

TO CONGRESS WITH PAUL TSONGAS

Interview #1

Tuesday Morning, June 8, 2010

RITCHIE: I'm really curious about this book you're writing. What's the story there?

ARENBERG: Oh, well, Bob [Dove] and I are friends and go way back. The book is about the filibuster. The working title is *Soul of the Senate: Defense of the Filibuster*. My interest in the history of the Senate and the history of the filibuster also goes way back. I've been somewhat distressed, I guess I would say, because I see the lurking danger of the current Senate overreacting to frustration with the filibuster and perhaps reforming it in such a way as to bring the Senate all the way to be a majoritarian body, which I think would be an enormous mistake. Now that I'm in academia I read the academic literature, and certainly the popular press. The criticism of the filibuster is almost universal. The view is it's anti-democratic, it's obstructionist. I think there is a perspective from people inside of the Senate—I know Marty Paone once jokingly described it as the “Stockholm Syndrome”—but I think there is from the perspective of people who have spent a number of years in the Senate that there are aspects that the filibuster which affect the operations of the Senate in ways that are not obvious even to the best scholars and others on the outside.

I'm thinking about the pressures towards consensus that are created by the supermajority requirements under Rule XXII. For example, we'll talk about the Alaska Lands Act later on. There's an example where it might not be very obvious how the filibuster played a role. There were two filibusters. There was a sweeping unanimous consent agreement. There was a cloture motion. There were all of those things. It was almost unique in that way. And yet, I think the final outcome was as solid and as lasting as it was because Senator [Ted] Stevens has the leverage of a potential filibuster and was able to negotiate. In the end, Senator Stevens came along and didn't press it all the way to the wall and try to defeat it. Without the filibuster we would not likely have had an Alaska Lands Act that stood the test of time as it has.

So that was the idea behind the book. I sent a note to Bob. Bob, who obviously knows as much about the subject as anyone. I said, “What would you think about doing a book together?” He loved the idea, so we launched into it.

RITCHIE: Well, I'm impressed that you convinced him. Because he didn't seem to be focused on writing a book, but I always thought he'd be the perfect person to do it.

ARENBERG: It's a great collaboration, because he's willing to let me write. So I've been writing and he's been to date largely editing. It's tremendous for the texture of the book to have someone involved who brings so much to it. I think I know Senate rules pretty well, but when you have somebody like Bob Dove reading it and not saying, "What's this? You're crazy about this." That's a terrific thing. We're well along in that project.

RITCHIE: One of the first interviews I did back in the '70s was with Floyd Riddick, who was the retired parliamentarian, and it was one of the most valuable for me because he explained the logic of the rules. You had to understand what was behind the rules to understand why the rules were the way they were. There's usually some reason why they proceed in ways that from outside the Senate seem totally unreasonable.

ARENBERG: I read that interview. In fact, I've quoted it a couple of times in the book. These interviews are really enormously helpful. And I love that quote—Bob uses it all the time—where Riddick said the Senate rules are perfect, and when they're changed the Senate rules will be perfect. [Laughs] That really encapsulates a Senate eye-view of how the rules operate.

RITCHIE: Let us know if we can be of any assistance in terms of providing material.

ARENBERG: That's great. If you're interested in reading some draft chapters, I'd be delighted to send them to you and seek your advice.

RITCHIE: Okay, and we have an interview with Marty Gold, I don't know if you've seen that, on Senator [Bill] Frist's approach to the "nuclear option." And we've done a number of other interviews with Marty Paone and others who have been involved with procedures on the floor. We can provide those to you as they open.

ARENBERG: We've been awarded a research grant from the Dirksen Congressional Center, and I think what we're going to use that for is to do some firsthand interviews of our own with some former senators, to see if we can generate some new information.

RITCHIE: It's a very timely book right now, that's for sure.

ARENBERG: Yes, episodically. That's one thing about writing about the filibuster. A little like writing a Christmas song. You can be sure that from time to time it will suddenly be timely again!

RITCHIE: And ironically, the next time the parties will probably be reversed, and each will be saying the opposite.

ARENBERG: Sure, that's one of the interesting things about it is that the view can be so situational. I think a lot of observers mistake that for a lack of deep convictions about the principles behind the filibuster. I don't think that's the case. I just don't think that anything that's as central to the way the Senate operates would have persisted for 200 years, basically back to 1806, unless it's served a valid purpose that senators were committed to. There's ample evidence for that. It gets dismissed too easily by academics, I think.

RITCHIE: Well, that Brookings Institution conference on filibusters was perfect on that: three Senate insiders were defensive of the filibuster, and the panel of political scientists who followed them were indignant about it. They were really not there to discuss filibusters, they were there to condemn them.

ARENBERG: Exactly. I don't want to be disrespectful to them. I think Sarah Binder and Steve Smith and those folks have done a real service in the kind of work they have done on filibusters, but I think they have developed a point of view and a stake in it, and I think there is kind of an academic bubble in which they operate. In some ways the Senate can be, as you know, kind of opaque. Analyzing the Senate, looking at vote studies and that sort of thing, can be very illuminating, but it's also like staring in from the outside through a small window. Sometimes the glass isn't even all that clear as to what's going on inside. I think even those that have spent some time here, on fellowships or spent a few years here maybe, I think miss some of the deeper impacts that Rule XXII has on the way this place operates. From my perspective, it's very profound. It's central to why the Senate is such a unique institution and its almost unique status as an upper body in the world. It's about the only place where the upper body is arguably more powerful than the lower body in a national legislature. I think the filibuster has a lot to do with that.

RITCHIE: And the relationship between the two houses is an interesting factor in that. People tend to study one or the other, but it's really the point/counterpoint that actually goes on, the strategies that need be considered in the House because of the unusual circumstance in the Senate.

ARENBERG: Dick Fenno did that marvelous little book. I forget the exact title but it was something like *The Senate, A Bicameral Perspective*, or something like that.¹ I always felt it was great but it was too brief. That really needed to be expanded into a full scale look at the Congress. I agree with you, it's so difficult to study these two bodies. I think you're caught as an academic trying to study the quantitative aspects like how many votes, and how many holds, how many bills were introduced, and how many passed, things that they try to do to come up with this kind of quantitative, scientific analysis. Then if you try to do something that's more contextual, you wind up with a case study. When you spend a lot of time in the Senate, you come to realize, as I always say, that these offices are 100 feudal fiefdoms, each with its own prince or princess, and its own currency, its own structure, its own culture. There are some marvelous studies. There was one on [Edmund] Muskie, the name escapes me now—

RITCHIE: By Bernard Asbell.²

ARENBERG: Yes, great book. Then I think it was Liz Drew that did one on [John] Culver.³ That's a great book. There are lots of fascinating books that way that really got at what was going on in a particular Senate office. But it's very difficult to generalize from that. I could write three volumes just trying to compare and contrast the three senators I worked for, and you multiply that by 100 in any given time, even more than that, it makes it very difficult to study this institution.

¹Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *The United States Senate: A Bicameral Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1982).

²Bernard Asbell, *The Senate Nobody Knows* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1978).

³Elizabeth Drew, *Senator* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).

RITCHIE: Well, good, we'll give you the opportunity to do that kind of comparing and contrasting over the next couple of days. I thought we'd start by talking about you. Can you tell me about your family background?

ARENBERG: Sure. I grew up in Norwich, Connecticut, which is one of those old New England mill towns that was in decline in the period that I came along. My dad, when I was young, he was a tailor and worked at my grandfather's tailor shop. I'd stop there after school and play with the box of buttons, and the old typewriter in the back, and stuff like that. He then went on to become a corporate vice president for a national men's clothing company. He and my mom are still alive, they live in Florida. I graduated from a very interesting high school. Norwich, Connecticut, has this institution called the Norwich Free Academy. I think there are only three institutions like this in New England, that when the public school movement came along, there were all these private academies all over New England. In these three instances, and Norwich is the largest one, rather than beginning a public high school, the city just began paying tuition to this academy, and they named it the Norwich Free Academy. It's still to this day a pretty unique institution for that reason. The way the classes are designated, it's the old British system, so you're a junior in your first year, and then a lower middler and then an upper middler, and then a senior. The school calendar was different than the public schools around the state, so there was a real sense of it being quite a unique institution. It had its own museum. It had its own library and art gallery. A very interesting place.

I went to college at Boston University. I then went to graduate school at B.U. I have a master's degree in political science. I was a PhD candidate, and was a Vietnam antiwar activist. Those were the days when I didn't go to my college graduation because it didn't feel right at the time. That was '67 when I graduated, so that was right in the heart of the most contentious part of the Vietnam War debate. As I said, I stayed at B.U. in the PhD program. I completed all of that, but at the time I was preparing to write my dissertation was when I first got involved with Paul Tsongas.

Let me just back up a little and say that during the time I was in graduate school, I was a community organizer for the Elizabeth Peabody House, which was an old time settlement house in Boston. It had actually been established in Boston's West End, and when the West End of Boston was redeveloped in the 1950s redevelopment craze and basically obliterated, replaced by some high rise apartment buildings, the settlement house moved out to Somerville, Massachusetts, which is a blue-collar, working family kind of community in the Boston area. When I came along, I was a community organizer

in Somerville. I worked in public housing, organizing tenants groups, and trying to improve living conditions. At the same time, I was going to graduate school at B.U.

About the time I was planning to begin work on my dissertation, I had some interest in coming to Washington at some point, and I heard about a job opening that Senator Muskie had in Washington. So I came down here and interviewed for the job. It seemed very interesting. It was a new staff position that he was getting on what was then the Public Works Committee. I think it was Jennings Randolph who was chairman and who had awarded him this new position, but it wasn't coming until the fall. So while I was here interviewing with Senator Muskie, the final decision was deferred for a number of months. I was told I was a viable candidate for it. I went over to see a former PhD program colleague of mine who was working for Joe Moakley over in the House. I sat down with her just talking about my interest in coming to Washington, what I was planning for my dissertation, and all of that. She said, "Well, you know, my son is going to run the campaign for this candidate who is going to run against Paul Cronin"—who was an incumbent congressman from Massachusetts—"up there in the 5th District, a guy by the name of Paul Tsongas"—who I had never heard of—"and you'd probably be the perfect person to be the issues director for the campaign." I said, "Well, you know, I've got so much on my plate right now. But on the other hand, this Washington job, I'm not going to hear about it until the fall. I'd like to meet this guy, anyway."

So I went back to Boston. We arranged this meeting. I'll always remember it was Patriots' Day. Patriots' Day is a holiday in Massachusetts commemorating the Revolutionary War battles at Lexington and Concord, and the reason I remember it is because it's the one day of the year that the Red Sox play a game in the morning. The game ends generally right around the time that the marathoners are arriving at the finish line of the Boston Marathon. So it's a big event. Paul Tsongas had gone to the Red Sox game in the morning and he called my office—I was a teaching fellow as a graduate student. They had given me what had been an old bathroom in the departmental office. A lot of the departmental offices at B.U. were in these brownstone buildings on Bay State Road. So I was given what had been a bathroom. They just basically took the toilet out, put a board down, and stuck a desk in there. You almost had to catapult over the desk to get behind it, that's how small the room was. So I a little sheepishly invited Tsongas to come over to this office. He came in, and he had been at the game and he had his shirttails out, he hadn't shaved, he had these old ratty running shoes on, his hair was a mess and everything. I'm looking across the desk and I'm thinking to myself: This guy's not even going to win the primary let alone beat an incumbent congressman. I don't

know where this is going.

We began to chat and he was such an engaging guy. The thing about Paul Tsongas, which carried through throughout his career, was just his absolute candor. He wasn't just the most candid politician I've met, he was the most candid person I've ever met. He always just said what he thought. I just was very taken with him. I found myself thinking: Well, the primary is in September. This might be a fun thing to do. We'll go tilt at windmills and have a good time and probably lose the primary. Then in the fall I'll find out about this Muskie thing. Meanwhile, I'll start putting together this dissertation. Of course, you can figure out what happened. About two or three weeks into the campaign I was such a true believer that I called Senator Muskie's chief of staff and said, "I'm in this thing for the duration. This guy is going to win a seat in the House. So I'll see you in Washington." That really was the launch of my career along with his. He did win that primary in September. He went on to upset the incumbent congressman—that was the famous Watergate class. And he asked me to come to Washington, with him, and I spent four years in the House with him. Actually, I told him that I would like to come to Washington for eight or nine months and then get back to Boston, which I love, and my PhD. It took me more than 34 years to get back.

RITCHIE: Before we get into that, I'd just like to go back to ask what was it that brought you into the field of political science in the first place?

ARENBERG: Well, it's an interesting thing. Growing up as a young Jewish kid, everybody always asked me: What are you going to be when you grow up? I always said I was going to be a doctor, because in the culture I was in, that was the pinnacle. You got the biggest response. "Oh, a doctor! Your mother is blessed." All that kind of stuff. It was a totally unexamined ambition. I went on to school, I started as a pre-med. I got into invertebrate zoology and organic chemistry, and I was doing okay. I got a job working as a surgical technician at the old Boston Lying-in Hospital. It was a famous OBGYN hospital, part of the Harvard Medical Center. It's since been swallowed up by the Brigham Hospital, I think. I worked as a surgical technician, basically the scrub nurse. I was trained to scrub in on operations and to know what instruments to hand to the surgeons at the right time. I did that for a couple of years and then in fact went over to what's now called University Hospital, part of the Boston University system. It was the old Mass. Memorial Hospital. And I even got some exposure to general surgery there, eye surgery and open heart.

I found it very interesting, but I began to develop an appreciation for—to look at it on the positive side of the coin, how dedicated to their professions these surgeons were, to look at the dark side of that same coin how narrow their lives were. It was medicine, surgery, maybe golf on Wednesday, but you were really single-minded. Seeing this so intimately, along with how I was feeling about my studies at the time, I began to realize that this wasn't going to be for me. So I began to look around for what was a more exciting major for me.

Well, as I said, I was becoming an activist. I was very interested in politics. At one point I got involved in a campaign for the mayor of Boston, a guy by the name of Tom Atkins, who was a Boston City Councilor. He went on to be the chief counsel of the NAACP, died at a too-young age. But he was in a five-way race for mayor of Boston, which was another case of tilting at windmills. I mean, the principal race was between Kevin White, who was the longtime mayor of Boston, and Louise Day Hicks, who was famous for her opposition to school busing. But Tom was a very interesting guy, and one of the things I had developed as a student was an interest in public opinion research. I had designed and done several studies academically, and I was able to bring it into his campaign and give the campaign an in-house polling operation that was pretty unusual. And for a campaign that couldn't afford to go out and hire a full-blown pollster, it gave us a lot of flexibility. I enjoyed doing that a lot. I'm losing where the chicken and egg was in there, but basically I was shifting towards an interest in politics and political science, and all this seemed to fit together pretty well for me. None of it involved a thought about: Where is this going to take me five years from now? In that particular era, it's not something that students were doing a lot. We were very much focused on the moment, and the politics of the moment, and it all seemed a lot more relevant than where my education was going and what I was going to do with it. I was carried along by that.

Ultimately, that polling capability is something that I did for all of the Tsongas House campaigns, both of them, and then it played a role in Paul's decision to run for the Senate against Ed Brooke, and in his Senate campaign I did the polling as well. Ironically, we had to go out and hire—after my polls had indicated that he could beat Ed Brooke, we then had to go out and hire a pollster to confirm that so we could convince contributors that in fact that was the case, because there was of course this natural skepticism about a poll that was being generated inside the organization. But, ultimately, those polls did earn a lot of credibility with outsider observers like the *Boston Globe* and so forth. We were able to do some things that were, up until that time and may still be, pretty unique. For example, after he won his first Senate race, we went back out in the

field the next day and did a poll to learn what it was about the campaign that had actually worked and to set a benchmark for future polling that he would do as a senator.

RITCHIE: Do you think that when you moved from the medical sciences to political science that you brought some of that perspective with you? Was that perhaps one of the reasons why you got interested in polling?

ARENBERG: Maybe. Maybe I had a bit of taste for statistics, that sort of thing. So I guess there was that side of it. But my perception of it was that the movement to political science, a lot of it was a flight! It was moving as far down the other end of the spectrum as I could go! I was perceiving of it less as science and more as politics, a perch from which to immerse myself in what was really exciting me, which was politics.

RITCHIE: You mentioned also the Vietnam War. It had heated up while you were an undergraduate. How influential was that in shaping you at that time?

ARENBERG: It was a very big part of my politics. I was concerned about it. I was very torn. I didn't want to go into the military and pursue this war, and I'm very proud of the fact that I had turned against the war as far back as when [John] Kennedy was president. I walked my first anti-Vietnam War picket line when Madame Nhu came to Cambridge during a visit she had to the United States when Kennedy was still in the White House. I remember carrying a sign, which I thought was very clever, which said, "So This Is the Nhu Frontier." It doesn't look so clever anymore, in retrospect, but at the time I was very idealistic.

It was very difficult in those days to get into the Army Reserves, as you know. I saw that as a compromise. It was short of going to Canada. A lot of good people around me were making those kinds of decisions. I fell into an opening—here's where the medical background did play a role, now that I think about it—I had gone to a wedding of a friend that I graduated with in Philadelphia. While I was there, I was talking to a third friend who told me that he just got into an Army Reserve unit in Philadelphia and they had openings. There were waiting lists everywhere, and I thought this was a good thing. I had a flight back to Boston. The very next morning, I got in my car and I drove down to Philadelphia, I checked into a hotel, and I called this unit and I said, "I understand you have openings." They said, "No, all our openings are closed." So now, here I am in Philadelphia. The only person I know who lives in Philadelphia is on his honeymoon. So I started going through the phonebook, calling military units. Well, I

started with general hospital units. I got ahold of this unit and I mentioned that I had this background as a surgical technician and they said, “We have an opening that’s specifically for somebody to do that kind of work. If you come down right now, we’ll sign you up.” So I drove to South Philadelphia, went in there, and he signed me up, swore me in, and that was it.

The first thing is you had to be local. These units were all Reserve units. You had to be local. It met in their case for Saturday and Sunday once a month and then two weeks in the summer. Of course you had basic training and all of that. He said, “So where are you living?” I said, “Funny you should ask, I’m moving to Philadelphia next week.” [Laughs] And so I did. I worked in a woman’s shoe store in downtown Philadelphia for a few months while I was waiting to go onto active duty. I did my basic training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, and my advance training at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, where they do the medical training. One of the things about the Reserves in those days was once you were in a unit and then you moved, it was relatively easy to transfer at that point. So then I was able to move back to Boston and transfer my unit to a general hospital unit in Boston. So I did my military service in the Army Reserve, rising to the level of a sergeant. It worked for me. Unlike many of my compatriots who did serve in the Reserves, I’m not shy about saying that for me it was an act of opposition to the war, and I’ve always felt a patriotic one. That’s something that always disappointed me about the posture Bill Clinton took, for example, about his service. He seemed more to try to explain it away than to really stand up and defend it. When you believe that this was wrong, from my perspective at the time it was the patriotic choice to make, and I still think so.

RITCHIE: Well, it gives you more military experience than the majority of the current Congress.

ARENBERG: Yes, that’s true.

RITCHIE: It obviously was an enormous issue that confronted college students that government was making decisions for them that could have serious consequences.

ARENBERG: One thing I like to tell my students now is that in political theory they always talk about the theories of representative government: Are representatives delegates or are they trustees. That’s a very familiar debate. I always use that example from that time. When I first turned against the war, I would write letters to my

congressman. The war was very popular and he was for the war. I would write letters and say: “You need to be a leader. You need to stand up. This war is wrong and you need to stand up and say so. Despite the fact that the majority of your constituents support the war, you have to stand up and lead. You’re a trustee. Part of being a representative is leadership.” Fast forward a half a decade, when the country had turned against the war, here I was writing to this same congressman saying, “You don’t have any choice about this. Overwhelmingly, your district is against the war. You represent us in Congress. You’re a delegate. You need to stand up and be against this war!”

RITCHIE: So what is a member of Congress, a delegate or a trustee?

ARENBERG: The real answer is some of both. It varies. I think there are some issues that are more clearly delegate-type issues. If your community supports the construction of a new bridge over the river and there aren’t severe environmental issues, it probably leans more in the direction of a delegate issue. There are some issues that are clearly because they are issues of your own moral view, the obvious one is abortion, but there are others that tend to be trustee-issues, where you stand up and you say what it is you believe. People either go along with that, support it, or they don’t. And then I guess there are a lot of gray areas in between where members make those decisions for themselves. Very often it’s a mix. “I’m willing to lead on this issue, even if I’m in the minority, but maybe not too minority-ish.” Things sometimes get shaped that way, where the trustee part of your view of things is pulling you in a particular direction, and maybe it gets shaped by the delegate part of it. We often see that. You trim your sails a little bit. That’s part of consensus building—and that’s a positive thing.

RITCHIE: People often quote Edmund Burke’s assertion that he needed to think for himself and resist the desires of his constituency, without mentioning that he was defeated in the next election.

ARENBERG: Yes. [Laughs]

RITCHIE: You also mentioned your community activism, your interest in public housing. What were you thinking about in terms of a future for yourself? You were involved in community projects at the same time you were in academics and you were interested in coming to Washington.

ARENBERG: Well, I very much enjoyed community organization. I believed then and I still believe that it's the kind of thing you do for a short time and then move on. It's one of these all-consuming endeavors that can be very difficult to sustain over a long period of time, and I think people who do it for too long—there are exceptions to this—sort of become cynical and hardened, and they lose the compassion and the passion that I think makes for good community organizers. It's analogous to my approach to being a congressional staffer, too. I always believed that there is a kind of continuum from true believers on the one hand to what I call the “hired guns” on the other. You can guess what I am from the way I describe the poles, I suppose, but to be fairer to the hired guns, I think there are staffers that view their relationship to their bosses as more like a lawyer-client relationship. As long as it doesn't too grossly violate their sense of what's right and proper, then they can represent their boss's point of view.

To me, being a staffer on the Hill was always an act of my own political activism. It was through the person I was working for, so I always felt the need to work for somebody that I agreed with. You never agreed with them 100 percent of the time, but the three men that I worked for, I agreed with well into the very high 90s. I really can't talk about my career as a Senate staffer without saying how incredibly lucky I felt to be in the right place at the right time to have those jobs with those three senators. There was an element of serendipity involved in that. It makes me weak at the knees when I look back and think about how easily it could have not happened.

But to go back to community organizing, I found it to be a kind of all-consuming activity that I did for two or three years. I could feel that if I had continued to do that sort of thing for five, or six, or seven years I would have been totally burned out by it. It's hard not to be beaten down and cynical. But it was a very enriching experience. It's one of those things that helped to inform my political sensibilities as I went forward and got more directly involved in politics—campaign politics and ultimately working on the Hill. My particular background, I think, gave me some insight into how constituencies were thinking. The other thing about my background was that it never got sufficiently specialized that—as you will see as we talk about things—my particular experiences over the years on the Hill were all over the place. I had come here somewhat as a generalist and built expertise as I went.

RITCHIE: One other thing from that time period. You mentioned Louise Day Hicks. This was a really tumultuous period in Massachusetts politically, in Boston in particular. There was a passage from the old New Deal period, whose coalition seemed to

be breaking up. Can you describe from your perspective what Boston was like back in the late '60s and early '70s?

ARENBERG: Well, my perspective may be just the optics that come from being where I was when I was. Let me pull back and do a broader frame. I see Vietnam, that issue and that period, as the launching point for the cultural divide that still plays a very large role. The reverberations from that still play a very large role in our national politics. We'll talk later on about the increasing polarization in Congress itself to almost alarming degrees and how that affects the filibuster debate and all of that. But from my perspective it has its roots in Vietnam. That was very true at that time in Boston. The Democratic Party was tearing itself apart, both in the city of Boston, specifically over the busing issue—and of course civil rights was a big part of all of that, too. But even more deeply, as Vietnam came along, it began to legitimize these two wings of the Democratic Party, particularly in Massachusetts. For a while there, the Republican Party was just standing on the sidelines. Occasionally, somebody like a Frank Sargent or an Ed Brooke could pick up the pieces, but it was the old-line, old-style machine Democratic urban politics versus the Vietnam era activists. Right around this period was when Mike Dukakis was elected governor of Massachusetts as a Democrat, beating in the primary a guy named Ed King, who was an old-line conservative Democrat, who then turned around and beat him four years later, and then Dukakis beat him four years after that. It seemed for a while there that that was the two-party system in Massachusetts: There were the new Democrats and the old Democrats.

In Boston politics, of course there was a big racial component to all this. As I said I was working for the first black candidate for mayor in history. Boston was not yet ready to elect a black mayor—I mean, it still hasn't elected a black mayor—but I believe that today the right African American candidate could win in Boston. But in those days, with all of these racial politics going on over busing, a black candidate was a red flag in many ways. I remember on election night, my memory is the 5th Ward of Boston is South Boston. South Boston, as you may know, is a deeply Irish Catholic community. Boston is made up of these constituent neighborhoods that are still—much less so today than through its history, but more so than a lot of cities—these communities still had their own identities. A lot of it is ethnic identity and South Boston certainly was like that in the '60s. Not only as an African American would you not walk the streets of South Boston by yourself, but as an Italian American you wouldn't do that, even an Italian-Catholic American you wouldn't do that. You were all right in East Boston, but you wouldn't walk the streets of South Boston all by yourself.

Well, comes election night and we need poll watchers to go watch them open the machines—they used machines in those days. They'd open up the back of the machine and there's a counter in there. Every campaign looks over the shoulder of the person from the registrar of voters who writes down the number. The Atkins campaign couldn't find anyone to go into South Boston and represent the Atkins campaign. So, being the fool that I was at that time, I said, "Okay, I'll do it." I think there were five or six precincts in the ward. I had to careen around South Boston, from precinct to precinct, to try to be a poll watcher at each of these voting precincts for the Atkins campaign, which I did. I came back sheepishly to headquarters in order to report. I think we garnered maybe seven votes in all of those precincts combined. But it was quite an experience.

RITCHIE: I interviewed Charlie Ferris, who was connected with the Democratic Policy Committee. He said he grew up in South Boston and you didn't ask what neighborhood someone came from, you asked what diocese.

ARENBERG: Yes, exactly. I've got one more quick South Boston campaign from the Tsongas Senate campaign in '78. One of my colleagues was a great guy. I mentioned that we did the polling in-house. Well, the Tsongas campaign in that era was very unique in that we had two in-house guys that did all of the TV spots. It really was the kind of self-sufficient campaign that really wouldn't be imaginable today in a viable way. These two guys who were doing our TV spots, and the leaflets and things like that, and one of them, a friend of mine, had a girlfriend he lived with who was not very political. She had borrowed his car for the day, and he had left in the trunk several big packages of leaflets. These were "Why Tsongas is Good on Israel" leaflets. Well, his girlfriend decided she was going to do him a big favor. She drove the car into South Boston, as it happened, and started leafleting the streets to help out the Tsongas campaign. She came back and announced this to Fred, and he just shook his head. I'm sure there were loads of folks in South Boston who were glad to hear that Tsongas was very supportive of Israel. [Laughs]

RITCHIE: When you signed on with the Tsongas campaign, he was from a pretty large district that contained the city of Lowell—

ARENBERG: And had not had a Democratic representative for about 100 years, since the late 19th century. The Republican registration in the district was pretty small—larger than in most other districts in Massachusetts, but still pretty small. The

Democrats certainly had a very large majority. The Republican registration was something like 18 or 20 percent. The Democrats were 50 percent, something like that as I remember it. But there had been a sequence of Republican representatives who had been there for a very long time. The most recent one was [Frank Bradford] Brad Morse, who was the congressman from that district for a very long time. Then I think [Richard] Nixon appointed him to a position at the U.N. So Morse left the House and it was right around the time of Nixon's reelection campaign.

Paul Cronin won that open seat. So he had been a one-term congressman at this time. What often happens in Massachusetts districts, even today, is that Democrats hold the seat for a very long time. When they leave, or retire, or go on to something else, or in this case a Republican has left the seat open, there's a huge primary on the Democratic side. The winner of that primary goes on to win the seat and holds it for a long time. That's pretty much been the pattern, with a few exceptions. When Brad Morse left, there had been eight or ten—all of the prominent Democrats in the district ran in that Democratic primary.

One of the wisest decisions that Paul Tsongas ever made was not to run in that primary. He was a Lowell city councilor at the time. He'd been kind of a maverick candidate for the city council, and a maverick city councilor. He decided that rather than run in that congressional primary like everybody else was doing—John Kerry, by the way, was in that race, and in fact won that primary—Tsongas instead decided to run for Middlesex county commissioner, on a ticket they put together. There were three candidates for the three commissioner positions. They were Paul Tsongas, Lester Ralph, who was the mayor of Somerville, and a guy named Counihan. The bumper stickers read "Tsongas Ralph Counihan." The story goes that people thought someone named Ralph Counihan was running and that "Tsongas" was a title like Senator or Rabbi or Monsignor or something. They ran on abolition of the county system in Massachusetts, and won. They didn't succeed in abolishing the counties, but they were a kind of reform ticket. You have to understand, unlike much of the country, the counties in Massachusetts are largely a patronage operation. There are county courts. There are some county functions, but it's certainly not what people from Maryland, or Virginia, or elsewhere around the country would be familiar with. The county government has much less influence on people's lives, and they were largely patronage operations with a lot of county workers doing whatever. They were good, well-paying jobs. Tsongas's view was this was all a big boondoggle and we needed to do away with that level of government.

He had run and won as a commissioner. Virtually all of the Democrats had been wiped out in the Democratic primary for Congress, losing to Kerry, who then went on to lose in the general election against Paul Cronin. Two years later, as Cronin was running as an incumbent, there was really nobody left standing except Paul Tsongas. He did have a primary opponent from the southern part of the district, but not a very serious opponent. He had a pretty good shot at getting the nomination, but he was considered really a very long shot against an incumbent congressman. People then didn't, as they for the most part don't now, defeat incumbent congressmen. In recent years, the media has gotten much better at focusing on which races are viable races, so we think of those as the congressional campaign and not much attention is paid to the 90-plus percent of congressmen who just quietly go about the business of getting themselves reelected again and again. And that was the case then. People expected that Cronin would win that race.

We ran that campaign on a shoestring. We were very proud of the fact that we raised \$100,000 in that campaign. Now, you know, that congressional district is now held by Niki Tsongas, Paul Tsongas' widow. She didn't succeed him, she won a special election just about three years ago. In our successful campaign in '74, we raised a \$100,000, and we were very proud of being able to do that. She raised \$2.5 million to win that same seat. So that says a lot about what's happened to politics in the interim. But, it's also misleading to say we raised \$100,000. Most of that money came in the last couple of weeks when it became clear that he in fact might actually *win* this seat. Most of the time, we were operating on nothing. We didn't even have a Xerox machine in the campaign. If you can imagine this: we took turns, each day, one of the campaign staffers would get in the car and drive to Cambridge where there was a place called Gnomon Copy in Harvard Square that did mass copying. We'd take all of the copying requests for the day down there and get them done and come back up to the campaign. Because in Lowell, we didn't have a Xerox machine. You could go to the library and pay 25 cents a page. It was incredible! We had one electric typewriter, an old IBM that had been donated. It had the old cloth ribbons. It didn't even have the take-up spool, so as you typed, the ribbon would go down and just accumulate on the floor.

Our headquarters was this old cleaners that still smelled of the cleaning fluids, which was actually very suitable, because the reason the Tsongas name was known in Lowell was because his father had run a well-known cleaners for many years. People remembered seeing the Tsongas name on the side of the trucks: Tsongas Cleaners. This hadn't been one of his old buildings, but it was a cleaning establishment. So, much to everyone's amazement, he won that race pretty handily.

RITCHIE: Lowell was in economic decline. It was one of the old mill towns.

ARENBERG: Yes, absolutely. One of the things that Tsongas seized on was the creation of the Lowell National Historical Park. That idea had been floating around. There was a commission. It was sold in Lowell as an economic development idea, and Tsongas had picked it up. He was a great champion of that. We raised it as part of that campaign, and then when he was elected to the House, it was one of the things he set out to do. Then it played a prominent role in his Senate campaign because he was able to demonstrate that as a freshman member—he only had two terms in the House—he was able to get something as significant as the first national historical park passed through the House of Representatives.

That is an interesting story in its own right, the Lowell Park. When he first started to sell it in the House, we were very naive about this. He went before the Interior Committee, which Mo Udall hadn't quite taken it over yet—he did in the second two years. Mo was chairman of the committee when the Lowell Park bill passed, but a congressman who had been chairman for many years—I've forgotten his first name now—[James Andrew] Haley from Florida, had been chairman of the Interior Committee for many years. Paul introduced this bill and he actually was successful in getting a hearing for it. They gave him a hearing because he had gotten himself named to the committee, so as a member of the committee they gave him a hearing in the Parks subcommittee.

He testified about all the jobs that this would create. We saw it as an economic development bill. It may have been Mo Udall himself who took Paul aside after that hearing and said: Look, you don't get it. This is not the culture of national parks. There is a real story to be told here, and there is a real argument for Lowell, but it's not economic development. That might be an interesting sidebar to what a national park in an urban area like Lowell might do. It might revitalize the city. It might bring it back. It might lead to all these other things. You're probably quite right. But it's not going to sell the Interior Committee on creating a kind of national park that's never been created before. They're thinking of Smoky the Bear hats and all of that.

RITCHIE: They were thinking of the West, also, not the East.

ARENBERG: Exactly right. There was all this Sage Brush Rebellion stuff going on, and the committee was stocked with people from Montana, New Mexico, and they were looking kind of skeptically. It might be interesting that Lowell played this kind of role in the industrial revolution, and these mills might be very interesting. And it's an interesting sidebar—I keep going off on these tangents, stop me if I'm going too far afield—but something like the Lowell Park owes its existence to the ineptitude of that particular city during the urban renewal era. The places that got their act together, they knocked all of that stuff down. In Lawrence, the proposal was to pave over the canals and turn them into inner highways, routes through the city. Lowell was sufficiently inept during that period that they never got the urban renewal funding, they didn't tear all this stuff down. So when you get to the '70s and there's a different sensibility about these things beginning to grow up, there it is, largely intact.

The backstory of how Lowell actually was able to get passed has to do with the leadership battle in the House of Representatives. When Carl Albert retired, in 1976, Tip O'Neill moved up to become Speaker and there was a four-way battle to be majority leader, which Jim Wright won. In that four-way battle, the outside thinking was that Jim Wright was probably third, and that the battle was between Phil Burton, who was a mover and shaker congressman from California, and Dick Bolling, who was one of the leaders of the reform movement in the House of Representatives in the '60s and '70s, and a guy who wrote a great book, *House Out of Order*, which I loved at the time.⁴ I learned a lot about the House from that book. The way those elections take place in the House is that you have the first ballot and whoever finishes last drops off. Then you have another ballot. And they're secret ballots. Well, Tsongas was the freshman lieutenant to Dick Bolling, supporting Bolling. The way the dynamic played out in that first round, as I remember it, I think Bolling came in first, and Burton was second, and Jim Wright was third. Burton was such an inside player he ultimately outsmarted himself by throwing some votes to Wright, thinking he was going to knock Bolling out of that final round, and that he was then going to be able to beat Wright. It became a Wright-Burton final, and Wright ultimately won, of course—by only one vote, I believe.

Paul was standing in line, waiting to cast his vote, and Burton came over to him and put his arm around him and said, "I hope you'll consider voting for me on this round." And, being Mr. Candid, he just opened his hand and showed him the piece of paper he was holding had Burton's name on. Well, when Burton lost, his fall back

⁴Richard Bolling, *House Out of Order* (New York: Dutton, 1965).

position was he became the chairman of the Parks Subcommittee on the Interior Committee! Mo Udall was chairman of the full Interior Committee, and he already had a favorable view towards Lowell, but Burton as subcommittee chairman really had control over that. I'll never forget that hearing. We had that experience of being burned the first time we had a hearing, but Burton just banged the gavel and said we'll have a mark-up next week. We came back and he banged the gavel and passed the Lowell Park bill and instructed the committee staff to write a few amendments which were deemed passed even before they were written, and moved on from there. That was it. We were out and in the full committee. A lot of it had to do—I always believed—that the right name was on that piece of paper at the right time.

We might have gotten Lowell Park done in the end anyway. It was a very meritorious idea. It has been very successful, and Lowell has had a tremendous renaissance. But it may not have, so it's one of those moments.

RITCHIE: It was coalition building.

ARENBERG: Yes, absolutely.

RITCHIE: One other question before we move on to Washington. The '74 election was the Watergate election. Was Watergate a major factor in that election?

ARENBERG: Absolutely. Cronin was one of the members of the House who had hung in there with Nixon for quite a long time. The very first piece of literature we did was one of these little folding leaflets, and on the front all it said: "Tsongas v Cronin on Nixon," and it made the case. The kinds of issues were good government issues. Tsongas revealed his finances and released his income tax returns and made them public, and challenged Cronin to do the same. Cronin was a developer in the area and he really resisted it. It became a tremendous issue in the campaign. Tsongas repeatedly challenged him to reveal his taxes, and then we did this big event. He had a radio debate with Cronin, and on the radio Tsongas said, "I will not only reveal all of my income taxes for the past five years, but I will reveal a list of all of my law clients, so that people will know who I've been representing, who I've taken money from." In the campaign, we all thought it was a riot because he hadn't been a very great lawyer—I guess he was a good lawyer, it was just that he did a lot of pro bono stuff and was practically taking barter. He didn't have a lot of heavy, high-rolling clients. There is a big IRS headquarters in Andover, Massachusetts, which is in the district, and he announced that he would be in front of the

IRS on such-and-such a morning a nine o'clock, and he was going to release his income taxes and a list of his law clients, and he challenged Cronin to be there. Of course, Cronin didn't come and we had the—it's now become kind of trite—empty chair with his name on it.

But the night before we had this big press conference, the campaign manager, Dennis Kanin, and I were sitting around the headquarters, and we had this sudden moment of realization when we said, "This might be a violation of lawyer-client ethics. I'm not sure we can release these names." So we got really worried about it. We got in the car and we drove up to Tsongas' house, he lived in this great old but at that time pretty run down house in Lowell up on a hill. We woke him and Niki up out of a deep sleep. It was probably one o'clock in the morning. He came downstairs and we had one of those classic Tsongas moments. We said, "We're not sure we're going to be able to do this. It may be a violation of ethics." He just shrugged his shoulders and said, "Look, I'm committed. If this blows the campaign up, well, so be it, I'll do something else." He went back up to bed and we went on wringing our hands.

We got there the next morning. It was one of those great shows of Tsongas candor and sincerity which became so much his trademark throughout his political career extending into the presidential campaign later on. But before he stepped up to the podium, he gathered all of the press around him on the sidewalk outside the IRS. He said, "Okay, I'm going to release a list of my clients. I'm going to ask you not to print it because we've developed this concern that it might be a violation of my clients' privacy. I've added an asterisk for everyone that I represented in open court, so I'm not revealing anything by saying that I represented them. So those names you're free to print. If any other name is of particular interest to you in some way, if you think it's significant, if you contact my campaign, we will approach that individual and see if we can't get clearance to release it." It just totally disarmed the whole thing. It wasn't a problem. They bought it. There was very little interest in any of the names except for one poor guy who happened to be named Edward Kennedy. It wasn't Ted Kennedy, but they wanted to know about that one: What had he done for Ted? It was classic Tsongas. He had that way of being—you know, in the Senate campaign, somebody trying *not* to be that complimentary of him described him as "terminally earnest." He was candid and straightforward. He told you that and it was hard not to believe it.

RITCHIE: During that campaign, you were tracking things by doing polls. Did you get a sense about opinion on openness in government and what was happening with Watergate?

ARENBERG: Oh, absolutely. There was a wave—I mean given the election results we know there was one of these huge election waves going through. It was perfectly clear to us in our district as well. There was an enormous wave of concern about the way in which things were done in Washington, which at that time meant Richard Nixon. We have these waves periodically and they're aimed at other presidents from time to time. But in that Watergate class there definitely was that, and I think ultimately the candidates because of the confluence with that Vietnam period that we were talking about, and all of these young new activists coming into the party, these things gathered into a perfect storm. You really had a wave of new members coming into the House of Representatives that were very different than most of the members that had preceded them. They were not life-long politicians, they were activists and they had a very different view. They seized on that reform movement that people like Bolling and [David] Obey had started a few years earlier in the House and had just begun to have success as O'Neill became Speaker. They added this huge wave of—I think it was 72 new Democrats that came into the House in that class—and they had a different view. And Tsongas was definitely a part of that.

The first thing they did was overthrow three longtime chairmen in the House, using the rules that had just been changed two years before that, subjecting these chairmen to election. They defeated Armed Services chairman F. Edward Hébert, Agriculture chairman William R. Poage, and Chairman Wright Patman on the Banking Committee, and threw a big scare into several others like Wayne Hays who barely survived. Here was this new caucus and some of these old chairmen hadn't gotten the memo about what this new class was like. They just dismissed them at their peril.

RITCHIE: In the House you have to have numbers to have influence. Even as freshmen you could have influence if you came in as part of a class of 72 who tended to stick together.

ARENBERG: That's right.

RITCHIE: Yesterday I was going through our file on Paul Tsongas, and I found this [letter from Richard Arenberg to the Joint Committee dated November 1974, with

biographical information on Tsongas]. I thought you be interested in seeing it. This was for the *Biographical Directory*.

ARENBERG: Oh, wow.

RITCHIE: They would ask each new person who was elected: Who are you? Send us your biography. That was about two weeks after the election.

ARENBERG: I'm already calling myself legislative assistant in writing. Isn't that a riot. That's amazing. I'm sure that was typed on that electric typewriter I was describing to you, where most of the ribbon wound up on the floor. Yes, you can see, it's definitely a real typewriter. If you got it today you'd think it was a ransom note! [Laughs]

RITCHIE: Well, you were teaching at Boston University, working on a dissertation, and you had just won a campaign. The question was whether you were going to go to Washington. Did you have any hesitation about that?

ARENBERG: No, I definitely wanted to come to Washington with him. But what I did say to him, which I have repeated many, many times since then with great amusement, was I told him, "This will be a great experience, I'd love to do this. I'd like to come to Washington for eight or ten months and then I need to come back to Boston. I want to come back to Boston and I want to finish my dissertation." Famous last words. Thirty-four years later I was still here.

RITCHIE: Can you tell me about setting up an office for a new member of Congress?

ARENBERG: Yes, first of all what happened in the period when that letter was written—and why I have absolutely no memory of it, of course, was that the first thing that happened to you was all of a sudden you start getting all of these letters. The House post office forwards them to you in your office in Lowell. You have no idea what to do with all this stuff, you start getting buried. You put a staff together and you come down here. We really didn't have a lot of experience. Being the kind of guy that Tsongas was, he brought people from the campaign. He didn't feel the need to go out and hire any old Washington hands, or anything like that, as newly elected members often do now. So we all arrived in Washington wet behind the ears. Our press secretary, who had been the press secretary on the campaign, arrived the first day for work and he had slept in somebody's

apartment the night before and he just threw the few things he had in a paper bag. He came to the office and his alarm clock was in there with a wire hanging out. I've often thought that today, guns would have been drawn. Even then, questions were asked and we had to go down and vouch for him. As well you know, it was a very different era in terms of perimeter security that we had here in the Congress. But I remember that morning when we got this call: "Can you come down and vouch for this guy?" They just thought it was amusing.

Initially, we were just feeling our way. We were sending out a "Dear Colleague" to the rest of the House every 15 minutes [laughs], doing that sort of thing. I think I probably wrote 300 memos to the congressman in my first week, because I thought everything that happened I had to tell him about and seek instruction, and so forth.

I do remember one moment when we first got to Washington. Dennis Kanin was his staff director and had been his campaign manager. The three of us were very close friends through all those years. He went on to be a law partner of Tsongas' when he left the Senate. He called Dennis and me into his office, the first day, the first moment. We walk in and he closes the door. Very somberly, he turns around and looks at us, and then he breaks into this sheepish grin and he shrugs his shoulders and he says, "Isn't this fun?" I thought about that many times over the 34 years that I was here. I think that's the reason I was a Hill rat for all those years. The reason why I didn't go off—many times I came to the edge, but never really went off anywhere else—was because I always wanted to shrug my shoulders and say, "Isn't this fun?" There was that element of it. Then he stepped back and looked at the two of us and said, "You know, I've never seen either one of you in a suit before."

Then we set about learning our way through the House. We made a lot of mistakes along the way, but there was a kind of openness and earnestness about Tsongas that made those kinds of mistakes easy to take. He didn't take himself too seriously, in a kind of personal sense. He never asked more of his staff than he asked of himself. He was not a Washington insider type who did the cocktail circuits, or the fund-raising circuits very much. In fact, all the years he was here, people would come up to me and say, "Your boss, he's got to be seen more, he's got to go here, he's got to there." I would tell him that and he would just kind of smirk at me. He was a family guy and even in those years, which were not very family-friendly in the Senate, he always made time for the family. If he could, he'd go home at six o'clock, and he didn't expect us to do anything more or less than he did. Of course, the Senate being the Senate, we did often, but it wasn't because we

feared that the boss was going to be upset if we went home for the kids' basketball game or something like that. That began in those very earliest days in the House.

It was a small staff. We jumped into issues, and some of them later—Alaska is a great example. He was on the House Interior Committee. It was one of the great issues before the House Interior Committee. I brought it to him and said, “This is an enormously important conservation issue. In the next few years, the Congress is going to decide what to do with the third of the state of Alaska that the federal government owns, and all of these decisions have to be made, and they’re all going to come through the Interior Committee. You should play an active role in it.” At first, he looked at me like: “I represent Lowell, Massachusetts. I’m a freshman congressman. I just got here. Alaska?” But again he was a very substantive guy, too, and ultimately saw the importance of it, the potential, the opportunity to get involved in a great national issue.

Lots and lots of issues that I’ve been involved in that we’ve dealt with over the years, all these critically important national issues come before the Congress, but issues like the Alaska Lands Act are different. It’s really important what’s in this year’s transportation appropriations bill, but it won’t be so important next year because next year’s transportation appropriations bill will be what’s really important then. It’s true with a lot of issues, their shelf life isn’t that long. Obviously, there are important exceptions to that, but when you deal with something like Alaska Lands, you’re putting these lands in perpetuity. I was very conscious that I was having an opportunity to create national park land that my great-great-grandchildren were going to get to stand on and say, if they knew it—maybe they’ll read it in the oral history now—“My great-great-grandfather had something to do with that.”

So the roots of his involvement on Alaska took place on that House Interior Committee, starting right from the get-go. He played a role in the House. Mo Udall was the chairman. He was the champion of the more-conservation oriented view of the Alaska issue. The ranking Republican on that committee was Sam Steiger, who was very funny guy from Arizona. He and Udall were two of the funniest people I’ve ever encountered in Congress, so it was very entertaining going to hearings of the House Interior Committee in that period. They were like a comedy team going back and forth. They agreed on nothing, but they greatly enjoyed it each other. And Don Young was only a couple of notches down the table, second or third on the Republican side, with the Alaska point of view, which was very hostile to this legislation. So Tsongas staked out the position to Udall’s left, so to speak. He sat way out the end of the horseshoe, way down at the very end. And

from down there he would take potshots at Udall. He would say, “You’re giving away too much here. We need to add this.” For every amendment that Young would offer, chipping away at things, Tsongas would offer an amendment adding new conservation elements to it. They never sat down and coordinated this, but Udall loved this because it positioned him in the middle. Young spent his time attacking the Tsongas position. That was all very amiable too, because interestingly enough—how these things go—Tsongas and Young played paddleball in the House gym together all the time. So they had a very friendly patter back and forth. There were a lot of compromises forged in that early stage. Those were the days of less partisan polarization. Even when there were these very profound philosophical differences about this, they were nonetheless able to come to grips with each other over a paddleball game and say, “Well, maybe we can work this out here. I’ll support this if you’ll support that.” So there were some interesting compromises that were forged in that way. And of course, the Alaska lands bill was killed in that Congress. John Durkin from New Hampshire had been the champion of the conservationist side of the Alaska issue in the Senate. He left the Senate in the same year, 1979, that Tsongas got here and there was nobody to pick up that flag. Tsongas had all of these stripes on his shoulder from the issue, and a depth of information about it. I think it was two weeks into his career as a senator that he offered his version of the Alaska Lands Act. So as a brand-new senator from Massachusetts, he got himself in pretty deep on Alaska from the very beginning.

RITCHIE: It seems that on one hand, he was promoting a Lowell Park to create jobs, but in Alaska he was working against the people who said, “We need to drill. We need to develop the land.” Was there some duality there?

ARENBERG: No, I don’t think so because I think the nature of the historical part was that these jobs were being created consistent with the preservation of the history, and although it wasn’t strictly a natural history in that specific instance, which is why a lot of the traditionalists had trouble with Lowell being a park, today you walk down Merrimack Street and you’ll encounter a park ranger with a Smokey the Bear hat on and nobody thinks anything of it. In Alaska, the issues were not hostility to job creation, obviously, but a lot of the jobs that were being talked about, as you say, grew out of the exploitation of the physical resources. The state of Alaska had been permitted to choose a third of the lands of Alaska, and really chose a lot of the choicest parcels. Native Alaskans got a third. So the view was that the tremendous wilderness heritage that was up there and reflected in the federal lands needed to be protected, and ultimately successfully was through the Alaska lands legislation. That argument is still playing out, and we’ll see another round of

the ANWR debate, I'm sure, in the wake of this oil spill in the Gulf. When we talk about Alaska, I'll talk about the history of that ANWR provision that grew out of all this. It was a compromise provision and that's why the issue perennially still comes back to the Congress.

RITCHIE: I've been interviewing Tim Profeta, who worked for Senator Lieberman, and he went on a congressional tour up there and he said that once he got to see it he really felt it needed to be preserved. But Senator Tsongas never got there, did he?

ARENBERG: Tsongas never got there. I did, after the fact. Ted Stevens used to sneer at the fact—in a very friendly way—that we were in these negotiations but neither of us had ever stepped foot in the state of Alaska. I got to travel there in a staffers' dream trip, because about a year after the Alaska lands bill was passed and was signed into law, Mo Udall put together a trip to evaluate how well it was doing on the ground, one year later. It was a group of senior House members, mostly committee chairmen, a lot of clout, and a very large group. Because of my involvement with Alaska, he invited me to go along on the trip. It was the best of all worlds from the view of a congressional staffer because I was with a House group that had enough clout—we had an air force plane that took us to Prudhoe Bay; we had helicopters to go down and look at the mines; we had seaplanes so we landed on wilderness lakes and Gates of the Arctic. Anywhere they wanted to go, we went, all over the state of Alaska. And yet, on the other side of the coin, I didn't have a boss on the trip. I didn't have any responsibilities. I didn't have a report to write when we got back. I had nothing to do but go along for the ride and enjoy every moment of it. So I had a great experience up there, and got to see a lot of this first hand. We went everywhere, from Prudhoe Bay down along the Alaska Pipeline to Valdez. We went to Wrangell-St. Elias, Ketchikan, Juneau, Fairbanks, Kenai, and Denali National Park, and everywhere in between.

There's a great story—I won't wait till Alaska so I'll remember to tell it, because it just popped into my head. You know that Mount McKinley is the tallest peak in North America and in fact I believe it's the tallest mountain, from base to peak, in the world. All of the other ones start way up in the Himalayas or some other mountain range. McKinley starts almost from sea level. So from the base of the mountain to the peak, it's the tallest in the world. Tsongas wanted to change the name of the mountain back to Denali, which is the Native Alaskan name. I think it means the high one or something along those lines. The groups up there, the conservationists, the Native groups, a lot of Alaskans wanted to change the name back to Denali. He was all for this. The problem was that one of the

great environmentalist heroes of the bill, and chairman of the Parks subcommittee in the House of Representatives, was John Seiberling. It happens that the congressional district he represented in Ohio—you can see this coming—was [William] McKinley's district! It was a non-starter for him. He would not hear of it. So the compromise was to change the name of McKinley National Park to Denali National Park and the mountain remained McKinley (although if you go to Alaska today, most people refer to it as Denali). It's just one of those strange stories about how things work in the Congress.

The only other name thing like that was during the committee mark-ups in the Senate Energy Committee, Tsongas used to threaten Scoop Jackson all the time that he was going to offer an amendment to move the final "s" in the Tongass National Forest to right behind the "t" so that it would be the Tsongas National Forest.

RITCHIE: That was a moment when a lot of the established politicians were somewhat reluctant to go with conservation because they had spent years promoting the development of forest lands and mineral use, and things like that. Now you have a group coming in and saying we have to preserve this rather than develop it.

ARENBERG: You had those mineral interests. You had tremendous oil and gas interests. You had the NRA and the hunters' groups in Alaska that didn't want any of this federal land to be national park land, out of bounds. And the state government and the representatives of the state, they were very much opposed to much of this conservation approach. But of course there was also tremendous support for it across the country. We're used to thinking of environmentalists as a particular niche, but this was a much broader coalition than that. There are true conservationists out there who believe in being good stewards of the land, and many of them are sportsmen and hunters, so there was also tremendous support for it. But it was in doubt from start to finish, and ultimately was signed into law by Jimmy Carter in December of 1980, after he had been defeated by Ronald Reagan and before Reagan was inaugurated. It was really just by the skin of our teeth because Reagan clearly would have vetoed it. He brought in James Watt to be secretary of the interior. I think about all of the provisions we wrote into the Alaska Lands Act giving authority to the secretary of the interior thinking we were protecting things! It says something about the process and assumptions of these things that every time we were providing a decision or a sign-off for the secretary of the interior, we were thinking of Cecil Andrus, or even Rogers Morton. Almost all of the secretaries of the interior who had come before, at least on these land conservation issues, were pretty protective. And then

suddenly we had these land decisions being made by James Watt. Fortunately it was very difficult to roll a lot of that back.

When we start talking about the dangers of a majoritarian Senate, these are the kinds of things I think about. If we had been able to simply roll through an Alaska Lands Act in 1979 and '80, pay no attention to the minority, and done very little consensus building; if we had just flexed muscle and signed it into law, then what would Reagan have done when he came in that tremendous mandate he had, took back the Senate, and all that great success he had legislatively in those first months, in the wake of what was viewed as this huge Reagan mandate and this conservative wave. I used to argue with Tsongas about that because I never believed that that's what happened. I thought Carter's horrible defeat had negative coattails. For example Frank Church in Idaho lost by about 4,000 votes, less than a percentage point, while Carter got only something like 25 percent of the vote there. That means a whole lot of people who voted for Reagan voted for Church. But the point I'm making here is that the danger is that a lot of the Alaska conservation legislation would have been very quickly rolled back by a majority Senate.

RITCHIE: If you can pass something easily you can repeal it easily.

ARENBERG: That's exactly right.

RITCHIE: You were talking about the Interior Committee and usually there are mostly westerners on the Interior Committee.

ARENBERG: Well, that was Lowell.

RITCHIE: But Lowell put him on a committee that a Massachusetts representative usually would not have listed high as a desired assignment.

ARENBERG: When he went there, one of his highest priorities was to get Lowell done. Later on, towards the end of his Senate career, I used to tease him that he was the highest ranking city councilman in America. Because even as a senator he would sit at his desk and do things like design streetlight fixtures for downtown Lowell. By the end, he had his hands in so many decisions—in a very positive public way—but he cared so deeply about bringing that city back and protecting its historical heritage in all of those things. So it was very much on his mind when he was first elected to the House that first and foremost he wanted to be appointed to the Interior Committee, where the decision

would be made about Lowell. So that's why he was there. We got involved in strip mining legislation, and the boundary waters decisions up in northern Minnesota. He got tired of seeing me coming at him with some new issue that was not in the sweet spot for Lowell. But at the same time we were getting Lowell Park done.

And of course, he was a real voice for energy conservation and alternative energy. Many of the same prescriptions that we're hearing today, Tsongas was talking about there in the mid-'70s. Certainly, as the energy crisis hit during the Carter administration, a lot of the national focus was on that, but that was always a big part of his thinking about the future. In fact, he chaired the very first congressional hearings on global warming in 1975 or '76, I think it was in the subcommittee on the environment in the House Interior Committee. We didn't call it global warming then, we called it the greenhouse effect. But he very clearly saw that coming as a big issue. In fact, the *Lowell Sun*, which was the relevant big newspaper in the district for him, and was always very conservative—it had a conservative publisher who was always taking every opportunity to take on Tsongas—there was a drawing in the *Lowell Sun* that I'll always remember. It was a drawing of Tsongas standing there with a flower growing out of the top of his head. Underneath it said: "Greenhouse Effect."

RITCHIE: When he got into the House, Lowell was the local issue that he was promoting, but then he got involved in all these other issues from Alaska to Michigan. How much leeway does a representative have to deal with issues that really don't relate to his constituency?

ARENBERG: You know, if you ask me that question today, I'd be very reluctant to say that there's much. I think because of the effects of the partisan polarization and the impact that's had, especially in the House of Representatives (although it's true in the Senate too) where most members are thinking more often about primary politics than even about the general election, because if you're a Republican there's likely to be somebody who's more conservative than you who might come at you from your right if you haven't dotted all the "i's" and crossed all the "t's." And likewise if you're a Democrat, there's going to be some progressive, more liberal person out there who may well take you on if you stray towards the middle or do too many compromises, or wander away from tending to business back home. So I think there's a little less room today than there was at that time. But I think it was pretty unconventional then, too, particularly for a relatively freshman member of Congress. He was a sophomore, he had four years, but he was a new member throughout. If he hired my more seasoned me, and brought me back to those

years, I might have been more circumspect about things that I urged him to get into at that time. I don't want to say we were naive about it, but he was like that.

When I talk about comparing and contrasting, this was part of the enormous contrast that I went through when I moved from Tsongas' staff to Mitchell's staff. Tsongas was a very visceral politician. For him, the sufficient requirement to make a decision was for a question to be put to him, it didn't matter, it could come from a letter from a constituent, a question from a town meeting, somebody he had met on the plane, or something I was presenting to him in a memo. If you challenged him with an issue, and it interested him (which was almost everything), then he engaged on the issue. He was willing to take a position, and he was willing to pursue it. He was totally unafraid of changing his mind, and there are examples of this later in his career. He felt, "If I change my mind later on down the road, I'll say I changed my mind, and I'll explain the reasons why I did it." This was 180 degrees from George Mitchell, who had been a federal judge before he came to the Senate, and had this judicial view of the issues that was akin to *stare decisis*. The first thing he wanted to know was: "How have I dealt with this issue before? And why am I going in a different direction? What's the explanation for that?"

If I'm not jumping too far ahead here, I'll tell a story from almost one of my first interactions as a member of Mitchell's staff. I went to work for him as his chief of staff, and I went in there with my first decision memo. I had been around the Senate for six years, and I had overlapped with Mitchell for four of those, so I knew something about him, and I had also been through the process of getting hired for this job, so I knew that he was a deeply substantive guy and that he looked at issues in terms of very solid building blocks, what were the issues and what were the arguments, and you really had to make a case. So I wrote what was for me probably my ultimate decision memo, with a carefully reasoned background and three policy options, and all of these things, something that I would *never* have done for Tsongas. Tsongas, usually giving him a memo meant it would disappear into the ether. The best thing to do was to brief him on the run, orally. He absorbed things like a sponge and you could brief him enough on the way to a hearing in the morning that he would be right there as soon as you got there, and he picked it up and he used it. Tsongas was very adept that way. Mitchell read all of the memos. He was very detailed in all of that. So I brought this memo into him. I stood there very proudly while he read it. He kind of looked up at me over his glasses and gave me what—I'll clean it up—but what I came to call his "crap-for-brains" look. He gave me that look and he said, "Why do I have to decide this now?" Bang, I was confronted, coming from Tsongas, for the first time I was confronted with this notion of an issue ripening, which again is another

judicial issue. George Mitchell doesn't like to make decisions until it's time to make decisions. In his view, since you don't change your mind very often or readily, you're careful about the decisions you make. If you make the decision too soon, you're just closing off options that might turn out to be important when you make a more careful study of this later on, and new facts come in, and events change. Well, that was not a consideration for Tsongas. If events changed, you repositioned yourself based on those newer events. It's just a totally different way of looking at decision-making, based on their personalities, I think.

So my jaw just dropped. It had never occurred to me before that it was a consideration—a choice not to make this decision now. It was an interesting decision. There were parties on both sides. There were options. I had the expectation that we would decide it and that we would move on it. But I learned a real object lesson.

RITCHIE: Well, considering Tsongas' career, he was only four years in the House, six years in the Senate, he didn't have time for things to gel. He sort of jumped into things.

ARENBERG: Right, very mercurial that way. If his instincts weren't so attuned, somehow, and I don't entirely understand how that happens, but they were, but you would say he shot from the hip a lot. As a staffer, a lot of my gray hair comes from that. He would go out somewhere and he'd just say "blah, blah, blah." And then he'd come back and would say to me, "Well, I just said this. Go figure out if that's right." We did a lot of that and we spent weeks filling in behind what it was he'd said. Much more often than not, we came out where he was. But there are a lot of those pathfinder issues. Some of them not as well known. He wrote a book called *The Road from Here*,⁵ which makes very good reading now. It was written in the late '70s and a lot of it is very prophetic. He used to take these tough positions. Because he thought it was the only way we were going to deal with energy conservation, he called for a gas tax. He was for a dollar gas tax in the Senate campaign and politically people hated it universally, but it didn't bother him.

What I learned from him over the years was—I think of it like an initial minefield. When you start out on an invasion, and there are mines all over the place, most of the invaders get blown up in that first minefield. If you're like that, and I think a lot of

⁵Paul Tsongas, *The Road from Here: Liberalism and Realities in the 1980s* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981).

political candidates who are like that, they get blown up in that first minefield. They run for the board of education or dog catcher and they get blown out because they say things that are too candid. But if you can get through that minefield and over time you begin to establish a reputation, people begin to see that as a personal quality, as a characteristic. It becomes a kind of armor, and that definitely happened to Tsongas as he went forward in his career. Ultimately, even as a presidential candidate, people began to see that kind of earnestness, that straightforwardness, that candor. People were *forever* coming up to him and saying, "I don't agree with you about a damn thing, but I'm going to vote for you, because you believe what you say, you don't spin anything." Again, some of that gray hair he gave me, he would just go out there and say it. He was totally open to people.

With great amusement, I used to watch people work their way into what they expected to be the inner circle and then to great disappointment learn that there wasn't any inner circle. If he came in here with us now and closed the door and sat down, he would say the same things that he would say on national TV or to a stranger he met on the plane, or wherever he was. That's how he was. What he thought was what he thought and it didn't matter that this was a private meeting. There wasn't any inside story. Those of us who had spent a lot of time with him got used to that, but people who came to work with him and moved up into senior positions, I watched them get deeply disappointed: "Now I'm an insider. I used to know this same stuff when I was out there in the far office!"

He was always doing things to us. We'd be having some big meeting on some big, heavy issue. He'd have all of his senior people arrayed in the office, which he didn't mind doing, by the way. Some senators like to deal with their staff one on one to maintain the proper power relationship. He didn't mind. He could have 15 staffers in the room disagreeing with each other. He liked mixing it up that way. But he'd get us all in the room and we'd be pontificating about something or other and he'd reach over and buzz his secretary and say, "Send one of the interns in." One of the interns would come into the office and he'd say, "You know, I'm tired of listening to these people. I know where they all are on this issue. I want to know what you think." And he'd put the question to them! He was genuinely like that. Every now and then, that sort of thing would get him into trouble, but he did a lot of really unconventional things. He got frustrated with Carter's national energy policy. He felt that we weren't really addressing the issues. So he wrote something called the Mass Plan, which he put in the index of his book. It was a comprehensive plan for how the state of Massachusetts could protect its energy future by itself in terms of what kind of programs the state could enact, what kind of private-public partnerships, just this whole huge plan with a few federal pieces, but not the sort of thing

you would expect to come from a U.S. senator. It was way out of his bailiwick, but he just jumped into things like that. He thought it was time to build a new Boston Garden, that the Celtics had played in that old arena too long. He became the champion of a new Boston Garden. It was just out of the blue, he jumped in the middle of it and began saying that this was what they had to do.

RITCHIE: On the other hand, to survive politically you have to have a sense of what your constituency is thinking. If he talked to an awful lot of people, he must have had a sense of the public mood. For instance, on environmental issues, Massachusetts was way ahead of a lot of other places in thinking about it.

ARENBERG: Tremendous instincts, but also there was a courageous aspect to it. You mention that conservation issue. Well, in that Senate primary his principle opponent was a guy named Paul Guzzi, and I'll tell you something about that campaign later because it's very interesting. They were very close to each other on the issues. They were both very similar. They both were named Paul. They both had ethnic names. Guzzi's was Italian, Tsongas was Greek. The Italian one was a much bigger asset (because there are many more Italian-American than Greek-American voters in Massachusetts). Plus, Guzzi was much better known statewide. Tsongas had been a congressman. He had visibility of 18 percent in our first polls, so when Guzzi came into the race we were really up against it.

RITCHIE: He was the [Massachusetts] secretary of state at the time?

ARENBERG: That's right. And he was in the Dukakis-Tsongas wing of the party. He was another one of those guys. Somebody looking at this race from the outside probably wouldn't have been able to tell these two guys apart. That was something that was of very great concern to us. At the time that Paul made the announcement—I'll tell that story later but I do want to make this point about conservation: Tsongas shared with Mo Udall what I always described as he was a nuclear skeptic. In other words, he was very strong on nuclear safety and safeguards. He was very tough on the NRC [Nuclear Regulatory Commission]. He opposed the Clinch River breeder-reactor. He was a very strong conservationist, but he believed that nuclear power—it's sort of the position that a lot of conservationists are coming to today—that with the proper care it's reluctantly said that it's a better option than massive coal and oil burning in its impact on the environment. Well, that was the Tsongas point of view in the 1970s, and in 1978, in Massachusetts, in the primary, it was one of the few differences between Guzzi and Tsongas. And Guzzi

thought he had him on this one, because he was opposed to nuclear power and Tsongas was not. But Tsongas, when it came to issues like that, was unafraid. There was a trustee issue if there ever was one. He knew that a lot of his allies weren't real happy with how he felt about that, but he believed all the way down to his core that the dangers that we faced, because of this early sensitivity to global warming, and to acid rain, which was a big issue in the Northeast at that time, he believed that the impact of the reliance on fossil fuels was much more dangerous to the environment than nuclear power was, and he wasn't afraid to make that argument.

In the end, the primary campaign probably didn't turn on that, but he was able to neutralize the issue because he was very committed and he had a deep base of information. He knew what he was talking about and he would not trim his sails on that, and he felt assertive about that. It wasn't even like he was trying to downplay the issue, or push it aside, or de-emphasize it, or anything like that. He acknowledged that it was a central issue, that it was one of the things in the '70s that needed to be decided. It was one of the issues that would confront a new senator. But he was going to say what he believed.

RITCHIE: I just read that constituents are less forgiving on issues that affect them personally, particularly their pocketbook, and more forgiving on general issues, where if a man takes a stand you can admire him for taking a stand. That's one reason why foreign policy usually doesn't play much of a role in election decisions.

ARENBERG: I think that's right, but I would add to that issues that affect them personally and issues that are easily understandable to them in personal terms. A good example of that, probably one of the very few issues that has no shelf-life in politics, is voting for your own pay raise. You could have voted for your own pay raise in 1947 and it would still be an issue today if you were running for reelection and they dug that out. "You did it back then. You flip-flopped over the years, but you have voted for a pay raise for yourself." They'd find a way to spin it. It's one of those things, when it becomes something people can really get their arms about and understand the issue in personal terms, they make up their minds about it and they're unforgiving if they think you have it wrong.

RITCHIE: One other thing I was going to ask you about, which we've mentioned a bit in terms of names: There were a lot of Massachusetts politicians who had a lot of power when Tsongas came to Congress. Tip O'Neill was the House majority leader. You

had Ted Kennedy in the Senate. In the House you had people like Joe Moakley on the House Rules Committee.

ARENBERG: [Edward P.] Boland was chairman of the Appropriations Committee; Silvio Conti was the ranking Republican on that same committee, right. Massachusetts in those days had tremendous clout in the House—and O’Neill was preceded by John McCormack as Speaker just a few years earlier.

RITCHIE: On the one hand, I imagine it would be a real asset to come into such a powerful congressional delegation. On the other hand, it means you have to do a lot to distinguish yourself from all these people who have all that power and are getting all that publicity. What was Tsongas’ approach to the Massachusetts delegation?

ARENBERG: I would say that in the end it was an asset to him—and I’ll point to a couple of those things—but those considerations tended to be invisible to him. You’ll recall that later on when Ted Kennedy was running against Jimmy Carter for the Democratic nomination, that bruising campaign, right in the heart of that, Tsongas chooses that time to go before one of the premier liberal policy groups (Americans for Democratic Action) and declares himself as a—the phrase was new then—a “neoliberal,” or we sometimes called them an “Atari liberal.” The Japanese game company, Atari, was just the hottest new thing on the cutting edge. He had the view that liberal Democrats were too anti-business. All of this later became familiar in his presidential campaign, but it was a real sort of coming out for him. A national audience and he makes this big speech. Of course, the editorial writers all around the country look at this and they see this as Tsongas attacking Ted Kennedy. And I think the Kennedy people saw this as Tsongas attacking Ted Kennedy. They were a little unhappy about it. We’d even warned Paul a little about this in advance, but didn’t realize quite how it would play out. But you would go in there and talk to him about it and he just didn’t see how his stating how he viewed these issues that he saw as a very profound part of his political philosophy, he didn’t see that as impacting Ted Kennedy in any way other than he might try to persuade Ted on a couple of issues, something like that. He didn’t see the conflict. He just didn’t deal with it in those terms. A lot of the niceties of senatorial courtesy—and this was more than that—they were opaque to him.

I remember his maiden speech. Particularly back then, it was considered a big event to make your maiden speech on the floor. Well, I was with Paul in his office one day. He hadn’t been in the Senate very long, maybe a couple of weeks. I have to say by

way of back story, he was the first Peace Corps volunteer elected to the Senate. He had been in Ethiopia and then had been a trainer in the West Indies. He was very proud of the fact that he was the only member of the Senate to have lived in Africa, and he felt he knew a lot about Africa. We were in his office, and it was before the Senate was televised so we were listening over the squawk box in the background, as we always did. I always tell people that in those days to be a good staffer you had to know all 100 voices, otherwise you wouldn't know what was going on. Anyway, somebody was making a speech about something and referred to Ethiopia or Somalia. He perked up and said, "I don't agree with that. Come on." He drags me over to the floor. He stands up and gets recognition and he starts talking! Well, about five minutes into this address, all of a sudden you hear this bang as those twin swinging doors of the center aisle fly open and puffing down the aisle comes Ted Kennedy, at a trot. Because, as you know better than I, it was the tradition for the senior senator to introduce his junior colleague on the floor when he was about to make his maiden speech. Here was Tsongas making his maiden speech without any forewarning. Never mind to Ted Kennedy, without any forewarning to his staff or his speechwriter or anybody else. He just had something to say and went down and said it.

That really encapsulates the way he was, and the way he viewed these conventions. It happened on Alaska, it happened on the Chrysler bill, it happened on a lot of the small issues that we'll talk about, but his view of what happens in a conference committee is usually—this is when we still had them, of course—was the House would come at, for example, 10 million, the Senate would come in at 20 million, and we would agree ultimately at 15 million. He liked to come swooping into a conference committee and say, "Mr. Chairman, look, we're going to spend a lot of time on this, we're going to go back and forth, but we're going to come out in the middle. Let's just adopt this and get this over with and save everybody a lot of time." It is an oversimplification, and he was guilty of that from time to time as well, but more often than not he was right. There was a lot of hemming and hawing that went on, a lot of pulling back and forth. Ultimately, if they were going to get legislation done, the House and Senate were going to compromise with each other, and that's what a conference committee was all about, and you could understand that going in.

He believed very profoundly that on *any* issue, if you got reasonable men and women of good will to sit around the table with the desire to come to a solution for that problem, that it could be done, that people could resolve virtually anything that way. I think more than anything else that if he would observe where we are with the Senate right

now, I think that's what would distress him the most. I often say it's not how polarized the Senate has become, it's that too often neither side has that desire to resolve the difference. Both sides are content to polish the cutting edge on that issue that they're going to take to the electorate in the next election. A lot of difficult, complicated issues fall by the wayside that at least in my humble view are very susceptible to real legislative solutions. Some of these old bulls of the Senate would have known exactly how to resolve them. They would have gotten in a room and butt heads, and done a little logrolling, and done a little horse trading, and all of that, but they would have come out with some kind of compromise. Because ultimately they wanted to legislate. I think that gets lost too often now on issues where it shouldn't.

I think immigration reform is a very good example of that. Everybody knows the system is broken, everybody knows there's a problem that has to be solved. In their heart of hearts, everybody knows what the basic parameters of that solution are, and that if it could be approached right now in the current political environment, in the current political culture that way, where men and women of good will brought their points of view and sat around the table with the desire, with the conviction that we have to resolve this problem now. The kind of pressure that we were under on Alaska, for example, where both sides wanted to resolve this issue once and for all. They wanted a legislative outcome. Even Ted Stevens, who was opposed to all of this, wanted to come to that ultimate solution. On immigration, at least in the past, we haven't been able to get there. We get as far as Republicans saying "Wow, this amnesty is a great issue for us." And we get Democrats saying, "Wow, we could change the shape of the Hispanic vote for decades to come with this issue." Ultimately, too often, too many members are satisfied to have that issue and it's too dangerous in the middle—that's the other piece of it. The whole political culture is so polarized now that that middle ground becomes so dangerous. When Senator [Robert] Bennett is not sufficiently conservative for his own party, that middle ground becomes pretty dangerous.

RITCHIE: There was a book that came out in 1980 by Sidney Blumenthal, who was writing in those days for the alternative press in Boston, watching the collapse of the old machine politics. The book was called *The Permanent Campaign*. His argument, which seems very prescient now, was that machine politicians were being replaced by the campaign managers, and that governing was going to become campaigning, that everything was going to be focused on the next campaign.

ARENBERG: I think that's absolutely right, and that's been the history of the time in between. It's what Tsongas used to call—not he alone, others too—but he called it “bumper sticker politics.” Campaigns themselves used to be more substantive. If you go back and look, I maintain that the Tsongas-Brooke Senate campaign was the last highly contested Senate campaign anywhere in the country where there was no—zero—negative campaigning. Tsongas' first words on election night, in front of those national cameras, were, “Those are big shoes to fill.” He had tremendous respect for Brooke. They had respect for each other. When he would see Brooke years later he'd always go up to him and say, “How come I won and you lost and you look so happy and prosperous?” As the campaign became more professionalized, more money, all of that, campaigns themselves became more and more about the bumper stickers.

If you go back and look at that Tsongas-Brooke campaign, not only wasn't there any negative campaigning, but both campaigns were having difficulty finding issues to disagree about. It was a very intense campaign with the Boston media. They'd come to us and say, “What are the issues here?” They'd do the same thing with Brooke. Well, I remember we finally were able to isolate five issues, and they would make you laugh how specific they were. Brooke favored the nuclear aircraft carrier and Tsongas was opposed to it. Brooke favored the neutron bomb, and Tsongas was opposed to it. The other one I remember right off was national health insurance. Now that's a big issue, but what's comical here was that Brooke had a national health insurance plan well to the left of anything that was considered by anybody in the recent round. I often tell my students, if you go back and look at Richard Nixon's proposal, that was to the left of these plans that are being characterized as socialist today. Remember that well known socialist president, Richard M. Nixon? Well, Brooke had a national health insurance plan like that. What we were attacking him for was it wasn't sufficiently similar to the Kennedy-Corman plan, which was the big Democratic standard plan at the time, Ted Kennedy's national health insurance plan. Of course, running in Massachusetts, we were all for that. We were criticizing, we would tear apart Brooke's national health insurance plan.

I told you about that post-election poll. One of the things that that poll demonstrated—and there's a lot of national press clips that I have from that poll—was that because the focus was so narrowly on only these five issues, the electorate got them. That's what they made the decision on. There was all this stuff about Brooke's divorce and all of that. People when they think back on that, sort of think, “Oh, poor Ed Brooke, he ran into trouble with his wife and it cost him his seat.” What that polling showed us was that by the time we got to election day, the percentage of people who were upset with

Brooke because of his divorce was almost exactly the same, totally washed out by the people who were very sympathetic with him because of the way that they thought he had been mistreated by the media over this issue, and that his wife had been unreasonable and all these sorts of things. So it really was kind of a wash out. What people were able to cite, even in open-ended questions, when you say, “What was the issue that most led you to decide who to vote for?” They’d say, “Oh, I just don’t think that nuclear aircraft carrier is such a great idea.” [Laughs]

RITCHIE: I remember being in Massachusetts that year—I went up for a wedding—and talking to people who were liberal Democrats, who were in Tsongas’ district, but who had always voted for Brooke. They were really in a quandary. They expressed almost anguish because they liked both candidates. I think they went with their party instinct eventually.

ARENBERG: It was a very difficult thing, and I think even at the time we were making that decision to run, the question got expressed: Is it where you want to be to run against the only black member of the United States Senate? Again, all I can say is this is Tsongas at his core. He thought about it and he said, “To not run, just solely for that reason, would be so condescending. It would undermine what Brooke’s position in the Senate represents. I disagree with him on specific issues.” One of the big things was that after 12 years in the Senate he just wasn’t coming home. It’s a familiar issue, but in Tsongas’ view he was a senator who had “gone Washington.” He was critical of that, and he wanted to put his vision out there. He was ready to run. That decision brings together a lot of themes that we’ve been talking about. One was you had all these powerbrokers in Massachusetts, and how is he going to deal with that? Right at the time we were thinking about it, I’ll never forget because the *New York Times* had just done a big story about how Ed Brooke was the Republican senator that labor unions loved to support, and then there was a piece in the *New Republic*. The theme was Ed Brooke is about to run for reelection and everybody likes him because they can show their bipartisanship by supporting him. Here we were thinking, “What mountain are we climbing?”

The way we first got into that, it was time to do our polling for Tsongas’ reelection race in the Fifth Congressional District. We were expecting that he was going to run for a third term. When we did that poll, I often used Brooke as a measure. I used Kennedy this way, I used Brooke that way as solid, very well-known politicians. You couldn’t run Tsongas against anyone else. There weren’t Republican figures who could get above the invisibility factor. They just weren’t well known enough to run against him to see how

strong you were in your own district. So I used to create this hypothetical race against Ed Brooke, because Ed Brooke was a known quantity and we could test our strength that way. Well, what I discovered, much to our amazement, that if you hypothesized a Senate race against Ed Brooke, that in the southern tier of the Fifth District, which was a portion of those kind of liberal bedroom communities around Route 128 in Boston—the ones that are in the Fifth District, Lexington, which is very Democratic, Concord, which is very Republican, and Republican towns, places like Bedford and Acton and so forth, really upper-middle-class and very progressive. They are crucial to Republicans winning elections in Massachusetts. If you are Bill Weld, or in the old days Frank Sargent, or Ed Brooke, because of the overwhelming Democratic vote in all of these old cities, you've got the Republican vote out in rural Massachusetts (but there's not that many voters there), you have these liberal suburban towns (in today's politics you would characterize them as independent, but even then, although we view them as Democratic or independent, they were more progressive than anything else). So a Republican could capture those towns and if he or she did, that's how you won statewide in Massachusetts. Seeing that Brooke's support, even within our own district, had atrophied badly in those communities was an eye-opener.

I took that to Tsongas and I said, "You know how we're always talking about how he doesn't come back to Massachusetts and everything. I think he's very susceptible to the assertion that he no longer cares about Massachusetts, and asking what has he done for Massachusetts lately?" He just didn't have that localized view in the way Kennedy did. Kennedy was always present. As many years as he had been in the Senate, he was on the local street corners and he was hanging out with the pols and singing at the St. Patrick's Day breakfast. Brooke was no longer doing that. So the next question was: Does this apply elsewhere in the state? We didn't have the resources. I had built this in-house operation for the Fifth District, but we didn't have the people, the resources, the phone lines to go statewide. What I proposed that we do was: we pick out a few of the other similar bedroom communities along the 128 corridor, places like Hingham on the South Shore, Braintree, and a few others going all the way around the arc, outside of the Fifth District. Take maybe a half dozen of those and do a poll in there. If they reflected the same weakness, then we really had grounds to start thinking about a statewide poll. We did that and it did.

So we put together a memo for Paul, and he said "There are three ducks that I want to put in a row before I agree to do this. The first one is I need to go to Tip and get his blessing. If he doesn't want me to take this on, it's a non-starter." Because he was a

freshman member of the House and O'Neill was the Speaker. The second one was, "I've got to go to Ted and get his agreement." The long-standing posture of the Kennedy family, going back to Jack Kennedy, was that they didn't mess in the other Senate race. Jack Kennedy had coexisted with [Leverett] Saltonstall, and Ted Kennedy with Ed Brooke. They just kept hands off that other race. That was their position. They didn't get involved. They just stayed above the fray. So our perception was we weren't going to ask for much but we wanted Kennedy's tacit endorsement, and if we could get it: one fundraiser and one TV commercial. That was the ask. The third of the Tsongas "ducks" was he would go to the publishers of the *Boston Globe* and not ask them to endorse him but just that they would not blow him out of the water right at the very outset, before he could establish a race. Because politically, particularly if you are a Democrat in Massachusetts, you go nowhere without the *Boston Globe*. The *Globe* loved Ed Brooke for the same reasons. He gave the *Globe* that same feature that all these other labor unions and everybody else got. They could endorse this Republican senator and that made the *Globe* less susceptible to the argument that it was a totally Democratic newspaper. So we weren't going in with the expectation we were going to talk them out of endorsing Brooke, but only that they would not editorialize right out of the gate: "What's this younger whipper-snapper, four years in the House, and now he's going to take on our great statesman?" We were afraid they were going to blow us out of the water before we even got going.

He wanted to put those three ducks in line. First he goes over and sits down with Kennedy, and Kennedy says, "Okay." We were kind of surprised by that, and he took a lot of flack for that, ultimately, for years after that. Ted Kennedy was Ted Kennedy—he wasn't going to suffer badly in the African-American community, but it got brought up for many years after that. Of course, Tsongas' relationship with the African-American community post-election ultimately became very strong too, so that helped with the healing. So Kennedy said okay. Tsongas went to the *Globe* and the publisher of the *Globe* said, "Well, we'll let this unfold. This is a very interesting development and we'll let this unfold." He no doubt already knew that he had this spotlight team that was looking into Brooke's divorce papers, but we certainly didn't know that. So then Tsongas approaches Tip O'Neill on the floor of the House. He goes up to Tip and says, "I'm thinking about this." Tip turns to him and says, "Funny thing but my son is thinking about the same thing." Total deflation. His son was Mike Dukakas's lieutenant governor at the time, Tom O'Neill, much better known around the state in Democratic politics, and he had the O'Neill name. This was going to be a non-starter. We just basically shut it all down. Within a couple of weeks after that, it leaks out that O'Neill is thinking about this. The *Globe* and others start asking him if he's going to run, and he starts saying, "I haven't

decided. I'm thinking about it." Then he goes off and has a summit. He leaves town to think about. Politically, they're starting to knock his block off. He's indecisive. Either he's committed to it or not, all this kind of stuff. We're just watching all this happen around us.

I'll never forget, it was Mother's Day. I was at home with my then two-year-old son, Josh. I was in Alexandria [Virginia]. The phone rings, I pick up the phone, it's Paul Tsongas on the line. He says, "Are you sitting down?" I said, "No." He said, "Sit down. He says he's not running." I said, "I'll be up there tomorrow." That was it. The funny thing was, he never made the decision to jump into that race. He walked to the edge of it, was lining his ducks up, and then Tip pulled the rug out from under it and it all deflated. Then when suddenly the opportunity reappeared, it was like he fell off the cliff. We never went back to revisit the issues or re-debate it. He just announced a couple days later, in a sort of classic Tsongas press conference at the Parker House in Boston.

I remember a TV reporter standing up and saying—this is also relevant to how things have changed in terms of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, and the Washington powers that be, and all of the stuff that we're accustomed to now—the first question was: "What's the view of the party leaders? You're giving up a safe seat to make this quixotic run against an incumbent senator. What do the leaders of the Democratic Party think?" Paul just kind of looked at him and said, "They've got something to say about this?" It reflected how he was: it never occurred to him, except for the very pragmatic steps with Kennedy and O'Neill that I described, it never would have occurred to him to contact the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee or talk to the state committee in Massachusetts, or any of the party elders, or talk to the labor unions, or any of that stuff. He made a personal decision to run and he went out and announced it. It reflects the fact that it wouldn't have occurred to him, but it also reflects how much all of that has changed, how much more influential those committees in Washington are today in playing this role in these local House and Senate races, a much greater role than they did before in terms of fund-raising and everything else. About the only thing the DSCC did for us in that '78 race was if we wanted to line up a senator to come into the state and maybe do a fund-raiser or endorse him or something like that, all of which didn't seem all that relevant to us either, they could arrange that. But it wasn't a very significant effect in terms of fund-raising and certainly in terms of consulting on planning how the campaign was going, strategy and all that, totally out of the picture, really.

RITCHIE: He had been only four years in the House and had a relatively safe seat. Was he in any way frustrated with the House? Did that contribute to his decision to

make the run for the Senate and give up the long-term seniority that he could have gotten in the House?

ARENBERG: I don't think so. The whole seniority thing kinds of falls into that category with Paul. He thought it wasn't such a great idea anyway, although Mo Udall always used to say, "The longer I'm around here, the better the idea of seniority sounds." But I think it was more that he saw it as a challenge. He cared about these energy conservation issues. He had these things that he wanted to get done and he saw the Senate as a better—in that sense he saw that a senator had a great deal more leverage. It wasn't just that it was a higher office or statewide, it wasn't the trappings that appealed to him. He saw that senators had a lot more leverage than somebody who had been around the House of Representatives for four years. But I don't think it would be fair to categorize him as frustrated, because he really had a lot of accomplishment for somebody who was only in the House for four years.

A lot of it was Lowell Park, but when Carter announced his national energy initiative, the first thing Tip did in the House was create an ad hoc committee on energy, very prominently. What he did was he appointed virtually all the major committee chairmen. It was [Dante] Fascell and [John] Dingell and all the powers that be at the time in the House. Tsongas went to him and said, "I've got this tremendous interest in energy. I really want to make a difference. Would you put me on this committee?" So it was all these senior members of the House and Paul Tsongas down the end of the table. It didn't faze him one bit. He would offer amendments. He came up with a national bike study to be conducted by the Department of Transportation. It seemed from one perspective almost trivial, but again with this kind of foresight he saw bicycle commuting as a real conservation measure, and he wanted the Department of Transportation to carry out this study. So he wrote this amendment, and I'll never forget it because the committee was having these around-the-clock mark-up sessions. He offers this amendment and John Dingell, now of course he's dean of the House but already in 1976 he was a very senior, very powerful member of the House. Dingell looked down the table at him and he said, "Mr. Chairman, I raise a point of order that this amendment is nongermane."

The bill had two titles, one was the regulatory title, the other was the tax title. This was under House rules not germane to either title. Tsongas leans back to me and says, "What do I do now?" I said, "Offer it as a title." So he goes, "Mr. Chairman, I'd like to offer Title 3 to the National Energy Act, the National Bike Study Title." This was in the Cannon Caucus Room, and it was jammed packed full of all these hard-bitten—I mean,

you can imagine who would have been there at midnight for this ad hoc energy committee mark-up, it's all these hard-bitten oil industry lobbyists and everybody, all these energy guys. Dingell opposes it, there's a roll-call vote and the amendment passes. The room stands up and gives Tsongas a standing ovation. It's almost trivial in a sense but it really says a lot about the character of the man. The trappings of the congressional system were not appealing to him, he was about trying to solve these problems and whatever it took to get it done. So I think he felt—and he did get two amendments passed on the House floor on the National Energy Act—a very unusual accomplishment, particularly for a young Congressman—one providing additional funding for ERDA, which was the predecessor agency to the Department of Energy, to do some conservation programs, and then there was the bike study, and ultimately DOT did that study, not that it went anywhere but they could dust it off now and it would probably be a good idea.

So when he made that decision to run for the Senate, I think he felt as though—in fact the very first ad that he did, I should mention this ad, which totally was done in-house. When he announced that he was running, everybody thought that this was tilting at windmills. Everyone thought he would get the nomination, because he was now a congressman in a race that only had three candidates already in the Democratic primary, but one was a state rep, another was a state rep who was at that time the only announced gay office-holder in Massachusetts—a woman who had announced that she was a lesbian and she was a member of the state house—and Howard Phillips, who you'll remember at that time was still calling himself a Democrat. So when Tsongas entered the race, he was now the 800-pound gorilla in the primary. O'Neill had said he wasn't going to run. Paul Guzzi, who had won a reform campaign, beating an old-line machine politician who had been secretary of state forever, Guzzi was a young guy who was very progressive, very well-liked by all of the same organizations that liked Tsongas. The difference was Guzzi was known by about 90 percent of the state, and Tsongas had a visibility of about 18 percent, representing the Fifth District, so we were really worried about Guzzi. Paul had called him and Guzzi had said, “No, I will support you, and I will endorse you.”

We were really concerned about him, because we figured, “How are we ever going to get Tsongas known with Guzzi in the race? He's already better known, they have virtually the same positions, they've got the same first name. They even look a lot alike, they're both sort of dark, ethnic guys. Plus, Guzzi is Italian and Tsongas is Greek, which is a much smaller minority in Massachusetts. We thought, here would be a real impediment if he got into the race. Well, several weeks into the race, when those *Globe* stories suddenly break about Brooke, Guzzi reconsiders and he jumps into the primary.

Now we've got this big problem: How are we going to deal with all of this? Well, the first TV commercial that we did was based on something we did in the first House campaign. We had done this spelling bee of kids trying to spell Tsongas. So we did this spot, it was a man on the street thing, where they were shown Tsongas' name and they tried to pronounce it. It begins with an introduction of Tsongas walking in front of one of the mills in Lowell. He says, "If I want to be your senator, then I've got to tell you what I've done as a congressman, and you've got to know who I am," or something like that. Then it starts breaking to these people and they say, "Testgas" or all these butchering attempts at trying to say his name. It wound up, the last one was this little kid, and it actually happened, it was this cute little kid, they showed him the sign and he goes: "Tickets!"

Well, we put that on the end and we knew we had a winner from day one. He would walk in a parade and people would shout "Tickets!" at him from the sideline. It totally turned this name confusion problem around. Suddenly, Guzzi was at events at various places explaining he wasn't the "Tickets!" guy. It was really a remarkably thing. And then ultimately there were issues, I described the nuclear thing before. We wrapped up the last ad just before election day. We went back to that. We got all the exact same people, four or five adult people. Tsongas says, "Now people know who I am." Each of them now pronouncing the name correctly, "Tsongas!" "Tsongas!" "Tsongas!" "Tsongas!" And then they go back to that same clip and the kid goes "Tickets!" Then it goes back to Tsongas, and he's kind of grinning and he says, "Well, four out of five's not bad." It was a killer, it was really a killer ad, and that catapulted him into the general election.

RITCHIE: A little humor goes a long way.

ARENBERG: Oh, yeah, it's hard to do. It's really hard to click. But when it does, it really has a tremendous impact. That was a great spot. What we knew, because we had in-house polling, was that right at the outset he was ahead of Ed Brooke. This was even before the *Globe* spotlight stories about the divorce broke. It was hard to convince people outside the campaign about that, because of the skepticism about the credibility of an in-house poll, but we had years of experience with my polling skills, I'm proud to say, and so Tsongas definitely believed in it. We knew that we were on much firmer ground, and that's how my polling ultimately got its credibility, is because the rest of the polling caught up with them later on, as statewide polling started to be done. By the end, even the *Boston Globe* was reporting on my poll numbers.

RITCHIE: Well, what is the secret in terms of polling? Is it the questions you ask, or the types of samples you create?

ARENBERG: I think most of the national political pollsters these days, their methodology is very good. There are some differences in methodology, some that I would take issue with, and some that are better, but I think we had very solid methodology. I was very tough. Having cut my teeth on academic studies, I knew how to put a sample together that was very rigorous. What I always saw as a tremendous benefit to our in-house polling, and where I think even some of the better national pollsters, they're all pollsters/political consultants these days. They all take from their poll a point of view and push it forward. As a result, I think they strain to pull a point of view out of the data. Sometimes things get crossed up there. Whereas, in my relationship with Paul, I was very comfortable in saying to him, "This data isn't very clear. Here are the questions we asked. Here are the responses. I think the range is in here somewhere." I would want to go back and test that two or three different ways. That kind of adding caveats, that was just part of my relationship with him. From a pollster that you were paying \$30, \$40, \$50,000 to do a poll, you were much less likely to get that kind of response. You've got a question, they want to give you an answer, and advice.

RITCHIE: Polls also assume that people have made up their mind, and in fact it takes a long time for the public opinion to gel.

ARENBERG: Absolutely. And the other place where polling has difficulty, and the best ones all recognize this, is in trying to figure out the turnout. It's not taking an accurate sample of the electorate, it's figuring out who's going to actually be in the electorate and cast ballots. They all have different solutions to how you do that. Because of the way I was able to approach these things with Paul—they all used screens, I used three separate different screens. I would come to him with the range and say, "I've got turnout A, turnout B, and turnout C. Here's how all of these various questions look, given this range of turnout." If you draw the same conclusion on something, irrespective of the screens, then I'm very confident about it. I think this screen's better than that one, and so forth. But I think there were a lot more shadings in the discussions that we could have about making these decisions than I have observed in subsequent years dealing with professional pollsters. They're much faster than I was. These days, I could probably be just as fast, given that you can carry all the computing power you need in a laptop. I used to have to go to a computing center and punch in all the data at a keyboard. It took me three or four days to get the data back.

RITCHIE: Were you aware of many other members of Congress who had people on their staffs who did the kind of polling that you did?

ARENBERG: I didn't know any. I look back at that, sometimes I look at the old newspaper clips and the hair stands up on the back of my neck because of the way I would be characterized as Tsongas' congressional staffer and pollster. I'm thinking about the kinds of ethics sensitivities that we would have today. It was a different environment back then. I was very careful. We never used federal resources or staff people or my time as a staffer. I either got off the staff for the campaign, or anything I did I did in the nighttime on a volunteer basis. All of the workers on the polls were volunteers that I trained myself. Nonetheless, you wouldn't want to be characterized the way some of those articles did then. You wouldn't want to do it today. In fact, when I worked with George Mitchell after the Iran-Contra affair, when he wrote his book, *Men of Zeal*, with Bill Cohen, I worked with both of them on that book and working for Judge Mitchell, believe me, we did it by the book—excuse the pun. But it was right about that same time that Jim Wright got into trouble on the House side over the handling of his book. But Mitchell and Cohen had great sensitivity to doing it properly. I had to be very careful about how I characterized that and what we were in fact doing. I was working around the clock, weekends and overnights, outside of my official duties to be involved in all that. I certainly wasn't being exploited, I was having the time of my life doing this.

It was great fun and produced a wonderful book.⁶ I am really proud of my involvement. Bill Cohen wrote on the flyleaf something: "You should wear a laurel wreath (over your green eye shade) for your patience and persistence in dealing with the final and never-ending touches to this book. Thanks for your friendship. Bill." I was touched by that. Cohen has a wonderful touch with the language. When he signed my copy of his novel, *One-Eyed Kings*, he called me, "A man who enters the land of the blind daily and yet 'sees' the things that others miss." I was honored to be thought of that way—even if it is overly generous. Senator Mitchell wrote very kind words in my copy of *Men of Zeal* also. We'll probably talk more about the book later.

RITCHIE: Well, I think there are plenty of people on Capitol Hill who have written things that have been signed by the politicians they worked for.

⁶William S. Cohen and George J. Mitchell, *Men of Zeal: A Candid Inside Story of the Iran-Contra Hearings* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

ARENBERG: That's right. By contrast, Tsongas used to say—he used to love to pull a speech out of his pocket and say to an audience, “This is what my staff thinks I should say today.” He would then throw the printed speech back over his shoulder and then just launch into whatever it was he wanted to say.

RITCHIE: Just one other question on that and then I think we should take a break for lunch. You were polling and looking at what public opinion was, and what the range was, and yet you were working with this visceral politician who was likely to say whatever was on his mind. It's kind of ironic that he doesn't seem like the kind of person who was constrained by polls.

ARENBERG: Yeah, and he wasn't really. He was informed by them. He was fascinated by it. He loved that we had capability to do these unconventional things, and that we'd ask unconventional questions about things that he was curious about. But, no, I never felt like there was ever a time when I would go to him and say, “We can't say this, because look at the poll numbers here.” He didn't look at it in that respect that way. He might think about how to frame something, but it wasn't any of the stuff that you see in today's polling, where you're testing specific words. Do we call this a tax cut or a tax break? Do we call it tax reform or, you know.

RITCHIE: Or revenue enhancement.

ARENBERG: Revenue enhancement, yeah, all that stuff. They poll that. I think as somebody who feels like I have some minimum polling credentials of my own, and being in the political world, I've always been slightly amused by politicians who will say to you—the same guy will say when you ask, “What's your share of the vote,” will say, “Well I have 52.3 percent of the vote going into election day.” This same person will be able to tell you, in great detail, what the impact of the weather forecast on his chances on that same election day. If it rains, sun, snows, whatever it might be, he's thought that out carefully, but somehow it doesn't occur to him that that might change the 52.3 percent, down to a tenth of a percentage point. People have gotten progressively better informed about what “margin of error” means, but they still don't understand it. A lot of what we look at falls into the margin of error ultimately. Newspapers have gotten very good about announcing “this is what the margin of error is,” and then they go about telling you that somebody's about to win the election because they've got a two point lead with a five

point margin of error. And in the end, it's only a snapshot at a given point in time—even if it's accurate—it is subject to many of these factors which can move the numbers.

RITCHIE: Well, this has been a wonderful kick-off.

ARENBERG: Oh, good.

RITCHIE: You've covered a lot of territory and you deserve to have a break. I'm going to be at the Democratic Conference luncheon until one o'clock. I give a historical minute and then I have to be out the door before anyone says anything political. So take your time with your lunch.

ARENBERG: Okay. We're going to meet over there [in Carl Levin's office] about one o'clock. We picked that time as we always did to coincide with the members' lunch, so I knew that way his staff wouldn't be all that tied up. I'm sure that 2:15 will be the outer limit of this lunch. I used to go to those [Democratic Conference] lunches from time to time with Mitchell. That's an interesting view of the Senate from that perspective.

RITCHIE: It's a little like a high school lunch room, in the sense of who sits at whose table, who saves a chair for their favorite person to sit next to them.

ARENBERG: It's funny that you say that because I was with Mitchell when he won the leadership fight and I have this whole view about how to characterize leadership fights. I always tell my students that the best approximation I can tell you is it's a little like running for the queen of the high school homecoming. There's a little bit of substance in there, there's a little bit of popularity contest in there, there's a whole lot of "what does this mean for me?" Some of that's the falling dominoes: Do I get a chairmanship out of this? Do I get a subcommittee? Who's moving where, all of that stuff. And some of it's just: Is this someone I have a sufficient relationship with that this will benefit my situation? Do our states have similar concerns that are coming down the road? But I steadfastly believe that who's winning a race is inversely proportional to how much news they're making about that race. I think if you're outside of a Senate race, which is virtually everybody including the staffs of the people who are in that race, to me it's the closest to the vest thing that happens around here. It's member to member. But I got a little picture of that from Mitchell from time to time. If you're outside of that circle of people who have some idea about what's going on, the best indicator is if you see

somebody making news about it on the outside, they're not winning, and that was very clear in the Mitchell race.

Everybody thought that Danny Inouye was going to win that race. And if anybody was second, they thought it was [Bennett] Johnston. Mitchell was sort of, "We're not sure why he's running, but some of the younger guys like him." And yet, he's a very hard-headed vote counter. He basically had the votes from the get-go. Bennett Johnston was making all the news. He did a very smart thing. In August, before the election, before the caucus vote, everybody was out of town, he stayed here in Washington where he had the press corps to himself. If you go back and look at it, there were all these stories about how Bennett Johnston was surging. I don't remember, it was seven votes or something was all he really had—but there were all these stories about what was going on with his surge. Because if you think about it, if you're trailing, it's in your interest to stir the waters and get people to think something is happening. People are talking about him. He's in the press. Maybe other of my colleagues are moving. It is a secret vote. Maybe something's happening that I don't get. If you're ahead, you're sitting there with the vote count, the last thing in the world you want to do is rock the boat. You want everything to stay as quiet as possible.

RITCHIE: And then the other factor is that your colleagues will look you straight in the eye and tell you they're going to vote for you, and then your votes don't add up.

ARENBERG: Yeah, I have a theory about why that happens. I think it's less that they lie to each other than it is the way senators talk to each other. They don't like to squarely confront each other, and so they'll say, "I hope you'll be with me, Jim, on the vote." Jim will slap them on the back and say, "Oh, I think you'll make a hell of a leader. You know I've always been a big supporter of you. We're great friends, don't worry about it." They'll walk off and the candidate will go, "Okay, I got him," And the guy, walking in the opposite direction, is going, "Phew, I dodged that one!" But Mitchell was a former federal judge, he's very precise. He would say, "Do I have your vote? On the first ballot? On such-and-such a day?" He'd go to everybody's office. He'd go and sit and look them in the eye. He never counted anybody unless he felt he had a four-square commitment. And it's dangerous to lie these days, because enough people leak. If you go back and look at the more recent elections, *CQ* usually figures who voted for who, at least in the Senate, they'll figure it out and you may just get hung out to dry. I think there's an awful lot of that, where you've got more than one member who is counting the same guy. It probably is accurate to say they're misleading each other, but most of the time I don't think they're

really lying to each other. It's just they're letting them believe what they want to believe. It's in the nature of most politicians, they're just not disciplined enough as vote counters. It's not how they're used to dealing with their colleagues. They're much more indirect than that. It's much more of a kind of massage. And they do their vote counting that way, too.

RITCHIE: The noncommittal commital.

ARENBERG: Yeah, right.

RITCHIE: Well, this has been terrific. I've really been enjoying this.

ARENBERG: Oh, good, I'm glad.

[End of the First Interview]