THE DEMOCRATIC CLOAKROOM
Interview #1
Wednesday, March 11, 2009

PAONE: Oh, that's a great Jimmy Stewart, from *Mr. Smith* [pointing to a framed photograph from the film *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*].

RITCHIE: My favorite senator, yes. That's a great perspective because it's right out of the Democratic cloakroom, looking down the aisle. That's actually a Hollywood set.

PAONE: Yes, I heard they let them come and take pictures of the chamber, at least maybe not as much for that as for the 1960 Otto Preminger movie.

RITCHIE: *Advise and Consent*.

PAONE: *Advise and Consent*, which reconstructed it out in Hollywood.

RITCHIE: Yes, *Advise and Consent* used the same set but they modernized it, because that's the 1930s look of the Senate chamber. By the 1960s it had taken on a different appearance altogether.

PAONE: It was great watching them ride the old subway from the Russell Building at one point in the movie. That was actually still running.

RITCHIE: That 1962 movie is like a time capsule.

PAONE: Yes, I love it. I went out and bought it myself.

RITCHIE: So I noticed that you were born in Everett, Massachusetts, but you were raised in Revere.

PAONE: Correct.

RITCHIE: I wanted to know about your background there. Did you spend your childhood in Revere?

PAONE: Yes, my parents met down here at Georgetown in the late 1920s. My dad came down from Massachusetts to go to Georgetown. My mom came from Lonaconing, Maryland, where her dad was a coal miner. He must have been an amazing guy because during the Depression he sent her off to college. She went to nursing school. They got married and they moved back to where he was from, up in Massachusetts, up in Revere. His dad opened up a grocery store. Before the days of 7-Eleven, it sold milk and bread and fresh fruit and candy. It had a soda fountain and the whole nine yards. He had immigrated over here in the 1890s and opened up what started out as a fruit stand and then turned into a grocery store. He had a house in the back where all the family grew up. So when my dad got back from college, he went back there and ended up working for the federal government. He worked for the National Labor Relations Board for thirty-seven years, until he retired in '72. But he would work every night. He would come home, have supper, and then he would go down to the store and relieve the uncle, his brother, that was running it in the daytime, and work until closing at 10:30, 11 o'clock. Then he'd go back home. And on Sundays he'd be down there at 5:30 in the morning, opening it up, and he'd work until like 2 o'clock on Sundays. Then I would go down on trash days and put out the trash on Tuesdays, and put out the cigarette and candy order. Everybody helped out at the store. As a result, the couple of brothers that stayed back and didn't go to college, that's what paid to send the other brothers and sisters off to college. His brother also went to Georgetown and graduated the year after him. A sister went to, I think Regis College, or somewhere. But the store was basically the source, the center of your life. So we grew up in Revere, yes, about a block away from the store.

RITCHIE: Did the family still live behind it?

PAONE: No, the uncle did until they closed it. He was a bachelor, who never married, the one uncle who ran the place. His name was Joe, and he was like the godfather of the family. If anybody needed anything, you went to Uncle Joe and he took care of you. He still lived in the back of the store. It was the type of place that still had an old GE refrigerator with the coil on the top, some ancient stuff back there. But he lived there until they closed it around '74, I think it was. Then he moved in with one of his sisters, a couple of blocks away and stayed there the next twenty years until he died.

RITCHIE: Did you go to local schools?

PAONE: Yes, I went to one right up the street. It was a small Catholic school, a twelve-room school. You had the first six grades on the first floor, seventh, eight and the high school grades were on the second floor, taught by these nuns. It wasn't a huge school where you changed classes or anything like that. You didn't have lockers or anything like that. The nuns would come in and change classes and teach you a different course. The only time you left the room was maybe if you had to go downstairs to the basement for a typing class, or the chem lab. My dad was in the first graduating class to that school, Immaculate Conception, in 1925. I graduated from it in '68, and my two brothers and sister graduated from it before me. So, yes, that was like a block away–like from here to the Capitol–from my house. Then I went on to follow in my brother's footsteps to commute into Boston to go to Boston College as an undergraduate.

RITCHIE: Charlie Ferris used to say that in Boston you didn't ask people what neighborhood they were from, you always said, "What diocese are you from?"

PAONE: Exactly.

RITCHIE: When you went to Boston College, what did you have in mind for your career?

PAONE: Actually, you know, I didn't. I just knew I was going off to college. I started off as a math major, because math seemed to come easy. And my oldest brother majored in math. But in my sophomore year we ended up having some very convoluted calculus book. Even my brother took a look at it and he said, "I don't know why they made this more complicated than they should have." He helped me get through that year by explaining something to me in thirty minutes that I would waste weeks in class on, not understanding. The teacher was horrible. Unfortunately, for me, I still did well in the courses, which kept me in the darn class, until my second semester my brother moved out of the house and I flunked the course! So that required the necessitation of changing your major, and I picked up economics. But around that time I had a really interesting history teacher, Raymond McNally. He taught Western Civilization, but he spent a long time on the Russian Revolution. He was fascinating, and that was around the time that you had [Henry] Kissinger in the White House, and the Soviet Union was our big competitor in

the world. I would read stories about the grain sales and all that, so I thought this is interesting. It's us and them, so I want to know as much about *them* as possible. I started taking all these Russian history courses, philosophy, Marxism courses, etc. By the time I was done, I wound up with a major in philosophy also, mostly because a lot of the Russian and Marxist philosophy courses I took, I only needed to take a couple more to get a major, so I did. I ended up with an economics and philosophy major.

I realized that this was really something I enjoyed. So while I was trying to decide what to do for graduate school, I got a job driving a forklift from 9:30 at night to 6:30 in the morning unloading railroad cars for a supermarket chain, the A&P it was called, the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company was their full name. Then somebody told me about a program they had at Harvard. It was adult education. It was set up by someone centuries ago, by someone who had bequeathed them money but solely for the use of adult education, with the stipulation–the way I heard the story–that they couldn't charge more for a course than the going rate for a bushel of wheat. So I took a Russian course at night there–that was the one thing I didn't have, the language–while I worked at the warehouse. I would go there a couple of nights a week and then go to work at 9:30 at night. I did that for a year, and then in the summer I took an intensive course to finish it up. Meanwhile, I applied to graduate schools in Russian history and studies, to Tufts and a couple of others.

My dad was insistent, "Why don't you apply to Georgetown?" Just to get him off my back, I did. And lo and behold, I got in. They had what was called a Russian Area Studies Program, RASP, and I got a Master's. I ended up coming down here in September of '74. I figured I'd be here for a couple of years, get the degree, and go back. I've been here ever since.

After six months, I came down here in September so it's now January of '75, and I'm running out of money. I went looking for work. My dad said, "Well, go to your congressman's office." Another thing, just to get him off my back, I did, but unbeknownst to me, he knew my congressman. We used to get a Christmas card from the guy, but I figured so did every other person in the district. But he had worked with him before the congressman had been a congressman. Torbert Macdonald was his name. His claim to fame was founder of PBS [Public Broadcasting Service]. It was his bill that established PBS. And for football fans before cable, it was his bill that ended the

blackout for home football, home Redskins games and other games that were sold out 72 hours in advance.

I went to his office, again just to get my dad off my back. I walked in–I think I had a flannel shirt and jeans on–and said, "I want to see my congressman." The lady at the front, she must have been just passing through because it turned out she wasn't just the receptionist, she was the office manager. She said, "Can I help you? Do you need a job?" I said, "Well, is it that obvious?" Apparently, just that morning, their patronage in the post office had finished up and she knew they had an opening in the House Post Office. So I went back to working nights again. I worked from 3 A.M. to 8:30 in the morning, over in the House Post Office, sorting mail. You did that for twelve days. You did that Monday through Friday, and then on Saturday and Sunday you worked maybe 4 to 6:30, and then you got every other weekend off. You ran around the buildings and you dropped off the mail at offices at 7 o'clock, before they got in. So I would do that, and then go eat breakfast at the Longworth cafeteria. They had, at that time, pots of coffee strategically located around the cafeteria, you could have as much as you wanted. I'd drink some coffee and then go over to the Library of Congress, across the street and do some homework, and drive back home. I lived in an apartment that was two floors below the ground so sunlight wasn't a problem, and sleeping during the day wasn't a problem. Having already worked for a year and half at the warehouse before coming down here, I was used to working nights. I'd sleep during the day and get up and go to classes around 6:30, 7 o'clock, go home and do a little more studying, then sleep from 10 to 2, and then go back to work. That lasted for a year and a half. He died and I lost my patronage.

I got a job, briefly, making furniture for the Door Store in Georgetown–or assembling it, I should say. Then I saw at Georgetown University, on the bulletin board, a card that said, "Parking Lot Attendants Wanted, $5 an Hour. Must be Polite," or something like that. I thought, well, $5 an hour at that time was more than the minimum wage, more than I was making, so I figured, I'll be polite. I went down and applied, and I got the job. At the time, Lot 18, Lot 16, those lots were making people leave their keys, and it was a relatively new program. They had run out of space to let everybody park their car and leave it, so they said to Terry Flaherty, who was a U.S. Capitol Police officer, why don't you try to start this program? He hired parking lot attendants to be available to come out and move cars if people, if somebody came out during the middle of the day and needed help because they were in the middle of the row. He was running

the program, and I got hired as the parking lot attendant. I told him, "I need more than fifteen hours a week." But within three weeks I was like at thirty-five hours a week, and then a week later I was on salary as a supervisor of Lot 18. Because Lot 16 was more established and Lot 18 had just come on.

RITCHIE: Which was Lot 18?

PAONE: It's the one across the street from St. Joe's and the Hart Building. [At Second and D Streets, Northeast.]

RITCHIE: Oh, okay.

PAONE: That was just then becoming–

RITCHIE: They were just demolishing that block.

PAONE: Well, they hadn't yet demolished those front buildings down there by the Monocle, and First Street. That was Lot 16 and Lot 17. Then there was Lot 18 and a little Lot 19 over there. They weren't connected. There were fences and regular buildings. That happened after I was gone. So I did that for a year and a half, working as a supervisor of the parking lots while I was writing my thesis at Georgetown, and finishing up school.

RITCHIE: I noticed that your title was "Vehicular Placement Specialist."

PAONE: That's what I would tell people. You would go to a party in Georgetown and they would say, "What do you do?" "Oh, I'm in pre-med." "I'm a dental student." "I work on the Hill." "I'm a Vehicular Placement Specialist."

RITCHIE: You mentioned you were writing your thesis, what was it about?

PAONE: Soviet and East European energy policy, going into the 1980s. At that time, [Jimmy] Carter was in the White House and you had the gas lines, OPEC was a new thing, and the Soviet Union was the largest producer of oil in the world. A lot of people didn't realize that, except maybe the CIA. But they also had a captive audience, so to

speak, for their product, because they had to supply oil to all of Eastern Europe, to their captive nations, and to North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba. Those countries couldn't pay them in convertible currencies. They would get some goods from them, manufactured goods and raw materials, but especially as OPEC formed and oil became far more valuable on the world market, the Soviets realized that they could make money here. So they eventually changed their policy to the Eastern bloc and told them, "If you figure out a five-year plan"–which they all had anyway under the Soviet model–"we will guarantee you that much oil each year, but if you need more than that, you have to pay us in a convertible currency," like dollars or francs or deutschmarks. That would obviously put a pinch on Hungary or Romania, who probably had very limited capital. If they needed more oil, then they were going to have to sell whatever they could on the world market in order to get dollars to pay the Russians. Anyway, my thesis was on that. It seemed like a topical thing at the time.

RITCHIE: What were you aiming at? Were you thinking about going into teaching?

PAONE: Teaching would have been a first love. Or working with a company that does business with the Soviet Union. Or working on the Hill. When I got the degree I went around the Capitol and left my resumé with everyone in the world. But at the time, Carter had a hiring freeze on, because of budget constraints, and I didn't know anybody on the Hill. So I wasn't getting very far. The CIA was one of the few people interested in me. But I told them I was a researcher and not an agent-type person. If they wanted an agent they were talking to the wrong person. But before anything came of that, they said, "If we hired you as a researcher, and we wanted to send you out for a little bit more training, would you be willing to do the training?" I said, sure. I needed a job.

But Terry Flaherty, the guy at the parking office called me. I was no longer working for him. I got my degree, I got my Master's, and he had a Darwinian theory of employment. He only kept active students. Once you got your degree, you left. We had an amicable parting. I just told him, "I've already collected unemployment in town once. I'm going to go down and collect it again while I'm looking for a job, so I'm not quitting." Because then you would have to wait longer before you could collect unemployment. So he laid me off. I went off to look for work and collect unemployment. But then two weeks later I got a phone call at home from him. He said,

"What are you doing? Are you interested in coming to work on the Hill?" A friend of his, Patrick Hynes, who had worked in the Democratic cloakroom for years, and had come to our parking office parties and softball games and whatever, had told him that one of their cloakroom staff had moved out to the floor staff and he had an opening in the cloakroom. He knew Terry had a lot of good young people over there; did he have anybody he could recommend? Terry told him, "Yeah, Marty needs a job, I just laid him off." He said, "Well, can he be up on the Hill tomorrow with a suit on?" So I did, and the rest is history.

RITCHIE: That was in 1979?

PAONE: Correct. I went up and met with Patrick, and then [Walter J.] Joe Stewart was the secretary of the majority at the time, and I met with him. I had to wait for a couple of days for them to call and have me meet with Senator [Robert C.] Byrd, because he wanted to meet with whoever was going in, to make sure you have the right attitude, not thinking that you were better than you were. He wanted the place to be kept clean and orderly. A senator has his lunch in there, and when he's done, you pick up the plates and have them sent downstairs again. I told him I had no problem with that. "You want the place kept clean, it will be kept clean." So once he became convinced that I had no political ties to [Edward M.] Kennedy, being from Massachusetts–I told him, "I don't have any political connections. I don't know anybody in this town. My dad is a retired government worker. I don't have any political sway." Because it wasn't long, prior to that, that he had defeated Kennedy for the whip job. Once he became convinced of that, then they hired me.

RITCHIE: That's a case where political connections would have worked against you.

PAONE: Exactly. At least at that point.

RITCHIE: I just wanted to ask you a little about the days when you were in the parking lot. Did you get to meet many of the Senate staff people?

PAONE: Oh, yes.

RITCHIE: I would think that would have been a good networking situation.

PAONE: Well, not really. It would have been if you were more of an outgoing, gregarious person. That's not me. And I didn't see it as a networking opportunity. These people came out, they were through with their workday. They wanted to get in their car and go home. All they wanted from you was to move these two cars that were blocking them. So there were some people that were nicer than others, that you got to say hello, and you'd talk about the weather or whatever, and that was about it. Now, you make your circumstances yourself, so I mean for somebody who was more outgoing, and more gregarious, and more conscious of the position and thinking more ahead, they probably could have turned it into a networking opportunity. But that was not me.

RITCHIE: So now you've moved from outside to inside, and you're in the cloakroom, which is an unusual place. Very few people get to go into the cloakroom of either party, so I wondered if you could describe what it does, what services it performs?

PAONE: It's an L-shaped room. There's one for the Republicans, one for the Democrats. The long part of the room has couches and two tables, well, there's now a third table on the other side. But the couches and chairs are for the members to come in, sit down and read the paper, talk amongst themselves, sit at the desk at the end of the room maybe and go over their speech before they went out to give it, bring staff in with them. Now, in the days of television, their charts are stored in there, so they might come in with their staff and go over their speech and what charts they are going to use. At the end of the room, there are two big desks–it started out as two big desks. I've got an old *We the People* book that used to have a picture that I'm in. Basically it was two big desks mashed together, where you have four people sitting in back of them, answering the phones. You would have fifteen lines ringing–and then there are also ten phone booths, old wooden phone booths like Superman would change his outfit in, the old wooden phone booths that when you close the door the light goes on inside and there's even a little fan that goes on to circulate the air. People call in, mostly from the offices, but once TV came in you'd get calls from all over the world. Mostly in the old days it was the offices and people downtown, wanting to know what's going on, especially in the days before they were on TV.

Then you have five page lines, also, which were much busier in those days, prior to e-mail. E-mail completely changed that. We used to run these kids ragged, running things around from office to office. That was the only way to get them. You know, whip notices would go out on Fridays to all senators' offices, and the kids would have to wait around for them to approve the whip notice so they could then bring them around to every Democratic office. All that changed with email.

In the early days, you had a window in the corner that opened to the hallway out there, along the Ohio Clock hallway. You could open that window and get a little bit of breeze from the hallway, especially if the Republican leader had the door open to the balcony, where you've got the Dole Balcony. We used to open the window and have fun with the tourists. They'd be out there and you can hear them. The tour group would stop right outside the window, where there was a statue, in that window alcove, and you could hear them talking and explaining it. Somebody in the cloakroom would occasionally open the window a crack and say, [in a low voice] "HELP ME, HELP ME." You'd see these tourists look around, wanting to know where this was coming from. But that was when they actually had glass in the windows. In October of '83, a bomb went off in the hallway. Thank goodness it was a Monday night. Howard Baker was going to have us work late that night, but fortunately around 7 o'clock he got fed up with the lack of progress we were making and he came out and put us out. I go home and turn on the TV and see that a bomb had gone off in the Capitol. It was put under a bench right opposite the Republican windows. If there had been people in the cloakroom at that time, some of them would probably have died, because it blew those windows completely in. And that's right where the Republican staff sit, and also any members that were in there at the time. Which is why now those alcoves are just three-quarter inch steel plate, and those windows are gone. Inside the cloakrooms there are curtains up to make it look like a faux window, but that's all steel plate.

Each cloakroom has a refrigerator for the pages to get water. Pages are taught that the senators all get their water. If a page goes to get them a glass of water when they start speaking, they have options of the type of water–with ice, without ice, some don't want it cold, some want it lukewarm, some want club soda. In the olden days we had Northern water and Southern water, as we called it. There was Poland Springs from Maine, and I can't remember the name but the other water was from Arkansas. Eventually, we just stuck with Poland Springs. Then you also had water in a cooler. Some people just wanted

water out of the cooler. So the pages had a list on the refrigerator of all the members and what their preferences were for water, so all the kids could come in and get them a glass of water when they were about to speak, and get them a podium. Then there's a sink there. Now we've advanced to where we have a microwave and a coffee maker, too. So we had our own coffee inside the cloakroom.

RITCHIE: Was one of your responsibilities supervising the pages in the chamber, what they did?

PAONE: Well, yes, I mean the person that supervised the pages in the chamber was usually one of the cloakroom staff. I didn't get that, because when I first got started I got the worst job, which was the presiding schedule. That's the worst job in the city, easily, because you're responsible for getting senators up there to sit there for an hour at a crack. That's why you do it in pencil, because it will be a quarter to two and the person up there is expecting to be relieved at two, because they've got appointments in their office waiting for them, and ten minutes to two you get a call from the person who is supposed to show up at two saying they can't make it. "What do you mean, you can't make it? What am I supposed to tell this guy–or woman–who's out there wanting relief?" You then go scrambling, making phone calls, trying to plead with somebody for thirty minutes. The smart ones would take the second thirty minutes, knowing that the first thirty could go longer if you don't have relief for them. You just have a knot in your stomach all day waiting for the next person to cancel. As a result, every day you went in and called them all, reminded them, "You have this hour today. Make sure he's going to make it." That sort of thing. You'd be working on trying to fill in the holes, to the point where I would go around looking for help. I'd go in the Marble Room and they'd hide behind their newspapers. I'd show up in the dining room downstairs and they'd hide behind their menus. They didn't want to see me coming.

Then the next person would be the one who supervised the pages. Then the jobs changed. We still do have somebody in the cloakroom that supervises them. Everybody supervises them, but you always have one person that they know they can go to with their problems, as you will have occasionally.

RITCHIE: Well, what would you do if somebody had to leave and another senator hadn't arrived to replaced them?

PAONE: You would get whoever the bill manager was and ask them if they would go up there and sit there for a minute, or whoever had an amendment on the floor, which is really what you don't want to do, but you would ask them if they would do it until so-and-so shows up. But the really, really bad thing was if the opening person didn't show up. Well, you're supposed to be starting at X time, ring the bells, and there's no one up there. Then you'd have to put the leader up there, and they didn't like doing that. You ended up remembering who your weak links were, who was always late, so you didn't schedule them to be the opening person if you could avoid it.

RITCHIE: Then you had late night sessions, which you never knew how long they were going to go.

PAONE: Right, but interestingly enough that wasn't as bad. Because if you were there late it was because you were there working. So you had votes. So there were a lot of people around, and people would help out, because it was more interesting and because they didn't have any conflicts, they didn't have appointments, committee meetings, etc. If they were hanging around the cloakroom, usually you could find somebody.

RITCHIE: So mornings were harder than evenings?

PAONE: Mornings and during the day, during committee meetings and people have appointments. In the days of honoraria, it was horrible. When senators could go downtown and make a quick two grand and come back, it just would blow holes in your schedule. It was tough even as a floor staff scheduling votes. People were complaining about wanting protection for this time and that time. It was just ridiculous. I was so glad when they banned that.

RITCHIE: You probably got to meet all of the freshmen senators, because they're the ones that spend most of the time presiding.

PAONE: Oh, yes, I did. Of course, this was in 1979 and '80. Then when we lost the majority in '80, the presiding book went to the Republican cloakroom. So we didn't do it again then until '87. I used to joke, that the only person who was sad about the change of power was the person who was going to do the presiding, or who had presiding in the other cloakroom.

RITCHIE: There was a period when they used senators from both parties.

PAONE: That was before my time. That was under [Mike] Mansfield. Byrd wouldn't allow that because one time, apparently, under Mansfield, Mansfield had sought recognition and a Republican in the chair recognized the Republican leader instead. That was the last time that ever happened.

RITCHIE: It was Jesse Helms in the chair, too.

PAONE: Yes. But we offered to do that when [Tom] Daschle became leader. We offered to let them sit like three hours every afternoon, and they turned it down. So we said, "Well, okay, we offered it."

RITCHIE: They saw it as an onerous task?

PAONE: I guess, yes. They would have to fill those holes either.

RITCHIE: People say it's a good way for the freshmen senators to learn the procedures.

PAONE: Oh, it is. Like anything else, you learn by doing, and by seeing. And if you're up there, especially if you're up there during a busy time, you're going to learn the flow of the place. That's what you really learn. That's what you need to get a feel for, how the place moves, and how it operates, and what's the lingo, and how do you call off a quorum, what is the pace of waiting for the chair to send your amendment to the desk and wait for the clerk to report, etc. You pick all that up by sitting up there and watching. And in quiet times, the smart ones also take advantage of the quorum calls to pick the parliamentarians' brains, and the bill clerks up there, ask them questions about how the place works. That's another way of getting to know how the place works. So that's very good for the freshmen who take advantage of it.

RITCHIE: Both Senator Byrd and Senator Baker used to get annoyed when the presiding officers did something they considered inappropriate.

PAONE: Oh, yes, I remember the phone incidents. One time, Baker was out there and he was trying to seek recognition, or he was asking for a parliamentary inquiry, and [Larry] Pressler was in the chair on the phone. He didn't hear him. Obviously, that was infuriating. So Baker told Howard Greene, "I want that phone out of there." So the next day, the phone was gone. He had just unplugged it and took it off the hook. But the jack was still there. So [Barry] Goldwater was presiding, and he realized, "Oh, man, they don't have a phone up here anymore." The next time he came in to preside, Goldwater brought his one-piece phone, like you could buy in those days, and just plugged it into the jack. Baker was out there and he looks up and there's Goldwater on the phone! He's looking at Greene, "I thought I told you." [shrugs] "I did!" The next day, the jack was gone, too.

RITCHIE: I remember there was an incident where one senator had his lunch sent into the chamber, and Senator Byrd took umbrage at that.

PAONE: Yes, he didn't like that. We'd have to tell people. You'd have to go to great lengths sometimes. Somebody would be out there for a long time and they'd desperately want some coffee, so we would put it in a glass and wrap a paper towel around the glass and scotch tape it, so they could sip a couple of sips of coffee. But other than that, you're right, Byrd didn't want it, and you weren't supposed to have food up there.

RITCHIE: Of course, in those days you didn't have television in the chamber, so it wasn't quite as obvious if someone wasn't paying attention to what was going on.

PAONE: Right, and that's also what made the job in the cloakroom more difficult too, because you were blind. No TV. All you had was a speaker box. You had the four people that sat there, and there was a marble fireplace with a mantle. At the end of the mantle there was an old box, well, it's still the type of box they have under each desk right now, the speaker boxes. When someone would start speaking, you'd hear them on the box, and you had to learn the members by their voices, especially if you didn't catch the chair saying, "The Senator from Nebraska." If you caught that, then you only had two voices to pick from, so it was a lot easier. "Okay, I know this one." But you had to learn them by their voices. And if they went to a quorum call while they were negotiating something, and you didn't know what was going on, that's when you had to pick up the

phone and call your floor page, and say, "What's going on?"–which is why the floor pages became invaluable.

In those days, the Page School went the entire four years, so you could start as a freshman and stay four solid years. By the time you were a senior, you had been a page for four years and you're clearly floor page material. If not, you're a seasoned page. So you had a lot of pages who knew a lot more than senators did, especially freshman senators. So you would call out to the floor page and say, "What's going on?" They would give you a recap of who's talking to who and what seems to be going on, which is why we ended up having a lot of floor pages immigrate into the cloakroom to work, eventually. Bob Bean and Bill Norton were two. So, yes, it was much tougher before TV, especially for people in the cloakroom to try to figure out. Sometimes, if you didn't get a good answer out of your page, you'd just get up, put your coat on, and go out on the floor yourself and try to find a floor staffer, and try to find out what's going on. "We're getting a few calls here, people want to know what's going on."

RITCHIE: I've talked to people who were lobbying in those days and said that it was a problem because you didn't know if your bill was up and you had to stay close to the chamber.

PAONE: Oh, yes, and the tape was much more important then–the legislative tape–of updating it regularly of what's going on on the floor. That was sort of like your version of the Internet, in the sense that people would call that tape and find out, "Was there a vote on the amendment? Did it pass? What's pending now?" You tried to update it. That's part of the job of the people in the cloakroom, to update that tape every time something changed on the floor. If something didn't change, like you were in a four-hour quorum call, you still wanted to update it every twenty or thirty minutes. So people would say on the tape, "At 3:30 the Senate is now debating the windfall profits tax, and pending is the X amendment."

RITCHIE: And pending is a vote, presumably.

PAONE: Right. We're expecting there will be a vote at set time, whatever. You would have everything on it. Then at the end of the day, you would have to put everything on it that happened during the day. And they still do, to this day.

RITCHIE: What's the difference between the Republican and the Democratic cloakrooms in terms of the way they operate? Aren't there some differences in terms of who can go in?

PAONE: Yes, the Republicans were always a little more liberal about allowing staff into their cloakroom. Senator Byrd, and other senators, wanted the Democratic cloakroom to be more of a place that members could go and feel like that was a place that was their own, and talk among themselves without being encumbered by staff, which was why we always asked members's staff–and they still do–if staff come in there to ask a question, we escort them back out to the floor. But if a member brings them in, and he's in there with the member, then that's fine. But usually, the member brings him in, talks to him, and then he goes back out to the floor. Whereas the Republicans, at times–and this is just my personal feeling that it would get a little crowded in there with all the staff in the Republican cloakroom. The members, I don't think, were too wild about sharing it. And now they've got it set up even in a different way. They've got a bigger table in the middle and they've got rid of some of their couches, so there's not as much seating area for just sitting down and reading the paper.

RITCHIE: In the Republican side?

PAONE: Right. Mrs. [Patricia] Lott redecorated it and put in different furniture and things. We had the opportunity to do that and I talked to Senator Daschle. He agreed that the leather couches were still comfortable.

RITCHIE: I've heard from various people that there's an advantage in the Democratic side of not having staff around. That you don't have extra ears listening to what the deals are.

PAONE: Exactly. Especially when you're negotiating, trying to get your time agreement, or letting the leader know who's holding up the time agreement, and who he has to talk to. So, yes, there definitely are advantages to that. Now, granted sometimes you end up with a scrum in there trying to get a time agreement. You might have seven members, and each one of those members will have their staff with them. But they're all involved in the negotiations. That's fine. But other times, especially if you're the floor staff talking to the leader, and he wants to know what's going on, and you've got

confidential information to give him, you don't want to be giving it to him with five other people hanging around listening. Other leadership staff are permitted in there. The whip's staff, and then you've got the leader's staff that handle various issues, whatever issues are on the floor at the time, that sort of thing, so you may wind up with three or four or five staff hanging around, and then you've got floor staff.

RITCHIE: One of the parliamentarians said that whenever he was looking for Bob Dole, he would look in the Democratic cloakroom, because Dole would sometimes be in there, sitting in one of the chairs with a yellow legal pad, with everybody standing around while they were drafting some amendment. He preferred to go there than the Republican cloakroom.

PAONE: Sometimes he'd come in and sit down. Not that often, though. I wouldn't be surprised with that story, because they did have so many staff hanging around in there. I do remember one instance. It was a Jesse Helms' issue. [George] Mitchell was leader and Dole was minority leader. It was an education battle that required cloture on the conference report. Dole knew that the votes were there, that Mitchell had the votes. He knew that he was going to lose anywhere from eight to ten Republicans on cloture. And he would have frank conversations with Mitchell when they would meet. They would both be up front with each other. Like, Mitchell, "I don't know why you're doing this. It seems like a mistake to me, Bob, but go ahead." Or Dole would say, "Yeah, I think you are going to get cloture. I don't know why Jesse's holding out like he is." You had an instance there on that bill where Dole had told Helms, "Look, let's take the deal. Let's move the cloture vote up." I think an Easter recess or something was coming up. "Why make people have a cloture vote on Saturday? Let's at least do it Friday. Let people vote and leave. If they get cloture, it's done."

Helms refused, but the story that came out of that was a [Robert] Novak story that some staff had clearly heard in that cloakroom and passed on to Novak. Novak wrote it in terms of "Dole is sharing his whip checks with Mitchell, to the detriment of Helms, and this is the extent he's gone to selling out Jesse Helms' conservative effort here to stop this bill." It wasn't selling him it, he was just being frank. It was just admitting that, "Yeah, you've got the votes on this one, George." And telling Helms, "Yeah, he's got the votes, why are you making people hang around for this?" In the end, he didn't renege. He came over. Liz Lechworth was my counterpart at the time. I was the assistant secretary

at the time. I was still the one in charge of the floor, as far as legislation was concerned. She came over and Helms wanted to know, would we give him a vote on something. I told her I'd take it to Mitchell, but I was pretty sure the answer was no. It was a conference report, and he's not entitled to anything else at this point. We already had these votes. We'd had quite a few Helms votes in his time on every bill there was. So I didn't see any reason to give him another one. And sure enough, the answer was no. I said, "It's not going to happen, so can we move this vote up." He wouldn't let us. I said, "All right, we'll come in at 12:01 A.M. Saturday morning and we'll have this vote at 1:01 A.M., if that's your insistence." So that is what we did. We got cloture, and Dole was right. Dole voted with Helms, although Helms didn't show. He didn't even bother coming in for the vote.

RITCHIE: He had made his point, he didn't need to be there.

PAONE: Right, but you can bet there were some of his colleagues, similar to a [Jim] DeMint issue last year, who said, "Wait a minute. We're here having this vote, and that guy who objected to the consent isn't here?" Colleagues don't forget that.

RITCHIE: Is there much relationship between the two cloakrooms, and the staffs of the two cloakrooms?

PAONE: Oh, absolutely. Yes, because no one else can sympathize with each other, other than the staff of another cloakroom. Especially with the floor staffs, we had worked together with each other for years. I mean, Dave Shiappa, who is now the Republican secretary. He worked in their cloakroom just like I did. Laura Dove was a page, her dad was the parliamentarian. She'd worked in there in various jobs. Over the years, each cloakroom has a different ebb and flow as to how long staff stay. You'll get a period of time where staff will be there for quite a while, and you'll have other periods of time where people are coming and going. You don't get to know them as well. But you're always in touch. "We're out of coffee cups," so we have cups. "We need some coffee." For a while, we were getting Starbucks coffee and they weren't. So they were trading us peanuts for Starbucks coffee, because they were getting peanuts and we weren't.

RITCHIE: The Senate has its peculiar rules and ways of doing business. It's not

self-evident when you walk in the door. How did you learn what you needed to know, being a cloakroom staff?

PAONE: Well, when I first started in the cloakroom, it was just like, "Have a seat and answer the phone." I didn't know what a first-degree amendment was, or a second-degree amendment was. It was only by watching and asking a whole lot of questions amongst the people I was working with–the other three guys answering the phones who were with me, and mostly asking questions of the floor staff. Abby Saffold, who went on to become the secretary ahead of me, whom I replaced, she was very good about answering questions–and Charles Kinney–about what's going on, why are we doing this, what is a motion to recommit? If they didn't have time to explain it to you then, at least they pointed you in the right direction. "Here it is in the Procedure book." You can look it up yourself, and at least then the next time your question might have a little more intelligence behind it. It was just a matter of osmosis, of picking it up over the years. I was asking questions until the day I left. You're always learning.

RITCHIE: How about somebody like the Democratic secretary, Joe Stewart, was he much evident in the cloakroom in those days?

PAONE: Only when Byrd needed him. He would do whip checks for Senator Byrd, or make some phone calls for him as to what he anticipated a vote was going to be, or get somebody on the phone for him, things like that. Over the years, that job changed also. For a while, in the early days, I'm told, I don't have personal experience in this, before they changed the election laws, it was also something where you would raise money, or learned how to raise money, or deal with people that did that for the leaders' campaigns and things like that. By the time I came along, that was all totally compartmentalized to separate fund-raising or campaign people that were separate from the office. It was all different then.

RITCHIE: When you came to the cloakroom, Senator Byrd was the Democratic majority leader and Senator Alan Cranston was the whip. They had a different kind of relationship than some leaders and whips because Senator Byrd always liked to be on the floor.

PAONE: Right.

RITCHIE: He was there all the time. What was the job of the whip at that stage?

PAONE: You know, it's just like the job of the vice president. It's whatever the boss gives you. Other than that, you content yourself to your committee assignments, your chairmanships, you have other things that you do. Occasionally, the leader would ask him to do a whip check on something. But just as often, he would have Joe do it. Not to make sure, because Cranston could do a very good job, but Senator Byrd was such a hands-on person himself he wanted to do it himself, to know what the results were. So there wasn't much of a role. Occasionally, if Byrd didn't want to do wrap up at the end of the day–which was rare–we would ask Cranston if he would come up and do it for him.

RITCHIE: How do you define "wrap up"?

PAONE: Wrap up is the end of the day, the two leaders or their designees standing out there, calling up legislation and offering amendments on behalf of other people, putting statements in the *Record* on behalf of other people, getting amendments adopted and passing the bills, and then putting in the closing orders for the next day. Now it also entails getting maybe a consent or two on how the next day is going to operate, but in those days Senator Byrd never left that to anyone else but himself. He always did the consents. He had such a knowledge of it that he could do it off the top of his head. The only reason you wrote them down was so that Senator Baker or Dole could follow what he was trying to get, because he didn't need it written down.

RITCHIE: What was he like to work for when you first got started?

PAONE: You lived in constant fear, and that's why I learned so much about what was going on, especially when I went out to the floor, in '82. I was in the cloakroom from '79 and I went to the floor staff in '82. You lived in fear that he was going to walk in at some point and walk up to you and ask you what was going on. If you didn't know, you knew you were dead. I determined early on that I never wanted that to happen. So I considered the floor was going to be my own personal floor, and nothing was going to happen on this floor without me knowing about it, just for my own self preservation. That put me in very good stead for the rest of my time, and as a result I became a lot like Byrd, in the sense that I didn't trust anyone else with questions. I went to the parliamentarians myself and asked them. Occasionally I would ask someone else and

they would give me information, and I'd find out it was wrong, and then they'd get mad at me for not going to them anymore after that, but I couldn't deal with that. I would just go to the parliamentarians and get it from them.

Sometimes, after doing it for a long enough time, you could have a give-and-take with the parliamentarians as to why is this situation different from the last time we did this. Don't you remember that? And they might not. Then they'd go back and they may have changed in the situation, and then you could sometimes have an impact that way.

RITCHIE: I remember Senator Byrd in those days used to come in on Saturdays. Did that mean that the cloakrooms had to be open on Saturdays?

PAONE: No, the cloakroom wasn't, but somebody from the Democratic Policy Committee had to be there from 9 to 12, and in the floor staff, and up in the press office, and I think in the voting records office. I think it was because he would have press conferences on Saturdays. So in case something came up, where he needed some information about a vote, the Policy Committee is where the vote information is kept, and it still is. It's all online now, but in those days it wasn't, it was in these big books in the offices. So you had to have somebody there to take the phone call and look something up, if he needed it. So, yes, you had somebody in on Saturdays. They didn't need anybody in the cloakroom, though.

RITCHIE: I remember the secretary of the Senate used to keep his office open on Saturday mornings. Short staffed, but it was opened on Saturdays.

PAONE: Right, in case he needed something.

RITCHIE: So the cloakroom was open every day from when the Senate went into session until it went out.

PAONE: Right.

RITCHIE: And the function was to facilitate what was going on on the floor.

PAONE: Right. It's an information center where members and staff call in. Members use it to prepare for the floor. The staff answer the phone calls from members or staff wanting to know what's going on, especially as I say in the days before TV. "What's going on? When's the next vote? Am I going to have dinner with my wife tonight or am I eating there?" Especially in the days before TV, I remember in one three-day period we logged in ten thousand calls on a busy CR, as we called it in those days.

It's sort of their office away from their offices. Members are over there managing a bill, they use the staff to make phone calls. They'll bring over their list: "These are the people I should be talking to today, during the down time." They'll have you get them on the phone and then they can check off the list of who they have to talk to. Other staff from their offices will bring over file folders for them, with the letters they have to sign, and things like that. They would finish it up and give it to you, and you'd have a page bring it back to their office. If they were spending the whole day there, they would probably eat their lunch there, too. So you'd send a page down, take their order, whatever they want, and they would eat down at the end of the room, at the table. And that was it.

As I say, it was an information center. And then during a vote, it would become very crowded, as all the members would come in to vote, and then they'd all go in to use the phone booths. With only ten booths, sometimes you'd have guys waiting to use the phone. Sometimes they would grab one of the staff phones. One of things I did when I took over, I added more phones. I put phones on each of the desks–they didn't have phones then–so that added more lines and we could tell them, "You can use one of those phones." So we added a couple more phones.

RITCHIE: Senator Paul Laxalt said that the Republican cloakroom was a great place to watch Monday Night Football. Were there more relaxed evening session groups in the Democratic cloakroom?

PAONE: Oh, yes. You'd always watch. If you were in on Monday night, it would be a football game, or during the baseball season, especially once TBS began broadcasting the Atlanta Braves games, you'd have people watching ball games. [James] Exon was a big baseball fan, as is Senator [Jay] Rockefeller still today. One Saturday session we were in, I think they were debating NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], and Boston College beat Notre Dame. I believe Notre Dame was ranked

number one at the time, so that was a huge upset. You must have had twenty-five senators in there, with Kennedy and [Christopher] Dodd screaming when they scored a touchdown. I was out on the floor at the time and you could hear the yell go up from the cloakroom.

RITCHIE: Were there regulars? People who were there all the time?

PAONE: Yes, there were some. Senator [Quentin] Burdick, near the end of his days, preferred to hang out with us versus his office. He would come over and read the paper, and he would play cribbage with Pat Hynes, and then hang out in the Marble Room. That was great for me, because he would preside, when you asked him to preside.

RITCHIE: In case of emergency, break glass.

PAONE: Exactly.

RITCHIE: There were a few who lived on Capitol Hill who were also close by.

PAONE: Right, but if they lived on Capitol Hill, usually they went home and hung out there.

RITCHIE: Just before that, they had Senator Lee Metcalf who lived on Capitol Hill and they made him the permanent deputy president pro tempore because–

PAONE: He presided so much.

RITCHIE: He could be there when they needed him. But when he died, they didn't replace that position, so you didn't have somebody quite as convenient.

PAONE: No, Burdick was the best we had. He was great. Then in the '80s, we didn't have to do it until '87, and then we had a big freshman class. And then you also had a pent-up demand from people who had come in '80, '82, and '84, that had never presided, so it was new for them too. But eventually the newness wore off and then you had to rely on the freshmen.

RITCHIE: You came in 1979, and then in 1980–I don't think anybody on either side anticipated it–the Senate went Republican. How did the world change at that stage?

PAONE: Yes, it was a shock. A lot of people that you would talk to everyday on the phone in these offices were now out of work, looking for work, plus you had lost the administration, so there was no more administration to go look for work. [Ronald] Reagan had been elected. But we didn't change other than giving them the presiding book. It didn't take Byrd long to realize that the rules were such that he could still be a major power here, to prevent things from happening. It was around that time that they regularized the idea of a Tuesday Conference luncheon for Democrats, because we hadn't done that on a regular basis up until that time, as a way of keeping unity, and realizing that with a united caucus he could still affect the legislative process. The way to keep everybody united was to have lunch once a week and let everybody let their hair down and let them know what the schedule was, who has what amendments they want to do, and that sort of thing.

RITCHIE: You had all those senators who were used to being chairman.

PAONE: Right. Oh, yes, and in those days you went from two/thirds-one/third committee staff money, so your budget was immediately cut in half. It went from two-thirds of the pie to one-third of the pie when you were ranking member. It was a shock to a lot of people.

RITCHIE: Did it significantly impact the work of the cloakroom?

PAONE: No, because you still had to make sure they were there for votes, make sure they knew what they were voting on. Every morning you would still have to do the daily attendance for the leader, because that's one of the things they do, is call each of the offices and find out who's here, is he going to be here today and tomorrow and the rest of the week, so the leader would know what his attendance would look like if he wanted to schedule an important vote. You wouldn't do that if somebody was going to be off at a funeral or something like that.

RITCHIE: The advantage of being in the majority is you can sort of predict when

things are going to happen. When you were in the minority, were you less able to do that?

PAONE: Well, you had less control over when was the last vote. But you'd be surprised, you don't really have that much control over when things are going to happen, unless you're going to move to table somebody's amendment, because as far as having an up-or-down vote on something, the minority has just as much control over when that vote's going to happen as you do. I mean, you can force a vote on a motion to instruct the sergeant at arms, if you're the majority leader, or you can move to table if you're in the minority. In that respect, the day-to-day operations, you were more frustrated in the sense that you didn't have as much information. But quite frankly, when Senator Byrd was leader, you didn't have that much information anyway, because he kept it close to his vest, because he was using it to negotiate with the Republicans on getting an agreement on finishing up whatever was pending on the floor. So he wouldn't announce the last vote of the day until after he had gotten his agreement. So people would get frustrated with you not being able to tell you that. They have gotten a little bit more when the Republicans were in charge. Baker probably didn't play it as close to his vest as much as Senator Byrd did. But it didn't take him long to realize that that's one of your big power points as leader, and you don't give that up without getting something for it.

RITCHIE: I can remember, you used to walk through the halls of the Capitol in those days and you'd be stopped by policemen and elevator operators. They'd all say, "Do you know when the last vote's going to be today?"

PAONE: Yes, and you still get those questions. You'd have people from the restaurants calling because they need to know, "Do we have to put out a buffet tonight?" Or "Do we have to keep all these other people here to work the restaurant?" You give them your best guess, but that's all it ever was. You never knew when somebody was going to come in, and even to this day someone can come in and decide, "This is a good time for me to give a forty-minute speech because there's no one else around." And you thought you were about to go out.

RITCHIE: Yes, you can see the expressions on the faces of the people sitting at the desk. Well, you mentioned Howard Baker. How different was he from Robert Byrd as a leader?

PAONE: He was a lot more laid back. And he would be the first one to admit that he wasn't a master of the rules, but he had good staff. He had Marty Gold, who was a person who was with him, and Howard Greene was good, and Marty would serve as his parliamentary advisor. So he knew. And in those days he didn't bother trying to use the rules to surprise you with something. He knew that in the long run that was not going to do him any good, especially with Byrd. So he was predictable in that respect, and he was a nice guy. He is a nice guy. But Senator Byrd was much more into that floor and the way things operated. Baker was much more into the big picture, so to speak, I guess.

RITCHIE: You've seen a lot of different leaders. What works better? Is being on the floor all the time, and being a floor person, better? Or is being a backroom strategist better? What's your general reaction?

PAONE: You want to be on the floor enough to get a feel for the place and for your colleagues, and to know when the time is right for negotiations, or when you want to hold back. All of the leaders have always done all of that. It's just a matter of style. They all had their own different styles. Mitchell was different from Dole, but they got along very well. I think it's just a matter of individual style, more than anything else.

RITCHIE: There was some comment when Senator Bill Frist became the Republican leader that he had never managed a bill on the floor, and for a leader that put him at a big disadvantage, as opposed to a lot of the other senators who had served in that position.

PAONE: He was. He did have that much, but he was also a brilliant man and he was smart enough to keep all the floor staff together, Dave and them, and as a result he got good advice, and he was able to seamlessly keep the place moving the way the Republicans wanted it to. Now, like anyone else whose got a majority that has a number of different interests in it, he didn't have the ability to just walk out there and say, "Okay, this is what I want to do here." He'd have to go back and find out if both wings of his party would agree to whatever he was trying to do. He would get like–just like we're seeing today–[Mitch] McConnell may have a vast amount of his party that wants to do one thing, but there may be a half a dozen of his party that want to do something else. So you've got to find some way of driving down the middle of the road. [Jon] Kyl insisting

that they get another dozen votes the other night on the omnibus was a classic case of that.

RITCHIE: We've gotten to the point where you moved from the cloakroom to the Democratic Policy Committee. It's now 11:30 and I don't know what your schedule is.

PAONE: Yes, I've got to head back, I think.

RITCHIE: This would be a good place to break. Then we could pick it up with'82 and talk about the 1980s. You know, we're working right now on the Democratic Conference minutes.

PAONE: Yes, that's what Dick [Baker] was telling me.

RITCHIE: They're wonderful because they become verbatim. We had edited the earlier volume and that was just minutes.

PAONE: Right, they didn't have an official reporter in there then.

RITCHIE: It's fascinating material, although it's surprising to me that senators are fairly formal even when they're in private sessions. Occasionally they let their hair down, but most of the time they're not much different than they are in public.

PAONE: No, that's right.

RITCHIE: But we're learning a lot about the way the institution works. We have all the minutes from '71 to '81.

PAONE: Yes, and after a while you'll see that they realized that with the press being outside in the hallway, people became more guarded with what they said. It started out with: this is your inner sanctorum; you can let your hair down and say what you want in here. But too many times people would go out and give verbatim accounts to the press, and that was also before you had three daily Hill newspapers and *Congress Daily* and *CQ* and all this other stuff reporting twice a day on this stuff. So now they're just as guarded

in there as they are on the floor, normally. Mitchell would always tell them, "You know, you're not constitutionally obligated to answer their questions. You do not have to talk to the press when you leave here." But it didn't do any good.

End of the First Interview