

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF TRENT LOTT
JUNE 10, 2009, WASHINGTON, DC
ORAL HISTORY 2009-13-10
TED STEVENS PAPERS PROJECT JUKEBOX

CHARLES FEDULLO: It will take me about thirty seconds to just do some housekeeping and you will occasionally see me slip this over and maybe look at the tapes.

TRENT LOTT: Okay.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Don't think I am not paying attention.

TRENT LOTT: All right, sir.

CHARLES FEDULLO: We just want to make sure that we are recording. The name of the narrator for this is Senator Trent Lott. The name of the interviewers are Paul McCarthy and Charles Fedullo. Place of the interview is Breaux Lott Leadership Group in Washington, DC. This is an exit interview/oral history of Senator Ted Stevens, Side A, Tape 1. Senator Lott, you go back pretty far with Senator Stevens. Could you start with your relationship -- how you built the relationship with him and how far back as a member of congress you got to know him?

TRENT LOTT: I think it probably would go back 30 years at least. I was elected to congress in '72, but I had been a staff member four years before that for Democrat Congressman Chairman of the Rules Committee Bill Colmer and then, you know, was sworn in to the House in 1973 and, you know, so Ted had already been in Washington, you know, in a previous administration over at the Interior Department. I didn't get to know him then. And even as a freshman congressman, you know, I was just trying to figure out what I was going to do in the House, but eight years later I was elected as the Republican Whip in 1980 and, you know, right after Reagan was elected President and, of course, Ted was the Whip in the Senate. And so that then was the beginning of a relationship. I think he initiated it. Typically of Ted, you know, he probably called. I don't remember that there was a particular call, but said hey Whip this is the Senate Whip, you know, we ought to look for some opportunities to communicate so I will know what you are doing in the House, you will know what we are doing in the Senate and we can help each other. And then there were some security issues. We wound up sort of forming a group of Whips, House and Senate Republican and Democrat met and talked about security in the capitol, you know, what do we do to protect the perimeter of the capitol building itself. I was always even an advocate of putting up soundproof, bulletproof plasticized around the House chamber so that our constituents could be briefed on what was being said, what was happening on the floor and so people could spit on our head or throw a bomb out of the gallery (laughter). I never could, you know, sell that, but we did do some things in the 80's to better secure the capitol building that people don't go back and look at that. But the bulwarks we fixed it where basically you couldn't get a -- just drive a car or truck right into the basement of the capitol way back in -- we laid the groundwork in the 80's. And Ted was always very considerate and I even actually took a couple of trips with him overseas. I think we went to the Paris Air Show. He led a delegation, invited me to go. I was the only House member that went. So I just developed a real affinity for him, liked him very much and my wife and Catherine got to be friends.

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF TRENT LOTT
JUNE 10, 2009, WASHINGTON, DC
ORAL HISTORY 2009-13-10
TED STEVENS PAPERS PROJECT JUKEBOX

And then, of course, in -- a few years later in 1989 I moved over to the Senate and was -- knew that if you wanted to be successful you ought to seek the advice of some of the more senior members. And I sought the advice of my predecessor John Stennis who had served in the Senate for 40 years. He had some good advice by the way. His advice to me was two things. Number one, buy a house in the District of Columbia, don't rent because at 40 years, you know, he basically rented. And then also he said when you have an opportunity to take trips and meet with the world's leaders. Even though he had been President Pro Tem of the Senate and Chairman of Appropriations and Chairman of Armed Services, he had never left the continental United States and he felt like it was a huge mistake and that it was the broadening and a learning experience that would help you be a better senator in particular.

But immediately after I got to the Senate I started to -- collaborating with Ted Stevens and watching him. And, you know, I like to pick at him, you know, and he is a good one to do that. He will just pick right back you know. And then not too long after I got to the Senate in 1994 I ran for Whip in the Senate against the incumbent Al Simpson and Ted was supportive which was not an easy thing for him. But he knew my Whip instincts and my background and he just felt like that I would bring an ingredient to the leadership as a, you know, professional Whip if you will that it would be helpful. And, you know, he counseled me and handled it very carefully. The same thing then when I ran for leader to succeed Bob Dole a year and a half later he was supportive.

But over the years I had come to respect Ted as just a, you know, excellent legislator. Whenever we had a tough bill coming to the floor I wanted Ted in the chair presiding cause he knew the rules and the Democrats respected his knowledge of the rules. He moved the legislation along and he wouldn't put up with any shenanigans. So every time it was going to be tense or close I would send word for Ted to take the chair and preside, but also, you know, I learned to respect his very aggressive advocacy of Alaska and support for programs that were important to Alaska and I just considered him one of the two or three best legislators certainly the best appropriator I ever saw and developed just a real friendship. He is a super guy. He has done an awful lot for his state and frankly for his country. He was the guy who flew over the Himalayans, you know, during World War II. And, you know, was there at the beginning of Alaska, you know, served in I don't know one administration and really just helped bring Alaska into the United States in a way that now exists. And I have nothing but love and appreciation for Ted Stevens.

CHARLES FEDULLO: You know, you worked when he was Appropriations Chair as you said.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: You were Majority Leader.

TRENT LOTT: Right.

CHARLES FEDULLO: From a national perspective pursuit of funding and policy matters. I mean everybody talks about Alaska and we talk about all the money for infrastructure --

TRENT LOTT: Sure.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And to help a young state.

TRENT LOTT: Sure.

CHARLES FEDULLO: But you were looking at things from a national perspective.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Obviously an effective lawmaker and an effective policymaker, but how did some of this stuff impact nationally more than just the state?

TRENT LOTT: Well, Ted also was looking at things nationally, particularly when it came to the defense of our country and foreign policy he would put that above any other consideration. Now, but I will give you a good example. Alaska is not heavily laden with military installations even though he was always very much involved in the defense appropriations and I think when he was, yeah, chairman of the full committee he continued on as Chairman of the Subcommittee of Defense because he did feel that it was very important that, you know, we -- we have a strong and effective military and he was always trying to find ways to help our war fighter. So, I mean, there is no question he was -- he was a national patriot. As a senator, you know, you do represent a state, but you are much more a part of the national situation. In fact, most senators will tell you if it is good for the country, it is good for my state. They don't always begin from the standpoint of it is good for my state it must be good for America. No, I think it is a little bit of a reverse. But, yes, he was aggressive in helping his state and so was I. I represented one of the poorest states in the nation and that had been abused and, you know, I think neglected for many, many years and had not gotten its fair share of a lot of things, partially because we didn't ask for it. That is one of the things I did to try to help my state get off of its knees. I said look, if you don't ask, you are not going to get it. Now we got to get a plan on how we are going to move our desk forward and we got to go up there and fight for our fair share. That is what Ted did. And, you know, these earmarks that now is considered taboo, you know, why is it that some bureaucrat at HUD knows more about the need for a water and sewer system in Tchula, Mississippi or Ketchikan, Alaska. Senators have a knowledge. It is not just about awarding supporters, it is about helping people. And Tchula, Mississippi I probably never got twenty percent of the vote in Tchula, Mississippi, but -- but the stark poverty and the inability to get the federal programs to help it was an embarrassment. To have people in the year 2000 having to carry water to their house to drink and wash their clothes is outrageous. And the same thing with Ted. Ted was supportive of the Native Alaskans up there. He was trying to get infrastructure. I mean in a place like Alaska if you have ever been to Alaska there are a lot of places you can't get there from here. You know you got -- you got to fly to Seattle and in to Anchorage and you got to take a, you know, a commuter plane -- commuter plane somewhere and then you got to get on a floatplane and then you got to get on a boat and the roads, just basic roads. So I defend, you know, aggressively the fact that Ted was aggressive for his state. Now, having said all that, when I was majority leader, there were a couple times when Ted and I locked horns pretty -- pretty hard because, you know, I was determined that on my watch we will get a grip on spending overall. And my view he was always look, let's agree on a responsible aggregate number. Here is a number. We are going to control it. We are even going to reduce it perhaps, but let's get that. And then we will fight over who gets it, underneath that, that aggregate. Appropriators generally don't like caps or limits or sequestrations across the board, but majority leaders, particularly Republican majority leaders that are looking at trying to find a way to get the job done, but also begin to move toward a balanced budget and even a surplus had a little different point of view.

So I remember one time we were talking on the phone. I was pressing him basically very hard to -- to control the appropriation spending. He didn't want to do it and it got so heated that I stood up and we were basically going at it over the telephone. But we never lost respect for each other. He knew I had a job to do. I knew what he was doing and we fought it out but here is the point. In four of my six and a half years as majority leader with Ted Stevens as Appropriations Committee Chairman, we had a balanced budget and surpluses. We have not had them since 1969 and we have not had them since. So you can be critical of me and you can be critical of Ted as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, but on our watch we took care of our states, but we also took care of the fiscal policy of the country.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Senator, that is -- that is great information because no one -- and I hadn't thought of that and we hadn't seen it in our research, so thank you. As a -- when he is Appropriations Chair and you are leader, you did say you got --

TRENT LOTT: Sure, we clashed.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Omnibus budget bill -- there are tons of things.

TRENT LOTT: Oh, I hated them. I hated them. I just got --

CHARLES FEDULLO: Give me some of these. I know ANWR would have been a debate.

TRENT LOTT: Oh, no, that --

CHARLES FEDULLO: What were some of the issues that you debated over that created the most kind of harsh --

TRENT LOTT: Oh --

CHARLES FEDULLO: And as you are responding, please, you had mentioned before we started talking you had a nickname for the senator.

TRENT LOTT: Well, you know, when Ted would get ready to handle a bill on the floor, you know, he knew how to move a bill. And he would wear one of his hulk ties or the Tasmanian devil tie because he would just come to the floor and it would just be a terror through the legislative process. And quite often when he would get ready to try to finish up a bill, the so-called manager's package, John McCain would show up and object and then I would have to mediate, you know, the little tussle between Ted and John. Because of a friendship with Ted, I could talk to Ted, but philosophically on a lot of those points I was actually with McCain because quite often there were shenanigans that did -- the things that wound up in manager's packages that should have been there. But Ted knew how to move legislation and quite often he had the Democrats working with him. That is another thing. Ted knew how to work across the aisle. I mean it is not just his personal affinity going back to World War II, factors with Inouye, you know, Democrats generally respected him. Bob Byrd obviously, other senior members on the Appropriations Committee. Of course, we always said that there were, you know, there were three kinds of members of a congress. There were Republicans. There were Democrats and there were approp writers. And they were neither. They were approp writers first and party members and national leaders after that. But, you know, when he would come to the floor, it was really something to behold. And as majority leader, I was always pleased to have somebody that knew the rules and knew the legislative process and had the experience to move the bill. Because the biggest problem for the majority leader is just

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF TRENT LOTT

JUNE 10, 2009, WASHINGTON, DC

ORAL HISTORY 2009-13-10

TED STEVENS PAPERS PROJECT JUKEBOX

Page 4 of 17

getting something done. I mean it is easy to block things in the senate, but it is the devil to move things in an affirmative way.

Now having said that, I was always in support of ANWR. I believe you should drill wherever oil and gas is. If it is in my front yard, put down the well there baby and I think the American people, you know, really basically agree with that. We, you know, we have never really come to terms with energy policy. We can -- we can get more oil and gas and we can do it environmentally safely. We can get more hydropower. We can do nuclear power. We can do wind and solar, but I really think that is hokey. We are going to spend billions and get very little, but I am willing to fight conservation, all of that, but here is another rule that I had. And I think Ted Stevens kind of had this rule too. If you have two senators from a state that said this is something the people of our state want and we support it, I gave them the overwhelming benefit of the doubt. Whether it was two Republicans or two Democrats or one of each I respected the knowledge of the senators of the people they represented. I would have supported ANWR on that basis if no other, but also I wanted the oil and gas out of ANWR. And I never could understand why senators from New Hampshire or Maine would hyperventilate over some tinny part of Alaska which they would never see, had no knowledge of, worrying about caribou while the caribou love the pipelines, it just -- so, I guess that is one reason why Ted, you know, was, you know, I guess we had a good relationship because he knew that philosophically when it comes to that sort of issue we were very much in tune and I always voted with him and I always tried to design it where he would have the best opportunity to win.

Now sometimes he pushed for things like ANWR that balled up bills, but I didn't mind that. Now at some point I would say -- I remember one of the saddest things I ever saw was when we had that close vote on ANWR one night and Ted, you know, basically said why am I here and, you know, he was really disappointed. And there was some thinking on his part and others -- let's just kill this bill. And the next day that was the discussion. And my argument was -- I am not even sure I was majority leader then, but my argument at the time was look guys, he had a shot, he took his best shot, we came up a little short got to move on and Ted accepted that. It was very hard for him.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What are some of the other issues where you as majority leader had to tell him to back off? (Laughter) -- I am sure there is a number, but just for the record what are some of the things that he fought --

TRENT LOTT: Well, not -- not very much. First of all, you tried to limit it because you didn't like going backing up, you know, because he would, you know, he would be very -- very aggressive, but, you know, because of our relationship he got to where he would, you know, he would actually come to me with ideas. I remember we had a project one time that was moving forward but not doing great and he showed up in my office with an idea of a solution I thought was excellent. I couldn't get the parties involved to agree to it, but Ted was looking for a way to get the right thing done for the Air Force. But the contractors wouldn't buy that and I remember, you know, sitting in his office listening to some of the things. In fact, one of the things I got to where I did as majority leader I would go early in the year to Ted's office and sit down with him and say Ted, how do you see this year? You know, what kind of money you talking about, how are you going to assign, you know, the amounts to each committee and what are you thinking about in

terms of timing? One of the things that I did with Ted that majority leaders have since might learn to do. About the only thing you have to do every year is pass appropriation's bills. You got to do it or the departments of government shuts down. You need to do it orderly or you can do it messy. So what I did, in fact, I think the first year I came in as majority leader in '06, there may have been one or two more times since then where every appropriations was passed freestanding -- every appropriation's bill. But what my general thinking was is okay appropriators, have your hearings, do your subcommittee work in March and April, get about full committees in May and then the floor is yours in June and July. Now that is a sacrifice from a majority leader cause basically you are setting aside all these policy issues that, you know, we like to play with. But my attitude was it takes time. You have to do it in an orderly way and it takes about two months to get them through the senate so that you can have August and September for the staff work to be done and for the conferences to meet so you can get them done by October the 1st. And I think the fact that I would talk to Tad -- to Tas -- to Ted as kind of look at the year, I think he appreciated that and I think it was helpful to us in getting our job done. But the biggest conflicts we had was, you know, trying to keep a limit on the discretionary spending. He would always, you know, have a real fiery speech in which he would say look, the percentage of the government that goes to discretionary spending which is the annual appropriation bills is continuing to decline and it is these entitlements that is eating up all our money. He was right. Absolutely. The problem in the government is not how much we spend on transportation or interior or defense, it is these uncontrollable, supposedly, which I don't think are uncontrollable, entitlements; Medicare, Medicaid, Food Stamps, you know, Student Aid, Social Security, they just continue to just explode. So when I would try to get a limit on discretionary aggregate spending or by category, you know, he wouldn't like that and we gave it our best shot and, you know, quite often he would out maneuver me, but sometime I would manage to hold in the reins and, of course, in that period I actually had somewhat of an ally in President Bill Clinton.

CHARLES FEDULLO: It is interesting earmarks and set asides --

TRENT LOTT: See I was more of a budgeteer --

CHARLES FEDULLO: No, no.

TRENT LOTT: Than an approp writer. I was never on appropriations and, you know, nationally I didn't come to Washington to be a spender. I came to try to control the size of government and taxes and regulation and all of that. Ted had a little different take on that. So that was the only place we ever really had disagreements.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Let me ask you about appropriations, earmarks, and the ability to put things in. I think that, you know, there is a lack of understanding publicly what percentage of the budget, earmarks and set asides are and Ted Stevens has gotten a reputation, fairly or unfairly, as being a pork barrel politician. Can you just talk about that? I think that there is a lack of understanding in that.

TRENT LOTT: Well, yeah, there is a lack of understanding nationally and it was demagogue to the maximum by Barrack Obama and John McCain and the media, you know, just loved it, you know, pound the people. Now, so I think it is an absolute legitimate thing for a senator or congressman to try to get earmarks or line items for needs in their particular

states. No question about it and I will defend that until the last day I live and I did it as long as I was in the senate. We had some -- we used to have votes on amendments by Republicans, Senators Jim DeMint or some of them. Tom Colburn we are going to, you know, we are going to stop these earmarks. No, you are not. You never going to do that. There is a little thing called the constitution, number one. The purse strings are controlled by the congress, not by presidents and not by some nameless, faceless, hopeless bureaucrat at the Department of Transportation or HUD or Interior. You know, why should we just send a block of money down to the Mississippi Department of Transportation and say you decide where it is going to be spent. Well, they -- they had their own prejudices and priorities which may not be, when you look at the aggregate of the state, the right ones.

But now having said that there is -- when I first came over to the senate and when I was in the house, I never got many earmarks when I was in the house, maybe a few, but not many because particularly as a freshman congressman even though I had been a staff member and I knew the process better than most cause I had been -- worked for the chairman of the Rules Committee and then I was on the Rules Committee and I learned the process and once you learn the process then you are dangerous. And, but still, you know, a freshman or younger Republican congressman in the minority you couldn't get much. But as you work your way up and, you know, once you get in the leadership than you do have a little more influence with what goes into a highway bill or an appropriations bill, what can be spent.

In those days though to get an add-on or line item in an appropriations bill, you pretty much had to have already gotten it authorized. So if you wanted to have a port channel deepening project, you had to have it authorized before you -- with the Corps before you get it appropriated. And that was a good -- good requirement. And then when I came to the senate, earmarks generally were -- they weren't -- they happened but there weren't -- there weren't that many and generally they went to senior appropriators in leadership.

Well, once I got in the majority leader's position I learned how to work those levers pretty well. Then one year I actually worked myself up to the title of Prince of Pork which is number two. I never could overtake Ted or Bob Byrd, but I worked up to the number two position and I was very proud of that. But as the years went by, more and more congressmen and senators learned -- learned how to work the system and it went from just the more senior members of key committees and leaders then it began to work its way down the line in the house, you know, tax bills. So that is another thing. People always blame the appropriators. Let me tell you what, some of the biggest earmarks I have ever seen to benefit individual companies were in tax bills and they really unnerved me.

And so as the years went by more and more congressmen and senators started milking the system and then -- and it just kind of -- and you didn't have to have it authorized and it wouldn't even be in a bill that came out of committee or it wouldn't even be in either bill out of house or senate. And when one day boom it would pop up in another conference report. And the numbers began to grow. Now, still as a percent of pork spent, it is small, but I do think that in this century the congress, Republicans and Democrats, but

Republicans have to say we kind of lost our grip on things. It got more and more -- grew and it got, I think, more irresponsible.

I remember one night in particular I was on the Finance Committee and I was majority leader and we had a conference meeting and it was down to where you really make the final decisions and there was probably four or five of us total in the room. And it was at like at ten o'clock at night and I remember Speaker Hastert was in the room and I was in the room and probably, you know, the Chairman of the Ways and Means, Chairman of Finance, maybe a couple of Democrats, but it got down to a pretty small group and the decision was made to put a particular provision in this tax bill. It really would have benefited a particular company which really bothered me and it was billions. I went back to my office and I told my Chief of Staff Dave Hockaday we got to stop this. This -- the opportunity for trouble here or, you know, a good ProCo is extremely dangerous where you drop something in a conference at 10 o'clock at night that was a needed bill that could benefit a sector or a company that is in the billions. Now Ted Stevens was not in the room on that. So I do think that there needs to be some reining in of that sort of thing and I actually supported some changes. I -- I supported a procedure which would have blocked, when I was Chairman of the Rules Committee in the senate, to block that type of -- just dropping something in in conference and made it subject to point of order when it came back to the conference where it could be knocked out solely without killing the whole bill. And the rules were such that if you pulled a piece out, the whole thing went down. And now it would still have to bounce back to the house, but it gave you a process to knock out a particular, you know, abusive type procedure.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And so I am going -- you said you were a budget guy when you were majority leader.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah, sure.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And Senator Stevens was an appropriator.

TRENT LOTT: Sure.

CHARLES FEDULLO: If you look back and you look at policy, you know, were there any issues where -- where Republican policy was changed or shaped or Senator Stevens was involved in helping shape any particular issues?

TRENT LOTT: Oh, oh, yeah. Ted was involved on every, you know, leadership decision because as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee quite often we would have leadership meetings we would bring in Ted. And, you know, he was, you know, he was very senior too even though he was not president pro tem at the time, Strom Thurmond was. He was in on the discussions and I remember one time there was an issue coming up that the Democrats were going to invoke a point of order. They were going to try to block us on a rule of procedure. And the general attitude is when it is a pure parliamentary issue, you know, your members are supposed to stick with you even if they are, you know, more liberal or more moderate than the rest of the party. That was an affront to the leadership. I can't remember what the issue was, but it was pretty -- pretty dicey and I remember for some odd reason we couldn't have a good place to have a meeting. We wound up having the meeting up in what was then the Senate Library in very cramped quarters. And I remember Linc Chafee got up and basically said, you know, I don't agree with you on this issue and I am thinking about, you know, I am going to vote with the

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF TRENT LOTT

JUNE 10, 2009, WASHINGTON, DC

ORAL HISTORY 2009-13-10

TED STEVENS PAPERS PROJECT JUKEBOX

Page 8 of 17

Democrats on this point of order and Ted got up as one of the old bulls probably the most knowledgeable of the old bulls and said, no, let me explain this to you. This is what we are talking about and when you are challenged by the minority on a point like this you support the leader. That is the end of the discussion. And Linc Chafee kind of sheepishly sat back down. We had the vote and we won.

So Ted, he knew the rules. He knew how to use the rules, but he would defend the rules and he would also defend the leader. That is one thing I always, you know, sometime people would say where is Ted going to be? I answered, Ted is going to be with the leadership. And they said why? I said because he served in World War II. And they said what do you mean? I said that generation understood that there was a chain of command. When somebody is in a position and has to make a decision and somebody has to carry it out. And Ted understood that -- that generation understood it. The current generations do not. And that is one of the things I admire the most about Ted Stevens and our fathers' and grandfathers' generation. But he, even in the end, you know, when the leadership would make a call, Ted would be the first to get in line even though may have fought it like a tiger.

CHARLES FEDULLO: I am going to move back to ANWR for a second. You know, Senator Stevens was the probably the most influential person in the history of the state of Alaska no matter what you say.

TRENT LOTT: Sure, absolutely.

CHARLES FEDULLO: I don't think there is any doubt.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: One of the things that I think he would look back and say is a frustration or a disappointment would be the lack of his ability to pass ANWR during his time. Why did -- why did it not pass? What were the stumbling blocks?

TRENT LOTT: There was -- I think it is a great tragedy for Alaska, but more importantly for the American people. We need what could come out of that very, very small area and can be done in a very environmentally safe way. It just became the cause célèbre for the greenies in the country, the Sierra Club. And so you had senators from states that were basically against oil and gas and energy. You know, New York, but even you had senators from states like New Hampshire. Good gosh. They should have known better. But it was a green issue in New Hampshire and, you know, they have some hills and ski slopes and so even a conservative Republican from New Hampshire would jump ship. And, you know, maybe there were other factors involved there.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Could he have done anything differently? Could Senator Stevens have done anything differently?

(Tape went blank for three seconds)

TRENT LOTT: You know, Stevens and Frank Murkowski, the other senator, were -- were both, you know, I called my nickname for Murkowski was Moose cause he was like, you know, like a big old moose, you know, being from Alaska. And they both were pretty aggressive. Now I used to ask them why you guys so grumpy? And I would figure out what it was. They were flying back and forth to Alaska on weekends. I mean they did it all the time. Basically, they were sleepy. That is why they were grumpy. But they were, you know, they were -- they were very aggressive. I would get, you know, energized on

lots of issues. And, of course, Frank became Chairman of the Energy Committee. And I think there was feeling, okay, now we got it. We got Frank in Energy. We got Ted at appropriations. I actually thought that Lisa, Frank's daughter, would soften the edges a little bit and would maybe help get ANWR and she is still trying. In fact, just yesterday there was a vote on Energy Committee where she is now ranking thirteen ten. And a subsequent vote I think was actually twelve eleven. That might have involved the Gulf.

But, you know, there is just a huge element in America and the news media that just believes that we don't need oil and gas and we can live on less. And, you know, they don't like anything but solar power. And it is amazing to me, you know, how many people have bought that. I am not one of those. My attitude has always been this is America we can always produce more. We don't have to do with less. But so I'm -- I'm a, you know, I am a very aggressive produce more of everything advocate, but I finally concluded look why are we fighting over this. Why are the Republicans saying produce more of everything and Democrats are saying oh, no, let's -- let's use alternatives and let's conserve? Let's make people drive, you know, you know, people -- purple people eater little small automobiles. By the way, I drive a MINI Cooper now so, but well, my attitude is well, wait a minute, why don't we just do it all. Let's explore more. Let's do hydro. Let's do nuclear. Let's do wind and solar and biodiesel. Let's see whatever we can do with alternatives and let's conserve too. Let's give people incentives to -- but don't punish them. Give them incentives to put in different appliances and insulate their homes and do all that stuff.

But -- and so I really thought that maybe when we kind of changed our positioning and maybe the Sierra Club and others would change theirs. They didn't and so ANWR now has become such a symbol. I think maybe what we ought to do is change the name and pick a little different area and say oh this is not ANWR and do exactly what we were going to do at ANWR. So, but, I do think that some time, you know, that maybe -- maybe the aggressiveness didn't help, but I know how passionate they felt about it and I agreed with them. It was very disappointing that the senate could not get that job done to me.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What -- I mean you talk about the aggressiveness and lack of sleep and Senator Stevens' temper. We talked to many folks during this project about --

TRENT LOTT: You should know half of that temper is for effect. He is an old courtroom prosecutor, you know. It is kind of like a southerner using -- look I'm just a country boy argument. Nobody really believes it, but we do it anyway for effect, you know. Or, you know, use it when we start giving you that old look oh I need some help. I just don't know how this system works. Would you give me a hand here? I'm just a country boy we are fixing to pick your pocket. So that is our -- that is our technique. Ted's technique was he give them (phew) he would blow up and everybody draw back and then they would concede points to him. It was for effect, but he also -- Ted is a passionate guy and that is one reason why I love him, you know. Anybody that is milk toast and, you know, doesn't care about their issues or their state shouldn't be in the United States Senate.

CHARLES FEDULLO: The one thing, you know, cause we will go to legacy and then a couple more things, the trial and the Justice Department. Just walk through your thoughts on the process.

TRENT LOTT: Well, maybe I should be careful because I do think that the Justice Department and the FBI and the Public Integrity Sections of the Justice Department has all become rogue organizations that really didn't think they were answerable to anybody. And what I saw happen to Ted Stevens is one of the most egregious abuses of the legal system in America I have ever seen. I don't even call it a justice system anymore. It is only a legal system. But the kind of things they did like when the FBI supposedly raided his house. He offered them the key. They didn't have to raid it. They could just unlock the door and walk in. But no, no, no, they wanted it to be a raid and by the way, it was just quite a coincidence that the media was there to get the picture. Mohr should be ashamed of the FBI's conduct in that investigation.

I do think the Justice Department was used for partisan political reasons in Alaska that I still don't understand why all that went on. And by the way, a lot of it went on in the Bush Administration and I think one of my greatest disappointments in President Bush was after eight years he went out he had no control over his own administration. He didn't know what was going on at Homeland Security. He didn't know what was going on in the Justice Department. The number of personnel went up. They were all just running amuck and I am embarrassed and ashamed of that.

But the trial itself I have never seen such prosecutorial abuse in my life. I mean one of the -- I am a lawyer. Now, I haven't practiced law in a long time, but I studied law and I wrote the laws. Isn't that interesting? You are not a lawyer even though you are involved in 35 years or actually 39 in my case in writing the laws, but they say oh you don't know the law. Well, yeah, and I am a member of the bars in two states. One of the basic things you learn is you cannot withhold evidence that is exculpatory for a defendant. There was a pattern of that happening in the Public Integrity Section. The conduct of that woman in that trial, the conduct of the people involved and the, you know, unseemly relationships developed was a shame and a blot on the legal history of this country.

And I am so proud of Eric Holder and eventually the judge who kept threatening to throw this thing out because of prosecutorial excesses and abuses that Eric Holder came in. Bush Administration, you know, a Bush attorney general, probably couldn't have done it, but Eric Holder had the guts to look at this and say wait a minute this is wrong. And now there are not one, but two investigations going on of what happened there. An independent investigator appointed by the judge and one of the Public Integrity Section of the Justice Department appointed by Eric Holder. It was -- it is just outrageous and it actually brings me to tears to think that a guy like Ted Stevens, who served his country in World War II, spent all his life trying to help his state and create and make and build a state like Alaska, when he reaches 84, 85 years of age, he is defeated unfairly because of the timing of everything, abused by the legal system in America, disgraced and then everybody said oh, wait a minute. This is not fair, you know, so okay, so he is, you know, you could say he got his reputation back, but how does he ever, you know, recover from this at that age and, you know, he lost the thing he loved the most the ability to help Alaska. It is sad, but at least they had the ability to throw that verdict out and give him a chance to go on with his life. But it is one of the dark blots on the history of the legal system in America.

CHARLES FEDULLO: You said partisan politics. Could you expand on that a little bit?

TRENT LOTT: Oh, I think there is no question that the Democrats politically fed this investigation and intended to get Ted, yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: So the FBI and the Justice Department in Alaska.

TRENT LOTT: Justice Department in particular were being used by Democratic politicians and then, I don't know where -- how the FBI fit in that, except they just -- I think they kind of just do what the Public Integrity Section in the Justice Department tells them. I don't know, but that alleged raid on his house even for Mohr I mean --

CHARLES FEDULLO: Is there -- you would know --

TRENT LOTT: Outrageous.

CHARLES FEDULLO: About the Justice Department it was surprising that the indictment came down while the election was going on, any thoughts on that?

TRENT LOTT: Sure. It was politically motivated. No question about it.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Isn't there an unwritten rule inside justice that you wait until elections are over where you don't indict?

TRENT LOTT: I don't know look, I don't know that much about the Justice Department. I never and I wasn't on the Judiciary Committee in the senate. I was on the Judiciary Committee in the house for I guess four years, but I learned a long time ago basically just stay away from the Justice Department. Stay away from lawyers. Stay away from judges because there is only one thing that can happen if you deal with lawyers in the Justice Department and it is all bad.

CHARLES FEDULLO: I am going to --

TRENT LOTT: And I am ashamed to be -- to feel that way, but I do, you know. I think we got a system now where judges are out of control. I have gone back and forth in my own mind and I have changed my position twice, but I really think that one of the places our forefathers made a mistake was when they gave federal judges life time appointments. I don't think human nature can withstand being put in an exalted position where you are answerable to nobody.

CHARLES FEDULLO: The hardest thing about this project is to have to talk about Senator Stevens' legacy and the trials --

TRENT LOTT: Sure.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And being pardoned.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Talk about his legacy, what he meant to the state, what he meant to the country and if, you know, I would like you to talk about that and then answer a separate question and does what happened with the Justice Department taint what he had achieved?

TRENT LOTT: Oh, surely. It is a taint and, you know, in his eulogies that are written in the media at least they will always have, you know, that -- a paragraph about all that and that is tragic because here is a man with a life of 84 years of accomplishments and production and everything he did throughout his life for, you know, for his family and for his state, for his country and then to have this happen at the end obviously, you know, was very, very sad. Now, I think it will also have that asterisk oh and by the way, the trial was, you know, the verdict was overturned and thrown out. And I don't think we have seen the last of him. Ted may be 85, but the Tas ain't done. He will be around.

CHARLES FEDULLO: I am going to ask you (tape cut out) I think the last words you had said were the Tas ain't done.

TRENT LOTT: (Laughter) Well, look, you know, he is trying to figure out what he does with his life now and how he can be productive. I don't know how he manages to still work and be as energetic as he is. I mean it is just astounds me, you know. I actually went by to see him last week. It took me back once again when he said, you know, I'm 85 and I am thinking, golly, bum. I mean he is wiry and, you know, he is still in really good shape and I don't know, maybe it is eating all that salmon up there in Alaska. Something is -- maybe it is just the genes, but, you know, time will cure some of the pain and will blur some of the negatives of this and in Alaska, I think Alaskans probably feel really bad about what happened to him and what they did, you know, with the election. But having been on the mountain top myself and been down in the valley of the shadow of death. I have learned that if you take your lumps and just keep on paddling that you can come back up on the other side of the mountain.

And who knows what -- what good things might happen for Ted. I think he will still be involved in trying to get things done for Alaska. Who knows, you know, what he will be able to do in terms of another institute. And I think he wants to, you know, be a player. Maybe he will write a book. I don't know. But he deserves to be remembered as one of the, you know, the great patriots and one of the most effective legislators in the senate in the last 50 years. If I were going to write a book along the lines of profiles of courage and, you know, effective legislative ability, it would probably shock people who I would have in that book. It would be people like, you know, Ted Kennedy and Diane Feinstein, and John McCain and Ted Stevens.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Do you have any anecdotes you would like to share that sort of explain your relationship with Senator Stevens? And you have told a couple, but we always like to ask folks. Sometimes people come up with some interesting stories. Senator Inouye was very funny yesterday. He said those are between Ted and I.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah, yeah, well, you know, I think one of the reasons why Ted and I always got along. First of all, I think he liked the fact that I was a little bit of a warrior from my state and the way I felt about my country. So philosophically we were pretty close, but also, you know, there were times when people were kind of afraid of Ted or would say I ain't going in that lion's lair. He will eat me alive. And I would just wander in there and start picking at him you know and I think that he liked that. So I always will remember my relationships with other than the one time when I really got mad at him by controlling the spending. I always had a smile on my face when I was dealing with Ted and I think that he knew I knew it. He couldn't fool me with that. But I don't, you know, he never -- he never got threatening to me because he didn't need to. We were -- we were copasetic. You know, we were very similar in many respects. I mean obviously I was not the, you know, the same age. I was of a different generation and now there is another generation after me. But I think we always felt a kindred relationship in our styles and in our philosophies and in the positions we held.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What -- it must have been a different -- Ted Stevens is not a traditional Republican. As you said, he worked across party lines.

TRENT LOTT: Sure.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Effectively. Built strong relationships.

TRENT LOTT: Sure.

CHARLES FEDULLO: As majority leader was that something difficult to manage?

TRENT LOTT: Sure. I do think -- now this is about talking about me we are supposed to be talking about Ted, but I think Ted would say this too. The toughest political leadership job in Washington is majority leader more than speaker of the house cause the speaker has the Rules Committee. He or she can be a dictator. I mean they have got the power. They control the agenda, the time it is debated, the amendments, the votes. President, when the president makes a decision if he is effective, things happen. He sends the word down to, you know, the Department of Education do this or that and things are supposed to happen. Now I think in recent years Bush sort of lost the ability to do that. They didn't feel like he could make them do anything that they didn't want to. But, you know, he probably should have fired a lot more of them. But what was the basic question?

CHARLES FEDULLO: Was it difficult to manage --

TRENT LOTT: Oh, no, no, yeah, being in congress 35 years and serving in I guess one, two, three, four, five different leadership positions, both in the majority and minority, I learned some lessons. And when I first came to Washington and it was in the congress I was, yeah, I was 32 years old and I was very principled and, you know, very philosophic committed and my attitude was I was going to have it my way or no way and what I got was no way. And over the years I learned that look legislative processes are very difficult, ugly, lengthy process and it doesn't work unless you got people that are willing to give a little, get a little, and try to find a way to find a sweet spot to get something done. Now I was always a very philosophically conservative Republican and my voting record would show that. But my -- I think my demeanor was a little bit more moderate because I wasn't -- usually I wasn't mad about it, you know. I always tried to find a way to inject humor in what was going on. But also I had learned that you have to work with everybody to make something happen and so actually I learned to use the abilities of people like Ted Stevens who could get me intelligence first of all. I mean Ted -- remember he was, you know, president pro tem, he was Chairman of Appropriations, but before that he was a whip. He knew how to count votes and I could go to Ted and say what do you think? What do you hear on the Democratic side? Can you help me get this vote or that vote? I could remember being in the well of the senate when a vote was going on -- very close vote and I would see that there was a Democrat that maybe hadn't voted that Ted knew or was close to and I could go to him and say can you give us a hand here. And I can remember more than one occasion where we wound up winning by a vote or two thanks to the relationship that Ted had with a Danny Inouye or a Bob Byrd. So it made it difficult some time, but more often than not it was an ability and a talent that helped the senate move forward. There were two occasions. One when I was a majority of one when I was in the minority where I saw the senate actually rise above partisan politics and get things done for the country. One of them was in 1996 through '98 when we had the majority in the house and the senate and Bill Clinton had the White House and what did we get done. We passed all the appropriation bills. We moved to a balanced budget or surplus. We had welfare reform, safe drinking water, portability of insurance. And how did all that happen? You know, was Clinton just rolling over? No.

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF TRENT LOTT

JUNE 10, 2009, WASHINGTON, DC

ORAL HISTORY 2009-13-10

TED STEVENS PAPERS PROJECT JUKEBOX

Page 14 of 17

We were working with Clinton. And, you know, we were finding ways to produce a result that benefited the American people. And it wasn't easy for Clinton and it wasn't easy for me.

I had, you know, and I had my little group. I had a group I called the Council of Trent. I don't know how familiar you are with history, but there used to be a Council of Trent and I had this group of senators not in the leadership that I would bring in and I would tell them kind of what I was thinking about doing. Ted quite often came into those meetings because it was kind of a lot of people would say who is on the Council of Trent? And I said well I can't tell you. They said why not? I said because it varies from time to time, depends on the issue. But, you know, I remember one time I was making a deal with Clinton and Judd Gregg said you are getting mighty far out on a limb. I said I don't care. Pat Moynihan is willing to do it. The president says he is willing to do it, we are going to do it. So I jump out there on that limb. Within two days Clinton called and said, you know what, I really can't do that. Whack. Sawed the limb off right behind me. But so did I fully answer your question there?

CHARLES FEDULLO: You did. You talk about the need to work across the aisle.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And the value.

TRENT LOTT: Oh, yeah. Let's see, there was another time I was going to cite -- oh, yeah, after 9/11, and we were in the minority. There was a run there between 9/11 and the end of that calendar year 2001 in which we produced massive pieces of legislation on a unbelievable fast track to do the right thing for our country. And the approval rating of the senate went up to like, you know, like the 80's. Never been that level before or since. Why? Because the American people in a crisis saw us putting aside partisan labels and getting things done. The Patriot Act, which, of course, the Democrats, you know, hated from then on, but it was a bipartisan effort. We did a lot of things. Some of them by the way Republicans didn't like it too much either. But Ted was always on board for that. Ted was always one that, you know, said we got to get things done for our country and he was somebody I could always count on to help me get votes and to help me, you know, develop the tactics to produce a result.

CHARLES FEDULLO: I know that we are running low on time, but there is two issues and you may have been in the house for them that sort of define Senator Stevens. Two of the most tragic events in his life before the trial. One was losing his wife.

TRENT LOTT: Oh, surely.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And the second was -- one was personal.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Certainly more difficult and the other one was professional. The majority leader vote.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah, yeah.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Could you talk about your perceptions of either of those and --

TRENT LOTT: Well, I, you know, I may not be the best one to answer about that because I was not then in the senate. I was watching it from across the capitol. The presumption was that, you know, in some corners was that Ted should have been the odds on favorite.

Now the problem was, you know, that was a new phenomenon for Republicans to be electing the majority leader. I believe it was majority leader, wasn't it?

CHARLES FEDULLO: Uh-huh. Yes.

TRENT LOTT: And so you had five people jump in there as I recall. Luger was in there. Domenici was in there. McClure was in there, Dole and Stevens. Now that is a legendary group when you think about it. And, you know, probably when -- if you look at that, Ted would have probably been considered one of the, you know, the more moderate people in that race and, of course, they started dropping off and then was Ted in the final two with Dole?

CHARLES FEDULLO: Yeah, he was.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah and I am sure he was disappointed obviously in how that went and, you know, he should have been elected probably, yeah. He should have won that. But the Republican Senate Conference at that time was very different than it was when I came along and got elected majority leader. First of all, we had an invasion of conservative house members. We basically moved in and took over the senate. At that time the senate Republicans were a little -- they had a pretty substantial sort of liberal Republican and moderate Republicans and then you had a smaller group of conservatives actually, you know. People like McClure and Helms and Thurmond and they weren't very well organized. And I think that -- I think (inaudible) and other factors started playing in there. Well, if Dole wins, he is not Chairman of Finance who will be Chairman of Finance and there was some wheeling and dealing going on there. So, just from, you know, what I saw surely he was disappointed and in my opinion he should have -- should have won that race.

CHARLES FEDULLO: And any perceptions he would have been in the house -- I don't know how close you were with the senator when his wife passed away.

TRENT LOTT: No, I was -- I did not really know him then. I think that was back in the -- when would that have been -- even in the 60's?

CHARLES FEDULLO: (Inaudible).

TRENT LOTT: Was it the 70's? Yeah, I was, you know, this was before I really started having any contact with him and, of course, I remember hearing about it and I have heard him talk about it. But, you know, he didn't talk about it very much. Obviously, it was painful, but he always felt like there was another guy in Alaska that sort of caused that, you know. And there was a little bit of bitterness there. But, you know, Ted has and that is why I think he is going to be okay now. Ted had the ability to take a serious blow and move on. That was obviously personal heart rendering, terrible experience that did, you know, bug him for years. But, you know, his life went on. He had wonderful kids by that marriage and he found Catherine and Catherine reinvigorated him, you know. It was a perfect fit for the Tas in her own way and then, you know, just like the leader's race. He made his race. He made the best of it. He never again tried to get back in the leadership. I mean you could say theoretically even when I ran for leader. Why didn't Ted come back and try to do that again? But he -- he took his best shot. It didn't work out. He settled in as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and, you know, eventually president pro tem and went forward. That is a great way to be.

PAUL MC CARTHY: One of the great themes that we have noticed is that his interest in appropriating funds to support Native people.

TRENT LOTT: Yeah. He was very passionate about all of the people in Alaska, but, you know, that is not a big voting block. But it was obvious that he felt like the Native Alaskans should have a better life and he, you know, he didn't just read about them or, you know, he went to where they were. And he -- he, you know, he talked a lot about their culture and a lot of the stuff that you would see in his office came from Native Alaskans and, but he tried to help them with their basic needs -- their fundamental needs. And he felt like the government had a responsibility to help them have a better life. And it wasn't just politics. It was something he really personally cared about.

PAUL MC CARTHY: I mean you talked about clean water in --

TRENT LOTT: Sure. Sure. Yeah. Yeah. Alright.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Anything you would like to add?

PAUL MC CARTHY: We deeply appreciate --

TRENT LOTT: Well, I hope it is useful and --

PAUL MC CARTHY: Yes, it was.