

Leonard Ballard

Inspector, United States Capitol Police (1947-1984)

Interview #5

(Monday, October 3, 1983)
Interviewed by Richard A. Baker

BAKER: Let's go back to the Puerto Rican shooting in the House chamber in 1954. You had mentioned earlier this poor fellow, "Buck," who became an instant celebrity thanks to *Life* magazine.

BALLARD: Buck was a big man . . . a terrific grip, strong for his age. He was leading these two culprits out. When they came out of the House gallery, they threw their weapons on the floor and screamed, "Shoot us, shoot us." Of course, nobody was going to shoot them, naturally. But Buck happened to be the only officer in the [corridor adjacent to the] gallery. In those days we only had one, just for tourist information. But he grabbed one couple by the collar and was leading them down the corridor when the press galleries erupted, the photographers, the writers, everyone. They snapped Buck leading these two out. In about a month it appeared in *Life* magazine. Well, it wasn't very long before a young chap showed up huntin' Buck. He identified himself as his son. Twenty-year-old son from Texas. Buck had left Texas several years before that. His family didn't know where he was. I think maybe he had eight children. Maybe that's the reason he left Texas! He spent about a week with Buck and came back six, seven months later to visit Buck.

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We always thought maybe Buck would get him on the police force. (Laughter) But he never did. Buck weathered it very well. Paid no attention to it.

BAKER: Well, you mentioned that the police department didn't spend a whole lot of time checking into the backgrounds of the men.

BALLARD: There was no check. We had a captain who came here in the 80th Congress, a former Pennsylvania state trooper who decided to run a fingerprint check on the appointees. There was no such thing as an applicant. You were just appointed. Well, that didn't work out too well. If you were a veteran, the captain wanted a copy of your discharge. He ran into trouble there, because you have no veteran's preference up here, so why do that?

BAKER: Did he try it for a while?

BALLARD: Yeah, he tried it, but he couldn't get much cooperation from the men. Nowadays, you can run anywhere and [conveniently] get a copy [of discharge papers], but in those days they charged you for that and the boys just didn't buy the program, that's all.

Then he decided to fingerprint the appointees. Well, he ran into one fella who had just served sixty months on a Georgia chain gang. He brought that to the member's attention, and the member told him to forget it completely. He was his appointee and he would take the sweat if there was any. We ran into one who had a long record of

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attempted rape, larceny. It was a good one. He ended up a lieutenant! (Laughter) Retired from here as a lieutenant. Well, he had a strong sponsor and he did a lot of work at the sponsor's house. He owned a home out in Virginia.

BAKER: Was this on the Senate side?

BALLARD: No, House side. He spent all his spare time out there working around the yard, in the garden, and the horses, and that bit. He wasn't about to drop him. He didn't drop him. In fact when they first brought it to his attention, he had him promoted to sergeant! And then it wasn't too long after that that he had him promoted to lieutenant.

The records stayed there and Bob Pearce came up [as chief] from Metropolitan, the first outside appointment we had. He went through the records and he found this one. The fellow was then a lieutenant, and he couldn't believe it. And he called me down, and I said, "Yes, and if you go through more you'll find similar, but there's nothing you can do about it, chief, not a thing. This is not downtown." Well, he was going to do something about it. He called the sponsor. The sponsor came over. They don't often do that. But he came in the office and was in there just a short time and left. Pearce called me back. What happened was he came in and he wanted to know about this record. And Pearce had the clerk bring the folder

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and show it to him. He took it out of the folder. He tore it up and he dropped it in the waste paper basket and he says, "I don't want this man ever fingerprinted again." He thanked Pearce for his time and went back over. He wasn't fingerprinted again.

BAKER: The sponsor had gotten a little tired of hearing complaints about his man.

BALLARD: That's right, so he decided to get rid of it for once and for all. In those days, it was a standing joke among the men, "Don't get in front of a camera." And when Buck got caught, that was really it. (Laughter) "We have told you time and again, 'Don't get in front of a camera.'"

BAKER: And now look what happens, you've got all eight kids down on you. (Laughter)

BALLARD: And we had an old joke, "Does your family know you're up here on the Capitol Police Force?" And they said, "No, they think I'm in Pittsburgh stealing cars."

BAKER: Just thinking about the quality of the men on the force, was it uneven until the late 1960s when patronage ended?

BALLARD: We did have some with records. But to my knowledge, they never created a disturbance, not a bit. They went ahead with their work. I think they thought they were lucky to be where they

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were, and really handled themselves. And of course we had students, so these men were the ones who had to do the work. The students had to study. You had to understand that. You had to put that man . . . if he came to you and told you he had an examination tomorrow, put him on a post in an out-of-the-way place where he could study. If you didn't, he'd walk out and go home.

BAKER: And there was nothing you could do about it.

BALLARD: There was nothing on earth you could do about it. To my knowledge, the fellows I knew who came here with police records didn't cause us a bit of trouble. The fella who served five years [at hard labor] worked here three years and bought a filling station nearby. Kept it several years and sold it. We bought gas from him, we [the Police] had an account over there. He owns some stations out in Maryland now . . . a good citizen. You had a few who would shirk, but you have that anywhere.

We had two fellows on the Capitol third relief. They were sort of sure of their patronage. They were in the Senate Office Building. And they were sitting there, gossiping. In those days, everybody traveled by rail. Now, Scott Lucas was the Senate majority leader [949-51] He came down the corridor with a couple of big bags. He looked in there and saw the men sitting at the desk and he said that he wanted some help to get out to get a cab to go to Union Station. He said, "Would one of you fellows give me a hand?" And one of them

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reached over and picked his [police] cap up from the desk. And he said, "Senator, I think you're looking for a red cap. This is a blue cap!"

BAKER: No. He didn't do that? (Laughter)

BALLARD: Well, Lucas went on out. But when he came back on Monday, I want to tell you, there was some paperwork. But he couldn't clip him. They had it and they knew it. He tried his best to bounce 'em.

BAKER: I wonder whose patronage they were under?

BALLARD: I've forgotten. I think one of them was under [Harley] Kilgore of West Virginia, and of course, Kilgore was a power. In those days, you had the good and the bad. It would have been common courtesy for one of them to get up and help the senator out to the cab.

BAKER: Given the fact that was what many of the men of the force did . . . it was expected.

BALLARD: Yes. And we are supposed to be semi-professional. Today, they would do it. But then, they were independent. That was part of the patronage system. They would take care of their man and let the rest of them go.

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BAKER: At the time, did you think that sooner or later all that would have to change?

BALLARD: I knew the police force was going to have to change because conditions were changing. More people were coming to the Hill. More employees were coming to the Hill. There were more activities . . . rumbles, demonstrations. We had one demonstration where 3,000 shipyard workers from Brooklyn came down. There wasn't anything we could do about it because you can't throw a tomato against a tank. We just stayed away. We hid out. They eventually went back. In those days, they all traveled by train. They went back to Union Station, took a train and went back. They created some disturbance, but in those days, the members [of Congress] didn't think they had a police force, so they didn't criticize the police force for not taking a part in it. They thought we were just appointees to do what they wanted, not to keep any order. If you'd get to that point, you'd call Metropolitan. But I knew that had to change, because you couldn't depend on Metropolitan for everything.

Now the night they electrocuted the Rosenbergs [June 19, 1953], it was Saturday night, I'm sure . . . this Hill was black with people. I was in the captain's office in those days, and I came down here for some reason, and I called the captain . . . he lived over in Anacostia. He said, "Just tell the men to stay inside the building

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and don't get involved, because there's nothing you can do about it." We only had thirty men on duty in all of the buildings, they were covering the doors and posts. It was hard to get Congress to appropriate money for men. It finally took until they just about tore the buildings down. When they were going to open the Rayburn Building [in 1964]. Well, fifty men--now that wasn't enough to cover the grounds, the garages, and the building. But, if you'd asked for a hundred, they'd knock you right down. I went before the [House] committee [on March 20, 1964], the chief was sick, and I asked for fifty-two men. Fifty privates, a lieutenant, and a sergeant. I had no trouble getting them.

BAKER: I read your testimony for that hearing. Why did you ask for fifty?

BALLARD: Well, we decided on fifty. The Sergeant at Arms [of the House], Zeake Johnson, and I got together before the committee hearing and we decided that we'd ask for fifty and we'd get the fifty. Then they'd forget that, and when we got a new committee [due to member turnover on the specific subcommittee], which changes every two years, just about, especially that committee, then we'll go and ask for more.

BAKER: Congress, as an institution, seems to have a very short collective memory.

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BALLARD: Oh, yes. Now that was my first appearance before a committee. It surprised me how little the committee really knew about the police force. That put me right in the pocket. That made me feel so much better. "They don't know what I'm talking about, these men don't." Now, there was one member [of the subcommittee], from Iowa, a Republican. He questioned me pretty thoroughly. He wanted to know why our men had to work eight-hour shifts and go home, whereas Metropolitan didn't quit on an eight-hour shift, if something was happening. Well, I had a little background on the members, on all of them.

BAKER: Did you get that on your own before you went into the hearing?

BALLARD: You're darned right. I wasn't going in there blind. Well, I found out that he lived in the Coronet [Apartments--on Capitol Hill near the House office buildings] and at night he rode around in the precinct with the Metropolitan Police. I told him I thought the reason was because the Metropolitan police got paid for overtime and we don't. He said, "You don't?" And I said, "No, congressman, we come under the same rules as your staff. We can work seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day with no additional compensation." He said, "I didn't know that." Now, I saw him a couple of days later and he did compliment me on my presentation. Now, of course we had to go to the Appropriations Committee to get the money

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for salary and equipment. Now, old man [Thomas] Steed of Oklahoma was chairman of that and I had no problem with him. He was very cooperative. He wanted to know if we had gear, and I told him we did. You have to wring it [appropriations] out of them, because they don't know, even today, that there's a police force up here . . . half of them don't.

BAKER: That's surprising, because all they have to do is look out across the Capitol plaza and they'll see fifteen white shirts.

BALLARD: That's it. They have never put us down as a police force. We're a Senate employee, or a House employee, and we're just here to do their bidding. Until something happens, like the Puerto Rican shooting . . . and then they were going to do away with the Capitol Police Force . . . nothing but a nuisance.

I don't care what committee you go before, House or Senate, for men . . always ask for more than you think you can get because they're going to clip it out, I don't know why, but they are going to knock you down some. So always ask for more than you expect to get. It has happened in ever case I've known since I've been here. [Chief] Powell went up here at the time of the Watergate hearings but a member said, "When I was on my way up here, I passed fifteen policemen standing and talking, so take fifteen off of this request you have." So we took fifteen off.

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BAKER: My goodness.

BALLARD: That's the rule they use and you have to be awfully careful. When Styles Bridges was chairman of the Appropriations Committee [1953-54], he got us a pay raise . . . a dandy . . . for the police. He was a good friend of the police and we were good friends of his, too. His administrative assistant came over to the office to see me. I had known him when I was in the Senate Office Building. I took him back and introduced him to [Chief] Pearce. Pearce hadn't been here long. I asked him, "Has this been okayed by Mr. [Carl] Hayden?" And he said, "Yeah." Well, I went to roll call the next morning and I told the men, "Please do us all a favor. For the next couple or three days just play it as straight as you can play. Don't gang up. Don't be seen anywhere you are not supposed to be seen. If you can keep your skirts clean for a couple days, we're going to get a pay raise. But if one of you gets out of line, he's going to kill us." Apparently everybody did, because we got a substantial raise.

BAKER: And that was when the Republicans were in the majority?

BALLARD: That's right.

BAKER: But they still felt it was necessary to clear it with Hayden, a Democrat, because held been around so long

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BALLARD: Well, I did, because Hayden was not only on the Rules Committee he was the ranking Democrat on Appropriations. He'd cut you to ribbons.

BAKER: And the fact that he happened to be in the minority party at the time . .

BALLARD: Oh, no. That didn't make any difference to me, because Hayden had the strength, regardless of where he was.

BAKER: Hayden's Hayden.

BALLARD: They'd listen to that fella and I knew that.

BAKER: I read the transcript of the occasion in the mid-1950s [June 9, 1958] when Pearce was chief and he was testifying before a House committee. Some of the members said, "Well, we come through that plaza in the mornings and we look and we see four policeman sitting in a car smoking. And we just never see any men out there [on duty]."

BALLARD: That's right, that's right.

BAKER: And they took a break in the hearing after raking this man over the coals. The chairman walked outside on the plaza and looked around and he didn't see one man out there at all! (Laughter)

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BALLARD: That's it. I don't care how professional you are, you still have that problem. They just will not try to protect themselves and you have to do it. Sometimes they get aggravated because you bang them over the head all the time, but you have to do it. You know when these things are coming up. You do it for your good and their good, but it's hard.

BAKER: I suppose it has always been difficult to get a police private to think in political terms, in this political environment.

BALLARD: Oh, certainly. Even when there was patronage. He was here to get an education.

BAKER: Is that true now?

BALLARD: Oh, very true. You'd be surprised. One of the worst outfits we have is that patrol detail down there. Now, they don't care who it is. They'll stop him, they'll ticket him. If I had my way about it, I'd break that thing up and put lem out on traffic or in the building or somewhere or other.

BAKER: How long has it been in existence?

BALLARD: Four or five years, but you don't need it on Capitol Hill.

BAKER: There's not enough land territory . . .

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BALLARD: Of course not. A few streets. Of course, they go off their territory a lot, and I've often said it's going to get them in trouble. And we're lucky, or we'd be in trouble now over it. And they get out chasing cars. You don't need that kind of a police force on Capitol Hill. You see, this place closes down at dusk. It's over. If you had stores or shops or bars, that'll be different, but a curtain comes down here at nightfall. You don't have to hurt people, but they hunt 'em up. And ticket, ticket, ticket! You can go down here every evening and watch them turn in their tickets.

BAKER: How many tickets will they get over the course of a day?

BALLARD: Oh, sometimes a couple hundred.
(Portions Deleted)

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BAKER: Your tickets go through the District court?

BALLARD: Yes, but you see, it creates a resentment among the employees. They are the ones you want to take care of because your purpose up here is to take care of the employees and the members, that's what you're here for. When I was in charge of the Capitol detail, I didn't allow a ticket to be written within my jurisdiction without notifying me. They had to find me first. And writing tickets on parked cars--that was out. Strictly. There was [in my book] nobody illegally parked, because I looked at it this way . . . I had a [police] man in every drive. If he was doing his job, there were no cars in there that weren't supposed to be. In the afternoon maybe 2:00 o'clock, he would turn loose his drive . . . let the tourists come in because all the employees were in that were going to be in that day. Well, here comes the third relief of the patrol detail, up and down the drive writing tickets. Oh, boy! If I didn't come over here and see the chief. I told him, you keep those characters off the Capitol [grounds] with their ticket books. Because it was embarrassing to the men in the drives. They had told those people to park there. Here the person comes back the next day, "You got me a ticket."

BAKER: They don't know anything about one shift leaving and the next one coming in.

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BALLARD: I didn't like tickets. They [tickets] had no business in being up here in the first place. But everybody has to have a traffic book.

BAKER: And if you create a patrol detail, then their reason for existence is to write tickets.

BALLARD: That's right, but they could be used in so many other places. It creates a lot of ill will. You see, the lowest employees in an office can help you and can help the police department. But if every time they park a car you throw a ticket on them, you are not going to get much from them. And I always looked at it this way, any time you opened a door to one of these offices, be sure there was somebody in their to say, "Come in." Not say, "What do you want" and send you down the corridor.

BAKER: You wanted a friend on the other side of that door.

BALLARD: That's right. And it may be that that receptionist is the lowest paid person in there, but she can make it nice for you, or she can make it tough for you, because you have go to get by her. And that's the game I always played.

There wasn't a door over here I couldn't open. Of course, as I said before, I was never a policeman. I wasn't cut out to be a policeman. I've spent thirty-seven years on the police force, but I'm still not a policeman. Because, up here it is not police work. It's public relations.

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BAKER: It's a very special kind of position.

BALLARD: That's what it is and if it is handled right, it's a lot of fun. There's times when you have thefts or something like that that has to be taken care of. That's to protect the people up here. There's not much of it. You'd be surprised how much is in the office.

BAKER: Theft by the employees.

BALLARD: That's right. Not the Service Department . . .

BAKER: So you are saying that it is not the cleaning crews taking liquor and things like that.

BALLARD: That's right. I hadn't been [stationed] over at the Senate Office Building but a short time, I was a sergeant, and I got a call to come up to Senator Knowland of California's office. Something was missing from one of the drawers. Well, I went down to Mrs. Payne, who was in charge of the charwomen, and I had the chairperson's name who cleaned up in that room. I asked her, "How long has she been cleaning that room?" And she said, "Twenty-three years." And I said, "Have you ever had a complaint about her?" She said, "No, not yet." So I thought, "It wasn't her." So I took my temporary fingerprint box up to the office and said, "Now, I'm going to have to fingerprint everybody in the office so that the next time

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something like this happens, we can eliminate these prints." That was the last theft they had in the office.

BAKER: An excellent way to handle it. Did you ever have to do that again in any other office?

BALLARD: No. You'd be surprised. I know there were thefts, but they wouldn't report it. But I stopped the thefts in Knowland's office.

BAKER: Did you get calls from receptionists and secretaries who had visits from strange characters or people who looked like they might be troublesome?

BALLARD: Oh. That happened four or five times a day.

BAKER: Secretaries have little silent alarm devices under their desks to call for help?

BALLARD: In those days, that was before the sophisticated electronics, but we used to get a telephone call down at the office, "The package has arrived in 318." A girl is on the phone. Well, you know she has got a visitor in there that she can't handle. There's something wrong. So, you send a plain-clothesman. And if you don't have a plain-clothesman--we only had a couple--you'd grab a uniformed man and tell him to get into his locker and get his civilian clothes on and go up to the office and sit there and observe. And sometimes

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he'd bring him out. Now the chances were that we could talk him into going on about his business. But, sometimes, you had to commit 'em. Take them out to Saint E's [St. Elizabeth's psychiatric hospital].

BAKER: That must have been very, very delicate . . .

BALLARD: That's right, because you didn't know who you were dealing with. You didn't know who that person was from home. He might be a relative of an influential person back there that could do [political] harm to the senator. So you had to handle them with kid gloves.

Now, we had one case during the Watkins hearings over the censure of [Senator Joseph] McCarthy. I went up to see [Senator Arthur] Watkins, a fine old man from Utah, and I asked him to give me the ground rules on the hearings. I knew they'd be peculiar. He said, "There will be no television, no radio, no smoking, no standing, nothing but scribblers." We didn't have too many men then, but I told them the ground rules. Well, the second day, after the hearings, he called me into his office and said he'd gotten a call from CBS and NBC to say that they had been offered a tape of the hearings. I said that I would look into it. So, the next morning before we went up there I told the boys, "Somebody's taping those." In those days, tapes didn't have [a range of] too much distance. "Who ever's doing it has to be up close to the committee [table]. Just keep your eyes open." Well, I had a young fellow--he was a law

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student from Indiana, a pretty sharp character--so I told him, "You be exceptionally observant. Don't pay any attention to the order. You pay attention to the people in there."

I was standing outside of 318 [the Senate Caucus Room] and he came out [with a suspect]. What caught his attention was a safety pin on his [the suspect's] pocket. And my boy said to him, "What is that?" And he acted like he didn't hear him. So he raised his voice, although in a committee room, he couldn't raise it too much. But he raised it some. "What did you say it was?" He said, "It's a hearing aid. I am hard of hearing." Well, the boy didn't think that a hearing aid would be pinned in his pocket. So he said, "Come outside." So he came out to me and I said, "Let's

take him down to the Guard Room. " So, we went down. I don't know how the word got around. We unpinned the speaker and we told him, "That's not a hearing aid." Well, he had a tape recorder and had made a bag and had it around his neck under his shirt.

BAKER: And in those days, tape recorders were large.

BALLARD: Oh, yes. It was a heavy thing. He had paid \$400 for it in New York. Well, the word got out and here came the press. But we didn't let them get near him. But when the committee broke at noon, I took him up to Senator Watkins-- to his office. I said, "Here's your tape. Are you going to bring any charges?" And he said, "No. Can you erase the tape?" I said, "No, we can't, but

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Metropolitan can." And he said. "Well, take the tape down and erase it and give him back his machine. Take him to Union Station and be sure he gets on a train back to New York. (Laughter) Watkins was very complimentary of us for it. But I told the clown [the suspect], "Fella, if you had taken these back to New York and made you some records and after the hearing was over sold the records . . . You know NBC or CBS network couldn't afford to touch this for the simple reason that the Senate would bar 'em from the Hill. "But you could have sold records like nobody's business." He said, "Well, I've spent \$400 for this plus expenses down here." I said, "You just dropped it all fella, because my orders are to put you on the train." And we did. Watkins was pretty kind to us . . . wrote us a nice letter.

BAKER: He could be a pretty tough guy . . . pretty irascible.

BALLARD: He was nice to deal with, but you didn't want to go on the other side of him. When he told me what was to happen in that committee room, I told the men, "This is it now and nothing else. I don't care who comes in there . . . with a camera, they don't go in, cause he'll rip us up.

BAKER: There must have been great problems of crowd control for those hearings.

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BALLARD: There were. Of course, the Army-McCarthy hearings really had problems of crowd control with people lined up down the stairs, because those were televised and advertised. Every celebrity who hit town made for the Hill because there was live TV. And, of course, we didn't have many men in those days. I had five men to work the committee. That was all we had.

BAKER: Were the Watkins hearings open to the public?

BALLARD: Yes, but there were certain rules and regulations. He was a stickler, and that's what he got. I tried to give him what ever he wanted.

I was walking down with [Senator Karl] Mundt one night from the Army-McCarthy hearings and he said that things were very orderly that day. It was jammed packed. Standing and everything. And I said, "We didn't have but five faint today." And he said, "Five fainted?" I said, "Yeah, there are some every day." He said, "I've never seen . . ." I said, "No you won't. We have officers stationed through there and we have that back door and we take them through the back door and there's an attendant from the doctor's office back there and they revive them and send them on their way." And he spoke of that the next morning when he opened up the hearing and mentioned that even the committee didn't know they fainted. Of course, he said that we'd come under quite a bit of criticism, and we had, over the Puerto Rican shooting.

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BAKER: That 's true. And the House at that time had passed the bill to "professionalize" the force.

BALLARD: He said he thought it was unjust. We tried to redeem ourselves. We killed the bill on the Senate side. The captain, who was a former state trooper had no political knowledge, and we knew that, and we used politics on him. He didn't even know what was hitting him. I think I told you, I went to his office and asked him to put us under the bill to blanket in every person [on the force] who was on the Hill on the day of enactment. He wouldn't do it.

BAKER: That was the end of him at that point.

BALLARD: I told him, "You're in for a fight, Captain." Of course, we knew where the power was. It was in the women, and that's what we worked on. We worked on the women, and boy, I'll tell you, we set him ablaze. (Laughter)

BAKER: Next thing he knew, he was on the outside looking in.

BALLARD: That's right. He lost the battle, the war, the job, everything else. (Laughter)

BAKER: The whole works.

BALLARD: That's right. Those women weren't going to stand for us being abused. If I had something that I wanted actually to lobby, I would hire a former congressman's wife, or a senator's wife,

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because they're familiar with these people. They are entitled to come up here to those luncheons every Tuesday, even if their husband's not here any longer. There's where I'd put my lobby.

BAKER: Do you think that there are wives of former members who do that?

BALLARD: I don't know whether any of them are doing it or not, but I know a lot of them could use the money. You pick the right one, she could be so subtle that they'd never know it. Would be very effective. I know we killed a good bill that way.

BAKER: (Laughing) You sure did.

Now I'd like to turn to a discussion of the kinds of services the Capitol Police provide members. You mentioned Karl Mundt a few minutes ago. That reminded me of the story you told [off tape] of getting him out to National Airport. And you told a story about getting two senators out to Griffith Stadium.

BALLARD: In those days you thought your job was to take care of members regardless of what they wanted. The Sergeant at Arms always had a standing policy of "Clear it with me before you move [drive] any of them." In other words, that's all right, because the Sergeant at Arms is making his brownie points, too. So you let him make his

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and you make yours. Now, we didn't clear anything with the Sergeant at Arms. If they wanted to go somewhere, to go to the airport, or Baltimore, we took 'em.

BAKER: Did the Sergeant at Arms expect you to say to the member, "I'm sorry, I can't help you until you clear it with the Sergeant at Arms and get his permission?"

BALLARD: That's what he thought. But we weren't going to do that. You know that. We knew politics well enough to know that he wasn't going to say anything to us, after he found out that we'd made the trips or whatever we'd done, because we would run right straight to that member and say we'd got in trouble.

BAKER: You had one grateful member on your hands.

BALLARD: That's right. And then that member's going to go to him and say, "Now listen. I don't want to hear any more about this. He took me and that's it." So, you played one against the other. Now a lot of times you didn't want to do it, but if a member flagged you, that's all you'd want to do.

Now Mike Palm used to have a restaurant on the corner of Independence Avenue and Second Street. It was very, very popular with the House members. He even had the [legislative] bell system in the back room where they drank.

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BAKER: He had a special back room just for House members?

BALLARD: That's right. He had the bell system there. Now, we used to actually ferry them from the House wing to Mike Palm's and nobody knew it but us.

BAKER: And particularly ferry them back after they were through drinking.

BALLARD: Naturally. I don't suppose the House Sergeant at Arms ever knew it. But we had some good friends there.

BAKER: Were you on the Capitol detail at that point?

BALLARD: Yes. I had the House over to Independence Avenue. That was my jurisdiction. Independence, First Street, Constitution Avenue . . . all within that is the Capitol detail.

BAKER: I see. So because Mike Palm's was close to Independence Avenue . . .

BALLARD: That's right. You did what they asked you to do. We never got into any trouble. I never did.

BAKER: So there you were one day in April 1953 in the squad car and passed on the street corner Senator (deleted) and Senator (deleted) and their wives waiting to go down to Griffith Stadium for opening day of the baseball season.

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BALLARD: That was right here on Delaware Avenue, right in front of the Senate Office Building at Delaware and Constitution. A fella by the name of Bacon was the squad car driver. Ray and I were just standing there, and I knew what they wanted. I said to Ray, "Go ahead. I knew they want to go somewhere, but there's nothing we can do now. We're in sight."

BAKER: They'd seen you.

BALLARD: So we pulled over and I said, "Can I help you?" He said, "Yeah. We can't get a cab and we want to go to the ball park. It's the opening game." And I said, "Oh, yeah, I know about that." I said, "Okay, we're going in that direction." Naturally. I got out and we put the two women in the back with one senator. And [put] the other senator in between Ray and I up front. We were going down New Jersey Avenue. As I say, Ray Bacon, if there was a traffic jam in the metropolitan area, Ray would find it. We went down New Jersey Avenue, and sure enough they were going to the ball park, move a little bit, then move a little bit, little bit. We got fairly close.

We hadn't had the radios very long and here came a call over the radio to go to the Senate Door [of the Capitol], that a man had a heart attack in the old Supreme Court Room--the Labor Committee met there in those days--and to break down the [revolving] Senate [wing entrance] doors. Well the doors in those days were old fashioned.

You spread them out and you had a bar that was on one door and you hooked it in an eye on the other door, and that kept the doors apart.

BAKER: Were they like accordion-type doors.

BALLARD: Yeah. Then you'd break the bar and put them back and push the door over to one side on its tracks. So we sat there in that danged traffic and finally I said--I had the radio--"Okay, door is broken, everything ready. Okay." There's a pause. We have moved up a couple car lengths and then we had to stop. Here comes the outriders. Ike [President Eisenhower] is on his way to the ball game. Well, about that time, the dispatcher says, "Do you see anything of the ambulance?" And I said, "Yeah, here he is right now." And I opened up the speaker and stuck it out and the outriders went by with sirens wailing. (Laughter) I said, "Do you hear them?" "Yeah, okay." A little bit farther, "Got the man out . . . put the door back together." Sitting there in that traffic, and finally we moved up to the ball park.
(Portions Deleted)

But, I thought it was great there. Here we were on the way to the ball park and they were talking their political strategy. Anyhow, we let them out. And (deleted) said, "I know that you are in trouble over this, I know that. Any person who can be on New Jersey Avenue, break down a Senate door, get a man out of the Old Supreme Court, put the doors back together, and get him to Casualty Hospital, setting in traffic on New Jersey Avenue can always have a job with me. (Laughter) "And if they say one word to you, come to my office." After that, (deleted), who had an office in the Capitol . . . I'd be standing there every morning and he'd come in and he'd get behind one of those columns and say, "Do you see anything of an ambulance?" (Laughter) He did that as long as he stayed here.
Now the old senator from Illinois . . .

BAKER: Paul Douglas?

BALLARD: Douglas. One night he was standing outside the Delaware [Avenue] door [to the Senate Office Building] and had on that old searsucker suit that he wore all the time . . . hair looked like a rooster . . . it was pouring down rain, he was soaked. I went by. I thought he'd flagged me. He didn't. So, I went around the building. I've forgotten who was driving the car. The third time though, I pulled up beside him. And I said, "Senator, you are going to get soaked. Get in the car and let us take you home. You can't find a cab here this time of the evening. We haven't run across any

or we would have directed them down to you. They are just not available. Get in the car." Well, he said, "I can't." I said, "Oh, yes you can. Come on now. " So I got

out and put him in the back seat and he said, "How many times have I stood up on the [Senate] floor and said that 'Every free ride in Washington ought to be painted yellow so everybody would know who was on a free ride'." And I said, "Well, you're not too far out of line. On the side of this car, in big yellow paint, is a police sign." (Laughing) We had a black car and the police insignia was yellow. I said, "Just get down in the back seat and if anybody passes they won't know you." We took him home. He was tickled to death for us to do it. He was very chatty. You know he entered the Marines as a private and he said that he would rather get the congressional medal of honor than be president of the United States. He was a great old man. I liked him.

BAKER: He was a great defender of the Indiana Dunes. He once said near the end of his Senate career that when he came to the Senate, he came to save the world. And then he adjusted his sites a little bit being content just to save the country. And he finally decided that if he could only save the Indiana Dunes, he'd feel okay.

BALLARD: You know, he fought the Pentagon from the word go and he was right in most cases.

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We used to take [Senator Thomas] Hennings home. We always took him home because he was drunk. We wouldn't let him drive. Held park his car in front of the Capitol, but we wouldn't let him get in it. We'd load him up in the squad car. Held always give you his necktie. I don't know how many neckties I got from Tom Hennings.

BAKER: Why did he do that?

BALLARD: I do not know. (Laughter) Well, one afternoon, I was busy, and I had another car there. And I asked the fella [officer] if he was familiar with the northwest [portion of Washington]. He said he was. I didn't see him until later. I asked him, "Did you get the senator home all right?" He said, "Oh, yeah." I said, "What kind of a necktie did he give you?" And he laughed and he said, "Did you know he gave me a necktie?" I said, "He always gives you his necktie." He said, "That's what he did." He was going to save it.

BAKER: Hennings must have been grateful to you.

BALLARD: He was, but the next day you didn't approach him on it, or say anything. Senator (deleted). He used to get bombed. And he was always losing his car. That's the truth. We'd spend the whole day in the area. "Do you remember where you started, senator?" Held call me up on the [Senate] floor, up in the cloakroom. "I lost my car again

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last night." "Now can you tell me where you started?" Well, he could give me some leads and we'd always find it. Bring it up and park it.

BAKER: Did you get the impression with people like those that they could function pretty well during the day? And it was only near the end that the bottle got to them?

BALLARD: Neither one of them were powerhouses. Whether they didn't want to be or couldn't be. They voted and that was about all. I don't suppose that anybody can remember any legislation that they ever sponsored. You had so many of those. Functionaries who just came along for the ride.

BAKER: Pretty easy for you to spot them early in their careers, I'll bet.

BALLARD: That's right. Back when I came here, you had about eighteen senators who ran the Senate. And I think we got along much better than we do today. It didn't take as long to do things. You got good legislation. To me, those were better days.

Now, I did feel sorry for two men who came here at roughly the same time. That was the California song and dance men--George Murphy, and [Edward] Brooke of Massachusetts. They came here within a year or so of each other [Murphy in 1965 and Brooke in 1967]. They came here with labels, "Song and Dance Man From Hollywood" and "First

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Black in a Hundred Years." And the spotlight was right on both of them. It was hard for them. Of course, neither one of them lasted long and neither one of them did a great deal. But it was hard for them to do anything because they were labeled. Maybe if they hadn't been, they might have been better off.

BAKER: Do you think that applies to people like John Glenn today. He came as a celebrity astronaut.

BALLARD: Yeah. That has a whole lot to do with his presidential campaign.

BAKER: The other astronaut, Harrison Schmitt of New Mexico was just here for one term.

BALLARD: That's all.

BAKER: I did want to ask you about that trip to Griffith Stadium. When you got back to the Capitol, did you have face any music? Was there any problem?

BALLARD: Oh, no, no, no.

BAKER: How did they actually get that guy out of the Old Supreme Court Chamber?

BALLARD: They got him out of there in an ambulance, took him to Casualty Hospital, and he was dead on arrival.

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BAKER: Somebody else broke the door down?

BALLARD: The man on the door. We *knew* he would! (Laughter)

BAKER: This was the revolving door at the so-called "Senate Door" entrance to the Capitol?

BALLARD: Yes. It used to be an old door in four sections and you would take a bar and hook it in there and that kept them apart. In order to open it, you took the bar off, put it up against the door, folded them up, and pushed them on a little track over to the side. You didn't use it that much on the Senate side, but it was used frequently on the House side. Because of joint sessions, joint meetings where there were lots of people coming through. Now young [Representative John F.] Kennedy . . . I was hooking the door on the House side. It was the opening day of Congress and, of course, all the families were in and we had opened up the doors to get them out. The House had gone back into session and I was trying to hook this section over and every time I'd get it over there, here was a young chap on the outside pushing the door. So I put up with it for a few minutes, but finally I got up. I used a little profanity. "Would you keep your so-and-so hands off that damn door until I get it hooked together." (Laughing) And he stepped back. Well, about that time, the fella [officer] on the House Door came and got me by the seat of the pants and pulled me back and said, "That's a new member. That's Kennedy of Massachusetts." He was so young, but this boy on

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the House Door had met him the day before. "And he's trying to get in." I said, "Oh, all right." So I broke the door and I said, "I'm sorry." He said, "I'm sorry that I got in your way, but I don't want to miss a chance for my first vote." I said, "Well, I don't blame you. Get in and get in the elevator and get up there." The old doors were bad.

BAKER: We have a photograph of you standing at a door over on the House side at the time of a presidential address, much later.

BALLARD: That was the last time that Kennedy was at the Capitol [January 14, 1963]. He and Mrs. Kennedy and an officer by the name of Ralph Scalzo and I were there with old man George Stewart [Architect of the Capitol]. That was his last . . . he was coming up to address a joint session . . . but that was the last visit he ever made to the Capitol.

When he was laying in state in the Rotunda, we had had a dry run on [former President Herbert Hoover. About three months before that. You know the military over at Fort Myer, they are supposed to be in charge. They don't have too many candidates for [laying in] the Rotunda. But they used to have a lot of them. So many of those military men had never even been in the Capitol Building or on the Capitol grounds. So, they would come over--about twenty-five or thirty--in a bus in civilian clothes so they wouldn't attract attention. I would give them a dry run of the Rotunda. There was a

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little room down there right off the Crypt [ground floor] on the Senate side. It was used as a committee room of some sort. And I would take them in there. We had a few charts and I went over it with them. And then we'd walk through. "The House of Representatives on this side and the Senate on this" . . . all that business.

BAKER: You don't take anything for granted.

BALLARD: No. Well, we had [a dry run] three months before for Hoover. He was in a hospital in New York. In fact, I don't know how long the military detail stayed up there [in New York] so they could pick him up. Kennedy's made it look like it was easy for us, and it was. 'Cause we had just had a dry run.

BAKER: And, of course, Kennedy died before Hoover died.

BALLARD: Now, I have had an official part in more state funerals than any person who ever lived.

BAKER: Starting with Pershing . . .

BALLARD: Down through Hubert Humphrey's. And more inaugurations than any other official here. Truman's was the first one. Of course, the boys who were setting up the state funeral would say, "If you have any questions, ask Ballard. He was here for Lincoln's." (Laughter) "And he knows how to do them."

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BAKER: Well, it shows you that people don't write things down around here. They really rely on people who have been here a long time to get important procedural information.

BALLARD: "What'd ya do last time?" There's very little written. It should be.

BAKER: It really should. One other thing we discussed off tape was your chasing Vice President Alben Barkley out to Winchester, Virginia.

BALLARD: I got a call from Barkley's administrative assistant, Bill Vaughn, a good friend of mine. Of course, as I say, I knew everybody in the Senate Office

Building. He called me one morning and said that the vice president had left for Winchester, Virginia to make a speech and to be grand marshal of the apple blossom festival parade. But he discovered after he left that he had left his glasses and said, "He can't read a line without them." He said, "Do you think you can catch him?" And I said, "We can try, Bill." I got his glasses and went down to the squad car on Constitution Avenue and said, "Joe, have you ever seen the apply blossom festival in Winchester?" And Joe said no. Joe was from Georgia and he didn't even know they had an apple blossom festival. (Laughter) I said, "I've got a pair of glasses here for Alben Barkley, but don't drive too fast, and we'll see it." So we made a stroll to Winchester.

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BAKER: If you'd driven faster, you would have overtaken him and had no reason to continue onto the festival.

BALLARD: Oh, yes. Then it would have been shot. So, we found him at a restaurant having lunch. They had a room set aside for the dignitaries. And we delivered the glasses. He thanked us. We stayed around for most of the parade and had a lot of fun. We didn't go back until around 5:00 o'clock. When we got back, some of the boys on the front [of the Capitol] said, "Well, you clowns have been getting by with everything, but you have had it this time. The captain sent word that when you get back to put the squad car up. You are fired. The lieutenant's in the same mood." I said, "Well, okay." The next morning, bright and early, I made it for Bill Vaughn's office. I said, "Bill, you know yesterday we weren't able to catch the vice president until they got to Winchester. And there's a little static about it. And I was wondering if you would write a letter to Joe Duke thanking us for delivering the glasses." And he said, "I understand exactly. What kind of a problem?" And I said, "Off the record, Bill, we stayed for the parade." He said, "I don't blame you." He wrote a letter, it was a dandy, signed "Alben Barkley." He said to his secretary, "I want this hand delivered over to the Sergeant at Arms office just as soon as I sign it." He said, "I think that'll take care of it, Ballard." So, I thanked him. That was the last we ever heard of the trip to Winchester. (Laughter) Alben Barkley stopped everything.

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BAKER: I'll bet he did, even if he didn't know it.

BALLARD: Well, two-thirds of those letters are signed by somebody in the office.

BAKER: One other story you mentioned off tape was the police post in the Capitol Dome. A lot of people are curious about the Dome and why they can't climb up there as it was possible to do in earlier years.

BALLARD: They had to reinforce the Dome. It got dangerous. It was open to the public. Of course, in the summertime, by the time they got up there, they had just about had it. People would faint and get sick and we had to have a man up there.

It was a punishment post. Because there were no toilet facilities up there. You had to come down. If you'd goofed off the day before, you had a gallon water jug. Now at roll call, in the morning, you'd see the fella standing over there setting a water jug down, you'd know he'd been in trouble the day before. And sure enough, when they'd call the roll, "The Dome," he'd get out his water jug and take off.

BAKER: I'll bet you didn't see the same guy with that water jug two days in a row.

BALLARD: Not *too* often! Then when they remodeled the Dome they put steel up there, so you can't go up there [except in the company of a member of Congress].

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BAKER: Were there other "punishment posts?"

BALLARD: No. That was it.

BAKER: That was the top post?

BALLARD: That was it. The Atomic Energy Committee [after 1951] met where the Old Supreme Court Room is now. They had a post in there. A desk. Across the bottom of the desk there was a bar. If you touched that bar, it alerted an agency downtown, a security agency, to come up to see what was the trouble. Well, the lieutenant [in charge] was a good friend of mine. He thought that that would be a good post for me because I could sit in there and I wouldn't have to patrol and I could read. But, I didn't want that post. That wasn't my bag at all. I liked to be out mingling with the people. But, I couldn't tell him, because I knew darned well if I did, then I was stuck forever. I was in there a week or so. And I touched that bar. Well, here came the cowboy from downtown. He grabbed the lieutenant.

BAKER: The cowboy from downtown?

BALLARD: Yeah. The security man. He had two guns strapped on him.

BAKER: Because it was the Joint Atomic Energy Committee?

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BALLARD: Oh, yeah. I said, "Well, I don't think there is much wrong. Maybe I accidentally hit that bar." Well, okay. Well, about a week later, I touched it again. Here came cowboy. (Laughter) The lieutenant is fuming. "Now, Ballard, if you don't be more careful, I'm going to have to take you out of this place." And I said, "Oh, I don't want to leave this. This is right up my alley. I read." And he finally said, "Ballard, you're out of here now." I had to trick him.

BAKER: Why did you think that if you hadn't tricked him . . . what was the problem with that?

BALLARD: He thought it was a good post for me. He was the type of fella, if you had said, "I don't like this post," you'd have died on it. He would have seen that you died right there. (Laughter) So, I couldn't say I didn't want it. I just had to work my way out of it. He was a good friend, but you could trick him pretty easily. In those days, the name of the game was "Can you screw the official." When they were carving the front of the Capitol [for the East Front extension in the late 1950s], in the grassy plot near the entrance they built a [temporary] building and they set that block of marble there. They brought those stone carvers and they sculptured that front right there.

BAKER: The pediment over the East Front stairs?

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BALLARD: Yes. That was carved right there on that grassy plot. Well, I used to enjoy that. I would sneak in there and watch them work for hours at a time. And I could hear the lieutenant hunting me. (Laughter) I had a way that when his voice drifted, I knew which way he went. And I'd go out the back door and into the building. And I'd run into him in the corridor. "I was hunting all over Hell for you." "Well, I've been down the corridor there." "Well, I wasn't down that way." And I'm sitting out there watching those stone masons.

BAKER: What was your post at that time?

BALLARD: Building patrol, which is a good one. But that is where I spent most of my time. They had a stove out there in the wintertime.

BAKER: How many carvers did they have in there?

BALLARD: They had five.

BAKER: And how long did that take?

BALLARD: Several months. Through a season.

BAKER: And they couldn't carve it someplace else and bring it in?

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BALLARD: They probably could have, but I think they would rather it was done right there [as was the case a century earlier with the new House and Senate wings].

BAKER: That whole East Front extension project must have been very disruptive.

BALLARD: Oh, yes. You see it was fenced off. The fence ran from the Senate steps out and across. And the same with the House. And that area was used for building materials.

The sandstone from the original building, when it was taken down [in preparation for the new facade] it was measured and numbered and then an exact copy in granite was quarried and sent up there, whether it was from Georgia or Vermont. And that was all stacked out there. When they first started excavating there for that, that's when they found the three steps that led up to where the original cornerstone was supposed to have been. But it wasn't there. There was no cornerstone there. Some people think that [James] Hoban [one of the original architects who competed for the commission to design the Capitol] stole it when they fired him and took it with him. 'Cause that's when it disappeared. Well, the three steps and some of the bones of the ox roast were found there.

BAKER: From 1793?

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BALLARD: Yes, September 18, 1793. A stone mason took one of those steps and cut it in three places and carved a masonic insignia in each one of those and gave one to the man who is now Inspector McDonald, and one to Herbie Price, who is a retired inspector, and one to me. And mine is now the cornerstone in my patio at home.

BAKER: My goodness. Were they sandstone?

BALLARD: Sandstone. Well, he took one of them and he gave us the other one and we put it down at the Architect's Office to store it there. And when they built the Shrine Temple over on Arlington Boulevard [in Virginia] the temple I belong to, well, George and Mac and Herbie and I gave them the [third] step for the cornerstone.

BAKER: Isn't that wonderful.

BALLARD: Oh, we got quite a bit of publicity.

BAKER: I bet you did.

BALLARD: I forget what was going on at the Capitol that day, a joint session . . . but none of us could get over to the laying of the cornerstone. But the cornerstone in the Shrine is one of the steps that George Washington used to go up to lay that [original Capitol] cornerstone.

BAKER: Where did the other one of the three steps go?

BALLARD: The stonemason took it.

BAKER: That's a wonderful story.
[End of Interview #5]