

**RUTH YOUNG WATT**  
**September 21, 1979**  
**Interview #3: Chairman Joe McCarthy**



Chairman Joe McCarthy questions witness General Henry Vaughn. Seated, left to right, are Senator Clyde Hoey, Joe McCarthy, Karl Mundt and Margaret Chase Smith. To Smith's right are staff members Bill Lewis and Obie O'Brien, Counsel Jerome Adlerman, and Ruth Watt (second from right, looking at papers).  
*U.S. Senate Historical Office*

**WATT:** In December 1952, after the Republicans had won and before Senator McCarthy took over as chairman, Senator McClellan had been chairman of the full committee. I went up to see Senator McCarthy when he got back to town, and I said, "Senator McClellan says that he doesn't think that he's going to stay on the committee." So Senator McCarthy picked up the phone and called Senator McClellan and he said, "John, what's going on here? I hear that you're thinking about not staying on the committee." He said, "You've got to stay on the committee to keep that son-of-a-bitch Joe McCarthy in line!"

**RITCHIE:** McCarthy said that himself?

**WATT:** Yes. I just remembered that. I was also remembering some of the errors I made, there were a couple during Senator McCarthy's regime. I had charge of writing up the subpoenas for witnesses and then Senator McCarthy would sign them, the chief counsel used to take them up

to him. But I made up one that they asked for, and it was served, and we had a hearing the next few days, and the witness did not show up. Senator McCarthy said, "I guess we'll have to have a meeting and cite him for contempt." Well, that night about seven o'clock I got a phone call from Jim Juliana, who was then an investigator and later became temporary chief counsel of the subcommittee, and said, "They've just called me and said there's a witness at the police desk at the Senate Office Building who says he has a subpoena to appear at 10:00 p.m. today." I had put the p.m. on instead of the a.m.! He showed up at 7:00 at night to report in for a 10:00 hearing! But I didn't make that mistake again. People didn't check on me much in those days. Now everybody checks on everybody to make sure you don't have an error, which is good. When the subpoenas are made up the chief counsel goes over them carefully, then the minority chief counsel goes over them and approves them, and then they go to the senator. So there is not much chance for error. But we didn't have the checks then that we have now.

That reminds me of an earlier story when we were talking about Elizabeth Bentley. She was under police protection. She had left the Communist Party and was a teacher in some kind of a school for Catholics in Louisiana. She came up to testify, but she came a few days early to be interviewed by the staff. We had her in a hotel with police protection—Capitol police. There were three policemen covering her. One was Lt. Disney who died in the last few years. There was one named Joe Baldisaro, who was one of the ones who married during the 1952 “matrimonial bureau” at the congressional bowling league. And one Ballard, who is an inspector over in headquarters now. The three of them were protecting her. We had her first in the Hay-Adams house. After two or three days they came over to ask for some money to take care of this thing. Well of course, I was new, I had only been there a couple of years (this was in '48) and hadn't had this before, so it never occurred to me not to pay. When it was the War Investigating Committee I had a bank account and I paid people out of the bank account and then turned vouchers into the Disbursing Office

and they subtracted it from my account. Then we had her in another hotel, and finally in the Congressional Hotel. In the meantime, they were feeding her—and she apparently was drinking quite a lot of beer or whatever because the bill was quite high—and we were supposed to pay the policemen’s expenses, too. Well, I didn’t know it was illegal. You couldn’t pay them unless they were on your payroll. I paid Lt. Disney for what I owed him and put the voucher in, and it came back and they said, “No, you can’t do this.” But they said, “We’ll let this go through this time.” So the other two never got paid. So they were out of pocket. But that shows you how you should check on everything, and which I later learned to do for every little detail. I’d call Bob Brenkworth or else call Bob Heckman who was up in the Rules Committee. I had to spend quite a few hours with those two people.

Now you’d like to start in with Senator McCarthy, I guess.

**RITCHIE:** Yes, I thought we could backtrack a little bit. McCarthy came on the committee in 1947, you said he was one of the two that stayed on for that whole stretch. By the time he became

chairman in 1953 he was a nationally famous senator. When did he begin to become a really influential person on the committee? Was it before he became chairman?

**WATT:** His name came before the public when he named those people in West Virginia in a speech he made there, and then Mrs. Smith made her “Declaration of Conscience” on the floor. I don’t remember that he was that important before that.

**RITCHIE:** Were you surprised when he suddenly broke into the papers with that Wheeling, West Virginia speech and began his whole anti-Communist crusade?

**WATT:** I was surprised when they started questioning whether or not he was telling the truth. Mrs. Smith, of course, started that right after she went off the subcommittee.

**RITCHIE:** Why were you surprised?

**WATT:** Because he hadn’t been in the press before then; it was all of a sudden. And then I think he realized that a good press was not bad. From then on he was in the papers all the time for one thing or another. The strange part of it was, when he became chairman of the committee he started right in on Communism.

It was a time when that was popular because of the Cold War—wasn't that about the time that the Cold War was on? They had the airlifts into Germany and so on. And Senator Jenner, who was chairman of Rules Committee, was really into this anti-Communist bit too. There was, I thought and still think, a real threat. I wasn't the way some of the people on the staff were, looking under rocks for Communists, but the country was geared to it, it was a sign of the times. And everything was blamed on Joe McCarthy, he wasn't the only one.

**RITCHIE:** When McCarthy went from being a regular freshman senator to becoming a nationally known politician, did he change? Did you notice any change in him? Or was he the same?

**WATT:** The same. Of course, Jeannie, Jean Kerr McCarthy, was working for him and we thought that she would calm him down some; I thought at the time the marriage would be good for him, but I couldn't see any difference. I think she was a little hungry for publicity, too. She was a smart girl, there was no doubt about that. She had quite an influence on him, I felt. Of course, Roy Cohn—he was a Democrat, as a

matter of fact. Dave Schine was a Republican and Roy was a Democrat. So the politics didn't mean a thing. Dave was never on the payroll, he just was a consultant on his own.

A sidelight on that—Dave's father owned a chain of hotels and apparently was quite wealthy, and Dave wrote a letter to the Rules Committee saying that it would be very desirable if Dave Schine could go in the senators' baths and so on, and he signed Joe McCarthy's name on it. Of course the Rules Committee turned it down flat, and Senator McCarthy knew nothing about it until later. He apparently had a good in with Senator Jenner, because I had been trying to get a wall built in Room 160 to divide it, and they turned it down. But Dave Schine went in and before I knew it one day there was a wall up there, so he had a little clout!

**RITCHIE:** He was an operator, I guess.

**WATT:** Well, yes. For instance, if they were going to have live television of some hearing, he would call his friends in California and all over the place to tell them he was going to be on television. Then when the bill came, it was personal, I wasn't going to pay it.

So Roy Cohn ended up paying his telephone bills. Of course, Roy would go for two or three months without going over to the disbursing office to collect his money for his pay, and he probably wouldn't have a nickel in his pocket. His mother would call every once in a while—his father was judge, incidentally, in New York—and ask me if I would please get him to go over to the disbursing office and collect his pay because his checking account was overdrawn. But he never paid any attention to details. He just left that to everybody else, and that was half of his trouble I think as time went on. He got so that he didn't care, but that was after he left the committee.

**RITCHIE:** Well, we'll come back to these. I'm very interested in all of these people. But I'd like to go back to 1953 when McCarthy became chairman. I was interested in what your feelings were when you thought of Joe McCarthy now as chairman of the committee. Did you have any premonition that the committee was going to change?

**WATT:** No. I don't think so. As you change over you always are a little concerned whether



you're going to still be there. Of course, Joe McCarthy told me there was no question about my staying anyway. But I had no feeling about it. I was a little concerned about some of the people that went on the payroll. Then Francis "Frip" Flanagan was chief counsel and all of a sudden Senator McCarthy brought in Roy Cohn and made him chief counsel. Then they said, "Well, Ruth, what are we going to do, we can't have two chief counsels." I said, "We'll just have to make Frip general counsel." So when some decision would have to be made, I'd say to Roy Cohn "What'll I do?" He'd say, "Well, ask Frip." Then I'd go to Frip and he'd say, "Ask Roy." In other words I'd just end up doing what I thought was right. I didn't have any backing unless I went to the chairman, and there was no point in doing that for office details.

**RITCHIE:** You had a small staff under Senator Hoey. Did McCarthy dismiss many of those people or did he keep them on?

**WATT:** The only ones I remember that left were Colonel Hatcher, who was assistant chief counsel. They wanted to make him chief and Bill Rogers recommended that he not be because

he didn't have the experience. He had been head of the highway patrol in North Carolina; well, that didn't give him experience to become a chief counsel of that committee when Hoey was chairman. So Bill Rogers suggested to Senator Hoey that Frip Flanagan be made the chief counsel, and Colonel Hatcher was very happy to be assistant chief counsel. He really wasn't into wanting responsibility at that point. Well, he left, because he said he didn't think he could be loyal to Senator McCarthy. And Jim Thomas, who had a law degree but was really a political appointment, for paying a debt or something, left the committee and started running a filling station. There was a Nina Sutton from North Carolina, but she stayed on until the end. I think those were the only two people who left. Jerry Adlerman went to another committee and returned in 1955. Jim Sheridan went to Immigration; those were from choice.

**RITCHIE:** But then McCarthy expanded the staff?

**WATT:** Oh, yes.

**RITCHIE:** He brought in a lot of new people. The first was Roy Cohn, he came on as chief counsel. He was only about 26 years old at the time.

**WATT:** Well, he was about the same age that Bob Kennedy was when he came on. Bob came in on the committee at that time, too.

**RITCHIE:** What was your impression of Roy Cohn in those days?

**WATT:** He was going so fast that I couldn't keep up with him. He raised his voice to me once. I reminded him that people didn't raise their voice to me and that was the only time I had a problem with him. I was not about to take any criticism—I probably had it coming, but I didn't take to it very kindly. But I always got along fine with him. I was kept advised on the hearings, because I had to take care of notifying the senators and getting the notices out, and making sure that we had a room and we had a reporter, and the whole bit. This was all the mechanical part of getting ready for a hearing. Then I had to pay the witnesses by voucher.

There is a ruling somewhere that if you subpoena a witness, if he asks for transportation to get into Washington in advance, you have to furnish it to him, otherwise he doesn't have to honor the subpoena. So there were times when I had to furnish transportation in advance.

Back then, witness fees were three dollars a day. Then it went to six and up, and now it's \$35, but that's not enough for a witness. You pay their transportation but that has to include their meals and lodging, which is not adequate. I remember one time we had a witness coming down from New York who had to sell his radio in order to get transportation down here, until we could pay his expenses. So it is a hardship—back then especially—on three dollars a day. You couldn't get a hotel room even then for three dollars a day and buy your meals; even at the middle-class hotels around here. But we had some big hearings, and we had a lot of hearings in the Caucus Room. Many of them were to do with the State Department and with army bases. They were most all government-based hearings.

**RITCHIE:** You mentioned that Bobby Kennedy joined the staff just about the same time that Roy Cohn did. I understand they didn't get along.

**WATT:** I would say that that is putting it quite mildly. I think there was very deep animosity. When Bob came on the committee he had been at the Justice Department, and I

often wondered how he got on the committee. Well, as time went on, they tried to avoid the fact that he worked for the committee when Joe McCarthy was chairman. They were trying to get around that, especially when he was running for the Senate, and for president. Well, I've heard some conflicting stories on that. One, Senator Mundt told me later on that Joe Kennedy, his father, had come to him and asked him to put Bob on the staff. Francis Flanagan, the chief counsel at that point, claims that he and he alone hired Bob, and that was before Roy came here. And I've heard other stories too about who was responsible. But they did mention Frip's claim that he alone had anything to do with Bob's coming on the committee. What difference it makes was that at that point they didn't want the stigma of Joe McCarthy. I'm sure that Joe had something to do with it, but some things I don't remember very well. (Bob left the subcommittee in August to go to the Hoover Commission.)

**RITCHIE:** Do you think it was that the two of them were very young and very ambitious men, that that was the reason why they couldn't get along together? Were they too much alike perhaps?

**WATT:** I don't think there was any problem when he first came on the committee, because he was just making \$7,000 or \$8,000 a year; of course, the maximum was \$10,000 for the chief counsel, that's what Roy Cohn was making. That was a lot of money back then. I thought I was wealthy. I was making five at that point. I started out at \$3,600, and that looked like a million dollars to me. But along that period I remember Bob sat in 101, there was a bookcase in between. I was out front. He was working I think with Carmine some at that point on the Palmer-Alaska airline investigation. But he went home at 5:30 p.m. on the dot. We laughed later because we would work way into the night—our hours were 9:00 to 6:00 and later, quitting time was 6:00 if we were going home early—and we thought it was a big joke in 1953 because on the dot of 5:30 p.m. he was out of there.

Then in June of 1953, they hired J. B. Matthews, you probably read about him. I have his book. He apparently was a Communist at one time and was a convert as so many of them were. Well, he came aboard as administrative assistant and everything was in a shambles until then as far as the staff was concerned, because everybody was at cross-purposes; everybody was vying for position and so on, which will happen on a committee. He hadn't been there a week when he had everything straightened out. He just had good administrative ability. Then he wrote that article for *Fortune* magazine, claiming that there were Communists in the clergy, and of course that stirred up the biggest hornets' nest you ever saw.

Always the chief counsel or chairman had hired the people on the staff, and that was just a foregone conclusion. So the three Democrats, Senator McClellan, Senator Jackson, and Senator Symington (J. B. Matthews quit, I guess he went the first of August, he was there less than two months), left the committee. They wrote a press release out saying they were leaving the committee

because of the fact that the chairman was hiring people and they thought they ought to have a say-so. So we had Senator McCarthy, Senator Dirksen, Senator Potter, and Senator Mundt—the four Republicans—on for the rest of 1953. We had many hearings. There was always controversy right on down the line because Roy Cohn is capable of stirring up controversy. I got along with him fine, but he did have his enemies. He had his friends, there was one fellow who wrote in the *News* he was very close to, and Walter Winchell he was close to, conservative writers and so on. Of course Walter was well known anyway for having gone into this Communist business. So there was never a dull moment.

At one point when things got pretty rough, I told Walt I decided I'd like to quit, and he said, "You can't quit when the going gets rough. That's the one time you're not going to quit." He was behind me the whole time and I was leaning on him a great deal. He has more of a level head than I do.

**RITCHIE:** There were a lot of charges against McCarthy that he was hiring and firing people on the



committee at will without consulting the other senators.

**WATT:** They never had been consulted though, up 'til this point. This was nothing new. Senator Ferguson never mentioned to anybody who he was hiring. Senator Hoey certainly never did. And I'm sure Senator Brewster didn't. So it was nothing new. This was a thing that was done all the time.

**RITCHIE:** But the three Democrats walked out because of the hiring of J. B. Matthews. And then they took Bob Kennedy as their counsel.

**WATT:** Well, this was much later, you've got almost a year in between. Then we had all the hearings on Fort Monmouth, and so on, then in January of 1954 we had a meeting—it was not a committee meeting, it was a “conference”—with the Democrats and the Republicans. They got together and set up a code of rules, conditions they would consider to return to the subcommittee. One was there would be a minority counsel, which was the first minority counsel on the committee, there had never been one before. Another thing was that they would have two senators present at any hearing or executive closed meeting. And there were

some others. The staff had to be confirmed by the subcommittee. I'll have to look back in the minutes, because I took the minutes of all these things. I know we had a morning meeting and an afternoon meeting, and then they came back to the committee, about the 25th or 26th of January of 1954.

I suggested to Senator McClellan—he may have had it in mind all the time, Watt and I both talked about it—I said, “I think Bob Kennedy would be a great minority counsel.” So he came aboard probably the first of March or thereabouts, or maybe in February sometime, he came on the payroll as the minority chief counsel. On the staff was my assistant, Maggie Duckett, and there was a girl by the name of Maxine Buffalohide, they both had come over from the Defense Department to work on the committee in the fall of 1953, and Bob asked me who I thought he could trust. I suggested Maggie, Maxine was more of a secretary but I wasn't sure of her, and he used Maggie up until 1956 or 1957 when he took Angie Novella as his secretary. Maggie said she would just rather go back to helping me do my work rather than being his secretary too, because she didn't

feel that she was adequate to do the extra work he was having at that point, after he became chief counsel in 1955. So I suggested that Angie would be good. Maggie always has said that Carmine was instrumental in doing this, but she forgets that she didn't want to be his secretary any more. She forgot about that, so there was a little bit of hard feeling there, but she forgot the sequence of events.

So then they came back to the committee, and in March, all this controversy was going on about Dave Schine getting favors because of Joe McCarthy, up at the Defense Department. Then this Fort Monmouth thing; they were claiming it was a cover up, one thing against the other. They had this meeting in early March, middle of March sometime, and that's the picture you saw of my husband standing outside the door with the press. They decided that they would have to have an investigation. Senator McCarthy would step down as chairman of this particular hearing. He was still chairman, of course he signed vouchers and was running the committee, but not the Army-McCarthy bit. And they

named Senator Mundt to chair this. Then they put another member of the full committee on until this was over, Henry Dworshak, I've forgotten the state he was from.

**RITCHIE:** Idaho.

**WATT:** Anyway, he was on for the duration of that to replace Senator McCarthy. They decided that inasmuch as I knew all these people so well and I might get involved, that I would act as chief clerk for this group except for executive sessions. That it would be better if I didn't go to those because I might get involved emotionally or get involved because I'd been working so closely with all these people. So I handled all of it but that.

**RITCHIE:** Who handled the executive sessions?

**WATT:** Bob McCaughey in Senator Mundt's office. I didn't even know they were going on half the time. They had them in his office. I got all of them later, but at that point I didn't even bother to see who had testified, I wasn't that interested. For some reason, you know you get sort of turned off on things after a while when you see enough of it. About that time, sometime in March or April, I don't remember which, I was over having lunch

at the Carroll Arms. Roy Cohn was there; Senator McCarthy was out of town. Dan Buckley, who is a cousin to Senator James Buckley and Bill Buckley, was on the staff. He came in with a letter in his hand. Roy Cohn came up, and they didn't see me, and they were standing in the middle of the dining room with this letter, looking it over. Roy Cohn has a quick mind, he's a very brilliant man, and I thought, "Gee whiz, I wonder what's going on." But I didn't think about it until later. So that afternoon one of the staff members, Tom Lavenia, came around to me and said, "This is a letter from the staff." (I don't know who it was signed by, or a memo. I thought it was a letter but it was not signed by Senator McCarthy because he was out of town.) It was three paragraphs, but in the first paragraph it said, "We, the undersigned, believe in the loyalty of Roy Cohn and Francis Carr," who came as administrative assistant after J. B. Matthews left, he was ex-FBI, left the FBI to come down, "to Senator McCarthy." There were two other paragraphs, but I didn't read them, I just saw the first paragraph. I said, "This is not done on Capitol Hill. I'm not signing anything."

These guys at this point were a little scared of their jobs, you know they all had to make a living. I had a husband to fall back on, but I wouldn't have signed anyway because it was not something that was done on Capitol Hill. So everybody had signed it at that point—Don O'Donnell was out of town, and Edith Anderson was sick, and Maggie, my assistant, said, "If Ruth doesn't sign it, I won't." Everybody else had signed it. It was loyalty to them, it was in the papers, it was called a loyalty letter, Joe McCarthy's loyalty letter. Well, he never saw it. Then the next morning, Jim Juliana whom I'd been very close to all these years, said, "It would mean a lot to Roy if you would sign it." I said, "No, I'm not signing it because this is not done on Capitol Hill and Joe McCarthy knows that I'm loyal to him anyway." There was something else in there about staff, but I didn't remember what was in it because I didn't read it. As soon as I saw what it was I said, "You don't do this on Capitol Hill, the senators choose their people. You're not going to influence anybody, a staff member's not. It's just not done."

Then Drew Pearson had an article on it. I always said that if you were in Drew Pearson's column you had arrived. Well, then it wasn't funny. I said, "Now I can see why people get mad."

**RITCHIE:** Did he mention you in the column?

**WATT:** Oh, yes. He said that I had refused to sign this loyalty letter, and nobody knew what was in it. It said Ruth Young Watt has been around for many years and she'll be there long after Joe McCarthy's gone. That was about what it said. But I didn't want to be involved, I kept away from the press and publicity all my life, always tried to. Then the letter went up to Senator McCarthy's office and he was still out of town. Tom Lavenia took it up to Mary Driscoll, his secretary. Mary Driscoll put it in her pocket and it's never been seen since. When Senator McCarthy got back, Mary Driscoll had destroyed the letter. He said to Don Surine and some of the others, "Why didn't you do the same as Ruth and refuse to sign that?"

In the meantime, Bob Kennedy got wind of it, and I think he saw it. And he went to the press. I think he's the one who told

the press about it. Anyway, Cecil Holland who was with the *Star* came to me. Apparently Senator Potter was anti-McCarthy, because he was all gung-ho with Bob. Oh, it was a big mess for those two days. The press was around and the whole bit. I remember Cecil coming to me and telling me not to worry about my job. Later on Watt said, "I would have divorced you if you signed that!" Of course, I'm sure he was kidding, but he was serious about the fact that I used my own judgment. Then the Army-McCarthy hearings started around the 20th of April. I learned only this year that Dan Buckley authored the letter.

**RITCHIE:** Before we get into Army-McCarthy, just to get some framework on 1953, we talked about when Senator Hoey was chairman there was one major hearing a year. Under McCarthy that changed completely.

**WATT:** Oh, yes. We had them every day! You have a list there.

**RITCHIE:** Yes, the comparison is incredible. There are about 25 or 26 major hearings under McCarthy as opposed to three the last year under Hoey.

**WATT:** That's right, and the thing is that we worked the same hours. We worked even Saturdays until



noon in those days. We never had Saturdays off. It was just busier. Busy, busy, busy, just all the time. By that time I had the experience, so I could handle it. If I'd come in cold I would have been probably all at sea. But I'd had 1947 through 1952 behind me. So the transition was not too much of a problem, because whatever problems I would have I'd run into along the line, so I knew how to handle them. As I said, sometimes there were things that had to be settled and I didn't know whom to go to, so I had to use my own judgment on them. As a result I got a lot of self-confidence that I hadn't had before because I didn't need it.

**RITCHIE:** The nature of the hearings changed also.

**WATT:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** Before then you only had one Communist investigation in the previous years, and now practically all of the investigations were into Communism. McCarthy in fact asked permission to go wider into these areas.

**WATT:** And the thing was that we had some other investigations but he wasn't too interested in them. Because he was into this "Communist threat" as he called it. I think there

was more than we realized. I was a little concerned about some of these things that came up.

**RITCHIE:** Were you impressed by the things that were going on, and the testimony that you heard at that time?

**WATT:** I was a little frightened. Of course, in the papers we also had this Cold War thing going on, and it was a little frightening. But on the other hand every once in a while you would hear about the Weathermen and so on, on the other end. They were well armed and everything and that frightened you a little bit too, because you didn't know what they might do. But we were so busy we didn't have too much time to think about it.

**RITCHIE:** There were a lot of executive sessions held at that time; a lot of witnesses were called in, some of whom did not testify in public.

**WATT:** In open hearings? That's right, because he still was looking out for people if there was nothing there. That was our whole attitude toward that as a protection for a witness, because if there was nothing there he was excused and nothing more was said. That's why we were so careful about keeping the executive sessions secret.

**RITCHIE:** Did you ever have any troubles with calling the wrong person, or getting the wrong name?

**WATT:** No, even on the Annie Moss thing it turned out they were right. It turned out she had been a Communist. When it did come out, Senator Symington was embarrassed. You remember the big thing they had about that? Well, it turned out later they were right about her. And they still forget that when they talk about Annie Lee Moss. She was very articulate and smarter than they gave her credit for. But there were some of the witnesses—I never could see. The author Howard Fast, who was one of the people they investigated, and I never have figured out whether he was actually a Communist or not. He might have belonged to a club in New York University the way so many of them did. Then there was one famous writer of symphonies, Aaron Copland, I see his name all the time now. They investigated him, too.

**RITCHIE:** Some of those sessions read pretty rough, the dialog sounds like strong confrontations. Did you ever feel any sympathy for some of the witnesses who got called up?

**WATT:** No. Of course, usually I had read a background, because we had a lot of FBI reports, because we could get them, you see. We had them right straight through the Rackets Committee, many of them. Of course, they were mostly Mafia types. I think Roy and J. Edgar Hoover knew each other pretty well, so it was not too difficult to get these things.

**RITCHIE:** That's another question I was interested in. It seemed like there were so many hearings. I wondered how well were they doing their homework on them? Were they as well prepared for all of those 25 hearings as they were for the handful they were doing previously?

**WATT:** I don't think so. They asked about the same questions of all of them, and sometimes they had a little background on them. But sometimes they didn't. For the most part you wouldn't have time to do all your homework on that, we didn't have a big staff. That was one of the criticisms. When they had the books—remember the books and the libraries—of course Howard Fast was one, and there was a black writer. We had many of them and we also had musicians and so on. Of course, these people don't get into politics,

they're not politicians. Novel writers aren't. Of course, Howard Fast has written many, many books—I never read one of them, and wouldn't know whether or not he was a Communist. But somewhere along the line they got this information. There were a lot of newspapermen who were furnishing them stuff. I don't know about Walter Winchell, but there was a prolific writer who had a big article every day in the old *News* or *Times-Herald*. They got some of their information from other people. I'm not sure if it always was checked out, I don't know that, because Roy and Dave and a couple of the secretaries moved down to the HOLC Building not too long after they came aboard, maybe six months afterwards. They had an office down there, and I was never down there. All their operation was out of there. They would call me to handle things for the hearings and so on, to set them up, and they'd have hearings out of town that I never went to.

**RITCHIE:** Why did Roy Cohn go down to the HOLC Building?

**WATT:** Well, they had a lot of Senate offices down there.

**RITCHIE:** Oh, they did. I was wondering why he decided to do that.

**WATT:** I don't know. I think it was because we were quite crowded and cramped and they had the space available. Then he corralled all this expensive furniture and everything. It was funny. Dotty McCarty was telling me about it. She was the chief clerk of the Sergeant at Arms office and they were in charge of all the equipment outside of the building. He apparently had corralled furniture from down there, from everywhere and had quite a plush apartment as well as a bar, I understand. But I was never down there, this is just hearsay.

**RITCHIE:** Did any other counsels from the committee ever do that, have an office outside the committee?

**WATT:** No, we had offices around the building. When I came on the War Investigating Committee they were all spread out. They had three small rooms in 110, then they had 160, then they had an office over in the Capitol, and they had one down in 7B in the basement. They were just spread out all over the place, and of course, eventually we lost all of that space. They moved to 101 the day I came to work on the committee. There was just that one room and 103 which is under the stairway there at First and Constitution, with no windows. The chief counsels

were in there for years until Howard Feldman took over. And we always had Room 160. But the other space they chipped away at until it was gone. So we had just the two rooms.

**RITCHIE:** Would Cohn and Schine hold hearings without senators, out of town?

**WATT:** Well, they were just conferences. They were not official unless you have a senator present and an official reporter. It's not sworn testimony and it doesn't mean anything. You can lie in your teeth and nothing would have happened.

**RITCHIE:** What was Schine's role on the committee? He wasn't on the payroll.

**WATT:** He worked with Roy all the time and they went on trips. Of course, we couldn't pay his expenses, but he didn't have to worry about money anyway.

**RITCHIE:** Was that unusual?

**WATT:** It's the only time it has ever happened, to my knowledge, in all the years I was around.

**RITCHIE:** It was hard to figure out what he was doing.

**WATT:** Well, he worked with Roy, and he had all the information. Where he got a lot of it, I don't know. It was strange because he wasn't on the payroll. Then he went in the army and Roy was the one who did all the stuff on trying

to get him out, trying to get special attention for him. Of course, Joe McCarthy could have cared less, but he did it for Roy, I think.

**RITCHIE:** In the period before the Army-McCarthy hearings, was there any particular hearing that stood out in your mind? The library books investigation or the loyalty in the State Department, was there anything in particular that really impressed you?

**WATT:** I remember the executive session where his life was threatened by that Pennsylvania man. That was just one day of hearing in executive session. That one I always think about because I can remember how uneasy they were, and how Senator McCarthy said, "Let him stay. If he's armed, so what." I think they all were about the same. They were long hours, long hearings. Many of them were in the Caucus Room. Sometimes I'd be so busy I wouldn't even know what they were talking about. I remember they had several hearings on the State Department, and there was one witness that they had that worked for the State Department whose brother I knew. They lived out in the area where I had lived all during



the war. And that was a little bit upsetting, to think that someone I knew would be having to testify before the committee. It wasn't that he had done anything wrong, but it was one of those things. He was being accused. I know he wasn't a Communist. But things like that, when you saw people that you knew, or a relative of people that you knew, that was a little upsetting. But I don't remember any particular one. They all seemed alike after a while, you know, you got pretty tired of all of it.

**RITCHIE:** Did you have any problem with leaks to the press? You said the press was helping you on occasion, but did Roy Cohn and others leak material out to the press?

**WATT:** I don't know. I would think so, but I don't know. The only ones I remember were when there would be a leak to the press and we would try to find out where it came from and it would end up we'd find out it was a senator who had done it. Now, as far as the other, I don't know.

**RITCHIE:** I understand that McCarthy was somewhat casual about leaving an executive session and then speaking before the press about material that had been discussed in executive session.

**WATT:** I don't remember that. And of course, I wouldn't necessarily be at a press conference anyway. I don't think I ever went to more than two or three in all the years that I was there.

**RITCHIE:** Well, the press I know sometimes congregates outside the door of an executive session.

**WATT:** Yes, but I'd be inside cleaning up or something and as far as I was concerned, I was through as far as my part was concerned. I had to rush back to pay witness fees. So that part just went over my head.

**RITCHIE:** The big hearings that everybody remembers were the Army-McCarthy hearings.

**WATT:** No one will ever forget that. Of course, it was nationwide television for weeks. From the 20th of April until the 21st of June there was only one week in between that we didn't have hearings five days a week.

**RITCHIE:** That must have been quite a pace for you.

**WATT:** Well, actually they had hired three or four people to handle it. There was Ray Jenkins, from Tennessee, and his secretary came, whose name was Pruitt. Then there were a couple of people who had been on the Hill that came to work, they were temporary more or less. About the 12th of May, it stands out in my mind,

Senator Hoey was no longer on the committee, and we got word that he had gone to sleep at his desk, this was in '54. I had worked for him, he'd been chairman for four years; of course, he was no longer connected with the committee in any way, but I couldn't understand why they didn't recess, because he had died. But that didn't happen.

Then about the 20th of May, Walter Watt had a heart attack, and between the hearings and him I was a nervous wreck. He was in the hospital and I spent half a day in the hearings and then I left Maggie to take care of them in the afternoon. I spent the other half of the day at the hospital. The fact that he was so sick and I was so terribly worried about him, the hearings meant nothing to me. Of course, that was the biggest part of my life I was worried about. I had been married less than two years. So the hearings were unimportant to me from there on. He was in the hospital for about three weeks, and I stayed home a week with him, but by that time the hearings were over.

I also remember—do you have that subpoena thing? That was interesting.

**RITCHIE:** Oh, for the party [for participants in the Army-McCarthy hearings]? Was that held right after the hearings?

**WATT:** That was on the Saturday after the hearings were over. But on the Saturday morning when it was supposed to take place, Senator Lester Hunt committed suicide, so it was cancelled. Remember he had his office right above us there on the second floor as you come in the Constitution Avenue entrance. He was a dentist, as I remember.

**RITCHIE:** And you were there at the time it happened?

**WATT:** No. But that's why they cancelled the party.

**RITCHIE:** That was supposed to have been a get-together for the whole staff after the hearings?

**WATT:** And the press, the people that worked at the hearing.

**RITCHIE:** I'm surprised when you say you weren't that involved in the Army-McCarthy hearings, because you did get a lot of publicity at that time. I read in a couple of articles in the papers that people kept noticing you on television.

**WATT:** Well, now don't forget at the beginning of the hearings everything was gung-ho. This was the 20th of May when he had his heart

attack, and the hearings started the 21st of April, there was a whole month in there. That's when most of those articles were. Then at one point—of course, the Senate was in session all this time and they'd be over voting and they were having interviews with everybody under the sun. They ran out of people to interview on live television and they finally interviewed me. Everything was so controversial, I couldn't say anything that I wasn't going to get in trouble with. I remember they asked me how many glasses of water Senator Jackson drank a day! And even that was controversial because he was on a health kick. They asked me such insipid questions, but I couldn't answer any of them, I had to skirt them. Not being used to interviews I was not that good at it.

After the interview, the phone started ringing. The switchboard was trying to screen the calls, but if it was a person to person they had to connect. Of course, they had put my name on public television. This call came in for me from New York, and it was a lady and she said,

“We just wanted to tell you that we’re having a luncheon here and watching you all the time, and we’re so proud of you, and think you’re the greatest,” and all this bit. I was feeling so important! I hung up, the phone rings. They said, “Is this Ruth Watt?” I said, “Yes,” and it was a man calling from Texas and he said, “Why don’t you go home where you belong you horse’s ass!” and hung up. So I was right back down to size. I guess he was so disgusted with that interview, it was so innocuous. I was thinking, gee wouldn’t it be too bad if somebody had to have a job that put them in the position I was in, in one of those things where you had no choice, because you don’t stop and think of those things then.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think that television changed the atmosphere of those hearings?

**WATT:** Yes, oh yes. I think anytime you get anything like that it changes completely. You are playing—I don’t care what anybody says—you are playing to the cameras, to the radio, or television, or any public.

**RITCHIE:** I’ve heard it said that Joseph Welsh, the lawyer, was quite an actor and knew how to play to the television.

**WATT:** Well, he was not one of my favorite people. I think we got off on the wrong foot because on the first day of the hearings, he was being a little bit of a clown, I thought. I think he did it for publicity, because I don't think he was paid, representing the army, I'm sure he was not paid. There was a telegram that came in for him. I thought it might be something very important so I went over and gave it to him and told him it might be important. And he practically bit my head off for even bothering him, "I don't want to be bothered." So that noon when we recessed I went over and told him, "I didn't appreciate the way you treated me. I'm not used to that kind of treatment, and I just want you to know I don't appreciate the way you acted." So then we got along fine.

But I think that was a big mistake McCarthy made when he was accusing that [Fred] Fisher. I don't know if he was or not, but the fact was that the way it was handled was very poor. And of course Welsh cashed in on it to the ninth degree, that's the thing now, they're not letting Joe McCarthy stay buried. They still bring it up every

so often on television, and quoting it. They use that part of the record.

**RITCHIE:** We've been talking mostly about the hearings and the events. We haven't really talked that much about McCarthy. I wanted to get some of your impressions of him. One of the accounts I read suggested that McCarthy was like two people: on one hand there was "Joe," who liked people and wanted to be liked by them; and on the other hand, there was "McCarthy," who was the tough politician, who sometimes couldn't seem to restrain himself. Is that a fair characterization?

**WATT:** Joe McCarthy was a very kind man, very thoughtful of people working with him, and I was very much taken with the way he treated people. When I made a mistake he'd say, "That's all right Ruthy, we all make mistakes, don't worry about it." You know, that sort of thing. Now, when he got in the hearings he was on a tirade sometimes. Whether or not he was playing to the press, which is possible, because I've seen other senators do it, or he just was taken with it. But he did get off on a tirade sometimes in the hearings. I can't remember if there was ever a time when I felt, "Gee, I



wish you didn't do this" or not, as I've felt that way on other occasions when some senator went off on a tangent, even not too long ago. It would get me a little upset thinking "Gee, I wish you hadn't done that" to myself.

Going back on one thing that happened that was kind of funny. The day that the senators came back to the committee in January of '54, we had a farewell party for Frip Flanagan, who had gone off our payroll and gone on the full committee and somebody else had come on our payroll to replace him. Of course it was one of those unfortunate things for him. Senator McCarthy said to me at this party—it was down the hall in Room 154—he said, "Ruthy, you know what, you've got to remember that you are not a senator." He said, "Today in that meeting, every time I said something that you didn't approve of, you frowned at me so that it slowed me down and I couldn't say what I wanted to say." I said, "Gee, I didn't know that I was doing that!" You know, I didn't, because I could just glare at them. But instead of saying something to me about "you were out of line"

or something, he put it that way which was a very diplomatic way to put it, I thought. While I was standing there with a drink in my hand, too!

**RITCHIE:** Some of the people who were associated with him, particularly other senators, said that at one time he could attack them on the floor and be as vicious as possible, and then, as they were walking out the door, he would pat them on the back and ask them how they were feeling.

**WATT:** I don't remember the vicious part. They do that all the time, let's face it. One time, the only time I ever saw that was when, I don't know what the lawsuit was, but I remember Edward Bennett Williams was representing him, and it was Senator [William] Benton of Connecticut, and we were up in the hearing room. How I happened to be there, I don't know, because it was something to do with the lawsuit and had nothing to do with the Senate. But I remember being up there and it was probably 357, because that was our hearing room, and the bells rang, and they were fighting and going at it tooth and hammer. A vote came and they went down the hall, arms around their shoulders. That's an example, but I've seen and heard

them go at it on the floor, and then behind the scenes laugh it off. It was grandstanding, but that's not unusual, I don't think for any of them.

**RITCHIE:** The other characterization I've heard about McCarthy was that he had no use for a lot of the niceties of protocol in the Senate, the way the senators are always polite to each other, and there's an apprenticeship system, and seniority counted, but McCarthy was sort of a blunderbuss toward protocol.

**WATT:** I don't know. I wouldn't see that side of him. The first year, of course, when they all came on in the Class of '47, they still were saying that freshmen senators should be seen and not heard. Of course, that's not the case now. Now they come in and they are seen and heard more than the seniors are. It's a whole new ball game, the whole picture has changed.

**RITCHIE:** Were you present during Army-McCarthy hearings when Senator Ralph Flanders came in and presented his invitation to McCarthy to be on the floor?

**WATT:** He came in and just broke up everything. They were talking and he just interrupted the proceedings. I was not impressed with it.

**RITCHIE:** Were you surprised by what was happening?

**WATT:** Yes, I thought he was off his rocker. You know, the feeling ran very high in those hearings. In back of the hearing table the VIPs requested seats. There was one group that always had seats: Jeannie McCarthy, I think Katy Malone, part of the time, Mrs. Mary Mundt, and Dolores Bridges. Then they went out together at noon and had lunch. Then one time, Mrs. Pearl Mesta came, as I remember, and she sat down—the place was crowded—in the seat where Bob Kennedy sat, and Bob couldn't get her out of the seat! And he sat right there in a little chair right by Senator McClellan so he could advise. Then Mrs. Alice Longworth used to come. They were all pretty pro-McCarthy, or else they didn't express themselves. But then, one day Mrs. Tobey came in, she was widowed then. She came up and said, "I want to sit back here and I don't want to sit anywhere near anyone who's for Senator McCarthy." There was nobody up there who wasn't, so I had to sit her in under the water cooler. That was the only chair that was empty, and she had to pour water for everybody else because there was no other place for her to sit! It was pretty well filled up with pro-McCarthy people.

**RITCHIE:** I understand that when McCarthy went through the halls he drew quite a crowd, and had quite a following.

**WATT:** He was a likeable man. He had a nice personality. One Thanksgiving he got on the elevator (Walter knew the elevator boy) and he asked him what he was going to do for Thanksgiving dinner, and he said, “Well, I’m here and I’m broke so there’s nothing I can do.” So Senator McCarthy gave him \$20 to buy a Thanksgiving dinner. He used to do things like that. Then, when they bought their house over on Capitol Hill, of course, he got all kinds of presents as the senators do, you know gifts, cheeses, and the whole bit, of course the Wisconsin cheese was the thing, and he’d go around the neighborhood and give all the neighbors all the stuff. I remember one Christmas Eve, it must have been in ’53, we went home and there was a big package of cheese on our doorstep, we lived out in Wheaton. That’s the only time that a senator ever gave me a Christmas present. They took care of their own staff, but they couldn’t very well take care of all of us. But he was a kind man.

I remember we went to Boston in 1954 on a trial for people at Harvard University that Senator McCarthy had accused of being Communists. There was an undertaker in Little Italy up there who just adored Joe McCarthy and followed him around everywhere he went. He also had a big Cadillac at his disposal, and everywhere that Senator McCarthy went he tried to go with him. Senator McCarthy would have to go out the back door of the hotel just to get away from this man for five minutes. I've never seen such adoration for a man in my life as there was in Boston. All those ethnic groups thought he was the greatest.

**RITCHIE:** They followed him around wherever he went?

**WATT:** Yes, the Polish group and the Italian group. "Little Italy" was a big Italian section of Boston, and we were at the courthouse in Boston for this trial.

**RITCHIE:** Did McCarthy go out to the neighborhoods while he was there?

**WATT:** No, they just came to him, he didn't have any reason to go there. This was in '54 and had to have been before the censure. I can't remember what time of year it was, but I remember that the defense had to pay my expenses,

so I never got called back. That happens sometimes, when they have to spend all that money for the defense. The committee pays your expenses when you are a witness for the prosecution.

**RITCHIE:** After Flanders came and delivered his invitation, a censure movement began. Were you surprised by that?

**WATT:** No. But I was quite pleased when they found only one count against him, and they all had made so much of it.

**RITCHIE:** Did you think it was justified at that point?

**WATT:** I was influenced by what Senator McClellan said, I think. I thought he did it very well. He said, "I'm fond of Joe McCarthy, but he's getting out of hand, and we have to do something to control him." So that was the whole attitude. I remember being over there when they were going up to vote that day.

**RITCHIE:** How did you feel?

**WATT:** I was on the elevator with Senator McClellan when he was going up to vote for censure. I can't remember whether Senator McCarthy was on there, at that time. He could have been. This was after the election in December of '54, and I remember Senator McCarthy said, "Well, Ruthy,

here's your new chairman, you've got to start taking orders from him." And I didn't know what to say, because I didn't want to say, "Well, I can't stand it because I'm not going to have you for chairman anymore." You know, because I was in the middle about making any comment, because I worked for the both of them so long. I think that was when they went up for censure. I'm pretty sure it was. Because I got on that elevator where the senators' dining room is now in the Capitol, I was going up to the second floor to go to the Disbursing Office probably and just happened to get on the elevator when the vote was about to start and I probably didn't even realize it was about to go.

**RITCHIE:** What effect did the censure have on McCarthy?

**WATT:** I think it was very sad. After the censure the press completely ignored him. If he sent out a press release you never saw it unless it was on the back page. And he was into the press stuff pretty much, I think he'd gotten it in his blood, as it does so many of them. He didn't get the invitations. I think it affected him greatly; I think it broke his heart, really.



**RITCHIE:** Did he become less active on the committee? He wasn't chairman anymore.

**WATT:** No, he came just the same. You see the time in between, in '55, we started off with the Irving Peress thing, which he had started, the Fort Monmouth thing. Senator McClellan had extensive hearings on it in '55.

**RITCHIE:** And McCarthy continued coming to them.

**WATT:** Oh yes, until the Rackets Committee, but that was way beyond this. But I'm trying to remember some other things about McCarthy. One Saturday we had hearings, and I called the official reporter the night before and told him we were having hearings on Saturday morning at 10:00 in 357. And then the next morning we had the hearing at 10:00 and about 11:00 Senator McCarthy said, "Will the reporter please read back that last question?" There was no reporter there! I hadn't even missed him. The girl who answered the phone at the reporting company got word that her brother had died and she had forgotten completely about everything and had just gone; and I didn't even notice that he wasn't there. The radio had been taping it, but they just had parts of it, so we had to start all over again.

Senator McCarthy said, “Don’t worry about it, Ruthy, we all make mistakes.” That’s the way he always was. I never made small mistakes; when I made mistakes they were biggies.

**RITCHIE:** I’ve heard that after the censure Senator McCarthy began to drink pretty heavily. Was that noticeable?

**WATT:** I don’t think it was any different than it was before.

**RITCHIE:** He drank heavily before?

**WATT:** I think he drank before. I don’t know that he drank that heavily, but by the end of ’55, about ’56, he was in pretty bad shape and we knew he had cirrhosis. And about that time someone told me that McCarthy had told Senator McClellan he had just a year to live. He knew that he had something that was not going to get any better. The person who told me this, he never would have said it, but this person knew that he had said it to Senator McClellan. I was told about it in ’56 sometime. He died the end of April in ’57.

You know, McCarthy and President Eisenhower were arch enemies really. The White House was having a reception for all the senators, around

the time of the Rackets Committee, actually in late March, and they were all invited except Joe McCarthy. We were having a hearing that day in the Caucus Room and Senator McCarthy kept calling me over and saying, "Ruthy, go ask Mary Driscoll if I've heard from the White House yet, if I've gotten an invitation," which I thought was kind of sad. I'd call Mary and she'd say, "You know very well he hasn't. He's not going to get any invitation to that party tonight." Then I remember after the hearing was over Ruth Montgomery, who later became a seeress or something, covered, our hearings pretty much, and he gave quite a long interview to her about the fact that he had been snubbed by the White House. But it was really kind of sad because he was at that point being ignored so much. Of course, I think it was of his own doing, as far as the White House was concerned, because he and Eisenhower hadn't been exactly the friendliest people you ever saw.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think in any way that McCarthy as chairman changed that committee? Did he have a strong impact on it?

**WATT:** No, because we picked right up after Senator McClellan took over. We got back real fast. Those people were just all into investigating Communism. Of course, he hired people that were into it. We had hearings on east-west trade, which was unpopular as far as the trade was concerned, because there was still a Cold War; and then we had a couple of Palmer-Alaska hearings on airplanes up there, and Senator McCarthy wasn't too interested in that because he wanted to get back to this other thing that he was into so much.

**RITCHIE:** So after he left as chairman, the subcommittee went back to its earlier pattern?

**WATT:** Except that we had more hearings. There were more things to go into, and the staff was different. Of course, Bob was chief counsel, he went from minority counsel to chief. And we had Don O'Donnell who was there under Senator McCarthy. He was a Democrat, but was appointed by Senator Bridges. If someone was from New Hampshire, Senator Bridges hired them, he didn't care what their politics were. He was looking out for his people from New Hampshire. So Don O'Donnell who was a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat came on as the counsel, he

stayed on. Then we had Jim Juliana, who stayed on as minority counsel, he was ex-FBI. Of course, Carmine was ex-FBI, he came back with the committee. Then we had Al Calabreeze, who had been CIA, and he had the same experience as the FBI people. And Paul Kamerick, who was FBI. Paul Tierney, was ex-FBI. He really put together a good staff, Bob did. The investigative staff from the Appropriations Subcommittee was hired for the most part. They all had the experience, so he had a good working group.

**RITCHIE:** There was one other thing I wanted to ask you about McCarthy. When he became chairman, he asked for authority to get copies of federal income tax returns for the investigations.

**WATT:** That started when President Truman was chairman. He was in the White House the first time I worked on it, in 1948 I believe.

**RITCHIE:** They did that back then?

**WATT:** You polled or had a meeting of the full committee to get permission. Then you wrote a letter to the president of the United States, it was the same wording right straight through, but every time a new president came in they had a new group at the Treasury Department, and they researched this thing and came back with the

same wording every time. Anyway, it was permission for us to secure income tax returns. You had to go through these procedures, I don't think we ever had any problems. The full committee had to approve it, we usually polled them and had their signatures approving it. Then the letter went to the President of the United States from the chairman. Then an executive order would come out maybe in a month or two, sometimes longer, in the Federal Register, authorizing it. Then you had to get a list of the people who could see income tax returns, and send a letter to the Internal Revenue Service so that no unauthorized person could see the income tax returns. They would not allow you to get them. You had to copy them over there. You could not Xerox them or anything, you had to sit at the Internal Revenue Service and copy them. Then when they were authorized, they would send you a letter saying that you could go to a certain person in the Internal Revenue Service and they had the files there. Sometimes they had to bring them from different parts of the country into Washington—or if you requested they be seen in a certain city, which was not too often.

Then they would write and say that you could go to such and such a room in the Internal Revenue Service and see an authorized person. That's when they would go down and copy them. But never copies of the original, just pertinent information you needed. This process was discontinued about three years ago.

**RITCHIE:** So when McCarthy was making that request he was just carrying on former policy of the committee?

**WATT:** This had been going on every two years, for each Congress. It was effective for each two years. No, we'd been doing that from '48 on, it was nothing new.

**RITCHIE:** There were some people at the time who were afraid that McCarthy was collecting income tax returns of prominent officials.

**WATT:** He couldn't get them, they had to be copied. It was not possible to get them. Unless the people gave them to him, the personnel.

**RITCHIE:** You once said that you had watched the program *Tail Gunner Joe*, on television. What was your impression of that program?

**WATT:** I thought it was terrible. It was not factual. It was an insult to the Marine Corps, I thought, because who in the Marine Corps would allow

somebody to go around shooting the way he did? It was completely untrue, I'm sure. I don't believe the girl that did the work did the research in the right places. She did the things she wanted to do, in my opinion. I thought it was very inaccurate. I was disgusted with it. I didn't think it was fair or true. There might have been some things in there that were true, but very few. But I suppose she had to make it interesting for TV, probably.

**RITCHIE:** The portrayal of McCarthy as a senator didn't ring true to you, as a person who knew him?

**WATT:** Not necessarily, no. They had to exaggerate. Of course, a program like that was not supposed to be a factual thing anyway, was it? If it was, it was not factual. There were just so many things that were not true. I'd have to go through it piece by piece before I could say what.

**RITCHIE:** When do you think that McCarthy began to lose support? There was a time when he had most of the other, especially Republican, senators behind him, but there was a point when he began to lose them. Senator Ferguson, for instance, voted against him during the censure.



**WATT:** Was Senator Ferguson still in the Senate then?

**RITCHIE:** Yes, he left in 1955.

**WATT:** I know he was defeated because Senator Patrick McNamara defeated him.

**RITCHIE:** That was in '54.

**WATT:** Was it that late? I lose track of the time. See, I don't know how the feeling was other than the committee people. I was not in touch with them. You were in your own little world over there in the Senate, as you know. Mine was broader than most people in the Senate because I had all the different senators on the committee, because I made sure I got to know them, and their staffs at the hearings, too. But your scope is so narrow over there. I'm just amazed sometimes. You know Senator McClellan's secretary and I are very close friends and I'm amazed at how few people she knew in the Senate. In fact, she'd go to the old building and get lost, even last year. But to me, Senator Potter was the first Republican to be anti-McCarthy, and that was before the Army-McCarthy hearings, he was definitely anti-McCarthy right down the line. Where it started, I don't know. He was Michigan, too. Maybe he influenced Ferguson, but I'm not sure

if Senators Ferguson and Potter were that close. Of course, when I first came, [Arthur] Vandenberg was senator, and I think Senator Potter replaced him. But I don't know that Senator Dirksen was ever turned off on Senator McCarthy.

**RITCHIE:** Senator Dirksen stayed with him to the end.

**WATT:** And Senator Mundt of course did. And that was the Republicans on the committee. Of course, Senator Symington, I think, on the Annie Lee Moss thing— And Senator Jackson, you never quite know about Senator Jackson as far as I'm concerned. He doesn't express his opinions much unless it's energy or one of those things that he is really into. I'm not sure that I know how he felt about Senator McCarthy, I don't remember, so it couldn't have been too pronounced. Of course, Senator McClellan always did think a lot of him, and he just was using his head on things. Senator McClellan just thought a lot of Senator McCarthy, period.

**RITCHIE:** But they broke with him, and they all voted against him on the censure.

**WATT:** Well, the only thing I know is what Senator McClellan said, his was the only opinion I

ever heard. I don't think that Senator Bridges and Senator Mundt and those people voted against him. He only had about 14 people that voted for him. They voted against censure. I've forgotten who else there was, but I remember Mundt and Bridges especially. And Senator Bridges was a powerful man.

**RITCHIE:** Each time around, McCarthy seemed to take on something bigger. He took on the State Department, then he took on the army, he took on the president. It didn't seem as if anything was going to stop him.

**WATT:** And he had Allen Dulles [CIA Director] over a barrel. I remember an executive session we had on that.

**RITCHIE:** What happened then?

**WATT:** He just was after him. He called him down to an executive session. I don't even remember what it was about now. I remember it was in the afternoon and we were in 101, in the "inner sanctum." I remember a lot, but it's funny how many things I'm vague on, because so many things went on during those years. I don't know why some things stand out in my mind and others don't.

I remember back in 1953, my oldest niece turned 18 and graduated from high school, so she took a civil service exam up in Portland. She knew that her boyfriend was going to have a G.W. scholarship for football, so she wanted to come to Washington, naturally. She came down to Washington and wanted to stay with us, but we were way out in Wheaton, which was a long way to be away from your boyfriend and have to go 14 miles to downtown every day. Anyway, they sent her to the CIA. She moved in town and left her winter coat with us, because spring was coming and it was too warm. Well, we didn't see much of her, she was just a kid out of high school. About September she called us and said, "Can you bring my coat in to me? I'll come down and pick it up."

She told them she wanted to get off a little early and come down to the Senate and pick up her winter coat. And they wanted to know who her aunt worked for. She said Joe McCarthy. Hah! Some big honcho the next day called her in and questioned her at length whether or not she was a spy for Joe McCarthy. Wasn't that funny?

**RITCHIE:** Everybody was under suspicion.

**WATT:** Yes, a little 18-year old kid who didn't have the slightest idea about Joe McCarthy or anybody else. That I thought was not the best judgment, some little high school kid being accused of being a spy. They didn't accuse her of that, but that was the implication. They never gave her another thing to do after that. They didn't give her one assignment until she went back home. She went home in January and was married in August, but they didn't give her anything to do, she just was being paid.

**[End of Interview #3]**