

# William F. Hildenbrand

Secretary of the Senate, 1981-1985

Secretary to the Minority, 1974-1981

Administration Assistant to Senator Hugh Scott, 1969-1974

Assistant to Senator J. Caleb Boggs, 1961-1969

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## **Interview #3: With Hugh Scott**

(Monday, April 8, 1985)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

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**Ritchie:** You said there was an incident relating to the 1966 campaign relating to [Bobby Kennedy](#) and [Caleb Boggs](#).

**Hildenbrand:** Yes. Cale was on the floor one day, sitting in his seat, and Bobby Kennedy came over and sat down next to him. They talked for a while, and after it was over, Cale came back and said that it seemed that the Democrats in Delaware were trying to get Bobby Kennedy to come up to Delaware to do a fund raiser for Cale's opponent. Cale said that Bobby came over to him and said: "Cale, I'm under a lot of pressure to go to Delaware and raise some money for your opponent." He said, "I don't know what I should do. What do you think I ought to do?" Cale said: "Well, Bobby, it's really up to you. If you go there, I hope you won't say too many bad things about me. But you have to do whatever you think you need to do." He said that Bobby thought a minute and then said, "Oh, hell, Cale, I'm too busy. I don't think I have time to go to Delaware." And he did not go. At that time, in those days, the biggest draw that the Democrats had was Bobby Kennedy, but he did not go in. He made some excuse and they never were able to get him into Delaware.



Senators Caleb Boggs (R-DE) and Robert Kennedy (D-NY) greet visitors  
on the steps of the U.S. Capitol  
*Senate Historical Office*  
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**Ritchie:** Do you think a lot of senators feel uncomfortable about going into other states to campaign against colleagues, even though they're of a different party?

**Hildenbrand:** A lot depends on the relationship between the members. I think where there isn't a good relationship, then I think that either side of the aisle doesn't care about going in and campaigning. Some members, the ones that I've worked for -- [Scott](#), [Baker](#), Boggs -- always took a position that it's very hard to say no to a colleague to go in and campaign, but they've always taken a position that they've never said anything bad about one of their colleagues. They might go in and say good things about whoever is running, but they would not go in and say bad things about a sitting colleague of theirs. That's the way they campaigned. But it's hard if you want the seat, you hate to see somebody defeated, but that's what the game of politics is all about, so you go ahead and do that.

**Ritchie:** I guess it would make for difficult relations if you campaigned against a colleague and the colleague was reelected. You still have to try to get that person's vote after the election. And I suppose that's the hardest thing for somebody to forgive.

**Hildenbrand:** Yes. Some people don't care. Some members don't like somebody, and it just doesn't matter to them. They're never going to get their

vote anyway, on anything, so they might as well go campaign against them. They have nothing to lose. But where you've

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got a good relationship, it's something else again. [Alan Bible](#) and Cale Boggs, I don't know whether I've told this story or not, but in 1968, I guess it was, when Alan Bible was running, we had a Committee of Nine in which we had a bunch of staff people that went to various states to help out candidates who were running against sitting members. They sent me to Nevada, where Lieutenant Governor Ed Fike was running against Alan Bible. Of course, both [Howard Cannon](#) and Bible, and everybody else that came out of Nevada, their relationships with the hotels were so good that as soon as you check in they know exactly who's in Las Vegas or Reno. They knew that I was there. It turned out that Alan Bible and Cale had gone to law school together when they both were here, working on the Hill, and went to Georgetown Law School at night. They had been good friends since the '30s. When Bible found out, he was very, very upset, and he called Caleb and said, "I just can't understand why. We've been such good friends. Why would you allow your AA to come out here and campaign." Cale felt so bad that he called me on the phone and said, "You'd better come home right away." So I came back. But it's hard for them to campaign against friends, yet that's the name of the game.

**Ritchie:** Is it more difficult if a state is represented by a Democrat and a Republican -- they've got to work together for the state -- but do they have some hesitation against campaigning against each other?

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**Hildenbrand:** No, within bounds I think you can do it, and do it well. I think that the other member knows that this is going to be part and parcel of it. He also knows that he's going to go to campaign against the other member in two years, or four years, or whenever it is. It's just something that they put up with, and they understand. Members just hope that the other member will do it in good taste, but he understands it.

**Ritchie:** Can you remember any times when there was bad blood over an election? When a senator felt that someone had crossed the line, gone too far?

**Hildenbrand:** No, I can't remember any. There are those situations in every election, where members will go in and say some bad things about another member. It just happens. I don't know any specifics. But I'm pretty sure that it happens, because there have been those members through the years who have not been well liked by their colleagues as individuals. My guess is that it's easy to go in and campaign against somebody like that. You're not going to get his vote anyway, so it doesn't make any difference.

**Ritchie:** Well, we left off last time at the point when you had accepted the post as administrative assistant to Hugh Scott, when Scott became the Republican whip at the beginning of 1969. I wondered if you could give me some description of what the responsibilities of the M for the Republican whip were.

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*Hildenbrand:* Well, as it turned out, at that particular time, because Scott was not [Everett Dirksen](#)'s chosen successor, or even chosen whip, there was a very cold relationship between Dirksen and Scott, and a cold relationship pretty much between the staffs. We talked, but there wasn't any exchange of what's going to happen on the floor, or what are we doing this week. Scott was pretty well kept out of the circle of leadership. I think that maybe [Gordon Allott](#) was the Policy Committee chairman, and [Margaret Chase Smith](#) was Conference chairman. But Scott was an outsider. So we really didn't have a lot to do because Dirksen would not let Scott do anything. Our Conference rules simply says that the assistant leader will do those things designated to him by the majority or minority leader. And Dirksen didn't designate Scott to do anything! So we didn't have anything to do. When we tried to get into it, we were told in no uncertain terms to stay the hell out of it, it wasn't none of our business. Dirksen was leader, and we had nothing to do.

For nine months -- well, I guess Dirksen got sick in the late spring, early summer, and went into the hospital for a period of time. Again under our Conference rules, the assistant leader became the acting leader when the leader wasn't able to do what he wanted to do. Scott took over and began to act as leader as much as he could, under the circumstances. Scott wanted to go and do "assistant regional whips," that concept. He was going to put it into place, and Mark Trice, who was then the secretary of the minority, called

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Dirksen in the hospital and told him about it. Dirksen called Scott and said, "You ain't going to do that. Forget that." So we didn't do that. Then, while Dirksen was still in the hospital, we had a military bill on the floor, I don't know if it was procurement or what it was, but Scott had talked to somebody, I don't know who it was, and went on the floor and said that the administration's position was whatever it was. And [John Tower](#) got up right behind him and said, "That's not right," that he had just talked to the administration and their position was blah-blah-blah-blah-blah, whatever it was. So it was an uncomfortable time for us to be acting leader, while all of the people who were close to Dirksen were still taking all of their orders from Dirksen. Anytime they didn't like anything that Scott was doing, they'd call Dirksen on the phone, and Dirksen would call and say "You can't do that," or "Stop this," or whatever it was.

We really didn't have anything to do. That was the first year that we put in the August recess. At the end of July we went into recess, and then Dirksen never came back. We were due back in Wednesday following Labor Day, and the day before Labor Day he died. We only had eight months to be whip, before Dirksen died.

**Ritchie:** Why did Scott want to do regional whips?

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**Hildenbrand:** We just thought it was a good idea. And subsequently, when he became leader and [\[Robert\] Griffin](#) became whip, Griffin established sectional whips, or regional whips, or whatever it is. Scott had a concept of what he called "shared leadership," in which he thought the more people you can involve in what's going to happen on the floor the better it is to hold that group together. If you're going to be effective, you've got to have as many members as you can in support of whatever your position is. He just felt that a way to do that was in shared leadership. Baker continued that and refined it even, with committee chairman meetings, when we became majority. Then it really was shared leadership. And he's being criticized for it, as a matter of fact, now. They think that's not the way to be, they think that Lyndon Johnson was the way to be leader. Well, history is going to record whether or not Baker is right or [\[Robert\] Dole](#)'s right. Or Dole changes and finds out you can't be what he'd like to be.

**Ritchie:** It's interesting that Scott, who was so shut out of the leadership, would advocate sharing the leadership.

**Hildenbrand:** That was just Hugh Scott. He'd been around so long. He'd been in Congress, and he was in the Senate, and he was such a pro. He believed this is the way it ought to be. He had no problems with it.

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**Ritchie:** Well, during this seven month period when you were sort of in limbo, what did you do?

**Hildenbrand:** Not very much. Because our whole activity was based on the floor, and they wouldn't tell you what was going to happen, or what was going on, so I spent most of my time on the floor just letting Scott know what was going on -- because they weren't about to tell you. The secretary of the minority, Mark Trice, and Billy Brownrigg, who was assistant secretary of the minority, they were all very close to Dirksen. They weren't going to help you. I had been good friends with Brownrigg and with Trice when I was with Boggs, but when I went with Scott I became the enemy. They didn't want to tell me what was going on

anymore than anything else. It was a difficult period of time for us, from that standpoint. We just went ahead and did the best that we could.

**Ritchie:** Usually the whip's position is to keep people informed as to what the calendar is. I know everyone reads the whip notices.

**Hildenbrand:** We didn't have whip notices in those days.

**Ritchie:** I guess it's become a lot more routinized since then.

**Hildenbrand:** Mmm-hmmm. Griffin started the whip notices, and then everybody since then has continued them.

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**Ritchie:** Dirksen died just before the session came back, but it wasn't at all automatic that Scott would become leader. There was a rather intense campaign. How did you go about campaigning to get Hugh Scott elected leader?

**Hildenbrand:** Scott waited until he came back from the funeral, which was Thursday in Pekin, and announced then that he would seek the post of minority leader. In the meantime, and unbeknownst to us, at the time at least, the M to Baker had gotten ahold of [Bob Packwood](#) the day after Dirksen died -- the morning after he died -- and had gone to Packwood and said: "The boss said we're going to go for leader, and wants you to be his campaign manager," or whatever he wanted him to be. Packwood, for whatever reasons, told a reporter of one of the Oregon papers, and so during the campaign somebody got a copy of a story that had been written which indicated that the morning after Dirksen died, they had begun to politick for his job. And it offended some members. [Len Jordan](#) of Idaho carried the article around in his pocket during that three week period and showed it to everybody that he talked to, because he thought this was so terrible that before this man was even cold they would be out there campaigning to take his place. While philosophically Len Jordan was far removed from Hugh Scott, he supported Scott and actively campaigned for him because of what had happened. To [Howard Baker](#)'s credit it wasn't necessarily Baker that did it -- it was staff who got exuberant and got themselves into this thing, and it turned out it was in the paper.

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Then [Hruska](#) announced shortly after the funeral that he was in it. So it was Hruska, [Scott](#) and Baker. Well, everybody knew that Baker and Hruska were going for the same votes, so if the three people stayed in, there wasn't anything they could do about it. They finally prevailed, on the Saturday before the election, on Hruska to get out. So Hruska announced at a press conference on Saturday

that he was withdrawing from the race, and he threw his support to Baker. In the meantime, Scott, who had been in politics for all of his life, and was involved with Meade Alcorn in the take-over of [Eisenhower](#) against [Taft](#) in '52, and knew how to campaign, just went about his business of contacting each member personally, and trying to gain their support. He always used to say to me, when we had our little card with all the members we had checked off, we knew where everybody was, he said: "We don't put anybody down until they look me in the eye and say, 'I'm going to vote for you, Hugh.'" So that's the way he ran it. When we went into the race that morning, we knew exactly how many votes we had. As it turned out, we had one more than we had counted on. Somebody obviously voted for us that we didn't count, because we got one more. If I remember it was 23 to 20, I think. Or 23 to 19 maybe. [\[Karl\] Mundt](#) was in at that time, so I think it was around 23 to 20. Well, anyway, it was within four votes.

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We won that morning, and that took most of the morning. We came over and opened the session, and the Caucus said we'll go back at 2:00 o'clock and elect a whip. All of the Scott supporters -- [Mark Hatfield](#), and [Boggs](#), and [Jim Pearson](#), and [\[Jack\] Miller](#), and [Griffin](#) and a whole bunch of them -- met in Scott's office. Scott said, "Look, I've been elected leader. I'm out of it. I'm not going to get involved in the whip race. How ever it goes, it goes." So we had Griffin and Miller and Pearson and [Tower](#) and Baker all in the whip race. I think there were five of them, it seems to me there were six, but I can't remember who the sixth one was, but they all got into the race. And it's low man out. So they started to vote, and it got down finally to Griffin and Baker, and Griffin beat him about by the same margin that we beat Baker in the morning. Baker lost two races in the same day: one for leader and one for whip. Then Griffin became whip.

The first thing that Hugh Scott did, to show you the kind of a politician that Scott was, and the kind of a person he was in terms of trying to smooth over ruffled feathers and hold a group together, he made an appointment to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, and he gave Howard Baker that appointment, with of course the heavy nuclear stuff that they have down in Tennessee at Oak Ridge. He gave that to Baker. They had a good relationship, even though they had opposed one another. They had great respect for each other. Then two years later he ran against us again. Scott decided the nicest

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thing he could do for him after he did it the second time was he made him vice chairman of the Watergate Committee. Baker said, "I can't afford to run against you again. Lord knows what you'll make me the next time!"

**Ritchie:** Baker had only been in the Senate for two years when he ran for leader.

**Hildenbrand:** He was elected in '66 and came in in '67, so he had been there a little over two years.

**Ritchie:** It was a pretty ambitious jump to run for leader.

**Hildenbrand:** But I think that everybody, because he was the son-in-law, they thought that it was the logical thing for him to do. You'd have to talk to some of the senior members to determine whether or not the brashness of someone running for leader after being here two and a half years may have impacted on them, I don't know. My guess is that in some cases that probably was true, but in other cases they wanted to make sure that Hugh Scott was not the leader, so whoever they could get the votes for they didn't care if he'd been there three years or three days. They were going to try to get him, and Baker's very attractive, very articulate, and they were just looking for somebody to take over so that they could be in charge. That's why they went for Baker.

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**Ritchie:** While Baker was appealing to the conservatives, he really was something of a moderate himself, wasn't he?

**Hildenbrand:** Oh, yes. You know the first vote that he ever cast, the first thing that he did on the floor when he got elected, within three months of his election, was to take his father-in-law on in open debate on "One Man One Vote." They went at it pretty hard. But compared to Scott he was an arch-conservative, from the conservative standpoint.

**Ritchie:** Was there any sense that the [Nixon](#) administration was in favor of any candidate? Did they try to campaign for Baker?

**Hildenbrand:** We could not see any. They were so new in their term, they'd only been in power for seven months, or eight months at that time. We don't think that they had gotten into it. We think the second time he ran that they were involved, for Baker against Scott, but the first time we didn't see any. It might have been there, but we didn't see it.

**Ritchie:** That's kind of a tricky business. If an administration comes out in front and indicates support for a candidate, wouldn't that automatically have some reaction in Congress on account of separation of powers?

**Hildenbrand:** It's not the thing to do. Because of the separation you have the possibility of losing more votes than you win by



getting involved. We had heard rumors in the second go-round that in the '70 race members who were running had been offered campaign contributions if they would pledge their support to Howard Baker when he ran against Scott the second time. We've had nothing but denials from everybody that's been involved, but the people that we talked to said: "They offered me the money, what can I tell you?" But everybody denies that that was the case. We do believe there was more involvement the second time than the first.

**Ritchie:** The conservatives lost in both races.

**Hildenbrand:** Yes, because Griffin was a moderate. Not maybe quite as liberal as Hugh Scott, but certainly he was much more moderate than the Hruskas and the [Hickenloopers](#) and [Gordon Allotts](#) of the world.

**Ritchie:** Did that create any problems for Scott during that first term?

**Hildenbrand:** No, because once again he went out of his way to bring into the leadership those people who were in the leadership. He didn't run it as Dirksen ran it: a one-man show. When he had some tough decisions, and he was going to make some decisions, he got Gordon Allott, and [Margaret Chase Smith](#), and [Norris Cotton](#) I guess was secretary . . . .

**Ritchie:** Wasn't [Milton Young](#) secretary?

**Hildenbrand:** Well, yes, Milton Young maybe in those days. Then Milt stepped down and Norris became secretary, because we backed Norris for that. Yes, Milton Young, I guess, and Griffin, and they would meet in the back room and make the decisions: this is what we were going to do, which was part of what we called the shared leadership concept. So it was hard for them, having been involved in the process, to go out and challenge the process. Scott was smart enough to have figured that out. He figured out: If I go this alone, they're going to hand me my head, but if I get them into this, they're going to be with me, because they can't afford not to. He worked on that basis. And events began to catch up, also. [\[Spiro\] Agnew](#) came along, resigning, the Vietnam War was heating up. Scott, being a former Navy lieutenant, having been in the war, trained in that fashion, believed that if you commit the flag then you've got to go down the road with whatever is going to happen. He stood with the president time and time again on Vietnam, Cambodia, and the bombings, all those kinds of things. The dissidents were sitting in his office in the Capitol and being arrested. I think he agonized, but he never once deviated from his support of Nixon's policies in relation to Vietnam. But they were troubled times for him.

And then along came the Agnew resignation. We were led to believe that the morning that Nixon appointed [Ford](#), that it had come down to Ford and Scott. The choice was down to those two, and Nixon decided that for whatever Nixon's purposes it would be Ford. Ford

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was closer to what Nixon would be than Hugh Scott was, and my guess was that that was an easy decision for them to make. That's where they had finally arrived at that point. Then they made Gerry Ford vice president.

**Ritchie:** You mentioned the other leaders in the party. The Republican party and the Democratic party in the Senate have a different leadership structure. The Democrats concentrate more power in their leader, but the Republicans have got a Conference chairman and a Policy Committee chairman. How does all that work? Are they really leaders of the party? Do they determine policy and try to lead the rest of the party?

**Hildenbrand:** Well, the ones that I've been associated with through the years have not. The Policy Committee chairman hasn't really a set policy, as you would think a Policy Committee by its name would have. But it's never worked out that way. The Conference chairman is the same thing. He just calls the Conference together, and the Conference is all of the people. They make a decision, but he doesn't have that much to say. The Policy Committee chairman, the Conference Committee chairman have as a rule never tried to take on the leadership. The Conference rules are pretty explicit in terms of the minority and majority leader being responsible for everything that happens on the floor. Tower, when he was Policy Committee chairman, from time to time would have small groups get together and

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issue papers, for example. But no one sets policy but the Conference itself, which is comprised of all the Republicans. They get together and they decide what their policy's going to be. There's never been a problem with those committee chairmen attempting to take over and become leaders.

**Ritchie:** But Scott wanted to make sure they were lined up behind him before he went out on the floor.

**Hildenbrand:** Yes, exactly.

**Ritchie:** In the party, do certain people rise to positions of personal influence and have to be contended with when a decision comes along? Do you have people who are identified as the leader of one bloc or another?

**Hildenbrand:** Yes, it's a little different under the minority than it is under the majority. In the majority a chairman is much stronger than a ranking member. But, by and large, you deal with ranking minority members of key committees who have been there for a long time. Like in the civil rights and voting rights areas we dealt with Hruska most of the time, simply because we had to. Or we ignored him, because philosophically our positions were so dichotomous. He didn't have a great civil rights record, the way Scott did, so there was no way that our party position was going to be anything near what Scott wanted it to be. But Hickenlooper was somebody that

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we always dealt with in terms of foreign relations, and these were people that had been around a long time -- even longer than Scott. They were elder statesmen, more or less, so you had to deal with them. You knew who they were. We didn't have the structures that they have now, the Wednesday Club, and the Steering Committee. We didn't have any of that in those days. You didn't have to contend with a whole bloc of people who were looking over your shoulder every time you made a decision.

**Ritchie:** Did you find that within the party there were people who had better contacts with the White House? You mentioned Senator Tower standing up and saying "I just talked to somebody in the administration and this is what their policy really is." Was that a problem?

**Hildenbrand:** To some degree. There were those who had much closer relationships with Richard Nixon than Hugh Scott had. Of course, they had access to the White House. Again, the White House had a tendency to be much more conservative than Hugh Scott was, philosophically. They dealt with Scott because he was leader. They didn't really have a choice. My guess is they would have loved to have had somebody else as leader, but there wasn't very much they could do about. [Charles] Colson was down there, and some tough guys were down in that staffing area in the White House. You never knew who was talking to them, so you had to be awfully careful when you

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went on the floor and said something that somebody didn't jump up and say: "That's ridiculous!" But after the Tower thing, and after [Dirksen](#) died and Scott became leader, there wasn't that much fear of that happening, because the members did not want to destroy the party in order to destroy Hugh Scott. They were putting party above everything else. Nixon was in the White House, and it was their administration, so everybody was sort of pulling together.

**Ritchie:** Nixon was the first president I think in this century not to have a majority of his own party in Congress during his first term. What was it like to work for the minority leader who was supposed to be supporting the president and introducing the president's program?

**Hildenbrand:** We had never been in the majority, so we didn't have anything on which to compare. So as far as we were concerned, it created no problems for us. We just went ahead and did whatever we had to do. We just thought this is the way it's always been, so we did the best we could. If I remember, we were at one point down to something like 38, in maybe the two years at the end of Nixon's first term, '71 to '72. We may have been down to around 38 members. We didn't have very many. But you did the best that you could and you introduced whatever the White House wanted you to do, and you carried the White House's water. The votes weren't there, but you did whatever you could.

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**Ritchie:** How did the liaison operation work between the White House and the Congress in those early Nixon years?

**Hildenbrand:** Originally they brought Bryce Harlow in, and Clark MacGregor. Bryce had been Eisenhower's liaison. MacGregor had come over from the House, had been a House member. They worked fairly closely with Hugh Scott, in letting him know what the positions were and things like that. But there were times when they would go to their friends, the Hruskas of the world, and deal with them instead of dealing with Scott. It did not happen that often, but it was something that we always had to deal with. We were aware of it. We knew that Scott wasn't the favorite son of the White House.

Haldeman and Ehrlichman, the so-called Katzenjammer Kids, or whatever people liked to call them, came into the White House in an adversarial relationship as far as the Congress was concerned. My guess is that that's really the beginning of strict adversarial relationships. As tough as Johnson was as a leader, nevertheless he did not have the disrespect for the Congress that Nixon and his people seemed to have. They would have been great if they could have been a monarchy. But that wasn't the way it was going to be, so they made life miserable for just about everybody. They had very little understanding of what the leadership up here said was going to happen. They didn't want to hear that. This was what was going to happen.

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I remember sitting in Gerry Ford's office, when he was minority leader, with John Connally, who was Treasury Secretary in those days (which must have been, I guess, towards the end of the first term of Nixon's, getting close to the '72

elections I guess, as a matter of fact), John Connally, John Ehrlichman, Scott, and Ford, and somebody from the liaison, Timmons or Friedersdorf or somebody like that. They wanted Ford and Scott to do something, some bill that they were very strong for. There wasn't any way that that thing was ever going to pass. There was nothing they could do about it. We had as many defections on our side as the Democrats had. Both Ford and Scott told Ehrlichman and John Connally in no uncertain terms that: you can't have it that way, because our people are not going to support it. Connally understood it, but Ehrlichman had no concept of what was going on. I remember him saying: "OK, you can tell everybody that's going to vote against us that we're going in to their state or their district and campaign against them." Ford just looked at Ehrlichman like this guy's got to be bonkers. Does he think for one minute that the President of the United States is going to go into some Republican state and campaign against some Republican that's running? That's crazy! Does he think also that that's going to make a difference? That we're going to support it? They just looked at him and thought this was crazy. Whatever it was -- I think it was a public works bill of some kind -- they got soundly trounced. But that's the way they thought. That was their thinking process. You

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were with them or you were against them, there was no in-between. They didn't understand your position. You didn't have a position. Your position was the administration's position, or you were a turncoat.

**Ritchie:** Very early on, in '69, Hugh Scott gave the administration a tongue-lashing after a tax bill. Nixon threatened to veto the bill, but the Senate ignored him and passed its own bill. Scott said, "The problem is you don't listen to us."

**Hildenbrand:** That was the '69 tax bill that took six weeks in the Senate. It was in November, if I remember, over Thanksgiving. It started early in November. We had the Internal Revenue Service and the Treasury people in our office for six weeks, from 10:00 o'clock in the morning to 11:00 o'clock at night, everyday including Saturdays. That was our baptism under fire, as a matter of fact, since we had only been in office for about two months when this tax bill came along. We continually went round and round with the tax people as to what they could or could not support. I remember members coming in to see the representatives of Treasury or IRS with amendments and saying, "Can you support this?" They'd get an answer back as to whether they could or could not. But we were new, the administration was fairly new, and they came in with a set of values as to what the relationship was between the Congress and the White House that were different than ours. What Scott was saying was: you

may think that that's what the founding fathers meant when they said executive and legislative, but it doesn't work that way. If you want to get something done, you'd better listen to us, otherwise it ain't going to get done.

**Ritchie:** Apparently they didn't hear that.

**Hildenbrand:** They never learned that for the whole time they were there until he resigned. I think they were lulled into false security by winning some things which they won because that's the way members believed. But they thought it was because they'd proposed it. Or they were riding high because they were getting Vietnam pretty much the way they wanted it, and getting support even though the people out in the street were screaming bloody murder. The Congress was standing with them, and I think they just thought that because the administration was putting it forth that it was going to win. Throughout all that period of time they really never listened to the Congress. You couldn't really talk to them.

**Ritchie:** Did Nixon himself get involved? Was he effectively used in congressional liaison?

**Hildenbrand:** No, I don't think Nixon ever came up on the Hill the whole time he was President of the United States, except for some official function. He stayed pretty much out of it. The Haldemans and the Ehrlichmans and the Clark MacGregors and the people that

followed were the ones that were involved. As a matter of fact, Scott's AA, Gene Cowan, left just before we got to be leader, I guess, and went to the White House in a liaison post, but that didn't help us any. It was just the way they looked at things so much differently than anybody else looked at it. There was no attempt to try to fashion representative government, or government by cooperation or accommodation. They would much rather take you head-on. If they won, fine. If they didn't win, then they's say, "Well, it's the Congress' fault."

**Ritchie:** Did they use Agnew at all in terms of congressional liaison?

**Hildenbrand:** They used him once. Somebody told him to get off the floor and quit lobbying, and that was the last time that they ever used him. He got involved in some issue, shortly after they became the administration. And he got on the floor and lobbied, and some member just flat resented it and just gave him a tongue lashing and told him never to get on that floor again and lobby these members, that was not his role. That was the end of that. As a result, I think we have always cautioned new vice presidents. We've always cited that as an example

of what not to do when you become the vice president. Don't let yourself get in the position that Agnew got into. If you want to call them up at home, or if you want to talk to them in their office, or if you want to call them off the floor and

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talk in your office, all those things are permitted. But not on the floor. That floor belongs to the Senate, and you're just a functionary. So vice presidents from that time on have sort of lobbied someplace other than on that floor. That's the only time they tried to use Agnew, and it turned out to be a disaster.

**Ritchie:** Was Agnew popular with the members?

**Hildenbrand:** Well, Agnew was a nice enough person and had a good personality. Members got along with him. He never had the credentials that they would consider that might have been required or necessary to be vice president. Being governor of the state of Maryland didn't really do very much for some of the Old Bulls of the party. But he was vice president; he was president of the Senate; they had a respect for him; they got along with him. But I don't think they really thought that he was a very strong individual, from the standpoint of doing anything but telling them whatever Nixon wanted them to hear. Then, of course, he made that "nabobs of negativism" speech out in the West some place. That didn't go over too well with a lot of people. Then he resigned.

**Ritchie:** Did you get a sense in Scott's office that Scott was trying to work to educate the White House? Or did he throw up his arms in despair?

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**Hildenbrand:** Well, no. He continually kept after them to try to get them to listen. I think eventually what he did was, he realized he wasn't going to be able to do it. He never stopped trying, but he accepted that he was going to fail. He just went ahead and began to be as good a leader as he could be, without getting the White House involved. He talked to the people up here, and they decided what kind of a position they were going to take, what they could get done, and what they couldn't get done. If the White House didn't like it, so be it.

**Ritchie:** Scott's affinity to other politicians would probably have been closer to [Mike Mansfield](#) in many ways, and yet at that time, because the Republicans were in the minority, the efforts at building coalitions seemed to be with the Southern conservatives -- the "Southern Strategy." How did he fit into that? Was he able to build bridges to the Southern Democrats?

**Hildenbrand:** Yes, and it's a very strange reason why. The Southern Democrat conservatives had a great deal of respect for Hugh Scott, despite the fact that he

stood for everything that they opposed in the areas of civil rights and voting rights. Two things were responsible for that. One, he had been a roommate with [John Stennis](#) at the University of Virginia Law School, so they had been friends for a long time. But more importantly, back in 1960, the Civil Rights Act of '60, [Dick Russell](#) for some reason was not well,

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was not able to be here on a key civil rights vote, and Hugh Scott gave Dick Russell a pair on whatever that vote was. The Southern Democrats never forgot that Hugh Scott had done this for Dick Russell. From their standpoint, Dick Russell was their god. He stood for everything that Southern Democrats stood for. It was epitomized by Dick Russell. And to think that a Northern liberal such as Hugh Scott would do this for somebody like Dick Russell, they never forgot that. His relationship with them was good, even though there was no way they could ever get in bed together in terms of civil rights or voting rights. But on other things . . . .

And Stennis became very, very strong with him because of his stands on the military. Stennis and I, along with [J. Stanley] Kimmitt, who was then secretary of the majority, we would have breakfast in the mornings, almost every morning, and we would talk about the military situation, and about the defense bill. Stennis was then the chairman of the [Armed Services Committee](#), so we had good relations with Stennis, as did Scott.

**Ritchie:** I was wondering how you'd go about lobbying members of the other party. Was it mostly the White House liaison people who did that, or the people out of the Republican leader's office who make the contacts?

**Hildenbrand:** Oh, I think both. You use all of the things that are available to you. You don't just say, "OK, you do this." If

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you've got the capacity, as you do in a White House liaison, as you do in leadership, as you do in relationships between members, you use all of those things. That's like letting a man build a house but you don't give him the tools. If you've got all the tools, you use them. And we did. We didn't worry too much about what the White House was going to do from a lobbying standpoint. They had their thing to do and we had ours.

I had always acted as a liaison between the Democratic side of the aisle and the Republican side. That was a role Scott wanted me to fill, and which I did. I got along famously with Mike Mansfield, very good with [Bob Byrd](#), because Mansfield had given Bob Byrd (after he had defeated [Ted Kennedy](#)) the



responsibility of the calendar of business, in formulating what we were going to take up, and under what kind of restrictions and time limits and all those things. Prior to that time, unanimous consent agreements were almost unheard of. We didn't have things like that. But with Byrd coming in they began more and more to get to the point of unanimous consent agreements and working out an orchestrated schedule, so that you knew ahead of time what was going to be coming up. I worked closely with Byrd. Scott gave me that role, and Byrd knew that that was my role, so we did an awful lot of that. I had good acceptance on the Democratic side from that standpoint.

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**Ritchie:** You had a good reputation of being a head counter. How did you go about it, finding out how people were going to vote on an issue?

**Hildenbrand:** Oh, a lot of that I gained from Scott's ability to be able to win his own races for leader. There are so many things that enter into a member making up his mind on how he's going to vote, that you have to take all of those factors into consideration. You can't just say because Barry Goldwater is a conservative therefore he will vote for a conservative position. There may be a personality problem. There may be something that somebody did for him and he's going to pay a favor back. I spent a lot of time on the floor. I knew these members. I knew their voting records pretty well. I watched them for so many years.

[Cliff Case](#), for example, who I considered to be the really true liberal in the Republican party because he never deviated. A lot of people said [Javits](#) was the liberal, but if you look at Javits' voting record you'll find that a lot of time he would vote a very conservative line, particularly economically, on money matters. Case that wasn't the case. Cliff would just go ahead and consistently vote the liberal line. But you knew that. If you watched him and studied it, you knew exactly where he was going to be. If you understand how that place works, and if you watch it in action and watch members in action, you can pretty well know exactly where the votes are coming

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from, and where they're going to be. I was fortunate in that I spent all of my waking hours, almost, on that floor. So I knew the interplay between members, and I knew the kind of things that were going on. We rarely got surprised.



Senators Hugh Scott (R-PA) and Clifford Case (R-NJ)  
*Senate Historical Office*

Roman Hruska, in 1970 when the extension of the Voting Rights Act came along, when John Mitchell was Attorney General, the administration had a proposal. [Phil Hart](#) was alive then, and Hugh Scott and Hart had a proposal, both of them were on Judiciary. They had a different Voting Rights Act than did John Mitchell and the administration. Hruska was the administration spokesman and leading the fight for this thing. They reported out of the Judiciary Committee Roman Hruska's bill -- the administration's bill -- and at some point Scott and Hart offered theirs as a substitute. The debate went on for some days. Finally, one afternoon, Roman Hruska came into the back office where Scott was and said, "Hugh, I'm going to move at 4:00 o'clock to table your substitute." Scott said, "That's fine, Roman, whatever you want to do, that's fine." We had counted our votes and we knew that we had the votes to stop a tabling motion.

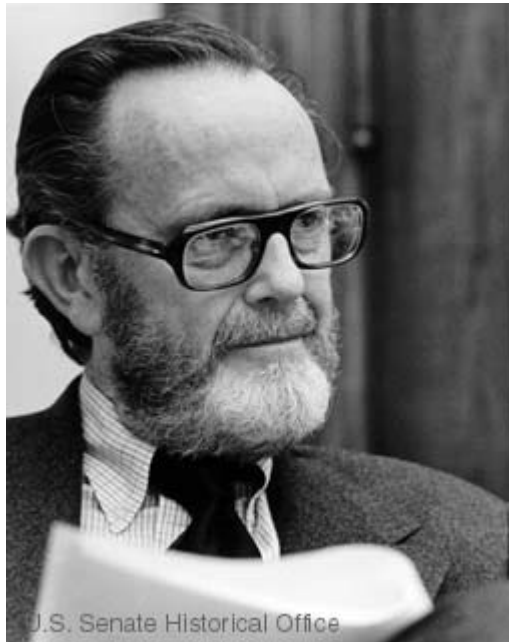
What Hruska did not know, and which we knew but weren't sure of is that a couple of days before that I had talked with [Barry Goldwater](#) and Barry Goldwater had a pet project of allowing Americans overseas easy registration, registration cards, or some way that they could easily register. He had an amendment, and I went to Phil

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Hart's people and I said, "Scott would like to take this amendment. It's not a bad idea. It doesn't do any damage to the voting rights at all, it just makes it possible for people not to get disenfranchised because they're serving some place overseas." Hart said, "Hell, that's no problem. Sure, we'll take it." I went back to Goldwater and said, "If you want to offer that, we'll accept it." So he offered it, we accepted it, and it became a part of the bill. Either Hruska didn't know it, or didn't think it would make any difference. The motion came to table Scott's bill.

They called Goldwater's name, and he voted no. I thought Hruska was going to have a heart attack. He rushed over to Goldwater and they got into a heated conversation, the net result of which was Goldwater said, "That's the way I'm going to vote. I've got an amendment in that bill and I'm not going to vote against my own amendment." There wasn't anything Hruska could do about it. So of course they failed in the tabling motion, and we eventually passed the Hart-Scott Voting Rights Act.



Senator Philip Hart (D-MI)  
*Senate Historical Office*

But they should have known that. They should not have ever have allowed themselves to think that simply because Barry Goldwater is an arch-conservative that he's going to be there forever. They should have figured that if he's got an amendment and it's in the bill, he's not going to vote to table his own amendment. He didn't. B ut that's the kind of thing that goes into being able to determine how the votes are going to come out. It's personalities. I think I said

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earlier that there are some members on that floor today who will have fifteen votes against them simply because they offered it. I don't care what the amendment does. But you have to know that. You really have to know who these people are and what their personalities are, what their relationships are, who they're close to, who they listen to. All of those things make up a part of being able to count votes.

**Ritchie:** Is there a good time to approach a senator to find out how they're going to vote? Or is there an inopportune time? Do you get the sense of when is the right or the wrong time to try to find out how a person is going to vote?

**Hildenbrand:** No, you sort of sense that. Some people are almost totally unapproachable. [Margaret Chase Smith](#). I would never approach Margaret Chase Smith. She was very close to Mark Trice, and I would never go to her to determine where she was. I'd go to Mark and he would determine for us, but I would never do that. You know the ones that you can approach, and you know the ones that you can't. When I became secretary of the minority, when Mark resigned, then I took over the role of making whip counts for the leadership, Margaret Chase Smith was gone by that time.



U.S. Senate Historical Office  
Senators Hugh Scott (R-PA), Karl Mundt (R-SD), and Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME)  
Senate Historical Office

We didn't do it that often -- nowadays they do it almost every time they turn around -- but in those days we didn't do it that often. You called a member, and here again I followed the Scott line, I would not talk to staff. I would always talk to the member. If he

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told me he was going to vote yes, then I would put it down. If the staff person said, "Well, I think he's going to do this," when you're counting votes that's not good enough. Unless you know the staff person and you know that without any questions this is exactly what will happen, because he's so close to the member that he reflects exactly the member's position, and he would know if there was any deviation from that position. It worked out pretty good from that standpoint.

**Ritchie:** You were on the floor a lot, did you speak to the senators mostly there?

**Hildenbrand:** Yes, and if I couldn't get them on the floor, I would call them in their offices. Or the Tuesday lunch, when we had policy lunch, was a good time to do a whip check, because then you had everybody there together and it was easy to go around and talk to them. That way you didn't discombobulate them from doing something they were going to do. They were there anyway, so it was easy. We didn't do very many whip checks in those days, as they do now. They do an awful lot.

**Ritchie:** Could you approach Democrats as well?

**Hildenbrand:** Mmm-hmmm. I had some that I would not necessarily approach. [\[Alan\] Cranston](#), when he became whip, which was '77 I guess, after Mansfield left, he and I had a good relationship. There

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are those that have written stories that he probably is the best Democratic vote counter -- or was the best Democratic vote counter, whether he still is or not I haven't followed it that closely. But he and I have a good relationship and still do. If Scott would allow me, we would exchange information about how things were going and where the votes were. We would pretty much know. Military things, I worked pretty closely with [Stennis](#). Stennis would know exactly where his Democrats were. Then I would let him know where our people were. Because in those days we were looking for the same thing: we wanted the administration to win, because it was our administration. I worked very closely with Stennis.

**Ritchie:** But there were some people you found unapproachable?

**Hildenbrand:** [Russell Long](#), for example, rarely would I ever approach Russell to find out what he was going to do. Some people I knew better than I knew others. [Fritz Hollings](#) I knew quite well. [\[Hubert\] Humphrey](#), Cranston, some of those that I had traveled with. I had no problems with going to them, but some of the others I left up to somebody else.

**Ritchie:** Were there certain senators--you mentioned the chairmen of the committees--who had a good feel for how people were going to vote, who could tip you off?

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**Hildenbrand:** No, because as a rule that's not a roll of the senator, unless it happens to be his own pet bill, or he's involved in it. There weren't that many good vote counters in those days. They just didn't count votes that much, it wasn't that necessary. The Armed Services people had a tendency to pretty much know where their votes were, more so than almost any other committee that we had.

The Towers and the Stennises pretty much knew where their people were. And they lobbied on the floor a lot. Tower was always talking to members, trying to get them to support positions, as was John Stennis. But some of the others didn't bother.

**Ritchie:** I have a stack of the Republican annual reports at the end of each session of Congress, and in every one of them when Hugh Scott was Republican leader there was a glowing tribute to Mike Mansfield. It's very striking to find one party paying such tribute to the leader of the opposition. Could you describe the relationship between Mansfield and Scott, and yourself and Mansfield?

**Hildenbrand:** I think Mansfield's and Scott's relationship really came together when they went to China in early 1972. Dirksen and Mansfield had gotten along famously -- everybody got along with Mike Mansfield anyway. Then when Dirksen died, we had only been two and a half years as leader when they went to China together. I think that there was a mutual respect, certainly, between the two of them. Their personalities were fairly close. They were both very low key.

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They were both Asian experts. They both liked the same kind of things. Mansfield had been a Marine, Scott had been a Navy lieutenant. They just got along from a personality standpoint. They were both genteel men. They were perfect for their time, that they should both be leaders at that time. It stood the country in very good stead.

They were honorable men. Scott had never any problem in knowing that Mike Mansfield would ever try to do anything which would hurt either the Republican party or Hugh Scott. I remember one instance when [Kennedy](#) was the whip. He came up on the floor one morning, we were in session in the morning for some reason, and they passed some amendment which Mansfield had told the Republicans, or told somebody, they would either not pass or would not bring it up until whatever it was that happened. And they brought it up and passed it. Mansfield found out about it and came in from his office and called it back up and defeated it, because he said, "the commitment was made that this would not happen." I don't think he defeated it, he just called it up and by unanimous consent had it withdrawn, but he said, "this is a commitment that Hugh Scott and I made and it will be honored." That was the kind of a person that Mike Mansfield was. And he knew that Scott was exactly the same kind of man.

To the degree that they could control their own people, they did. They were both about the same age group. Scott now will be 85

in November, Mansfield's very close to that, so they were of the same age group. They had a lot of things going for them that made it easy for them to be compatible.

**Ritchie:** The whole use of unanimous consent really requires the two parties to sit down and argue out things behind the scenes, not on the Senate floor. Was there a procedure for operating this way, when a bill came along that the Democrats wanted to pass by unanimous consent?

**Hildenbrand:** Yes, in those days when Bob Byrd was whip, he would get together with me and say this is what they would like to do, and would I go ahead and try to sell it on our side of the aisle. I'd go back to Scott and say, "They want to do this, and here's what it is." We'd get a hold of the manager of the bill on our side, whoever was going to handle it and see whether or not it was acceptable. Then we'd just go on the floor and make the consent agreement. Scott, as a rule, would contact the ranking member of the committee, the leadership, and if somebody had notified us, when I was secretary of the minority, that they had a problem with the bill, we noted that on the calendar of business. We'd look at that, and then we would contact them and say, "We'd like to enter into this kind of an agreement. Do you have a problem with it?" They'd say, "Yeah," and we'd say, "Well you'd better come over on the floor because they're going to make that consent agreement, and if you want to object to it you'd

better be there to do it." We began to enter into those things from time to time, not very often, but then like Topsey it just grew. Now they do almost everything by unanimous consent, which was really not the way that the Senate was designed. But that's the way it's working out.

**Ritchie:** Does that sort of enforce a bipartisanship on members?

**Hildenbrand:** Well, yes, it makes everything cut and dried, because if everybody enters into a consent agreement then you know that's what's going to happen. It's taken away the deliberation of members getting up and trying to make arguments and persuade people. There isn't very much of that anymore. Members are no longer persuaded by arguments on the floor. The orators of the old days are gone, when you could win votes by getting up and making a passionate plea for your position. Nobody does that anymore. They may make passionate pleas, but it's for press back home and it's not for swaying anybody on the floor.

**Ritchie:** Did you have troubles with any members who just wouldn't go along? You only need one to object to a unanimous consent request.

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**Hildenbrand:** Oh, you would get from time to time members that would not go along. Both Mansfield and Scott were fatalists in that regard. They'd say, "If we can't do it, we can't do it." And they'd go call it up and do whatever they wanted to do. We had problems on our own side because we had a small core of members of the liberal wing of our party, the Cases and the Javits, Mark Hatfield, Margaret Chase Smith to some degree, Jim Pearson, [John Sherman Cooper](#), who were liberal. It was hard for the Republicans to have a single position in those days.

And if the Democrats had not made such an issue about Wyman-Durkin in 1975, if they hadn't made such an issue about that, Baker would never have been as successful as a minority leader, or Scott in his last two years, as they were, because when they fought that issue for three months they solidified the Republican side of the aisle, who consistently voted together as a bloc of 42 or 43 members, whatever number they had. They just consistently voted that way. They finally realized, after having done it for three months, that, hey, if we stay together as a group, we can do almost anything we want to do, or at least the Democrats can't do anything to us. I'm sure there are people who will argue with me, but I really believe that the effectiveness of the Republican party in the Senate grew out of the fact that the Democrats made such a big issue of that Wyman-Durkin and forced the Republicans to stay together. Because if you look at the history of the Republican party after that in the Senate, you'll

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find that they began to do an awful lot of things as a party, which they had never done before. They put Jack Javits in charge of an economic program, and they fashioned an economic program for Republicans in the [Carter](#) days, which never would have happened before -- it's ridiculous to even think about it.

**Ritchie:** On the other hand, when Nixon was president they really needed to get beyond party lines, since they had to pass the president's program, or try to pass it.

**Hildenbrand:** Yes, but we didn't worry too much about it. When you had as few votes as we had, unless you got Democratic support you couldn't do anything -- and that's where, you mentioned earlier, the coalition came in. That's where we got that bloc of Southern Democrats that would join with the Republicans. But we stood to lose four to eight members, so we had to pick up a like number on the other side, because of the Javitses and the Cases of the world. In those days you couldn't count on them, in most instances.



**Ritchie:** I wanted to ask about some specific legislative events of that period, particularly the Haynsworth and Carswell nominations. Early on in the first few months of Scott's term as Republican leader . . . .

**Hildenbrand:** 1969 was Haynsworth.

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**Ritchie:** He broke with the president on this Supreme Court nomination, which was a pretty rare event. He must have felt an incredible amount of pressure from the White House.

**Hildenbrand:** Well, he made his decision early on. He was a lawyer. His philosophy was such that he just did not believe that this man would make a good Supreme Court judge. As it turned out, he supported Carswell, and if he had his druthers he would have supported Haynsworth over Carswell, but he didn't have that. He'd made a decision, he stood with it, and he made a commitment to the president that whoever he sent up the next time he would support. So he voted against Haynsworth and then supported Carswell.

**Ritchie:** Did he restore himself in good graces by supporting the Carswell nomination?

**Hildenbrand:** Mmm-hmmm, even though Carswell lost. The conservative wing of the party would never accept Hugh Scott, so it really didn't make any difference. There was no way that he could do enough for them, before they would take him into their bosom. Philosophically there was no way that that would ever happen. But they understood what he had done and they understood from the standpoint of Haynsworth, and then of course he got back in their good graces by supporting Carswell, much to the chagrin of the liberal wing of the party, in both sides of the Capitol. I remember [Don Riegel](#), who was then a Republican, and Pete McCloskey came over to

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see me and pleaded with me to try to get Scott to change his mind and not vote for Carswell. Scott had given the president his word, and it wouldn't have made any difference what Carswell did, or what they found out about him. If they voted, he was going to vote for him. And he did.

**Ritchie:** One of the places where Scott had the most trouble with the Nixon administration seemed to have to deal with the Justice Department, judicial nominations and civil rights bills and the rest. What was Scott's relationship with John Mitchell?

**Hildenbrand:** Not very good. They had nothing in common. Mitchell was a hard-line conservative in terms of judicial things. Scott was a lawyer and a liberal. He always felt that they were trampling on the Constitution and on the rights of individuals in some of the proposals that they made. So they went to Hruska much more than they ever went to Hugh Scott in dealing with things, because Hruska was ranking on the Judiciary Committee. John Dean was the liaison for Mitchell, and they worked very closely together. We barely saw them. Maybe they'd pay a courtesy call or something like that. They were friendly, but they weren't close.

**Ritchie:** It didn't do John Mitchell very much good. He lost more often than he won.

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**Hildenbrand:** Well, you know the makeup of the Senate was such that there was no way that John Mitchell and Nixon could have won on those judicial kind of things. The strong coalition was no longer there, and the Senate was changing. The country was changing. They weren't about to win.

**Ritchie:** The same thing was true on the extension of the Voting Rights Act in 1970, a major confrontation with the Senate. You were pretty much involved in that. Could you give me some of the background of your role in that?

**Hildenbrand:** That was the one that I talked about Barry Goldwater and the business of the registration of people overseas. We worked with Clarence Mitchell, who was then with the NAACP out of Baltimore, and was a good, close friend of Scott's and of [Phil Hart's](#). They just put together what they considered to be a sound extension of the Voting Rights Act as a substitute to the administration's, John Mitchell's proposal, which the House had passed. We really did not do very much in terms of the administration, we let Hruska handle it. He was the floor leader as far as the bill was concerned. We knew where the votes were, and we knew that anytime we wanted to do whatever it was we could do it. We had the votes. We knew that the things we had in the bill were the things that should be there.

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There was no attempt, that I recall, by the administration to try to change Hugh Scott. They knew where he was. He made it very plain when he offered the bill with Phil Hart that that was his position. Scott had a tendency that whenever he could not support the administration's position, whatever it was, that he would not involve himself in leading the fight on that floor against the administration. He would let somebody else take that role, as Hruska did in that case fighting for the administration's position. But Scott did not go on the floor and harrangue the

administration. He was a part of the thing, and when it was time to vote he made a speech and they voted. That was all that there was to that.

**Ritchie:** When there's such a divisive issue among members of the same party, what does that do in the Conference? Did you have a great amount of tension?

**Hildenbrand:** Well, you try to stay away from having Conferences when you have that kind of a situation, because that's a no-win situation. You're not going to get a party position, so there's no sense in having a Conference so people can scream at one another. That's about all that would have ever happened in that kind of a Conference. You would never have come out of there with any position. There's no way that you could resolve that issue to the satisfaction of everybody, so you just didn't have Conferences.

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Scott didn't like to call Conferences for that reason. In fact, most leaders from that time have not liked to call Conferences. It just evolves into something you don't need it evolving into. It gets into screaming matches and personalities get involved, and it's a mess.

**Ritchie:** So when do you call a Conference?

**Hildenbrand:** Most of the time you do it from an informational standpoint. You call Conferences so that the members know exactly what it is that's going to happen. Then, if you can get a consensus, you do. But we found out through the years that those Conferences are not the way to get something. It just doesn't work out too well. Members just have their own positions, and you just have to go along with whatever those positions are.

**Ritchie:** Well, I have a series of questions about foreign policy and your trip to China, but we've been here for an hour and a half and I think this is good point to stop now, since we've been discussing mostly domestic issues today.

**Hildenbrand:** All right, suits me.

End of Interview #3

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