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## Fragile Coalition Interviews - M. Caldwell Butler, June 19, 1975

M. Caldwell Butler

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CONGRESSMAN M. CALDWELL BUTLER (MCB) OF VIRGINIA.

- DFS - This is the first interview with Mr. Butler on Thursday, the 19th of June, 1975, at 2:00 in the afternoon. We are not trying to do an overall history of the impeachment. I zeroed in on the background and results of the Coalition.
- MCB - All right. On the basis of that, how could we have possibly anything else to talk about [in view of the Mooney and Woodlief tapes]?
- DFS - We have much more from you than from anyone else. I think you obviously at the time made more tapes and notes and so forth than anyone else. We know that your memory is probably going to be better on items that were not in those tapes.
- MCB - Now you will be able to measure the validity of my recollections against those tapes, right? So if I tell you a different story now, that will be interesting, won't it?
- DFS - For example, on the 20th of June, last year tomorrow, you said to Woodlief that already you along with Walter Flowers and Mann had a power to determine the fate of the President of the United States; that was on the 20th of June. Now what I would like to note simply as an introduction is that this is a totally confidential, until you edit or release whatever we say. And secondly, our purpose in giving you these questions is simply to kind of jog your memory and so that we have a kind of common basis for all members.
- MCB - I feel like I've been jogged out, by what you've already got [the other tapes of Mooney and Woodlief]. I have answered everyone of these questions already.
- DFS - I think that much of that is true.
- MCB - Why don't we just go around where you wish?
- DFS - How about if I start with what we call question #1? There are a couple of things that I don't think were in the tapes.
- MCB - All right.
- DFS - How did you express your very initial predilections about either impeachment of the President's guilt or innocence? Taking for example your reaction on the 31st of July, 1973, when Drinan introduced his first resolution to impeach? How did you react to that?
- MCB - 346 \* I considered the source. I want you to understand that I'm not prejudiced against all brothers of the cloth, but I think he is a little bit of a screwball and that was my reaction to it. You realize, of course, that the basis of his first impeachment resolution was Cambodia. My immediate reaction was entirely negative, almost ridicule, and ultimately that was the position of the Committee; we just plain didn't impeach for Cambodia.

BUTLER, p2

- DFS - Which leads us directly to number 2. If that was your reaction to Drinan, what in the subsequent nine months was most responsible for making you say, "Now, wait a minute, is there something here?"
- MCB - Oh, I started taking it seriously when it became apparant that the leadership was taking it seriously. When they started, I started taking the position of the official line, which was also my thinking, when the administration starts hiring staff and then we suddenly realize that they were gearing up to this thing, we ought to take it seriously. Now I cannot remember when that was.
- DFS - So it was not simply what was done at, for example, the Saturday Night Massacre, but the reaction of the White House to that that caused your anticipation? That was October 20th....
- MCB - I think I took it seriously before that. I still think that I was prejudiced in favor of the President at that point. But I hadn't taken any public line on it, and that is the smartest thing I ever did.
- DFS - One of the other seven Members phrased it this way; what is your reaction to this: "The hearings to date [April 4, 1974] remind me of the advice of Abraham Lincoln when he said if you want to stop a church from being built, don't attack their religion, but start an argument over where the best location would be. It appears to me the strategy of the White House is to start an argument about procedural methods used by the Committee, in an effort to divide the Committee and make it appear that it is being unfair procedurally." Or another statement that "Ford brought his life to the Judiciary Committee, whereas Nixon brought his lawyers." Now how does that strike you?
- MCB - He was "lawyerly" unnecessarily I thought, and you have a negative reaction to that. The procedural questions that they were raising all the time did offend me; I guess that I was disappointed the way the Republicans reacted to all that. I had a feeling that they would pick up a line over there in the White House, and pretty soon we were using it. That kind of discouraged me.
- DFS - You mentioned to Woodlief, for example, that, "The hatehet men, Buchanan and Burch, were doing the Présidnet no good...."
- MCB - Yes, I'll stick to that; yes, sir.
- SL - Did your thinking change a great deal when Butterfield told the world on July 16th about the tapes? —the conversation in the White House, the EOB, and the tapes?
- MCB - That was a surprise to me. No, I don't think the existence of the tapes changed my view of it but I do remember feeling kind of defensive about the Présidnet's right to tape. And also my immediate reaction was that he had a right to keep it.

- MCB - I still feel that way too. I think that if the case had been presented properly, and they had brought it along from the Supreme Court in a less defined fashion, he might have even prevailed on that point, but I did feel that his handling of it worked against him, and the tapes presented evidence that ultimately did him in.
- SL - At the time of Agnew's problem, now we're up to October again, were you aware that he was trying perhaps to put his case before the House Judiciary Committee?
- MCB - Yes, I was aware that he wanted it, and I was even willing to do it if somebody had pushed us to it. But he collapsed before he could get the strategy going. When they had a spokesman over there to tell us he would stay in there and fight, he was on his way down to plead guilty.
- SL - Did you think that was Agnew's strategy or did you think perhaps it was part of the general White House strategy? That possibly could have tied up the Judiciary Committee?
- MCB - I was never aware of any such strategy as that. No. I just never heard of it.
- DFS - I'm going on to the concept of an impeachable offence. That's number 3. You particularly stressed the "reasonable expectations of the American people."
- MCB - Yes, I did that in a statement.
- DFS - Let's take this: here we have what is objectively a serious offence, either criminal or political, but neither has so aroused the American people that they are aware of the seriousness of the threat to the American political and constitutional system. Is the President impeachable?
- MCB - Yes, I see your point. Yes, my view of that is that we do simply what I feel our job is: to place the charge and the Senate by its guilty vote determines whether it's enough to require removal of the President. So I've always felt, I guess, I'd like to go back and study my own evolution --I started off with a pretty narrow view, but the more I thought about it, the broader I got my feeling about it. Simply because so much of the President's actions and attitudes cannot be spelled out in criminal law. And to answer your question more specifically about this. If there is a heinous offense of which we the committee are totally aware of, for example, he had in his negotiations with a foreign power give away secrets, just spilled the beans while he was drunk and for security reasons we kept that a secret. I think it would be our obligation to impeach him or recommend an impeachment. This is the obligation of the Senate and the House to make efforts to control the information, even in the absence of the knowledge and support of the American people.
- DFS - Now you said in your public statement that Thursday night that the people are entitled to assume that the President in telling the truth. Now is lying itself by a President impeachable or the subject-matter of the lying?

BUTLER, p4

- MCB - Well, the nice thing about all these is you don't have to say exactly, but a consistent misrepresentation is another matter. That's exactly right. I felt we weren't impeaching him for lying but it sure does color his credibility.
- DFS - Again you mentioned in your tapes, the Presidential responsibility for truthfulness of subordinates after the fact. Once he became aware of, for example, Kleindiest's statements, does that constitute, by indirection, an impeachable offence?
- MCB - Oh, absolutely. I think that is somewhere along the line of obstruction of justice. Knowingly misrepresenting the qualifications of a man you pointed out as trustworthy is a breach of faith, whether it's elevated to the status of an impeachable offense is a matter of judgment. That was my view and that is still my view. I've met Kleindiest several times—I go to church there, a little Episcopal church, and he's on the vestry. He is a neighbor and he has been very cordial to me; I feel a little bit self-conscious about it. I think he acted very, very good—running that guy off his gold course. That's what kind of upset me a little bit; even at the time I felt like that's a guy that has some integrity. Of course, he might have been slightly stupid. \* | °
- DFS - On the 18th of last July, St. Clair insisted that the proof be clear and convincing. What standard of proof did you require?
- MCB - When you talk about a standard of proof, you're talking about what the facts have established at the indictment or accusatory level. I think looking back over it, when they say clear and convincing, they are talking about, assuming that we believe the facts, clear and convincing evidence that he ought to be removed, not clear and convincing evidence that the facts have been established. And so, I felt that was my reaction then, that he is putting a standard of proof up there that goes beyond what we ought to be required to do. That it is up to the Senate to determine if we've met whatever standard of proof they think is appropriate. It's enough for us to have evidence that we think if believed could require to have him removed. The more I think about it, that wasn't my immediate reaction, but it is now. It's a lot of foolishness to talk about that; we weren't concerned with admissibility or anything else and all of those terms of the trial. That doesn't help you much, does it?
- DFS - Yes, it does. Is it accurate, then, to draw from that statement of yours that in a certain sense the fact preceded the theory in your evolving required standard of proof?
- MCB - Yes, absolutely. I think somewhere along the line—and I can't tell you when—I concluded that he ought to be removed. I don't know when I came to that conclusion.
- SL - You did say in the Woodlief interview that the President is required to adhere to a standard of conduct partly described by statute, partly by the Constitution, and I "wrestle" whether it's also described by the reasonable expectations of the American people.
- MCB - What date was that?

BUTLER, p5

DFS - July 18th, one week before....

MCB - All right, I came a little bit from that, but not far, did I?

DFS - Did you ever consider the so-called Ford standard? That an impeachable offense is what the House considers it to be at a given time?

MCB - Oh yes, that's absolutely true. Simply because there's no court of appeals. You impeach for failure to meet whatever standard we want to set, post-humously if we want to. So it is whatever we think but that doesn't mean that a guilt plea has got to follow. It's our judgment and discretion and I'm satisfied as to that. That's why I got further and further away from the view that our criminal code would tell us when the President ought to be removed or not.

DFS - There is one other question that I have about an impeachable offense. Did you recall reading any particular books or references or historical sources during this period?

MCB - Only my wife.

DFS - Any particular one that stands out during this time?

MCB - No, I'm a fast reader and not very proud of it, so I cannot recall. One little volume that Bill Cohen was playing with...

SL & DFS - Burger...Pickle...?

MCB - No, try again. Okay. I went through the material that John Doar put together.

DFS - And the summary by the Library of Congress?

MCB - Yes, I went through that one. And I did have Burger's book. Somebody sent it to all of us. But I thumbed through them all and felt that in each instance the scholars really had the feeling that they didn't know any more about it than I did. All this historical evidence wasn't very helpful to me. That is all there was to it. The only enlightening thing was "high crimes and misdemeanors"—to find out that a misdemeanor was not what we think a misdemeanor is today and that is about the only real help that the research gave me. Because the rest of it I think and still think is just totally a matter of judgment.

DFS - Just very briefly then: some outside factors that influenced you? For example, Mrs. Butler? To what extent during June and July of last year were you in communication with her about impeachment?

MCB - She was not here much of the time; she was in Roanoke. She came up one day—for a few days. But I called her daily. Several times a day and discussed it with her pretty freely and so as well with Manly, my oldest son. Manly was home for a while. And I discussed it with Jimmy, my third son, who was up here at that time.

DFS - Sort of a historical messenger....

BUTLER, p6

- MCB - Yes, that's right. My family was quite influential in giving me a reaction.
- DFS - Mrs. Butler, in the McCall's article, referred to anonymous phone calls and threatening mail. Had that any background effect on you?
- MCB - Oh, no. None of that really came up until after my statement. But I think we may have over-reacted, I don't know.
- DFS - And your mother was never convinced?
- MCB - My mother called that night and she called afterwards and said, "Is everything all right?" That's about all. I think she is convinced now.
- DFS - One final thing about these other factors: Evans-Novak, for example, on the 18th of June listed you as "an impeachable leaker." Did that sort of media coverage put a burden or pressure on you in any way?
- MCB - No, no. I did not feel that it did. It didn't also precipitate much mail. I didn't get stones as I can recollect either.
- SL - On question 6--what information or evidence did you consider most helpful and convincing during the hearings, as far as you were concerned?
- MCB - That's a pretty hard question, because I'm constantly thinking, and I realize I'm in a position to contradict myself.
- DFS - I assure you that you'll have an occasion to uncontradict yourself.
- MCB - Well, I'm sure the tapes are more reliable now and I still feel like the accumulated effect of it was more than anything else. An impression that this goes back a long way with me as far as Nixon is concerned. I never felt like he had any feeling for people--from the word go. I don't think this is essential for being President although it would help. Because to be President, you're more sensitive to that. But I never felt very warmly toward Nixon; I don't think anybody does, either. What's the most damaging to me was this general feeling that how cold-blooded he was. It just kept becoming more--that is the accumulated effect of the Nixon credibility, and accumulation of facts, certainly the conversation with John Dean. I know that you have got that on tape. The first time--is that March 10th? I don't know. That conversation was the one that shook me more than anything else; the witnesses that testified that were influential in my judgment, I guess, were Kalmbach, simply because he was such a pitiful character, so obviously been used, although he may be a great actor. O'Brien because he was such a milktoast, and he was obviously trying to get away from it all; he probably was as guilty as any of them but he was so concerned about his own welfare that it made you realize the quality of people that were involved in this thing. Butterfield did not persuade me, I thought that was a lot of foolishness, building a case around a lot of suppositions that I wasn't impressed with. John Doar bore down on him pretty hard. There's not a place the President didn't know about it. I didn't think that we needed that even when we got through to him. I don't think that were any witnesses that pushed me over the top. The facts did it. I guess John Dean's conversation, particularly though.

BUTLER, p7

SL - Do you remember your reaction when you first actually heard ~~of~~ the White House tapes in committee?

MCB - I remember being impressed with the fact that he was in charge. That is all. Is that what I say on one of my tapes?

DFS - Yes.

MCB - That about did it in my mind. I read somewhere that somebody else said differently and I couldn't believe it. That Nixon was not in charge--I can't remember who I heard say that. I struck me as totally ridiculous.

SL - Do you think if there hadn't been any tapes at all, could they have made a clear and convincing case against Nixon?

MCB - Oh yes, I think the case could have been made, but I don't think that the witnesses could have been found. I don't think it would ever have crumbled to the extent that it did. I guess that's a little bit out of prejudice for John Dean, who turned in before he knew the tapes existed. Yes, I believe that the case could have been made. I think that we could have gotten the facts. If you are asking me was it the evidence outside the tapes, if the tapes were not admissible in evidence, and therefore we had to rely on statements outside the tapes, could we have made a case against the President? I think that, yes, we could but it would have taken us some more digging but the facts were there. But getting the witnesses to come forward under those circumstances would have been extremely difficult.

DFS - You in your tapes have made all sorts of very incisive comments on Doar, Jenner, Garrison, and so on. We don't have to pursue that. But I would like to ask you this, under number 7: who within the committee positively influenced you?

MCB - Well, you know I think I was actually uninfluenced by Hogan. Cohen was on one side of me and Hogan was on the other. I think that the four people that made the Republican membership on the Coalition, probably are the people who had the most influence on my judgment. I would listen to Chuck Wiggins, to Ed Hutchinson, but I felt that they'd prejudged it. So I didn't get much help from them. Outside the committee, I didn't: nobody on my staff went into it at all. My wife I'm quite sure had as much influence to do with it as anyone. Holton, the Governor, he and I are quite close--I remember discussing it with him on several occasions. He didn't influence me; it was obvious to me that he was abandoning the President.

DFS - The person who you referred to most, if you recall, in your tapes, is Walter Flowers....

MCB -- I do? From my conversations with him?

DFS - It was just that repeatedly you say, "I'm impressed with Walter's train of thought--that he seems to be leaning--that he had a following --that type of thing.



BUTLER, p8

- MCB - Well, I felt like his problem and my problem were the same. You are not saying that I was influenced by conversations with him, but by observing what he had to say.
- DFS - Both--but you made it a point that you did not talk directly to him, and said that "I'd rather hear indirectly what he is saying."
- MCB - I really, for a long time, didn't discuss with him. I didn't discuss it much with Jim Mann; he didn't have too much to say. And Sam Garrison you know is from my home town. I really didn't think he was helpful in the facts.
- DFS - At one point, you said that it's amazing he has a reputation of a prudent prosecutor; down in Roanoke he was "hanging Sam."
- MCB - He was one who made the argument that we should be prudent prosecutors; that was a little out of line for him because he was quite a hanging Sam. My recollection is so limited now, how could it possibly be as good as the tapes?
- DFS - And we have them--fine. Would you go on to number 9? That of course comes right at the end of July. What is your recollection of the earliest, however informal, first person-to-person contact that led up to the Tuesday morning meeting in Railsback's office?
- MCB - My recollection is walking over there with Jerry Waldie one day and he was laughing about it. I can't remember exactly, but in substance I don't like what John Doar has done and don't want to vote against an impeachment resolution because it is a sloppy piece of work. That's basically my attitude. And he said we've got some other people working on it. And I said that I would like to be in contact with them.
- DFS - Beginning the mechanics of the emerging so-called Coalition....Now already on July 18th, which is five days early, you noted, "We are meeting informally all the time -- Rails, Cohen, myself, and Fish." Now looking back, wasn't that kind of a presage?
- MCB - I think so, yes. I don't know the dates. That weekend Cohen and Fish stayed there and talked to that crazy Cates. They urged me to do that, but I went home for the weekend.
- DFS - Did you frankly go home on purpose to....?
- MCB - No. I went home because my family was there.
- DFS - What do you mean by "crazy" Cates?
- MCB - I just think that he was not very objective in his analysis. But his presentation was pretty thorough and pretty good. So we had to listen....
- DFS - Were you ever personally briefed by him?

BUTLER, p9

- MCB - Yes, I went to breakfast with him over in the Capitol Hill Club. You don't have a recollection of that?
- DFS - I'll look it up.
- MCB - Now let's go back to the day, the weekend that Fish and all those people met. When I had breakfast with Gates—I had pretty extensive notes on that—I remember that David Dennis was there—and McClory, possibly.
- DFS - The Doar drafts came out on Friday the 19th. Then this breakfast evidently took place on Saturday the 20th?
- MCB - Yes, and I went home after that.
- DFS - Then the first Coalition meeting was on the morning of Tuesday the 23rd.
- MCB - That's right, because Monday I probably was driving up in the morning with Jimmy. So that was the first time we met and that was quite a good briefing. That was my first time I knew him [Cates]—the weekend before the Coalition.
- DFS - That's valuable.
- MCB - I'm not sure; I usually take notes because it makes me pay attention, not for the purpose of just historical records. So I took pretty extensive notes on what he told us.
- DFS - Now once the Coalition as such started to form, I noticed you missed only one meeting, and that was the meeting on Friday morning in Mann's office. Therefore three people who most consistently attended were yourself, Railsback, and Mann. Was there any particular reason why you were not in the Mann office meeting?
- MCB - It was an early morning meeting.
- DFS - That's right.
- MCB - I was physically exhausted; I was tired. Jimmy was there with me and we just got back and took our time getting there.
- DFS - Fine. Now as the week went on with the seven of you there, did you have any thoughts that there should be Sarbanes or Hungate or Froelich or Hogan or McClory or that there was an omission?
- MCB - Absolutely not. You have our discussion, I think, that's why Froelich wasn't invited in, and why McClory wasn't invited it. Cohen got so mad when we sent the notes over to McClory. I don't think any of those folks would have contributed anything. Even now, I don't think they would have when we got down to drafting — no.

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BUTLER, p10

DFS - Could you just recall any specifics in illustrating the intensity of either the meetings or the week?

MCB - I don't recall any friction, any disagreement. I guess we all were kind of amused when Jim Mann came back with the draft that we thought we were working on. But no, I think it was a very cohesive group. Everybody I think made a pretty good contribution. I think it goes back to the fact that Jim Mann and I are the same kind of lawyers I think. We both are very careful in our drafting. I don't know as he did a lot of trial work, he didn't strike me as a trial lawyer. Not too spectacular type. But I expect he's done quite a bit of trial work. But I never did; I was more interested in drafting. And I think all of us had more of that kind of background so we got along pretty well.

DFS - This next question may be redundant, but I would like your comment on the very famous adjective "fragile" coalition. Do you think it was really justified?

MCB - I think the fragile coalition crept into meaning as a reference to the fragile connection between the all-powerful group of Democrats who find themselves at the mercy of seven swing votes. And I think the fragility was the relationship between the two groups, but somehow got translated. But I may be wrong, but that's my feeling about it. I never felt that we were fragile; if we had been fragile, we'd been shattered by the fate of the Kastenmeier resolution of when we were going to vote. That should have blown it but it didn't.

DFS - Would you comment on this--someone said that there was more partisanship in the matter of procedure than in substance...?

MCB - You mean within our group or the whole committee?

DFS - Within the whole committee.

MCB - Well, I think that they gave us the procedural points so that they wouldn't have to on the substantive ones. I really don't know, well, I guess that's true. I think we shamed them into being a little bit more magnanimous procedurally. I judge from what I read briefly is that Rodino made all these concessions to keep us three or four Republicans within the realm of possibility. I think he did. I think that was good strategy. I don't know but that I would have been tempted to leave. It's mighty easy to get up and storm out and say well, "My God, this is being railroaded," and that makes you rather weak. So I think we would have grabbed at that opportunity if it had been presented and we were conscious of it. Well, I don't know if it was partisan; I just think that that was one of the facts of life.

[Informal discussion of Hilton Head session]:

DFS - That brings up another question: what would be your reaction to having a very informal, perhaps hour long interview with the seven wives? On the topic of their role during that week. I think that would be a valuable part.

BUTLER, p 11

MCB - I understand now your batchelor existence. If you think that you can dispose of that in one hour....

MUCH LAUGHTER.

DFS - We thought that would have considerable discussion about the evolving drafts at Hilton Head. Mainly about the evolving drafts. You notice in Book #2, you have the drafts as we have them and Mr. Thornton has given us his two drafts and Mr. Mann is going to provide us with his drafts.

MCB - Then you've got the tape with Mooney.

DFS - That's right. So now we have all the drafts that were involved. And the other members have made comments which you already have about that. So when we get together, we thought one of the things that we are going to zero in on was the reason for the changes in the drafts as they came --especially in articles I and II.

MCB - You know I was a little disappointed in your putting the changes into the drafts. Still it takes some real thinking to figure out just what changes were made. I don't know how to present that but what basically you want to ask is how each word was changed? Is that right, is that what you ultimately plan to do?

DFS - Well, that's up to you.

MCB - That's what I would like to do, you know.

DFS - That's very good. But I think for us to have done any more than present you with the drafts would have opened up to the charge of reading into them. Why did this change or not-- we simply provided the primary sources.

MCB - Oh, I agree with that. I'd like to see it set up in twelve columns so that we can see the transition from one paragraph to another 'till you get to the end. Do you follow what I'm saying?

DFS - I do, very much. And that we can do at Hilton Head. And each one of you will have a copy of that line-up. Then of course Tom Mooney is there also. That leads us to the last question here, namely, your hindsight on the Coalition, which to a large part is not covered by your various memos and tapes. I'll just start out this and Steve can pursue it. Now in anticipation of the Senate trial, at that time were you as a lawyer satisfied with Articles I and II as defensible?

MCB - Yes, I was pretty well satisfied as to that. Yes, I was. With Article III I was not.

DFS - I know that. Now as to your immediate personal reaction. I know, for example, that you took a walk with Jimmy and you mentioned Mr. Thornton immediately afterwards. Then, for example, in the morning, the newboy left you a note, "Cook the Crook." And your conservative neighbors applauded you and so on. What was your own feeling that Saturday night, the 27th, once the final vote on Article I had been completed?

BUTLER, pl2

- MCB - I don't know, I think I gave very little to Woodlief on that too, didn't I? I guess I was just kind of apprehensive about whether we had done the right thing or not.
- DFS - Did you feel if any of the non-Coalition members, a Waldie or a Drinan, who from the very word go had been obviously in favor of impeachment, were in any sense playing a role of tremendous regret at the moment of the final vote?
- MCB - No, I wasn't conscious of that. I didn't have any reaction at all. My reaction to most of those guys was a great relief that they didn't blow it. No, I guess I didn't have that reaction, although I would have to admit that I felt a little bit like Mezvinsky over-dramatized it. I remember his vote. The impression of reluctance was misleading. Several of them may have felt that impression, knowing the disappointment I think they felt that they were going back to being mortals again. Having such a good time being stars.
- DFS - Do you think there were beneficial results for our "system" of government that came out of the inquiry? To give you an idea of what we're thinking of--someone has said that up to that point the White House, not simply the President, had become a "fourth branch of government responsible largely to itself." One, do you think that's a justifiable statement and two, do you think that's stopped?
- MCB - Well, yes and no. Yes, I think we've brought the executive power back to reality. And that's good. I think we established that the impeachment process has to be taken seriously. That we can do it if we have to. Yes, I think that we have established standards of conduct for the Presidency that will be hard to violate. And I think that's good.
- SL - If the President had not released the June 23rd tapes, how do you think the three articles would have fared?
- MCB - I think that the third article would probably have been shot down in the House. I think that's almost indefensible; I just don't see how you can justify that.... On the last two, I think we would have been about two-thirds to one-third.
- SL - What about the Senate?
- MCB - I just have no feeling for the Senate. It would have been a trial with very few surprises in it. An awful long drawn out affair--and like I tried to say before, it's a policy decision, not guilty or innocent: not guilty is the way you express this view, that even if the facts are true, you don't think that the President ought to be removed. And I suspect that the public sentiment is such that the Senate would have gone on and removed him. I think we got it going on the theory that there was going to be a trial. And I think that the evidence could have been presented in such a way as to be convincing. If this thing had had a lawyer's proceeding by committee the whole impeachment trail would have been a trial in itself.

BUTLER, p13

- DFS - How do you now evaluate the treatment by the media? Not simply the impeachment procedure, but of the Coalition particularly?
- MCB - Well, I don't think the media has picked up the significance of what we had and did. I may be wrong, but I feel that it was pretty significant in the outcome and I certainly have not read anything that indicates that they picked that up and what we do read is that we orchestrated and manipulated all of that.
- DFS - In the Jimmy Breslin book you were almost wholly ignored, and the Theodore White book gave curostry passing....
- MCB - I think we were closer to the scene than that. I think we did a persuasive job. Because everybody had a mutual respect, it turned the whole crowd around. I mean we just would have looked at it harder and so forth and so I think it was significant—that's all there was to it. I just think we had the destiny of the proceedings in our control. And you just can't ignore it. Well, that's it!
- DFS - You of all the seven have probably said the lead publicly, prior to the last week of July. Was that out of concern for your district or natural reluctance to discuss the case or your own uncertainty on how you were going to vote?
- MCB - Well, that's my style. I reserve judgment; I simply dnn't talk about it so I can keep my options open. Also probably masking the fact that I was having trouble corralating all the evidence in my own mind, and so I didn't want to display my ignorance. Third, I think it was ethical.. I think it was a mistake to discuss it; I don't think it was ethical, a mistake to discuss the substance of the evidence at all and a number of people did that. And the press understood that because that's what I wanted them to do. As far as my district was concerned, I thought I was in awful good shape and didn't work on it too much. It turned out I was probably wrong.
- DFS - As a matter of fact, then, how do you assess your role in the hearings when the election results were in in November?
- MCB - I was reelected by virtue of the fact that I didn't have a real strong Democrat opponent. I did have a strong indiepened opponent. I was reelected by virtue of these facts: a weak Democrat, the landslide against Nixon, and they had no place to go. The people who were Nixon's friends were mad at him. And me. They went I think with the thrid party candidate. And finally, Democrats Eurned out to be of very sizable support for me.
- IF - If President Nixon had still been in office and we had not had the impeachment vote, but no tapes, no resignation, therefore getting ready for a trial, and the Democrats had had a strong candidate, I would have been shot down the shoot. So I guess all things considered, it probably helped.
- DFS - We owe you a double thanks, not only for these two hours and more but for the fact that you provided us with so much previous material.
- MCB - Okay, it's my pleasure, very much. Thank you.