Myra, somebody named Myra, last name was Manes, M-A-N-E-S. So I called the number and I asked, "Is Myra Manes there?" and this guy said, "Sir, someone's playing a trick on you, this a funeral parlor and your remains are not here." And I look up and everybody in the cloakroom was falling out of their chairs laughing at me. And Mitchell loved it.

DD: Your taxpayers' dollars hard at work. Is there anything I haven't asked, Abby? And some summary thoughts on your time with Senator Mitchell.

AS: I don't know if this comes across in this conversation, but one of the things that makes a successful leader is a staff that is congenial, and I would say we were an extremely congenial staff. When times got tough, we were not tough with each other. We, I think, worked as a team, and worked as a team for him. And I enjoyed my time with him very much, not the least of which was the staff, but the other thing is that interestingly enough, for the thirty years I worked on the Hill, it was the only time I worked for someone from my part of the country, and I understood him better, I understood the issues better somehow, his point of view, the point of view of Maine, and that was very nice for me, I enjoyed it.

He was, Marty really did capture in the description of the judiciary bill the amount of work that he would do to bring people on board, and that it had to be done. He was sometimes annoyed about having to make those calls and so forth, but at the end of the day there is only so much that staff or other senators can do before a leader has to get in and convince people to be on his side. And that was something we could count on him for, he was easy to work with in that sense, from the perspective of the floor and the procedure in the Senate. I en-, I totally enjoyed my years with him.

I am not sure that I would have retired when I did had he run for reelection in '94, it was that much fun to actually work with him, to be working with Martha, Diane, Marty, who I'd worked with since 1979. It was a very nice place to work, and he did not encourage staff feuds – basically I think there were personalities that may not have gotten along together all the time, but in general it was a, it was extremely congenial place to work, and I credit him for that. I think that he wouldn't listen to bitches from staff about other staff, it just wasn't a, you wouldn't think of taking it to him. And I have been in cases where that actually was not the case. The tone is always, I think, set by whoever the senator is, and the staff behaves the way the senator wants them to behave, and he expected good behavior from us.

DD: Marty, is there anything that I didn't ask or we didn't cover, and some parting thoughts.

MP: No, no, I just said, he was a, I thoroughly enjoyed working for him. And he was a very sharp guy, like I said, he got it. You didn't have to spend much time with him as far as the procedure, and then once he had a grasp of the procedure he knew how to deal with people, and he knew how to find their, how to negotiate with them and find their soft spot. And it was a pleasure working for the guy, and I thoroughly enjoyed it, it was a lot of fun.

DD: Martha Pope.

MPope: I think, starting with the big picture first and that is, when you worked for George Mitchell, you really felt like you were working for something important, for the greater good. His position on the issues, his position in the leadership, you always felt like you were very lucky to be a part of something that was much bigger. And then, to reiterate, he was very, very smart and a brilliant speaker, and on that level you felt very proud to work for him.

I feel he could be difficult to work for in the sense that – and I suppose this is a positive thing to say about somebody involved in government – he always pushed back. When you had a position and he didn't agree with it, he always pushed back, and he pushed back over and over again, and it wasn't always pleasant. The tone of voice was somewhat dismissive of your own intellect and [p/o] we had a certain award that we handed out to people who we felt had achieved the prize of the day by being spoken to with less respect than one would have appreciated. *But*, in the end, he did the right thing.

And they were very good years. I wouldn't have traded them for anything. I also don't think I could do it again, but I do feel very grateful that I had the opportunity to work with somebody of his ability. It was not always a pleasure, but it was always a privilege.

DD: Back to Abby.

AS: I would just want to make another comment on that, on approaching him when he was disagreeing with you. And one of the things I definitely appreciated was that each decision was a new decision. If you, if I had come in to ask him about something that he just really hated, he would be annoyed at me for even bringing it to his attention, just furious about something – as furious as he got, which was essentially, you just knew. I mean it wasn't like you were yelled at, but you knew, it was like, "Oh, leave."

Something would come up, a different issue that he needed to make a decision on, you could go in, it was a new conversation. It didn't continue over and over, which made him easy to approach, for me anyway. And I thought that was invaluable, that, so that even when he was annoyed at you, you didn't, you knew it wasn't going to go on for the rest of your life, and you could come in and it was a new discussion.

MPope: In fact, to emphasize that, it was just extremely to his credit that you felt you *could* disagree with him, and you could disagree with him in the strongest possible terms. And he

didn't always like hearing what you had to say, but you knew that you could walk away from it and not pay a permanent price, which you couldn't say for many, many people; many, many senators would not have tolerated the disagreement that he actually welcomed. On a certain level he *did* want to hear when you disagreed, and not just hear when you agreed with him. And I think a lot of people in Washington get into trouble because they encourage people, they surround themselves with people who say, "Yes," and he did not do that.

DD: The only thing I'd add to that is that often you would leave a room in a disagreement, he would then go to a press conference, to an interview, Senate floor, and come around and make it his own. He will have, never had told you that, "Oh, that's a good point," but he would come around to it, having some of his own and some of what staff or other senators had advised. In my eleven years, I only once had him say to me -

MPope: Good point?

DD: Not even that far, but it was, and I remember it like it was yesterday, it was having to do an interview prior to the election as majority leader, when *National Journal* was doing a big piece on Inouye, Johnston and Senator Mitchell, and we were very mum when Senator Byrd announced his retirement, and had a debate about this in that everybody else went out there, and we said, "This is Senator Byrd's day, we're going to let this go." And we did not speak for several weeks in public about it. In passing he did, but we didn't do it immediately for the day of stories, and we didn't do it - but a number of us, Martha included, myself, and I can't remember who else, went to him and made the case that he should do this *National Journal* piece, and he resisted. He did not want to do it, thought it was a mistake or whatever. We ended up doing it, and it actually ended up being kind of a primer for that election that people went back to and back to and back to. And one time, walking down a hallway, he uttered something about, "That worked out okay." But you never got the sense, or at least I didn't know where you'd end up. But then he'd be on the Senate floor and you'd be like, "Oh, wow, look at what he did." Martha, did you want to speak?

MPope: Well, we're wrapping up here and you can tell we've gotten a new head of wind, but does anyone in this room ever remember him saying "Good job," ever?

DD: Sometimes on the Senate floor.

MPope: In a prepared speech. He didn't give praise, and I honestly have to say I felt that one of my jobs as chief of staff was to provide that recognition. And in fact, it was a bit of a badge of honor if you didn't get the praise. Because if he said, "Good job," to somebody, then you had to worry that he was just patting you on the head but he was being patronizing. Because he didn't, he did not hand out the praise at all, and you didn't really want to get it from him because it wasn't necessarily a good sign.

DD: Abby.

AS: Which is one of the fascinating things about working for him, because theoretically, you know, getting the positive feedback is the thing that keeps people going. I don't remember, however, not getting the positive feedback was not negative. You knew *he* was doing a good job.

MPope: Right, right.

AS: You were proud to work for him, you knew in the end he did appreciate what you did. I think, I felt he did. But maybe I had to feel that way to keep going. No. I did feel he did, you just didn't get it on a daily basis, and, well, okay, I know one early difference between Senator Mitchell and Senator Byrd was, one of us always sat by Senator Byrd, even though Senator Byrd knew what he was doing, at the end of the day when he'd announce the schedule for the next day, when we'd passed bills by unanimous consent, there was always one of us of the floor staff sitting next to him on the small chairs handing him paper and stuff. Whoa. Once Senator Mitchell had an idea of what he was doing, he didn't want *any* of us sitting there.

MPope: But he did have a paper -

AS: Oh, he had the paper and script, but none, we wouldn't sit there, you know, so.

MPope: Well, I guess to wrap this part of it up, of working for George Mitchell, was that you had to be an adult.

AS: Yes.

MPope: And, you know, he didn't provide that, nor should he necessarily be expected to, and I think that speaks to Abby's point about how we enjoyed working [with] each other, because sometimes we had to provide each other with praise, in the absence of it from him. But you were proud to work for him, you really were proud to work for him. I think that wraps it up for me.

DD: Did I forget anything?

AS: No, but if they want us to get back together, we can do that.

DD: Okay, great, thank you.

End of Interview