JUDGE RICHARD BELL

JAMES MACKAY: The star of this week's—this month's I Remember Hour is Judge Richard Bell.

JUDGE BELL: Thank you. When I was invited to come here, my criticizers at home—my wife, and some of you know Olive Dougherty [spelling?]—told me that I was too young for this program. They needed somebody with age, who had been in DeKalb County longer than I had and saw it develop prior to what I've seen. I'm not a native son. My father was from White County--Cleveland, Georgia, and my mother was from South Carolina. She finished Winthrop College and went down to Beaufort, South Carolina, to save the heathen down there as a Presbyterian Home Missionary. Then she went over to—came to Cleveland, White County, and boarded in my grandfather's home—they had twelve children—and taught at Rabun-Nacoochee Gap [Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School]. All the boys in my grandfather's family fell in love with her, and my father was successful. He got her. He was a hard-working mountain boy. And there wasn't much to do in north Georgia, so he decided to go over to South Carolina to a farm and raise cotton. At that time cotton was the coming crop. And he went to Iva, South Carolina, where he worked hard. And over there, the greatest thing in my life happened: I was born on July 5, 1920. The boll weevil came; and, as most of you know who've followed farming in those days, there weren't any insecticides. So in 1923 he packed up his family and came to Decatur.

I had a great-uncle here, Ransom Ledford, who ran the livery stable right across the street, where the courthouse is today. The corner building where Scott's Drug Store used to be was the Ledford Building. The house down—that was remodeled—the Circa House—my cousin [aside, to audience member] Merle, is it?—Ledford was—lived there; and Rupert Ledford sold it to the people who now have it, and it's a national thing. So I had roots here in Decatur. And also my uncle had some houses that we lived in.

We moved down to Atlanta Avenue and Martin McFarland—some of you remember Martin; he married the Hudson girl—they lived upstairs, and we lived downstairs, just a block from here. And I crawled up to the courthouse when I was three. I've been here ever since [laughter]. We stayed in Decatur for a short while; and then my father was a cement contractor, and we went to Florida for a couple of

years to work in the boom that was going on down there. We came back and moved to between here and Avondale, and I went to the second and third grade at the Avondale Elementary School and first met the people that you know as the [inaudible—sounds like "Buckmans" or "Folkmans"?], the [inaudible—sounds like "Nesbys" or "Meshbys"?]—all the people in Avondale that were there at that time. I used to think it was a terrible walk from where we lived on—I believe it was Hillcrest—to the elementary school just across from the golf course. It's not very far now, but at that time for a six- or seven-year-old, it was a long way.

I remember going to the corner filling station--we didn't have a radio in our house—when the [inaudible—sounds like "Toodie" or "Tudy" - "Smethen" or "Smevin"?] fight was fought. The men all gathered up and this little radio, and that's the first time I remember a radio. We moved back on down to College Avenue, 551, which is a salvage place now; but at that time—and across the street is Ace Hardware. I tease my sister about the fact that we had an outhouse. She says we didn't, but neither one of us can remember where the outhouse or the indoor bathroom was [laughter]. But we moved from there up to 627 College Avenue, which where Bio Chemical [BioLab] is now; and we lived there for several years. We had—Hubert Morgan, the Morgan family lived next door, with the Bloodworths and the Walkers—Margaret married a Bloodworth—were—and others, they were kin to. Her husband lived in the community. We stayed there for a while. I went to Winnona Elementary School, where our teachers were Ms. Langford in fourth grade—Ms. Langford, we called her "Lady Monster." She didn't appreciate that, but she didn't know about it. Then Ms. Clark in the fifth grade and Ms. Doster [spelling?] in the sixth grade. I met—in my class were Betty Ann Brooks, who is a doctor her in Decatur. Calvin Rutland and I had a big fight over a girl—I won't tell you who she was—in the fifth grade. He's dead now, but he was a builder and, you know, the son of Mr. Rutland. There were many, many other people there—the Pierce boys, the—I met Olive Dougherty at that time. She's a member of this organization [DeKalb Historical Society]. I tease her about walking by her house, and she didn't notice me because she was interested in older boys.

We left that area and moved down on—a block or two from here on Beaumont Street, 132 Beaumont Street. We really, in that time, people didn't have—my family didn't have much money; we were looking for lower rent. We lived down there for a number of years. I went to Ponce de Leon Elementary School in the seventh grade, and

I remember the prettiest girl in school was Dorothy Ramspeck. If you remember her, she was a blond, and she sat in front of me; and I've always wondered whether I really put her hair in the inkwell or not. At that school you'll know people like—and in my class were—Floyd Sanders, who married a Rutland girl and is a doctor here; Warren McLain [spelling?]; Louis Estes, the Estes[es] own the building across the street from here at that time; and many, many others. Just as all of you have heard from other speakers, the streets weren't paved. We used to walk down the street to where Mrs. Hudson lived, and beyond that was nothing but woods. At this house on Beaumont we had a cow, just two blocks from here. We had chickens. Clairemont was a row of houses, and at one house was the county medical center. Dr. Evans was the medical doctor at that time. Down the street, next to where the Baptist Church is, was a house in which Mr. and Mrs. [inaudible—sounds like "Worm" or "Wern"?] lived; and they allowed my father to use the back of their land for a garden. During the Depression much of our food came out of that garden—collards and turnip greens and all of those type of things. The tax commissioner, Mr. Howard, lived across the street, down here just a couple of hundred yards down Clairemont.

When we moved to Decatur my mother put me on her hip and walked three blocks down to the Presbyterian Church. And that's been sixty-three years ago. My family is still in the Decatur Presbyterian Church. It's been a major part of my life, what went on there. My first Sunday school teacher that I remember was Caroline McKinney Clark, and Ms. Annie Fullerton was another Sunday school teacher. Later on Jay Kirkpatrick, Mr. Newton, and Mr. Morris were Sunday school teachers of mine.

I finished grammar school, and we started Boys High School of Decatur. Boys High and Girls High were—in 1932, I believe it was—they had a junior high, but they changed to Boys High and Girls High. And the only time we saw the girls was before class and after it was over. But we managed to see them regularly. I loved athletics; and if they threw a ball out, I grabbed it—football, basketball, baseball, track, whatever. And I used to go down and watch the older fellows practice. Alf Anderson was one of the great football players and baseball players that Decatur produced. He and his family lived where the Decatur Federal building is on the corner [Commerce and East Ponce de Leon] down here a block. Mr. Anderson was the coach at Oglethorpe, and all of his boys—Marion, Alf, Charlie—were wonderful athletes. Where

the Decatur Federal Building is was a field, and we used to play sandlot football there. Mr. Burgess, I think, owned it.

As I grew up through high school, I had some pretty rowdy friends; and they got in a lot of trouble. One of the meanest men in Decatur was Andy Robertson; he was a judge of the police court. And I used to go there with my friends when they were to go before him, as a character witness. He can't remember that I was ever a defendant, [to Mr. Robertson, present in the audience] can you, Andy?

ANDY ROBERTSON [off-camera, from audience]: No. I expected it every week [laughter].

BELL: But at any rate, as I grew older and finished—went through high school, in 1938 Decatur had a championship football team; and I happened to be the quarterback. We won all of our games and went to Tyler, Texas, to play. We lost there, but we didn't lose as badly as the team did when Decatur—in 1931 or 2 or 3, when we had a great football team and they went to Kentucky; and they were beat about 83 to nothing. [Responding to audience member's inaudible comment] Eight-seven? You remember that! [laughter]

At any rate, at Decatur Presbyterian Church we had a wonderful scout troop. Mr. Elder was the scout master, and we had some names in the troop that you'll remember: Ripley—Francis Ripley, Bill Owens; Bill Turk; Dave [inaudible—sounds like "Kevin" or "Cavin"?]; Cicero, my brother, and I; Albert Cobely [spelling?]; Fred Wimbish; Jack Royal. And we used to think that we could walk out to the "Hello, World" filling station toward Tucker and back; and it was a fourteen-mile hike. Now that you can measure it with a speedometer [odometer], it ain't quite that far; but it seemed like an awful long way. And then we camped a great deal up above the—in the woods above the CDC; and Bill Owens fell in love with it, and the Owens[es] bought property up there and built their house there, and they still live there. We did a great deal of camping and other things around the Peachtree Creek down this side of the—and at that time we caught many, many fish out of it. They were about that long [gestures with hands to indicate size of fish], and we would clean them and eat them. I think the pollution's so bad now, there are no fish in that creek.

I remember that O. L. [inaudible—sounds like "Ambsley"? Ansley?] was the long-time principal of the high school, and Mr. Ferguson was the superintendent of the Decatur schools. I had wonderful teachers. Many of you remember Mrs. Culver, Mrs.

Sara(h?) Louise Head, Ruby Crawford, Mr. Culver—we just had a great group; and I give them a great deal of credit for what I did in my education.

I'm not going to leave out that during that period of time, I liked girls. And we dated—I liked it then, because you could date several people, and you didn't have to be "steady." Today, when your children have boyfriends or girlfriends, they've got to—they can't have but one. Well, we managed to move about and date many, many times—of different girls. One of the things that Jack Lassiter, one of my friends in high school, and I did was to we saw—went over to Druid Hills because we saw a lot of good-looking women over there, girls. And Mary Alice Clark, who is here now, was one of the persons that we visited. She used to invite us over to her house on Sunday night, a group would get together. I think [to Mary Alice Clark, in audience] Mary Alice, wasn't your father a doctor? [She answers in the affirmative, off-camera.] And he had enough money to have Coca-Colas in the icebox [laughter]. And that, as we said before the meeting, that was all we had in those times. We didn't have anything to drink alcoholic or any pot. And I don't know whether that would go over today or not.

When I finished high school, it wasn't, "Was I going to college?" It was, "Where?" And I chose a little college over in South Carolina, Presbyterian, and went over and graduated in 1943. I learned to fly while I was there; they had what they call a Civil Air Patrol course. You learn to fly these little Cubs, and you get a private license. At that time the war had begun, World War II; and, like everyone else, I was anxious to get over to kill me some Germans. And I applied—I finished two years of college; you had to have that. And I went out to Fort Mac [MacPherson] and applied to be a pilot. I wanted to have pilot training. And I was terribly disappointed, because I'm slightly color-blind. To pass pilot training I separated yarn, and I passed that. But those pictures they have where you see the numbers, I had a little trouble. So I was disappointed, but I went back to college and finished and went in the infantry—went in the army and went in the infantry. I went down to Fort Benning to infantry school. In July of '43 I finished my course, and here comes the paratroopers. I asked—the captain that was there asked, "Anybody want to be a paratrooper?" I held up my hand, and he looked at me and says, "Son, how tall are you?" I said, "Five—not quite five-eight." Well, they didn't want anybody less than five-nine. So I went on in the infantry and went overseas for two and a half years, and I came back. And the sequel to that story is if I'd gotten into

the Air Force or the paratroopers, they all got killed and broken up or anything else, and I came home. And here it is forty years later, and I'm talking to you about it.

While I was in college, I also enjoyed athletics and fraternity and dances and those kind of things; but we all wanted to get in the service and to help win the war, and it happened to be my deal to go to the Pacific. We got on a ship out in San Francisco and eighteen days later were in the islands of the South Pacific. I served in three campaigns as an infantry officer. I went from a second lieutenant to a captain during the war. I had what they call a mine platoon in the infantry—that was the platoon in a infantry regiment which had the flame-throwers, the demolitions, and I suppose I would have been called a demolition expert. We blew caves closed, where Japanese were down in them. We burned them to death with the flame-throwers. And for most of my time I was in the Solomon Islands—started at Guadalcanal and went to Bougainville, where I stayed thirteen months. We went over to New Guinea and then to the Philippines, where we landed on Leyte and then went to some smaller islands called Cebu and Bohol, and some of our people went to Mindanao; and we fought that war for several months. And then we were training to invade Japan. And I remember when the news came over the radio that the war was over, instead of going to get drunk, like a lot of people thought they ought to do, there were a great crowd of people went to the chapel and cried and prayed. Because we knew that if we were going to invade Japan, there would be just literally hundreds of thousands of casualties.

I came home, and my father was a minor official here in the courthouse; he was a bailiff for the justice of the peace. Graham George [inaudible—sounds like "Daddy"?] was the justice of the peace and Judge Verner—they had two of them in the courthouse; and I used to help Dad serve papers. They were down here in the basement of this building on that side. I decided that I wanted to go to law school, and I went uptown to the Woodrow Wilson Law School and signed up on Friday for a night course. I was going to work during the daytime. Well, on Monday I was offered a job with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, traveling; and I didn't go to law school. I traveled for ten months and discovered I didn't like working, at least the type of work that I was doing. I was making statistical surveys on wages—as one of my friends back there [in the audience], he says I don't like to work now [laughter]. But at any rate, we were making statistical surveys on wages and prices and traveling seven states. It was terrible to be out on a trip for three or four weeks and get

stranded in Mississippi or Alabama on the weekend. I can see why traveling salesmen become drunks. I would look for a basketball game or a picture show or what. But at any rate, after ten months I told my boss that I wanted to resign, that I'd always wanted to be a lawyer, and I was going to Emory. And I went to Emory Law School, and those of you that know Emory, Dean [inaudible—sounds like "Hillkey"?] was the dean at that time, and you had some wonderful professors and Paul Bryan, Mr. Quillian, Agnor was just—had been there just a short while—who else?

MACKAY, prompting: Culp

BELL: Yeah, Culp—Maurice Culp--and had a crowd of old fellows there that taught you the law and wished you well when you went into law practice.

I went through straight in nine straight quarters, finished the bar [exam], and Pierre Howard [Sr.] decided to resign from the legislature or not to run, and run for judge. That was when Judge Hubert, Pierre, Harvey Armistead, and Judge Vaughn ran for judge in 1950. I thought I'd like to run for the legislature. And Judge Guess was one of my father's great friends, and I went down to Judge Guess's house, down Clairemont; and I asked him, I said, "Judge, what do you think about me running for the legislature?" He said, "Son, you ought to run. You're an asset to this community; you'll be an asset to the legislature." And I've told this story, but twenty-five years later we were sitting over here in the courthouse and talking politics, and he [Judge Guess] told me, says, "Richard, everybody that comes to—that wants to run for politics comes to me for advice, and they don't come for advice, they come for encouragement. I encourage all of them to run" [laughter].

Well, I ran; and there were eight of us in the race: Gene Williams, Herman Austin, Charlie Parker, Ed Tucker, and a couple more—Glenn [spelling?] Hicks. And I happened to win. We ran on plurality votes then; and the person who got the most votes would win without having a runoff. Well, I got about five thousand votes, Charlie Parker got about four thousand, Herman Austin got about three thousand, Hubert Morgan got about eight hundred. And I was a legislator. That same year Jim Mackay was running against a Smith man, and he [Mackay] won.

Now, at that time, the way you ran for office, you didn't get on television, because they didn't have any or you didn't have the money to get on it. You went to meetings. We got invited the first time to go to the Wesley Chapel Civic Club. When we got there, there were twenty-three candidates; and there were five people [non-

candidates] there [laughter]. And we talked for four hours to those five people. And before my time came, which was about eleven o'clock, wasn't but three of them there—two of them had left [laughter]. And I think Clark Harrison told you what the way we did, we would go Klondike and see Mr. [inaudible—either Robertson or Robinson?], we'd go out to the north side and see Tullie Smith, and if you'd get those kind of people for you, you had a good chance. That's not true now. You can go out to the north side, and you can see thousands of apartments where people live that you don't know. You have no idea who they are, how they're going to vote, or whether they're Republicans or not.

But at any rate, I went to the legislature with Jim and Mr. McWhirter [spelling?]. The great things at that time were the minimum foundation for education and the sales tax, and we passed both of those. And the people in Atlanta who counted had us out to the Piedmont Driving Club for a dinner and congratulated us on what we had done. And Mr. Rich, Mr. Haverty, Bill Hartsfield, all the leaders of Atlanta clapped you on your back and says, "Dick, you did a good job." Well, anybody who ever called me "Dick" didn't know me; I never had that nickname. If they saw you on the street the next day, they wouldn't know you; but that night we were something, Jim and I and Mr. McWhirter.

The article that was in the paper this morning about me, saying that I was going to speak, said that I have never lost an election. Well, I'm proud that I have. Bob Broome's daddy died, Mr. Jolley was elected for a short while, and then I wanted to be sheriff. I had changed from the infantry to the Military Police Reserve and had gone to the [inaudible—possibly "provost"?] marshal school, and I was in law enforcement; and I thought not only did I want to be sheriff because I thought I was qualified, but also I understood it paid very well. You might not know it, but it had fees to it. You'd have a prisoner in jail that would get arrested in the afternoon, and he wouldn't get out until after midnight; and they'd get two meals paid for at seventy-five cents a meal without having to feed him anything. And if you could get several thousand of those a year, you could make twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars off the jail fees; and that's what Mr. Broome did and Jake Hall and Bob Broome. We cut it out later with legislation. But Bob told me after he beat me—we ran, and I ran a good second. Mr. Jolley was in it and Mr. Christian, our police captain. But Bob told me I didn't know what I missed. Well, I do know what I missed. I missed being what I've been for the last thirty years.

By getting beat, I learned that you couldn't just run on your own; you had to have some people to help you. And when I got beat, the next day I started making friends with the people I knew were against me.

Two years later I ran against Hubert Morgan. He had been appointed solicitor of the county court—they called it the City Court of Decatur. He was chosen by the McCurdys. Walter McCurdy was the solicitor, and he made him—fact is, back in the days when we were all trying to get ahead, this county was controlled by the Candlers, the McCurdys, the Burgesses, and the Weekes [sic— "Weekeses"?]. Now, there were a few others that could get in on it, too; but they [the aforementioned men] had all the political jobs. Mr. [Scott] Candler was the commissioner, Julius [McCurdy] was the county lawyer, Walter [McCurdy] was the solicitor to the county court, Mr. Ben Burgess was the clerk of the court, John Wesley Weekes was the probate, Murphey Candler was the lawyer for the school board, and John Wesley Weekes had charge of the juvenile court and the probate court—the county guardian. That's where all the money was, in those jobs [laughter]. They didn't let the rest of us in on it; and they had chosen Hubert for the solicitor of the county court, because Walter wanted to go with Julius over in Decatur Federal. They all were wonderful people, and I like them; but I wasn't chosen.

So I decided to run against Hubert, and they thought it was awful in the courthouse that I'd do that. He was a good boy, and it was his job. Well, I beat him two-to-one. But I needed a trick to win. And so a good-looking brunette girl came over here from Alabama about that time, and I needed a wife for the election [laughter]. So on May 29 I met her, and two and a half months later I married her. And Hubert Morgan says, "It's a dirty trick. It's a political trick. It won't last six months." And I want to tell you it's lasted thirty-one years. She's not black-headed anymore [laughter].

But anyhow, I remained solicitor of the county court for ten years. E. T. Hendon ran with me—[points to audience] E. T.'s back here. We were scared to death the first month we had court. Hubert and Walter and Judge—the judge who were there didn't do much after we had won the office, and they had about a thousand cases on the calendar the fourth Monday in January. And Pooley Hubert had beat the judge—now, what was his name?

VOICE OFF-CAMERA: Dave Phillips

MACKAY: Uncle Dave

BELL: Dave Phillips, yeah, I remember him, I just-- But they thought Judge Hubert could probably handle it, but they didn't think I could handle the job. So we drew up a calendar, say about a thousand cases, and you couldn't get in the courtroom, there were so many people that had been charged with crimes—drunk driving, drunk fighting, and those kind of things. And all the lawyers were there, waiting to see us break down. Well, I chose a case and called it and tried it, and somehow the jury found him guilty. From then on it was all right.

E. T. and I kept that job for two years, and Mr. Leathers was the solicitor general. Clarence Peeler was working for him, and Clarence told you that—if you were here—Mr. Leathers had a heart condition and that he decided to retire and give it to Clarence. Well, I looked at it; and my job paid $8,000, and his paid $11,400. And I didn't know what the job was about so much; but I knew what money was about [laughter], and so I decided to run. And a third boy got in it from Covington. We had Clayton County, Newton County, Rockdale County, and DeKalb. Clayton County got out the next year. But it was again a plurality race, and Clarence is a wonderful friend of mine now; but at that time he didn't like me very much because I was running against him. And he would stand over in the corner at political meetings and talk to Gene Branch, and I'd be out there shaking hands. They counted paper ballots at that time, and at midnight, the night of the election, I was ahead of him, I think, seven votes. The next day, the next afternoon, I beat him by 105. And that's how I got to be district attorney. They changed the name from solicitor general to district attorney.

I stayed there—E. T. left me and went into private practice—but I stayed there and had some more help. I'll give him [E. T.] credit for a great deal of help, but Dennis Jones, Emory Daniel, Curtis Tillman, and a host of other fine lawyers came and helped me as district attorney. And I got to try all the major cases—or we did—that happened in DeKalb County and Rockdale and Newton for the next twenty years.

We had two cases to happen—we tried murders, rapes, robberies, thefts, every kind of thing—but we had two cases that happened in DeKalb County that until that time, Leo Frank had been the most publicized case in Georgia. I don't believe we've had any cases like the Ms. Gray case or the Barbara Mackle case in Georgia or anywhere in the Southeast that had more publicity. I'd been in office six months when Ms. Gray had her problems with Drs. Shinall, Heard, and Ansley [sic—later corrected to "Charles Cunningham"]. You'll recall—those of you who—How many of you were

patients of that thing? A number of people were. But anyhow, Dr. Ansley [sic—means Charles Cunningham] had conducted a small medical practice. He was in my church, practically a saint. He was an elder and had Mrs. Fry—Tom Fry's mother—as his secretary-nurse. And here comes Bob Shinall, an eager young doctor, and Heard, another eager young doctor; and they persuaded him to get a clinic and to expand. So they built that building up yonder down the street, and they proceeded to expand into a four-doctor firm [sic—practice?].

They needed someone who had more experience than Mrs. Fry; so this lady came and interviewed and said that she was wealthy, she didn't need a job—her husband was a dead colonel, and her father had been the president of Panama, and he had a mining interest out in Colorado. But she just wanted to work for the public; she didn't care how much they paid her. And they grabbed her, because they liked that low pay. I think they paid her three hundred dollars a month. Ms. Gray came to Decatur and bought her a ten-acre tract out in north DeKalb, where she put a dog run. She organized the office and hired twelve or fifteen girls. They had twelve waiting rooms [sic—examination rooms?], and they proceeded to expand. And Ms. Gray, at the trial, said Bob Shinall would run from one office—one waiting room [sic] to another, stop and step in and say—she'd already had the information taken from [inaudible] girl—and say—blood pressure and that type thing—and say, "Can I help you?" And the person would say, "Well, I've got a headache." "Nurse, give him an aspirin." And he'd run to the next room, stop, step in, and say, "Can I help you?" "Well, I've got a cut." "Nurse, put a Band-Aid." I'm just making this up, [laughter] but they worked from seven o'clock in the morning until nighttime, and then after supper Bob would see thirty patients at his house. And they made a lot of money. But Ms. Gray was apparently taking some.

So they decided that they'd gotten so big that they needed a professional manager, and they hired a young man from Louisiana who had run a little hospital. Dr. Heard was on vacation in Europe, and he [the manager] couldn't get much answer as to what was going on. So he was down there one Sunday afternoon, looking at the records; Ms. Gray wouldn't let him see them. And he saw something. They had a cashier that took in checks and cash and everything, and on the deposit slips there wasn't any cash, just checks. So he called one of the doctors and said, "Doc, I got something big here." And he called Ms. Gray and said, "Can we meet at the office? We

need to talk to you." She says, "I've got company. We're going to have dinner. I'm sure we can work it out in the morning. I'll be there at nine o'clock."

Well, she was quite lavish in her spending. She spent $10,000 a month on the dogs and the upkeep of her house. She and her daughter flew to New York to see a play on Saturday night. She had a pink Lincoln—some of you remember that. She had a station wagon. She had a daughter named Candy, who went to a private school. She just lived high. She gave lavish parties where they drank liquor and ate steak, and the doctors ate some of it, too. But at any rate, the next morning the lawyer was there, the auditor was there, the doctors were there; but Ms. Gray didn't show up. And after an hour of waiting, they got some police and went to her house and went to the airport. There was nothing at the house. All the fifty dogs were gone, furniture was gone. She'd gotten three trucks and the pink Lincoln and the station wagon, had some blacks, and they headed for Greenville [South Carolina] down the highway. When they got to Greenville, the dog handler met them there from Connecticut and took the dogs to Connecticut, she took one of the cars to Boston, the blacks came home with the trucks. In Boston she changed cars—traded for one, and went to Oklahoma, where she applied for a job at a doctor's office and told them, "You won't need an accountant. I can handle your bookwork" [laughter].

At any rate, we started having—the FBI got it. [Goes through papers on desk in front of him.] I've got pictures here of—I'm not going to show them to you, I'll let you—I'm not going to read them. But—[to people who are leaving room] y'all go when you've got to [laughter]. I heard her say—[Pulls a page from the stack] But it started getting in the newspaper. This—[reading headlines] "Mrs. Burton there in a wheelchair" [passes papers along to someone off-camera]; "the Janet Gray trial"; "Mrs. Burton being convicted"; and just—in every newspaper in the world. Later on I'll tell you who she was.

But at any rate, Dennis Jones and I were in the office, and we decided what should we do. "Well, let's talk to the doctors." So we called up down there and says, "Let's have a meeting." Well, they were so busy making money that they didn't stop. But they sent Bob Heard, and I suggested that we talk to him, and I suggested to Bob Heard, I said, "We represent the state, and we think we can handle the case. But you might want to have your lawyer here." And he says, "Like hell. We're not going to hire somebody to do your job." And so we had one trial without a lawyer.

MACKAY: That was John Heard, wasn't it?

BELL: Yeah, John Heard. So it was tried twice—I'll tell you why. But the second trial, they hired Pierre Howard [Sr.]; and Pierre charged them $10,000. They yelped like stuck pigs, but they wanted somebody to represent them besides me [laughter]. But at any rate, they looked all over the world for Janet Gray. She had—we found out she had thirty-four aliases. She'd stolen all over the world. She was named Burton; she was named all kinds of names. She was wanted in California, Hawaii, Virginia, and all the stories that she had told the doctors were just false. We got—the auditors went to work, Price Waterhouse, I believe it was, or one of the auditors; and they discovered that they could prove that she took $186,000 and probably took two or three hundred thousand in a two-year period. Ms. Gray was caught in Oklahoma and brought back.

And Judge Guess didn't like doctors, Frank Guess. The doctors thought that if they could get Mr. Clements appointed to handle the money—[inaudible—sounds like "Marion" or "Marriott"?] Clements—that they could come out better. Judge Guess appointed his buddy Rooster Armistead, and Rooster got a $30,000 fee out of it. He gathered property together, sold property, got the money that was in the banks, and sold the dogs—all those kind of things.

But at any rate, she was brought back; and Tom Davis and Charlie Edwards—Tom Davis is a former FBI man. One of his friends, Charlie Edwards, was with him in the trial of it. And they were ruthless with those doctors. We—the courtroom was full every day. Five out of six people in the courtroom wanted her to go free, because they thought those doctors had stolen money from their clients [patients]. They'd made so much, they hadn't missed $200,000 in two years? And you don't miss it, something's wrong [laughter].

Anyhow, we went to trial, and Dennis Jones was my assistant in the case; and we agreed that I would ask questions, and Dennis would object to things. Well, Judge Guess let everything—including the kitchen sink—in[to] evidence. Bob Shinall thought that he was a pretty smart fellow. And they questioned him, and says, "Doc, you don't think we ought to have a trial, do you?" And [Shinall replied], "Well, why should we? She's guilty." And he stuck his foot in his mouth every time we turned around. Dennis got so mad at Judge Guess just letting the kitchen sink in that we quit objecting.

But at any rate, you'll remember, some of you who are Methodists, that Bob Shinall was a Methodist. And he went to church one Sunday night, and Dr. Crawley was

the minister, and Frank Thomas was foreman of the grand jury. One of the jurors was on the front row. Dr. Crawley felt like he ought to say something on behalf of Shinall, and he preached about the case. And the next day Frank Thomas reported to the judge that a juror had been preached to, and Tom Davis asked for a mistrial [laughter]. Bill Pittman was the man [juror].

Well, I learned something. Like I told you, I hadn't been in office but six months; and I felt like I had had to put up everybody that knew something about it. I put up all four doctors. I put up—and poor old Dr. Ansley, as saintly as he was—

CORRECTION FROM AUDIENCE: Cunningham [Charles Cunningham, whom Mr. Bell had heretofore referred to as "Dr. Ansley"].

BELL: Cunningham—that's right. It was Cunningham. Excuse me—it was Cunningham. Dr. Cunningham just wasn't used to being questioned about anything. And they got him on the stand and says, "Doctor, did you ever make any calls at night?" They were trying to prove that he could have taken the money. He says, "Certainly." And [defense counsel] says, "Did you ever take any cash for fees?" "Sure did." They said, "Did you turn it in?" [laughter]

But at any rate, the second trial was a month later. And as I say, I put up all the women that worked with her [Janet Gray], all the doctors, all the—I put up one doctor, I put up Heard, because he was best on his feet as a witness. I put up one auditor, I put up one girl that worked with her [Gray]. On Wednesday morning, when they were just waiting to get at John—the other people—I stood up and announced, "The State rests." Tom Davis almost had a heart attack. They asked for half a day recess so they could prepare the case. We went to the jury on Thursday, and the jury found her guilty. The irony of it, though, was, she went down to the jail on Wednesday night, and she fell out of her bed and twisted her knee, and we had to send after her with a stretcher and to have a doctor brought to see that she could hear what the—well, when I read the jury verdict. She didn't get a lot of [prison] time. But we were just glad to convict her, because the public were against our doctors. They thought that they just didn't treat their clients [patients] right. That was one of the cases that happened during my time that I got to try because it happened in DeKalb County.

The second case that got as much publicity as the Leo Frank case and the Mrs. Gray case was Barbara Mackle. You'll recall that Barbara Mackle was visiting Emory University—not visiting, she was going to school there. Her mother had come to visit

her because she had the flu. And Gary Steven Krist came to Decatur—or Emory University—and kidnaped her, went down at the Ramada Inn by the CDC [CORRECTION: Rodeway Inn, rather than Ramada Inn; possibly on Clairmont Road adjacent to the Veterans' Hospital]. I'm sure you remember most of the facts about it, but he had built a box with a fan in it, a light, and brought it in a station wagon from Miami, where he was employed at the University of Miami as a—wasn't really a doctor or anything—but in oceanography [CORRECTION: marine biology]. And when that happened, our police got into it; and a few hours later, the FBI took it over. And for a month I would get calls asking, "What are you going to do about the Mackle case?" And I'd say, "Well, I don't know. It's a federal case right now." Well, they investigated it and discovered that she hadn't been taken across the state line, whatever would have made it a federal case, and finally I got a call from Washington saying, "Mr. Bell, we're going to turn that case over to you. You'll be receiving some papers soon." And that afternoon I got a stack of investigation papers about that high. [Holds hand above head to demonstrate] [laughter] I often asked the [federal] agent in charge how many agents worked on it. He grinned at me. Mr. Mackle was a personal friend of Richard Nixon and of J. Edgar Hoover. And every agent that they had, I think, worked on the case.

Dennis Jones and I wondered what to do. They told us, "Anything you want, we'll help you with it." So we talked about it again, just like we did the Gray case, and he says, "Well, let's call—see if we can get Mr. Mackle." So we called the agent in charge of the FBI, and fifteen minutes later Mr. Mackle called us. We said, "We want to come down there and see what happened." The box was built there, and much of the request for the ransom money was in Miami. So we flew down to Miami. The Mackles put us up at their condominium on Biscayne Bay. Billy Vessels [spelling?] was a former All-American football player who was Mr. Mackle's right-hand man, and he took us everywhere we needed to go. Richard Nixon had slept in the same bed I did two weeks before. He was a wonderful friend of the Mackles', as I told you. And J. Edgar Hoover had stayed in that condominium.

But we made an investigation, we had all the help that we could; and, as you recall, there was a trial. Jimmy Venable, the Ku Klux Klan Grand Cyclops [Grand Dragon?] represented Gary Steven Krist. We spirited the Mackles in and kept them away from the newspapers. We came in the old—the courthouse downstairs and up to my office and got it indicted by the grand jury without the newspapers getting in on it.

Then they [the Mackles] came back, and they spent their time as witnesses in my office. And it was a week-long case. Mr. Venable was a character. He helped me a great deal by his cross-examination. If you made something out, he would make it out that much better when he cross-examined my witnesses [laughter].

I chose the jury. And when I studied jury selection, such as it was, you wanted to get businessmen on the jury. You wanted accountants; you wanted people with mathematical backgrounds. So in choosing the jury, I talked to a fellow that was a--one of the [potential] jurors that was a—worked on computers. And I figured computers people are like accountants, so I took him. When the jury went—came back, they had argued for three or four hours about whether to convict him [Krist]. The vote—first vote—was eleven to one: eleven for the electric chair, one for acquittal. And it was that fellow that I'd chosen for a juror. I found out he'd been to a bible college, he was nutty on religion, and he just didn't believe in the death penalty. So they compromised and came out with a life sentence.

I could go over a lot more the facts of the case, but you remember that he went down to the Ramada Inn [sic; Rodeway Inn] where Miss Mackle and her mother were staying. At four o'clock in the morning he broke in on them, kidnaped the girl, tied the mother up, took her [daughter Barbara] out to Gwinnett County, and buried her in this box. And she was eighty-three hours—here's the book [holds up a copy] that was written about it, *Eighty-Three Hours Till Dawn.* She stayed in the box underground for nearly four days. And he [Krist] called. He went back to Florida and called from Palm Beach and said, "The girl that you're looking for is buried out this street." He'd already gotten his $500,000 ransom and told them where they might find her. Well, it was directions that you couldn't hardly follow, and they searched for hours and finally saw some loose dirt. They dug in it, knocked on the box that they ran into, and they discovered her.

[Holds up photographs] Here's pictures of Gary Steven Krist when he was out here in a hotel, he and his girlfriend, who was a Honduran. They took pictures of each other. They were undressed somewhat—it's not real bad, about like a bathing suit. But you can get some ideas from it [laughter]. But anyhow, he was convicted and sent to prison. It was a fantastic story. He served twelve years and was deported [sic] to Alaska, where he became mayor of the town of Sitka [Note: unconfirmed]. He ran a fishing boat. I guess he's rehabilitated. They talked here recently about him going to

med school, and I think they scared the med school off. They wouldn't take him. [Note: Krist did become a doctor but lost his license to practice.]

I had many, many more interesting cases that you—that—we had a case that happened down here a block [from the courthouse]. A lady worked for the City of Decatur, she had a visitor in the hot summertime from her nephew, I believe it was, from south Georgia, who had a little twelve-year-old girl. A fifteen-year-old black boy, in the middle of the night, went in the house. It was hot August, and they had fans going. They didn't have air[-conditioning] in those days. And [he] spirited her out, took her over by the Baptist Church, raped her, brought her back to the house; and she went to her mother, who was sleeping, and said, "I've been robbed." [Newspaper account gives her age as nine and quotes her as saying, "I've been stolen."] And the mother said, "You're dreaming." And she was wearing her aunt's pajamas, and they were wet. And Mr. Mothershed, who was a detective for Decatur at that time, was called. Since the boy was black, he [Mothershed] went down to the black people that were living over by the cemetery. And he thought he knew who the boy was, a little fat, fifteen-year-old boy, and got him out, took him over to the police department and turned the microphone on. And [he asked], "Boy, why'd you do it?" They didn't have the cases that some of you remember about *Miranda*, where you've got to advise them of their rights and give them a lawyer and all that. And the boy said, "I don't know, Mr. Mothershed. I just laid the blocks to her" or something of that nature.

Well, it went to trial with all the black lawyers in Atlanta in there that were good. Mr. [Donald] Hollowell was one of the fine black lawyers in Atlanta; Horace Ward, who tried the Jan Kemp case, the judge, and was the law student that didn't get in [the University of] Georgia was one of the lawyers; Howard Moore, who represented the Communist professor in California, were three of the black lawyers. And they thought they had a case that would go to the Supreme Court of the United States.

The South Georgia farmer didn't want his daughter to get on the stand and say she had been had by a black person. So the way I proved intercourse, I got Betty Ann Brooks, the doctor, to come in and say that she found sperm inside this girl and that she had lacerations; and that was the slim way of proving rape. At any rate, the lawyers didn't know about the tape, where Mothershed had turned on the microphone and taped, and they [the attorneys] thought sure that they [the jury] were going to acquit him [the defendant]. And they put their client on the stand; he said he didn't do

it. And I think it was probably the first time that anybody ever used a tape recording in DeKalb Superior Court. I put it up for rebuttal; and in trying to get it in as evidence, I had several things I had to prove: that it was done properly, that the person who did it knew how to make a tape, and that it hadn't been tampered with. And the leading black lawyer, Mr. Hollowell, wanted to cross-examine the detective before we played it. So he talked for forty-five minutes while Mr.—Judge Ward and the other lawyer were on the telephone and in the books trying to find out what you do about tape recordings. But anyway we played it, and all this bubbled out. "I did it. I laid the blocks to her," and so forth. So they [defense counsel] asked for a recess. They took the little old boy back in the grand jury room, and there was a bailiff back there with them; and he said they asked him, "Boy, why'd you do it? Why'd you lie to us?" [chuckles] He got fifteen years. And the father of the girl sent me a hundred pounds of pecans, and that's the last I've heard from them [laughter]. That's been about twenty years ago.

We had a case called—where "B" Brooks, who was the speechwriter for the Talmadges, shot six times through a door out on Briarcliff and killed a man outside. He [Brooks?] was going with the fellow's former wife. "B" Brooks had all kinds of political savvy. He got Judge Edenfield, who was later a federal judge, as his lead lawyer—Tom Davis, Bob Broome, and another one. And they brought Herman Talmadge from Washington as a character witness and had Marvin Griffin and Carl Sanders as character witnesses—had Bob Hall and John Sammons Bell and Superior Court--I mean, Appellate Court judges as character witnesses. And he had—he was on the pardon and parole board, and he was scared. He locked his doors, and he kept a pistol by his bed. And this fellow was coming to see him about his ex-wife; and when he knocked on the door late at night, Mr. Brooks shot six times through the door and hit him and killed him. It was a good manslaughter case, where you have a passion and you do something when you don't intend to do it, but you kill somebody. But at any rate, Judge Dean was fresh on the bench; and we had the heavy pressure of all those politicians. And I tried as hard as I could for you people of DeKalb County, but we lost that one [laughter]. He was acquitted.

I could tell you tale after tale after tale of standing up in the courtroom on Monday morning here, in Rockdale, and Newton County and saying, "Ready for the State," and trying murders, rapes, robberies over a period of twenty-two years; but you've heard enough, I think. Let me tell you that I have been proud to be a DeKalb

Countian. I've enjoyed not only serving as representative, solicitor, district attorney—I retired from district attorney and was appointed executive director of the State Bar of Georgia. I stayed there three years and retired again. My friends—I was going to practice a little law. In 1980 my friends came to me and says, "We want Bob Broome beat for Superior Court judge, and you're the only one that can do it." So I ran against Bob—he'd been elected four years before—and I think I spent—[Addresses audience member] Did I spend anything?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, off-camera: No. [laughter]

BELL, chucking: Anyhow, I beat Bob two-to-one; and I became a Superior Court judge. And Clarence Peeler told me, said he thought I was going to retire, but he congratulated me, that I worked hard during that time. And two years later we were sitting at the table one night, my wife and I, and the subject of the [Georgia] Supreme Court came up. And we looked at who were running—people you don't know, Irwin Stolz from LaFayette, one from Perry, and some others. And she says, "Why, you're more popular than they are." So I ran a state-wide race in 1982 for Supreme Court of Georgia. I spent $300 besides the entrance fee, and I won it. So I've been in that job three and a half years.

DeKalb County's been good to me. Since we've been here, we built a house out beyond old Durham Park thirty-one years ago. We raised our children there. We had four children—had them in four years. Had a boy, and then seventeen months later a second, a girl; and then we had twins seventeen months later. And she [Mrs. Bell] told me, says, "If you come home and find that I'm not here, I'll be down at Milledgeville [state mental hospital]. I will have found out I'm pregnant again" [laughter]. We've attended the same church—my wife, I've told you—all of my life practically, and since she's been here. My children were raised in the Decatur Presbyterian Church. We went to the same elementary—the kids did—the same elementary school, Allgood Elementary. They went to the same high school, Clarkston High School; and let me say that they got a good education from DeKalb County schools. All of them went to college. All of them got their master's. My son got his law degree and his CPA. And it's all because DeKalb County has good schools and prepared them to do that.

I'm not through yet. I'm up there. I was at work this morning. I don't know how much longer I'll work, but I'm not planning to quit anytime soon. I've talked my hour.

MACKAY: Thank you. [Applause] All these afternoons are special, but this has been extra-special. And we are grateful to you, Judge, for coming out. I'd like to escort you and Naomi and the other members of your family. We're going into the courtroom. We want all of you to come in there and join us for some refreshments, and it'll be more efficient if they go in there first. [To Bell] If y'all will come right ahead. And I think we might bring those in there.

BELL, rising, to audience: You can. Let me show you. [Holds up two photographs] This is "Rise and Shine," and that was the $5,000 dog that Mrs. Gray had [laughter].

MACKAY: You can bring those in there. They might want to look at them.

END OF RECORDING