

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF WALTER J. HICKEL
MAY 26, 2009, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
ORAL HISTORY 2009-13-01
TED STEVENS PAPERS PROJECT JUKEBOX

MALCOLM ROBERTS: We will be in good shape.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Am I plugged in right?

CHARLES FEDULLO: I think so. These old recorders are a little fussy sometimes. I like to have the old and the new because I think they -- I think they help a lot.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: How long is your tape?

CHARLES FEDULLO: I have 90 minutes and then I have 13 hours.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Nineteen -- 90 on each side of it. Okay, well that will work.

WALTER J. HICKEL: We can make it work.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Yeah, we are in good shape. Testing one, two, three, four, testing one, two, three, four. I don't know why this is not being nice to me. Testing one, two, three, four. Testing one, two, three, four. Testing one, two, three, four. There we go. Testing one, two, three four. So now we are -- now we are cooking with gas.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is better.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And we will turn that up full. All right.

WALTER J. HICKEL: It has been a very good interview. I enjoyed it. Thank you. God bless you and see you later. (Laughter).

CHARLES FEDULLO: Put that on. All right. First, the name of the narrator

WALTER J. HICKEL: Walter J. Hickel.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And then Charles Fedullo is doing the interview. We are in Governor Hickel's office in the Captain Cook Hotel at Hickel Investments. This is Side A, Tape 1. It is Memorial Day week May 26, 2009, Tape 1, Side 1. So as we go through this oral history, it is in the book that you showed me "Crisis in the Commons", but I would like you to walk through the senator passes away, recent change --

WALTER J. HICKEL: What was that?

CHARLES FEDULLO: A senator passes away, recent change in state law as to how governor appoints a senator to replace an open seat. How did you approach and come to the decision to choose Ted Stevens?

WALTER J. HICKEL: Very simple. He was not a personal friend. He was an Alaskan, but he was a survivor and we needed a survivor. Not a Republican. Not a Democrat, but down the road someone that was supporting Alaska cause Alaska is an owner state. It is entirely different than any other state in the union. If -- commons are owned by all its people not by some company or something like that. And a lot of people didn't understand that, including Washington, DC and stuff. So I appointed Ted Stevens not because he was a friend. I could have appointed Carl Brady, a good friend of mine, stuff like that, but Ted was a survivor and I knew that. That is the only thing I was looking for. Someone that would be there long enough to understand that we are not a state like any state in the union. We are the only country in the world that is owned in common that has a democracy.

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF WALTER J. HICKEL
MAY 26, 2009, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
ORAL HISTORY 2009-13-01
TED STEVENS PAPERS PROJECT JUKEBOX

CHARLES FEDULLO: So as you come to this conclusion just reading historical references, when you talked to Richard Nixon about becoming Interior Secretary, you were passed a note I believe that said the senator had passed, Senator Gruening, and --

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Senator Bartlett.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Excuse me, Senator Bartlett, Thank you. Senator Bartlett had passed and what was the discussion with -- with President Nixon like?

WALTER J. HICKEL: You mean for why I appointed Stevens?

CHARLES FEDULLO: Did he want --

WALTER J. HICKEL: Wanted me. I think --

CHARLES FEDULLO: He wanted you to become senator?

MALCOLM ROBERTS: No.

CHARLES FEDULLO: He wanted you to become Interior Secretary.

WALTER J. HICKEL: He appointed me because he wanted someone and he knew him. He saw me take this to Truman. I told Truman why we couldn't become a state with only three million acres of land. He was just a young guy then. He appointed me cause he knew I didn't have any problem telling a cabinet officer, a Supreme Court justice, or a plumber exactly what two and two was. That was why he appointed me and he never ever opposed me.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What about the discussion regarding who was going to become Alaska's next senator with President Nixon? Did he talk to you about that at all?

WALTER J. HICKEL: He didn't -- he just wondered who I was going to appoint and I said I think I will appoint Ted Stevens. He said do you have the courage to appoint Ted Stevens. I just walked away and I appointed him.

CHARLES FEDULLO: You had promised Carl Brady, at a different point, that if any position came forward you would name him. Was -- how did -- how did Mr. Brady respond when you made the decision?

WALTER J. HICKEL: He understood that because he knew that I needed a survivor and that I needed someone that would understand exactly what I was talking about whether he was a friend of mine or not. And Carl Brady -- Ted Stevens was a survivor. He wasn't a friend. He was a survivor.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Why was it important -- you have talked a little bit about all of the different aspects, why was it important that you choose someone who wasn't your friend? You talked about why that it is Senator Stevens. Why was that important?

WALTER J. HICKEL: Because I didn't want to appoint a guy just for political reasons. I wanted him to understand the uniqueness of Alaska. Alaska was not like any state in the union. We are owned in common and owned in common means that all the outside interests think all it is is money. And so I had to have someone that understood that. Stevens understood that. He was not a friend personally, but he understood it. And I said Ted that is the direction I want to go. He said I understand you.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What did -- what was -- a lot of people said Paul Edgar Boyko would have been had the law not changed the next senator and you had worked closely with him.

WALTER J. HICKEL: You mean if the law had not changed over that?

CHARLES FEDULLO: If the (cough), excuse me, a law had recently been passed that when replacing a senator, they did not -- the person replacing the senator did not need to be of the same party. So a Republican governor could choose a Republican senator.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: A lot of people said that Paul Edward -- Edgar Boyko would have been the next senator.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Who?

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Edgar Paul Boyko.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Edgar Paul.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: This is -- I mean did you discuss that with him at all?

WALTER J. HICKEL: I didn't. Why would I have appointed Edgar Paul Boyko, do you remember?

MALCOLM ROBERTS: No, I have never heard that.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I hadn't heard it either.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Was he attorney general at the time?

CHARLES FEDULLO: He was attorney general at the time and some press reports had said and he had said that he thought that it was a way to keep him from becoming the next senator. It sounds like that is something that there is not much --

WALTER J. HICKEL: I didn't appoint that. I appointed -- when I do things I don't get into those little details. I am looking down the road where is this going to be 30 years from now. We have got to keep this going way down the road not today or tomorrow. And Ted Stevens was a survivor. He was not a friend. He was a survivor and I think with a conscience. And my conscience always leads me way down the road and so Carl Brady was a real personal friend of mine, but Ted Stevens was a survivor.

CHARLES FEDULLO: When you look back at the job -- well, I want to ask you one other question. Rasmussen. Was Rasmussen ever in the running as somebody?

WALTER J. HICKEL: Not from -- he might have been, but I was -- I was -- I wouldn't appoint him. I wouldn't have. Nice guy. I know him. He is my neighbor, but I wouldn't appoint him and that I wouldn't have appointed Carl Brady because, you know, he is my personal friend. I was looking down the road what is best for the state of Alaska and we are the only country in the world that is owned in common in the democracy. We can't have just friends. We got to have somebody that could see the difference.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Why was that person Ted Stevens? You said that he is -- he was a --

WALTER J. HICKEL: A survivor.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What is that -- tell me what that means?

WALTER J. HICKEL: Well it means a survivor is a little bit like a Wally Hickel. I am a survivor. I built the kids the 37 fence. I came up here and built a company. I survived. I built a country. I survived. I took it to Washington, D.C. I'm Interior Secretary. I am a survivor. I am a survivor. I didn't become Secretary -- Secretary of the Interior. Oh, yes, bullshit, I did exactly what I thought was right. History has got to prove that and Nixon talked to me at great length about that one time. About historical things Walter Hickel is - - the fact that he never changes his mind.

CHARLES FEDULLO: So --

WALTER J. HICKEL: So it his statement, not mine.

CHARLES FEDULLO: So you felt pretty strongly that Ted Stevens would be the best long-term solution.

WALTER J. HICKEL: He was a survivor.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And what -- when you look back at the job, what was his biggest strength and biggest weaknesses -- 40 years? You appointed somebody to set the longest term ever in the US Senate.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Ted Stevens -- the only way we could win Alaska that was by politics. We had to sell this idea of an owner state and there was no one understood that. They were Republican or Democrat. Ted Stevens could survive through that. I saw that clear as a bell. And that is why I appointed him. Carl Brady would have been a great friend for 10 or 12 years, you know, but I needed someone to take that thought through there because we were changing the world. This state of Alaska changed the world. It is 84% owned in common and now Russia wants to be like Alaska. China wants to be like Alaska. I have taken it over there. They all want to make a country like Alaska because it is very unique. Alaska is the state of the union. We are a country of the world.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Talk about Senator Stevens' 40 years -- his over all --

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Legacy. I mean what do you think his strengths and weaknesses were? What is he going to be remembered for?

WALTER J. HICKEL: Oh, he is a survivor. Ted Stevens is a believer in those things. I know that, very unusual. He is not just a senator. He has to represent a country that is unusual in America and he did. He stayed there. He never asked me about anything. I never told him what to do, but he always stayed that line. He always stayed that line. He had a commitment.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Did you think he would serve that long when you appointed him?

WALTER J. HICKEL: I thought he -- yeah. I always thought -- I saw him as a survivor. If I changed anything from that than I would be changing him, but I saw him not as a friend but as a survivor. Look how long he survived after Ted Brady did -- I mean Carl Brady. Carl was a personal friend, but Ted survived.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What's his legacy? What is Ted Stevens' legacy?

WALTER J. HICKEL: Probably the owner state. If you were the only country in the world that has a democracy in common. Ted Stevens helped make that happen. It took him a long time to see it, but he sees it. I knew he would see it after a certain number of years. I never ever called him and said Ted you have to do this, Ted you have to do that. I just watched in awe that he supported Alaska as a survivor and the President saw that. I took that to Nixon and I took it to Truman. I took it to -- I didn't ask them what they thought. I told them what it was.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Talk to me a little bit about your relationship. How you met Senator Stevens and how you two developed a relationship? I always think that it is --

WALTER J. HICKEL: I just met him here. He was never a personal friend. He was a good friend of Carl Brady's and Carl said, you know, I think Ted Stevens is going to survive a long time. I remember sitting here and I agreed with him to that. He didn't have to sell me. That little guy told me that. I have a little guy. You have probably seen him. The

New York Times had me on the front pages the little guy I was. And I have a little guy that I don't care if the pope, a president, or a prostitute I am going to tell them what I actually think and not just because he is a pope, president or prostitute.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Well, let me ask you I mean did your relationship with Senator Stevens ever have rough batches?

WALTER J. HICKEL: I never -- I never asked him for anything. Was there any one thing that I ever asked him do you remember?

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Well, it is interesting though but, you know, many times he didn't back you.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I know that.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: I know that privacy he supported the -- who was it?

CHARLES FEDULLO: Jay Hammond.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: During the primary, well, no even earlier when he won in '66 he supported him in the primary. He supported the former territorial governor. I am blanking out his name starts with M.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is right.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And then you -- you looked at running several times through the 70's and 80's. He rarely backed you. He usually tried to talk you out of it. He never supported the LNG gas line.

WALTER J. HICKEL: No, I know that.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Which you believed in so strongly for many years.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is right.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: So it has not been -- he has not necessarily been --

WALTER J. HICKEL: He was a personal friend, but he was a survivor and that is why we had to be a survivor cause we were not like any state in the union. Get that straight. There is no fucking state in the union that is owned in common. No country in the world that is owned in common that has a democracy. And we took that state and now you know what? China wants to be like Alaska. I have had -- they have come over to see me. Russia wants to make it like Alaska. I have been over to Russia. They are great friends. Russia and China looks like enemies I mean to a lot of people. They are not. They sur -- they are owned in common and they had that kind of a system. Russia is not an evil empire. I have been all through it. One time I spent months traveling through there and Russia is a friendly country, but they call -- our leaders call it evil empire because they don't want to be like that.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What about over the years how you would rate Senator Stevens watching him in different legislative battles, ANSCA, ANILCA --

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: How would you rate his skills as a legislator?

WALTER J. HICKEL: He is also a survivor. Ted -- Ted knows why I appointed him. Right at this desk I told him why. And so I never bothered him with it. I never talked to him about it. I never went -- when I went to Washington I would see him, I might not. That was one of the things --

MALCOLM ROBERTS: I was just going to say when -- during the statehood battle you saw the power of seniority.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is right.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And that was in your mind.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is exactly right.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: You saw it in a small state needed seniority.

WALTER J. HICKEL: You are completely right.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And with that power Ted did a lot for Alaska.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I knew Truman. I knew all those presidents. I was the only man in the history of America that served in the cabinet and didn't live in the continental United States. They put me there cause they knew that I would tell them to the truth for. They knew that. I didn't go and say I wonder what they think. I let them know what I thought. And you know what that is the most honest thing you can do. I am tired of these people that just want to talk -- they want to support the money people cause they will give them money to get elected. I never did that, ever, and that changed a lot of things. And so history will show that this owner state you can be yourself if you are real. It is very different. China sees that. My God, Russia sees it. Oh boy, I took it to Russia. I took it to China. I remember taking it to those countries and they are big countries and I could make them believers, but I couldn't make those economic interests in Seattle believe that.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And Ted used that seniority very skillfully.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yes, he did.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: On many issues. There is no question about that.

CHARLES FEDULLO: You chose -- you chose and you thought he would be a survivor. You saw the importance of seniority.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is right.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What -- what are the main issues that you think Senator Stevens helped the state of Alaska with? You talked about the owner state.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: But what about military? What about the impact that he had on appropriations?

WALTER J. HICKEL: He could do whatever he wanted that is important and let him make that decision. He never came in and said, Wally, what do you think? I never called him up and said this is what I think you ought to do. When it really got down to the owner state, it was very simple and when it got into an individual thing I let him make his own decision. And he finally came all the way around and he saw the importance of that owner state. He thought and there is no doubt about it.

CHARLES FEDULLO: How do you feel people will remember Senator Stevens?

WALTER J. HICKEL: The fact that I appointed him and he didn't -- he didn't support me on anything.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Do you think you will be remembered well for choosing him.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Do you think what?

CHARLES FEDULLO: Do you think that Governor Walter Hickel will be remembered well for choosing Senator Stevens?

WALTER J. HICKEL: I think Walter Hickel is going to be remembered worldwide as the owner state. Russia sees it. China sees it. Who else I was thinking of?

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Korea.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Korea sees it.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And countries in Africa are looking at it now.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is exactly right. There are people in Africa are asking me to come back down there. I have been there three different times and I have got grandchildren. Africa now wants to make his country like Alaska and that is going to change the world. Africa is big. God damn it is rich as hell, but it is poorer than any country you have ever seen. I have walked that thing. It is a disaster, but that is because the economic interests want to control it and boy, the world is seeing that. The world is seeing that. And so if we -- if we would ban as a common, this is an absolute (inaudible) if we manage the commons to the benefit of the region and its people and not some leaders with more regard to some company, like Africa is, we could eliminate poverty from this earth. And all we have to do is have a young guy and getting the field with the guts to say let's eliminate poverty on this earth and I will guarantee you the world is going to go for it. And you know that who I think it is -- Jack Childrens. I found out that --

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Jack -- if you go back to Jack Hickel, 16 years a medical missionary in Africa. One of his sons called the other day. He speaks Zulu. He is working with the activists and the (inaudible) in South Africa to look other strategies so that beyond the socialism, beyond the capitalism with all the Wall Street mess and everything, what's the alternative? The Alaska alternative is quite exciting.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is exactly right.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: It is a constitution issue as you know Charles. The flyers are our resources. The (inaudible) people and the benefits must go to them.

WALTER J. HICKEL: It is in the constitution and a lot of people in market don't give a shit about that or know anything about it. They don't want to take on the money people. Get a story out there, God damn, it is real.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Let me ask you a question. You know, you're -- you're a passionate --

WALTER J. HICKEL: Person.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Ted Stevens is a pretty passionate guy too.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Go ahead.

CHARLES FEDULLO: People talk about his temper. Did his temper hurt him? Did his temper help him?

WALTER J. HICKEL: I don't have a temper. I have a bleat. Jesus Christ even had a temper. I'm an Old Testament guy. If you look back at all those leaders, they didn't have tempers. They had ideas. Ideas are more powerful than money and I learned that as a little boy. My mother told -- I was about four or five years old or in there, had an older sister, my mother said Walter is different and she treated me different. And that is the reason with 10 children she didn't try to hold me back at any time. I went to war. I had no money, but I had an idea and she said Walter has an idea. She tells Gertrude and Kathryn, two years, two sisters older than I did and mother saw it and that is important and that you got to see it in the future and not at the moment. The eyes reflect the mind. The faith reflects the heart. Clear eyes clear mind. Open face open heart. And that is the way. I told that as a young boy and I have seen great teachers come in faith and listen to that. I am not a teacher. I have been that. You have seen me do that.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: You bet. You bet.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I have taken it to the UN. Yeah. I gave a speech once at the UN didn't I?
MALCOLM ROBERTS: Ninety-four. Why war? Why not big projects?

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is exactly right. I took that to the UN. I didn't say well, maybe, you ought to do this. Why war? Why not big projects? You know, wars are just big projects (ha, ha, ha). Change the UN. Ideas will change it. That is why Nixon took me to Washington. He said and he never argued with me. I don't care -- I remember Kissinger tried his damndest to do something with that and I got him thrown out again and I am just a kid.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Tell me --

WALTER J. HICKEL: And that is a historical fact.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Oh, absolutely.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: I mean how does -- you seem to have this tie with Senator Stevens about your ability to kind of see things --

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And say let's look into the future.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is right.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What -- when people look back when they say 10 years from now, 20 years from now.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Fifty years from now.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Fifty years from now what was the relationship between Senator Ted Stevens and Walter Hickel? You called him a survivor. You said you are not personal friends, but how will you two be linked and how will you two be remembered?

WALTER J. HICKEL: We are not linked. I never have taken him to dinner. I never have him in here to talk. He will ask me once in a while. I am a survivor with ideas and I was born and raised with the Old Testament. Two sisters read to me one hour a day out of the Old Testament when I was about six, seven -- five, six, and seven years old. And that Old Testament -- the New Testament wouldn't work. The Old Testament would say right to the point and that is what they read me and that was my whole history. I have never forgotten it. Sister Flavia and Sister Seraphin and sisters -- what are those sisters? I am trying to remember which one called me back when she was 96 years old and from the time they taught me was when I was five, six, and seven years. I went to school when I was five. Five, six, and seven years old they read to me one hour a day for two years. And the book they read me out of was the Old Testament. That is the only education that and I remembered it all. I didn't write it down. I couldn't write, but I had a remembering mind. That is exactly my education and I have 14 honorary college degrees at one school.

CHARLES FEDULLO: So, I mean what are the -- what are the significant issues you think over the 40 years that Senator Stevens was in office that he addressed?

WALTER J. HICKEL: He was a survivor. That is the only reason I appointed him. He was a survivor. We didn't need guys to get elected every time to put them in Kenai or something like that. Ted Stevens I saw that. He was not a friend, but he was a survivor I thought.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And Charles, your memo lists all of the big ones, you know, all of the big ones, you know.

CHARLES FEDULLO: I mean --

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Native Claims Settlement Act, the 200 Mile Limit.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Magnuson-Stevens.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Absolutely. All of these things once he was part of all the decisions were being made that affected Alaska -- those massive federal laws.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: That he was there for and he was tough and he was in there swinging for Alaska. Now all of his decisions weren't right and Governor Hickel didn't agree with all his decisions, but he was in there swinging.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is right.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And fighting for Alaska and Alaska benefited.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I never criticized him even to this day. He never supported me in anything, but he supported the ideas.

CHARLES FEDULLO: How about the one thing that is probably the most uncomfortable for people to talk about is the indictment, conviction, court case being thrown out against Senator Stevens? Do you have any thoughts on that?

WALTER J. HICKEL: What --

MALCOLM ROBERTS: This is the lawsuit that he -- Stevens just went through, you know, with Bill Allen --

WALTER J. HICKEL: Oh, Bill Allen, oh yeah.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And then, you know, he was convicted on was it seven counts and then they were all thrown out for mismanagement of the prosecution. So that was the case that actually led to his defeat as the senator re-election to Begich last year.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is right. Well, I -- if that happened, that happened. Look at Jesus Christ. He got crucified, but he didn't give up. I remember the teachers teaching me that I only had two years of education from Sister Flavia and Sister Seraphin read to me out of the Old Testament one hour a day for two years. That was my whole education.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And Charles, in those days they didn't know about dyslexia.

WALTER J. HICKEL: No. Uh-uh.

CHARLES FEDULLO: You are dyslexic, sir?

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah, I couldn't read. I couldn't read anything. But boy I could remember. I could remember anything and I could repeat it to the President of the United States or to anybody and that is what those sisters could -- and Sister Flavia or Seraphin called me when she was 96 years old I told you this and she was the --.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: I have been watching you; didn't she say I have been following you all these years?

WALTER J. HICKEL: I have been following you for all those years, just think of it. I was about eight years old the last time she talked to me and she was 96 then. I don't know how old she was then, but she was very young. But, she followed me all her life.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: You know they didn't understand dyslexia. They told the education authorities who visited the school that if they could give Walter his tests orally he would get A's.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is right.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: But they didn't understand the deal and so he couldn't read or write.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I couldn't read or write. I could get A's in everything, but I couldn't write.

CHARLES FEDULLO: May I ask you a question -- the one thing that always strikes me is you came to Alaska with thirty-seven cents in your pocket.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I was looking for a country that really needed help and I wanted to go to Australia and thank God, but I didn't have a passport. I didn't know what a passport was. Where can I go without a passport? They named Guam, Philippines, Virgin Islands, Panama Canal, Hawaii and the last place they mentioned was Alaska. I had never heard of it. How far up in Alaska can I go -- true story? The steamship company in Los Angeles -- well, young man, if you would have come in here a couple of weeks ago, we could have taken you to Nome, everything, the first of October in 1940. Boy, I am glad I didn't make it to Nome. They said we can take you -- now as far as we can take you is Seward. I said I will go to Seward and I hit the hiking way up to Seattle. And I slept in the engine room of that boat for seven days and seven nights and they fed me two meals a day and that is how I got to Seward. And when I got to Seward, a man -- an old Filipino guy, I remember he loaned me ten dollars to get to Anchorage and it was the 1st of October. It was cold. I had no clothes or nothing. And one guy gave me a sleeping bag and this guy gave me ten dollars and that is how I got to Anchorage with thirty-seven cents.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: There were tough trails about coming into Prince William Sound and seeing the Wrangell Mountains.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Oh, coming into Prince William Sound -- God bless those mountains. I said oh, God, it was a seven day trip and I looked at those mountains and I made a commitment. Great commitment. I said you take care of me and I will take care of you. He has kept his word and I have kept mine. That is all you have to do -- keep your word. I don't care if you are the whore or a saint, keep your word and it works.

CHARLES FEDULLO: So talk about the comparison. I always think this comparison is interesting that these two people who have had such a huge impact on the state of Alaska. One comes to Alaska six hundred dollars in debt. The other comes to Alaska with thirty-seven cents in his pocket. They are not friends. They are not close, but they shape the state. How -- how do these two people --

WALTER J. HICKEL: Who are you talking about?

CHARLES FEDULLO: You and Senator Ted Stevens.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Well, I appointed him. He would never have made it. I know.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Do you find any -- any sort of similarities to you or background or to your approach to things?

WALTER J. HICKEL: No, he is a believer. That is all I know. There are many things right. He is a believer. I didn't bother him. Once in a while he would ask me something and I never -- I never bothered him when he was a senator. I never bothered him. Nixon knew that. Nixon knew that I had a way of convincing people and that is why he took me in the cabinet. I am the only guy in the history of the world that ever served in the cabinet. I didn't have an education.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: That doesn't live in the continental United States.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I didn't live in the continental United States, yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: How -- how do you -- when you look back, I mean and I am asking you a similar question -- for 40 years -- you appointed the guy that has probably brought more money to Alaska than any politician ever.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I saw his ability. That is the --

CHARLES FEDULLO: Did he meet your expectations -- did he exceed it?

WALTER J. HICKEL: No, I didn't ask him for that. I didn't tell him he had to do anything. I am trying to tell you when I appointed him. What did I tell him?

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Well, you told him you -- we needed seniority and needed a survivor.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is exact. I said, Ted, we need seniority and we needed a survivor. I appointed him.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And you didn't that the other potential candidates for that post --

WALTER J. HICKEL: Carl Brady was my personal friend. He lived with me and everything, but Carl Brady wasn't that kind of a guy.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And what do you mean by that kind of a guy? Ted Stevens is dogging -- doesn't quit -- doesn't give up. Is that what you are talking about just this sort of --

WALTER J. HICKEL: No, Carl Brady was a personal friend. Do you know Carl?

CHARLES FEDULLO: Uh-huh.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I never -- I told him I was not going to appoint him. I was going to appoint Ted Stevens.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: But didn't you have a meeting in your home, governor, you called Ted back from Mexico.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: He had left politics.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yep.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And you and Carl and Ted met in your home.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is right.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And you talked it out with him and you said I am going to pick Ted for these reasons and Carl understood. Carl was also a man of great integrity.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah, Ted -- he -- Carl Brady. But I said I am appointing and Ted was not a friend. Ted was a survivor and that is why I appointed him. You have got to do things from here and not from this billfold. I am telling you.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Here meaning your gut.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Know your gut instead of your pocketbook, yeah.

WALTER J. HICKEL: And that is why I am the only man in the history of the world that served in the cabinet that didn't live in the United States and the reason Nixon took me is because I could handle guys like Kissinger. Kissinger was a disaster. You ever read those stories on history.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Uh-huh.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I -- I --

MALCOLM ROBERTS: He was on trial the same as when Kissinger came in and said you can't put the whales on endangered species list cause we need the oil for the space program.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Go ahead. I know --

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And Wally said -- now these are my words. I wasn't in the meeting, but it was basically this message. What the fuck are you going to do when there are no more whales?

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is exactly what I said.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: And (inaudible) said well we'll probably find a substitute. When you find that fucking substitute cause I am putting them on the list.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is exactly what I did.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: He signed it November 25, 1970 after Nixon had signed it. It was the first action by any country in the world to save the eight major species of whales.

WALTER J. HICKEL: That is exactly right.

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Big man did it. Over -- over Kissinger and his big companies.

WALTER J. HICKEL: I did. I don't care what they think and that is why Nixon took me in there cause Kissinger was owned by the top interests. He was smart, but he was owned by the very top interests. It didn't bother me a bit. I just kicked him out. You can do anything if you believe. I am a study of the Old Testament. What did Jesus Christ do when they crucified him? He still licked them. See my point and I am a believer. And that is the way it is. I was taught by Sister Flavia and Sister Seraphin and I told you -- I told the story about one of them called me when --

MALCOLM ROBERTS: Yeah, well, we have had almost an hour, Charles and -

CHARLES FEDULLO: Well, I was going --

WALTER J. HICKEL: Go ahead.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Just say is there anything you would like to add?

WALTER J. HICKEL: Like to add?

CHARLES FEDULLO: Uh-huh.

WALTER J. HICKEL: Well, I am going to be around as a young man until I die. I will be 90 years old in August. I might live to be 110, 104 or I could die at any time, but I am going to always be young and I am going to tell two and two is four.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Governor Hickel, thank you and joining us for the interview and of one A was Malcolm Roberts, governor's long-time assistant, author, and friend.

WALTER J. HICKEL: This book here --