CHAPTER 12

THE SENATE: THE GREAT AMENDER

Throughout the spring of 1964, President Lyndon Johnson used the news making powers of the presidency to call on the Southerners to stop the filibuster and let the Senate majority pass a civil rights bill. Johnson literally turned the White House into an electronic soapbox, speaking to his fellow Americans over the television waves the way an old time politician would stand on a real soapbox when giving a political speech.

Clark Schooler, Carl Brimmer, and Greg Netherton were eating most of their meals in the basement of Mike Palm's Restaurant on Capitol Hill. It was while eating a late dinner and watching the late news on television that the three young men were able to witness and appreciate President Johnson's many virtuoso performances on the tube.

Practically any situation where Johnson gave a speech or met with the press was turned into a presidential lecture on ending the filibuster and getting the civil rights bill enacted into law. At a special press interview on the occasion of President Johnson's first hundred days in office, Lyndon Johnson sat casually on a sofa in the Oval Office and literally boiled over with executive enthusiasm. He said:

"I don't want to predict how long the Senate will be discussing this bill. I am hopeful and I am an optimist and I believe they can pass it and I believe they will pass it and I believe it is their duty to pass it. And I am going to do everything I can to get it passed." [83]

Whenever Lyndon Johnson met with a distinguished visitor in the White House Rose Garden, or if he was dedicating a new national park far from the nation's capital, there was always a mini-oration on the civil rights bill. "Those senators have been debating the civil rights bill for a good many days," Johnson said, "and obviously there will be much debate yet in the

offing. But I believe, after a reasonable time, the majority of the senators will be ready to vote. And I hope that a vote can be worked out." [84]

Clark, Carl, and Greg were impressed by the president's electronic handiwork. "This constant presidential electronic barrage must be having an effect," Carl Brimmer said one night at a late dinner. "Can there be any question in anyone's mind that Lyndon Johnson is supporting the civil rights bill?"

"There's an even more important point," Clark Schooler added. "Lyndon Johnson is putting up a good argument, whether he really believes it or not, that 67 votes can be found for cloture and the bill actually will be passed into law."

But by the month of May, even President Johnson appeared to be getting exasperated with the way the filibuster seemed to be dragging on forever. In a prepared speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Johnson spoke with something of a whine in his voice. He said:

"Our nation will live in tormented ease until the civil rights bill now being considered in the Senate is written into law. The question is no longer: 'Shall it be passed?' The question is: 'When? When? When will it be passed?'" [85]

Greg Netherton, the voice of the rational South, listened to this particular Johnson statement and answered the question directly. "Maybe it will never pass," Greg said somewhat confrontively to the presidential image on the TV set. "Maybe the filibuster will succeed! Or maybe the bill will pass heavily amended, in a form that you, President Johnson, and my civil rights house mates, won't like very much!"

Neither Clark Schooler nor Clark Brimmer were upset by Greg Netherton's comments to a two-dimensional television image of Lyndon Johnson. Clark and Carl both regarded Greg's words as a precise statement of the current situation.

One day Clark found himself in the Senate dining room. But it was not the subsidiary Senate dining room in the New Senate Office Building. This was the real Senate dining room. It was the one in the Capitol building proper. Clark Schooler and the Senate aides supporting the civil rights bill were enjoying a working breakfast discussing strategy for getting 67 votes for cloture.

As often happened, the discussion was being led by Ralph Shepard, Senator Hubert Humphrey's special assistant for civil rights. "The key to a successful cloture vote is Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois," Shepard began. "Dirksen is the Republican leader in the Senate. Dirksen has gotten eight to ten Midwestern Republicans to give him their votes on the civil rights bill. That means those senators won't vote for cloture until Dirksen

tells them to. The end result is we have to win Dirksen over to our side to get those last few votes for cloture."

It was about that moment that a waiter presented Clark Schooler with the most appetizing plate of scrambled eggs and bacon he had ever seen. The serving was garnished with buttered toast and orange slices and chopped pineapple. Continuing to listen to Ralph Shepard, Clark began to eat his breakfast with enthusiasm.

"President Johnson is doing his part," Shepard said. "Lyndon is using a technique he calls the hero in history approach. He's hanging back and letting Everett Dirksen take the lead in the final struggle over the civil rights bill. That way a hero's niche is being carved out for Senator Dirksen. And the prospect of being a hero will help coax Dirksen into going our way on civil rights."

"President Johnson has been burning poor Senator Humphrey's ear off," Shepard continued. "The president calls Hubert Humphrey almost every day with more instructions."

Ralph Shepard then effectuated an exaggerated Texas drawl and pretended to be Lyndon Johnson speaking:

"Now you know this bill can't be clotured unless you get Ev Dirksen," Ralph Shepard mimicked the president. "You and I are goin' to git 'im. You make up your mind right now to spend time with Ev Dirksen. You've got to let ol' Ev have a big piece of the action. Ol' Ev's got to look good all the time." [86]

There was a generous round of laughter when Ralph Shepard finished his imitation of President Johnson. Clark took advantage of the gap in the conversation to signal one of the waiters and ask him to bring Clark a second helping of scrambled eggs.

The discussion of the civil rights bill resumed. The middle-aged woman who was a civil rights adviser to Senator Clifford Case of New Jersey made an observation. "I saw Senator Humphrey on television on 'Meet The Press' this past Sunday morning," she said. "Humphrey gave soaring personal praise to Dirksen. Humphrey said Dirksen would put the well-being of the United States above the narrower interests of the Republican Party. Humphrey said Dirksen would see the civil rights bill as a moral issue and not a partisan Republican issue." [87]

While waiting for his second helping of scrambled eggs, Clark Schooler decided to join in the discussion. "Not too many people across the country watch Sunday morning politics shows like 'Meet The Press,'" Clark said with an aura of great knowledge. "I doubt that very many average viewers saw and heard Humphrey trying to butter up Dirksen."

"That's not the point," the adviser to Senator Case replied tartly.

"Everyone in official Washington watches 'Meet The Press.' You can bet good green money that Senator Dirksen watches it religiously. Humphrey really laid it on thick. He called Dirksen a 'great senator' and a 'great American.' Humphrey said that, when the civil rights bill passes the Senate, Everett Dirksen of Illinois will be its champion." [88]

About this time, the waiter brought Clark his second helping of scrambled eggs. The waiter deftly placed the plate, a piece of fine china decorated with the great seal of the United States, right in front of Clark. As the waiter put the plate down, Clark noticed something interesting about the waiter's hand.

It was a rich shade of dark chocolate brown.

Ralph Shepard resumed the discussion at this particular Capitol Hill working breakfast.

"What you saw on 'Meet The Press,'" Shepard said, "was typical of what's happening every day in the hallways, and the inner offices, and the meeting rooms of the Senate. Humphrey will run into Dirksen and say to him: 'We can't pass this bill without you, Everett.' The next time Humphrey sees Dirksen, Humphrey will croon: 'We need your leadership in this fight, Everett.' Then Humphrey will ride next to Dirksen on the Senate subway and wax majestic: 'The successful passage of this civil rights bill will go down in history, Everett!'"

"Which means," Ralph Shepard opined, "that Everett Dirksen will go down in history. That's an idea that interests Senator Dirksen a lot." [89]

Clark was barely listening. His eyes moved from the waiter's hand to the waiter's face. The face was black like the hand was. Clark's gaze then wandered over all the other waiters in the room. They were lined up against one wall of the dining room, attentively waiting to fulfill any request from the diners they were serving. There were about eight waiters serving about 25 breakfasters, roughly one waiter for every three persons eating.

All of the waiters were males. All of the waiters were African-American.

Clark Schooler was suddenly jolted by the realization that, in the Senate dining room in the U.S.Capitol building, the staff of waiters was completely racially segregated.

Ralph Shepard was winding up the breakfast meeting.

"Senator Humphrey is peddling one particular line to Ev Dirksen," Shepard said conclusively. "It is the line that this is the opportunity for Dirksen to be the great man of the hour, the great man of the United States, the great man who saves the civil rights bill. And now, it appears that Dirksen is beginning to swallow the great man hook. When that hook is firmly caught in Everett Dirksen's gullet, we will wind him in along with

8 or 9 additional Republican senators and have ourselves a clotured civil rights bill." [90]

Clark Schooler was struck by his own adult naivete. He had been working on Capitol Hill and eating in the two Senate dining rooms for almost a year. It had taken him that long to specifically perceive and bring to the forefront of his mind something that was perfectly obvious. Racial segregation was being practiced daily in the dining rooms of the U.S.Capitol, the very heart and symbol of the American democracy.

How many other white persons, Clark anguished, lived their daily lives in a racially segregated world and never even noticed that this particular form of human separation was taking place?

Then Clark was overwhelmed by a sense of great irony. All of the people eating at this particular working breakfast were white. They were working on a legislative bill that would vitally effect every black person in the United States. But no black person had been invited to come and dine and participate in the discussion. Blacks were present only to serve the food and clear away the dirty dishes when the white folks were finished dirtying them.

It was some weird form of intellectual segregation, Clark thought, in which blacks were not allowed to join in the "brainy" work of passing legislation. That was true even for legislation that greatly affected black people.

Clark's tortured brain was suddenly asking him a series of questions: Were the black waiters listening to and following the breakfast table conversation about the civil rights bill? Were they aware that, as blacks, their future rights were being thought about and argued over by a breakfast table full of white persons? Did any of the black waiters wonder why they were not asked their opinion about what needed to be done? Or were the waiters so accustomed to their role as second class citizens that they never heard any of the conversation, concentrating their minds only on their assigned task of serving a morning meal?

How did it feel, Clark thought, to hear white people planning a struggle for civil rights legislation and, because you were black, not being allowed to participate in that legislative struggle?

That thought gave Clark the creeps.

The meeting was over. Clark hastily finished his second helping of scrambled eggs. As Clark got up to leave the table, he thanked the waiter for the extra attention.

"Glad to do it, sir," the African-American waiter replied cheerily. "I hope you enjoyed your meal, sir."

Clark could not detect even a hint of resentment or sarcasm in the

waiter's voice.

Meetings on what do about the filibuster of the civil rights bill were coming thick and fast. One afternoon Clark Schooler walked into yet another gathering of the Capitol Hill aides and assistants supporting the civil rights bill. But Clark discovered things were going to be different when he walked into the meeting room in the Old Senate Office Building and saw both Joseph Rauh, Jr., and Clarence Mitchell, Jr., sitting at the table. If the two lobbyists for the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights were present, there probably were going to be some fireworks.

Things became even more intense when Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, the Democratic floor leader for the civil rights bill, walked in and sat down. He was closely followed by Senator Thomas H. Kuchel, the Republican floor leader, who pulled up a chair next to Humphrey. Clark could not tell whether it was intentional or not, but senators Humphrey and Kuchel had seated themselves in such a way that they were directly across the table from Rauh and Mitchell.

Ralph Shepard of Humphrey's staff, who generally presided at such meetings, never had a chance to formally open the meeting. At the precise moment that both Humphrey and Kuchel were seated at the conference table, Joseph Rauh launched an all-out verbal assault. Given that the four men were all supposed to be friends and political allies, at least on civil rights issues, Clark Schooler was fascinated and somewhat shocked by the obvious bitterness of the exchange:

RAUH: "The word is all over the Senate. The great senators Humphrey and Kuchel are beginning to negotiate a compromise version of the civil rights bill with Senator Dirksen. Are the rumors true? Are the great senators Humphrey and Kuchel really going to sell the civil rights bill down the river?"

HUMPHREY: "Sooner or later, we have to talk with Senator Dirksen. It's simple mathematics. He has in his back pocket, tucked up real tight against his backside, the eight or nine Republican votes we need to make a 2/3 vote for cloture."

KUCHEL: "Face the facts, guys! No Dirksen! No deal!"

MITCHELL: "This is an incredible reversal of our agreement. We all said all along that there would be no compromises to the House bill when it came over to the Senate. Are you two caving in to Dirksen? If you do cave in, you are putting the Leadership Conference in a box and nailing down the cover. We'll be powerless to pass a strong civil rights bill."

RAUH: "The Leadership Conference is united in thinking that dealing with Dirksen is unwise. Dirksen means compromise and a weak bill. There

should be no dealing with Dirksen until all other avenues of gaining cloture have been exhausted. We had that pledge from you, Hubert Humphrey. Right from you! We need to hold Dirksen off with his weakening amendments."

HUMPHREY: "We are going to talk about cloture. We have to think ahead. We have to plan exactly how we are going to cloture the filibuster. If we can't pass the bill as it is, we have to think about passing the bill as it might be. We have to plan . . ."

MITCHELL: "You are shooting your friends in the civil rights movement if you trade with Dirksen."

HUMPHREY: "We don't have the necessary 67 votes for cloture."

KUCHEL: "Get real, Clarence! We need to be talking votes here. That means no more talk about 'no compromises.'"

MITCHELL: "Black Americans will never understand or tolerate the weakening of the civil rights bill. Black people feel very deeply about this piece of legislation. Violence in the streets will inevitable flow from any weakening of this bill."

HUMPHREY (trying to calm things down): "Clarence, don't get so excited. You rose three feet out of your chair when you said that."

RAUH: "Senators Humphrey and Kuchel talking publicly about compromising with Senator Dirksen means that some of the amendments to the bill proposed by Senator Dirksen will be adopted. What a disaster! Some of those Dirksen amendments are as bad as those proposed by the Southerners."

HUMPHREY: "So far, we have made no definitive deal with Senator Dirksen. But we have to talk out loud. Right now, we're having enough trouble getting 51 senators on the Senate floor to meet every Southern quorum call. All those brave fighters for civil rights want to be elsewhere, usually back in their home states electioneering. Democratic senators have actually said to me: 'If the survival of the nation depends on my being here, then let's just forget about the survival of the nation.'"

RAUH: "I'm worried that you guys aren't trying hard enough. If you'd really put the pressure on, we could get 67 votes for cloture. And we wouldn't have to kneel down and genuflect to Senator Dirksen."

HUMPHREY: "You're starting to sound like Lyndon Johnson. He grabbed me by my shoulder the other day and almost broke my arm. The president said: 'You've got to get those 67 votes for cloture.' I told Lyndon he was grabbing the wrong arm. He should have been grabbing Ev Dirksen by the arm and telling him to get the votes."

MITCHELL: "This is starting to have 'sell out' and 'let down' and 'back to the old plantation' written all over it."

HUMPHREY: "Give a little, Clarence! I have the Senate wives calling me right now and asking: 'Why can't the senator be home now?' The wives add: 'The Senate isn't being run intelligently.' Then President Johnson calls and says, 'What about my military appropriations bill? What about my poverty bill? What about my food stamps bill?'"

RAUH: "What's more important? Those pet bills of Lyndon's, or the civil rights of millions of American blacks?"

HUMPHREY: "Joe! Clarence! We aren't going to sell you out. And if we do, it will be for a whale of a price!" [91]

At that precise moment, bells began ringing in the halls of the Old Senate Office Building to signal a quorum call on the Senate floor. Literally saved by the bell from the wrath of Joe Rauh and Clarence Mitchell, senators Humphrey and Kuchel jumped up out of their chairs, shot out the door, and hurried down the hallway in the general direction of the subway over to the Capitol and the quorum call on the Senate floor.

Clarence Mitchell was left sitting with something of a dazed look on his face. "Sell us out," Mitchell said softly, almost to himself. "And for a whale of a price. You've got to wonder. Just how bad is that going to be?"

The meeting was over. The remaining participants stood around for awhile, engaged in separate conversations. One by one, they began drifting out the door. Suddenly, unintentionally, there were only two persons left in the room. They were Clark Schooler and Clarence Mitchell.

"It was nice to have a fellow citizen of Baltimore in the room with me during such a heated discussion," Clarence Mitchell said.

Clark replied: "These are very exciting moments in the Senate, Clarence." Clark tried to shape his words so as not to reveal his growing worry that some sort of deal probably had to be worked out with Senator Dirksen. "The filibuster is dragging on for what seems like forever," Clark went on. "There's a growing feeling that we have to hold a cloture vote and be done with it, even if we don't have the 67 votes for cloture."

"I know that feeling is there," Mitchell replied wearily. "And I know Hubert Humphrey has his problems, as he just told us. But I have my problems, too. I want a strong bill."

"You know, Clarence," Clark said, going back to the subject of his and Clarence Mitchell's hometown. "I have a theory about Baltimore. Because Maryland is a Border State, black people have had it better in Baltimore than in most big Southern cities in the United States. Sure, Baltimore is racially segregated. But blacks are allowed to work as policemen in Baltimore. They're allowed to drive buses and taxicabs. And blacks have been given the right to vote in Maryland. We have black persons serving on the Balti-

more City Council and in the Maryland state legislature. So, Clarence, those things make Baltimore quite different from almost all of the big, racially segregated cities further South."

"I think you may be right about that," Mitchell responded.

At that moment, Clarence Mitchell walked over to Clark Schooler and put both his hands on Clark's shoulders. He held Clark at arm's length as he talked. Mitchell spoke in a low but very firm voice.

"Clark Schooler," Mitchell said. "You are a truly good white person. I'm aware that you were one of the first white newspaper reporters in Baltimore to write stories about black people that did not involve crime. I know you covered early civil rights demonstrations in Baltimore in a way that was objective but also very fair to the civil rights cause. You're a Capitol Fellow, and you've been working hard for Senator Kuchel, and that means working hard for the civil rights bill. And you've even come over and stood behind me when I have been holding important press conferences and releasing important statements for the NAACP."

Clark really didn't know what to make of what Mitchell was suddenly saying. "Clarence," Clark said softly, "I was very pleased to do all that."

"Then why," Mitchell said, "do you repeatedly call me 'Clarence' to my face?"

Clark was completely startled and caught totally off guard by Mitchell's question. Clark's eyes widened. He suddenly felt as though all the strength was draining out of his body.

"I'm more than 25 years older than you are," Mitchell continued. "I'm certain you don't repeatedly address white men who are 25 years older than you are by their first names. And yet, just because I'm black, you take the liberty of calling me 'Clarence,' almost as though I was a delivery man or an apartment janitor."

Clark was barely able to speak. "Claren . . . uh . . . Mr.Mitchell. I really don't know what to say."

"I'll bet you don't call Senator Humphrey 'Hubert' when you talk to him," Mitchell went on. "I'll bet you don't address Senator Kuchel as 'Tom.'"

Clarence Mitchell was, of course, absolutely right. Without ever realizing it or thinking about it, Clark had developed a life habit of addressing African-Americans of any age or importance by their first names. It suddenly dawned on Clark that, if he had spent any time with Martin Luther King, Jr., he probably would have started addressing him to his face as "Martin."

Mitchell ended this part of the conversation as quickly as he had begun it. He let go of Clark's shoulders and stepped back. He changed the subject

by telling Clark he really did agree with Clark's view that things were not "all that bad" in Baltimore for the city's black population.[92]

Clark Schooler realized there was no point in his trying to go back to work for the rest of that particular day. Clarence Mitchell had completely altered Clark's view of himself and the world he had been living in. Clark told his secretary in Senator Kuchel's office that he had a meeting to go to some distance away from Washington. He would not be back in the office for the remainder of the afternoon.

It is one of the great historical and literary traditions of American life. It has been portrayed in countless history books, novels, theatrical plays, and even musical compositions. When things go wrong for Americans, they get on their horse, or in their covered wagon, or in their 1951 Ford Victoria hardtop convertible, and head west.

For Clark, heading west from Washington, D.C., meant driving the interstate highway toward Frederick, Maryland, and the Appalachian Mountains. Clark had no idea where he was going. It was as though he simultaneously wanted to drive away from Washington and much of his past life.

After about an hour and a half of driving, Clark and his 1951 Ford were well past the town of Frederick when Clark saw a sign for Antietam Battlefield. Clark had heard about Antietam all of his life but had never visited there. Rather than come to his senses in Ohio, or perhaps even Kansas or Colorado, Clark decided to end his westward trek and pay a long overdue visit to the Civil War battleground on the banks of Antietam Creek.

It was the middle of a late spring afternoon when Clark arrived at the battlefield. Antietam, Clark learned, had been the bloodiest single day of the Civil War. More soldiers, Northerners and Southerners alike, had died there in 24 hours than on any other battleground in the War Between The States. True, more men had died overall at the Battle of Gettysburg, but it had taken three days to get the killing done there. The one-day battle at Antietam had killed many more soldiers, from both sides, than any single day at Gettysburg or any other Civil War battle.

Clark suddenly realized why, subconsciously, he had stopped his westward excursion at Antietam. The issue at stake at Antietam, as in the entire Civil War, was human slavery for millions of African-Americans in the United States. On that one day of incredible pain and slaughter, the North had sacrificed wave after wave of soldiers in a continuing, but at that point fruitless, effort to defeat the South and end human bondage in America.

It occurred to Clark that this was what was happening in the Senate with the civil rights bill in 1964. Northern forces, Democrats and Republi-

cans alike, were giving all they had to defeat the Southern filibuster and drive racial discrimination from the field. But, as at Antietam, these great sacrifices on the part of the North were meeting only with frustration. The South, by dint of great struggle and commitment, was continuing to hold its ground and maintain the status quo.

Clark found his way to Burnside's Bridge, the site of the key battle at Antietam. He found a spot on the banks of Antietam Creek where he could sit and gaze upon Burnside's Bridge and watch the afternoon sun go down. As he did so, Clark's thoughts went back to his encounter with Clarence Mitchell and what it said about Clark himself. In virtually a state of reverie, Clark reviewed some of the major events of his past life in a world of racial segregation.

Racial awareness had begun for him, Clark decided, in 1951 when he was 16 years old. His mother and father were taking him and his brother to Ford's Theater, the only "legitimate theater" in Baltimore where one could see a touring Broadway play. The family was going to see the Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein musical "Show Boat" to celebrate Clark's older brother's birthday.

To get into the theater, the family had to dodge a picket line of whites and blacks protesting racial discrimination at Ford's Theater. The pickets, Clark later read in the newspaper, were claiming that a "white's only" Ford's Theater violated the "separate but equal" doctrine promulgated by the Supreme Court in 1896. Since there was no separate theater where blacks could see a touring Broadway play, the picketers argued, even the antiquated separate but equal principle required that black people be allowed to buy a ticket and watch the show at Ford's Theater.

"Pay no attention to those pickets. They're just causing trouble."

Clark's mother had said that to Clark and his brother as she maneuvered her family through the picket line. Clark later learned that was the same thing African-American mothers often said to their children, teaching and encouraging them not to make the mistake of making trouble for white folks.

A point of irony, Clark recalled. Half the cast of the musical "Show Boat" was African-American. The most famous song in the production, "Old Man River," was sung by a black man. The lyrics of that song lamented the unfair treatment of black men and women working at menial jobs on the boats and docks along the Mississippi River.

Clark and Harry, a friend from Clark's private high school, were going through the process of choosing a college or university. They were in

Princeton, New Jersey, getting a look at the campus and interviewing at Princeton University.

After a long day of talking to admission officers and wandering the Princeton campus, Clark and his friend decided to take the night off by going to a local movie theater. They were slightly late arriving at the theater. They entered the auditorium and took their seats when the theater was dark and the movie had already started playing.

When the film was over, and the lights brightened in the theater auditorium, Clark looked around. He saw that, for the first time in his life, he was attending a motion picture with black people. "Look, Harry," Clark blurted out to his friend. "there are some . . ." Clark had realized the inappropriateness of what he was saying in time to at least not complete the sentence.

Harry leaned over to Clark and whispered softly in Clark's ear. "Get with it," Harry intoned with pointed disdain for Clark's naivete. "We're in New Jersey. They let black people into movie theaters up here."

Attending Williams College in Massachusetts was a turning point in Clark Schooler's journey toward racial awareness. Or at least Clark Schooler always thought so. Abhorrence of racial segregation and support for racial integration were routinely expressed in the classroom at Williams, by both faculty and students alike. But Clark later realized there were few if any palpable actions to back up these strongly held views.

In the entire four years that Clark Schooler was at Williams College, from 1953 to 1957, only one African-American was in attendance. He was the son of a United States Government Foreign Service officer. The young man was a graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy, one of the most upscale private preparatory schools in the United States. As a child, this particular African-American had lived in a number of the foreign countries where his father had been posted by the State Department.

This black college student was fluent in both French and German. He virtually oozed international sophistication. He in no way resembled the black persons that Clark occasionally saw and dealt with while growing up in Baltimore, Maryland. Welcome or not, the Baltimore version of an authentic American black person was not present at Williams College in the 1950s.

His senior year at Williams, Clark lived in a small dormitory. It was a somewhat grand three story brick building with a two story front porch comprised of four tall white wooden pillars capped by a triangular pediment. Inside the dormitory, a grand staircase led upstairs between a wood paneled living room and a wood paneled dining room and opened out into an interior hallway leading to a series of three-person, three-room bedroom suites. It

was in one of these bedroom suites that Clark first noticed the picture.

The picture was a black and white photograph of a meeting of the Ku Klux Klan, the secret Southern society devoted to maintaining racial segregation in the American South, by force if necessary. The Klansmen were portrayed in their white robes with hoods over their heads. This particular group was lined up on horseback facing the camera, the exposed heads of the horses contrasting with the covered faces of the Ku Klux Klan members. If one studied the photograph for a while, one could see that one of the equestrian Klansmen had a looped up rope, perfect for a hanging, attached to his horse's saddle.

But the picture was not just a small photograph sitting in a frame on a table or something relatively obscure like that. The picture was an enlargement, blown up to poster size, and covering the better part of one interior wall. Furthermore, the room in which the picture was displayed had been set aside by the suite's occupants as a sort of little living room, with a sofa, a cocktail table, and a couple of comfortable chairs. This was a room in which people were entertained socially, but with the eye holes of the Klansmen's hoods gazing down on the room's occupants from the wall.

College students are expected to have school spirit and be supportive of one another, so Clark never complained or criticized the picture or the fact that it was displayed in a relatively prominent place in his dormitory. So far as Clark knew, none of his dorm mates ever complained either. The picture remained on the wall, a permanent part of their daily lives.

Also during Clark's senior year at Williams, he and two other political science majors joined together to write a senior research paper. Such a paper was required of all graduating seniors and could be undertaken as a group project. The subject chosen by the three young men was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The final paper that was turned in was exactly what was expected of respectable Williams students of the 1950s. The history of the NAACP was carefully reviewed with an emphasis on the organization's many court suits on behalf of African-American civil rights. The traditional legalistic approach of the NAACP was highlighted, and the paper concluded with a ringing description of the NAACP's most recent achievement. That was successfully arguing the case for the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision of 1954, cited as *Brown v. Board of Education.*

The paper earned all three students an A grade and many favorable written comments from James MacGregor Burns, the supervising political science professor.

Respect for the NAACP and racial integration ended at that point. In

researching the paper, Clark had written to the NAACP's national headquarters for information. The NAACP had responded in a most helpful manner, mailing back several publications, one of them a history of the organization that became the major research source for the paper. The NAACP also sent back a separate letter asking Clark and his two fellow political science majors if they wanted to found a chapter of the NAACP among the student body at Williams College.

Unbeknownst to Clark, and definitely without his approval, the letter calling for the founding of an NAACP chapter at Williams College was posted in a prominent spot on a bulletin board in Clark's dormitory. One of Clark's dorm mates with some artistic talent had drawn some decidedly African-American faces, in caricature style, around the outer margins of the letter. Someone else had decorated the letter with little sarcastic phrases, such as "Yes, indeedy!" and "Let's do it!" Both those who posted the letter on the bulletin board and most of those who read it considered founding an NAACP chapter at Williams College a big joke.

Remembering the concept of college students as supportive of one another, Clark again said and did nothing.

Chapin Hall was a large building containing a major auditorium at Williams College. It was the preferred site for college assemblies, major lectures, Dixieland jazz concerts, and visiting musical groups. The music presented ranged from piano recitals and classical string quartets to more popular forms such as dance bands and individual singers.

One of the most popular solo acts to play Chapin Hall during the 1950s was William Sarkaster, a chemistry professor at Yale University who, in his spare time, composed popular songs that made ironic comments on contemporary American society and college life. Professor Sarkaster was a popular attraction on the New England college entertainment circuit, playing his own compositions on the accordion and singing his lyrics in a slightly flat but wonderfully animated voice.

Sarkaster's repertoire included a song entitled, "In My Bad Old Dixie Home Down South." The song humorously recited all the wonderful things the singer would get to do once he left the cold and unfriendly North and returned to the town he grew up in back in good old Dixie. The lyrics were filled with traditional Southern slang references such as "corn pone" and "grits" and "you all."

Toward the end of the song, Professor Sarkaster would intone the lines:

I want to take off these shoes, which are really pinchin'
Put on my white sheet, and go to one more lynchin'

At this point Sarkaster would stop, wait for the audience to get the joke, and leave time for the waves of laughter which he knew were surely coming. And, even in abolitionist New England, the waves of laughter always came.

When the laughter subsided, Professor Sarkaster, of Yale University, would finish the song with a flourish:

In my bad old Dixie home down South!

Thinking about the professor and his song at a later time in his life, Clark realized that, when hearing the line about a lynching, Clark never visualized in his mind the black person who was going to be tortured, hanged, and mutilated. He only visualized a bunch of good old Southern white boys out having a good time.

Was it only at Williams College that this sort of thing was going on in the 1950s? Clark's boyhood friend, Albert Kurdle, had gone to Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. One weekend Albert drove over from Cornell to Williams. Albert picked up Clark, and the two young men then drove to Princeton University in New Jersey. They went down to Princeton to visit a mutual friend attending college there.

The mutual friend belonged to an "eating club." The Princeton student body was broken up in to small groups that ate their meals together. This particular eating club was popular with Southern students attending Princeton, with a number of the members being from Louisiana and Mississippi. After dinner on Saturday night, the eating club held an impromptu get-together. At some point during the evening, the traditional, jovial, collegiate song singing began.

One song, which the members of this particular Princeton eating club sang with great gusto, had new words applied to a current popular song. The current song was entitled "Davey Crockett" and had an opening line that went:

Dav-e-y, Dav-e-y Crockett, king of the wild frontier

But the Princeton version of the song was somewhat different. The opening lines were:

Autherine, Autherine Lucy, black as you can be,
Autherine, Autherine Lucy, you're not goin' to school with me!

The song, Clark knew, referred to Autherine Lucy, a young black woman who had tried in the mid-1950s to get admitted to the racially segregated University of Alabama. A U.S.Court had ordered her admitted under the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that desegregated public schools. But the Board of Trustees at the University of Alabama had succeeded in keeping Autherine from registering for classes on a technicality. The entire Autherine Lucy affair had been taken as a big victory for pro-segregation forces in the South.

The next day, Sunday, driving back from Princeton to Williams, Clark mentioned to Al Kurdle his discomfort with the Autherine Lucy song and other racist songs similar to it. Al Kurdle listen to Clark's sentiment and then responded loudly, as if talking to the world as well as Clark Schooler. Albert shouted: "Everybody but cave 12 can get lost!"

Al Kurdle offered no further analysis of what he had just said. Al gave a smug look to suggest he had just summed up a vitally important aspect of human life in a single sentence.

Clark took the phrase to mean that people are naturally clannish. Ever since the days of the cave dwellers, people have instinctively formed social groups and come to regard other groups as alien and inferior.

Clark Schooler graduated from Williams College and left college life behind him. But something stayed with him, much to his regret. It was the hidden attitudes of racism, which he found could be just as big a problem at Williams College in New England as at his childhood home in Baltimore. These attitudes were ingrained in a person, Clark concluded, hiding deeply inside, waiting to pop out at the most inopportune times.

And good old Clarence Mitchell had popped one of those hidden attitudes out of Clark just that previous morning. Clark wondered: How many such hidden attitudes were still within Clark Schooler? And how many such hidden attitudes were still within the American people?

The sun was setting along the Appalachian Mountain ridge line to the west of Burnside's Bridge at Antietam Battlefield. Clark realized it was time for his reminiscences to end. He walked back to his car, got in, and began driving back toward Washington, D.C.

As he rolled down the highway back to the nation's capital, Clark Schooler labeled himself "Unseeing Man." It was a play on a famous novel, "Invisible Man," which was written by an African-American author named Ralph Ellison. The point of Ellison's novel was that blacks were "invisible" to most white people and treated as such.

If Ralph Ellison is the invisible man, Clark thought to himself, I am the unseeing man. I am quite unable to really see black people as they are and

understand the things black people experience and feel.

As the filibuster rolled endlessly on, Clark Schooler was spending much of his time watching the action on the Senate floor. One day he was sitting on one of the sofas provided for Senate aides when, to his amazement, Clark found himself sitting next to Beau Stevens, the "rational Southerner" who had been Clark's friend and fellow student in graduate school at Johns Hopkins.

Clark looked at Beau, did a double take, and then whispered: "Beau, what are you doing here in the Senate?"

Beau Stevens was enjoying the noticeable fact that Clark was both surprised and mystified by Beau's presence. "I heard you were working for Senator Kuchel and for the civil rights bill," Beau said with a smile and a wink. "So I decided to come down and work for the Southern filibusterers and against the civil rights bill."

Clark promptly invited Beau Stevens to have lunch with him the following day in the Senate dining room in the New Senate Office Building. After the two young men had ordered lunch, Clark began the conversation.

"Beau," Clark said. "I always regarded you as my 'rational Southerner,' the man who saw that the South was wrong about racial segregation and could discuss the topic in an enlightened and reasonable manner. What are you doing working for Senator Richard Russell, the leader of the Southern Democrats opposing the civil rights bill?"

"I guess hometown and home state roots go deeper than we think," Beau replied. "After all, I'm from Georgia, just like Senator Russell. I have decided to fight for Southern honor if not for white supremacy and racial segregation."

Clark looked at Beau with amazement and said: "You're kidding, right?"

"No, I'm not," Beau replied. "It's the thing to do when you're from Down South. We Southerners realized long ago that we cannot defend our brave Confederate soldiers for fighting to preserve slavery during the Civil War. Slavery is completely discredited now. So we defend our soldiers for fighting for honor and the integrity of the Southern homeland."

Clark asked: "And exactly what are you fighting for with Senator Russell and the Southern filibusterers?"

"State's rights and the integrity of the United States Constitution," Beau replied with a high degree of confidence and certitude. "The national government in Washington must not be allowed to destroy our federal system by forcing racial integration on sovereign state governments. The states themselves should end racial segregation in the South. As Senator Russell has said on the Senate floor, racial desegregation should not be

enforced with a U.S. Government blackjack." [93]

"But desegregation will never happen if we leave it to the individual Southern states," Clark said, working hard to quell the testy and confrontational tone that was trying to creep into his voice.

That statement by Clark seemed to be Beau Stevens's cue to launch into a major lecture on Senator Russell and the Southern mind set. Clark did not mind. Similar to Beau, he was a political scientist, and he liked to both give and listen to lectures himself.

"Richard Brevard Russell, Jr.," Beau began, "is from the small farming village of Winder, Georgia, some 40 miles northeast of Atlanta. He grew up in the black belt country of the Deep South. Winder is located in a string of counties where blacks were in the majority and whites were in the minority. But all the land in the black belt is owned by wealthy white people, like Senator Russell, and farmed by black tenants and sharecroppers. It just seemed natural to Richard Russell that the white people should be running things and the black people should be doing all the heavy work."

"You have to realize," Beau continued, "the strength of mutual reinforcement in the South. Everybody a young white person ever meets or talks to believes in white supremacy and racial segregation. All of a young person's role models are segregationists. And anyone who doesn't support this existing Southern way of life immediately becomes very unpopular with most of their white friends, neighbors, and fellow workers down at the office or the factory."

"For a politician," Beau went on, "supporting racial segregation is an absolute requirement for keeping your elected office, whether you're the local dogcatcher or a U.S. senator. If you don't come out loud and strong for white supremacy, your opponent will, and your opponent will soon replace you in office. And remember, thanks to literacy tests and other Southern white stratagems, most blacks aren't allowed to vote in the Deep South."

"Richard Russell is a lifelong bachelor," Beau Stevens lectured on. "When he was first elected to the Senate in 1932, the legend is that Russell promptly memorized the Senate rulebook. It is also rumored that Richard Russell reads every word of the *Congressional Record* in bed each night before going to sleep. Well, why not? He doesn't have a wife or children to worry about."

"Russell has now served more than 30 years in the Senate," Beau rambled on. "He has used every one of those years to build his skills and qualify himself to be the Southern leader in the Senate. As a true son of the South, Dick Russell considers being Southern leader, and fighting for racial segregation and the integrity of the U.S. Constitution, as being more impor-

tant than being Senate majority leader."

"We know that's true," Beau said, starting to wind his lecture down, "because in 1951 Richard Russell had the chance to run for and probably get elected Senate majority leader. The Democrats were in control, then as now, and the previous majority leader had been defeated for reelection. But Russell elected to stay on as Southern leader, even though that's not an official Senate leadership position. He threw his support for majority leader to a young and ambitious Democratic senator from Texas, who won the post. His name, incidentally, was Lyndon Johnson."

"I found I couldn't abandon Richard Russell and my Southern homeland in their hour of need," Beau Stevens concluded with great seriousness. "Remember, it was Richard Russell who made the filibuster respectable. He's the guy who stopped talking about upholding racial discrimination when filibustering a civil rights bill. He now talks mainly in terms of defending state's rights from U.S.Government intrusion."

Clark's and Beau's food was served and the conversation lightened up while they were eating. Mainly they reminisced about their graduate school days at Johns Hopkins and brought each other up-to-date on what all of their former graduate school pals were currently doing.

After dessert, Clark returned the conversation briefly to Senator Russell. "Have you ever heard the story," Clark said, "about Lyndon Johnson and Richard Russell and the time the Senate was meeting 24-hours-a-day in an effort to break a filibuster and pass a civil rights bill?"

"No, I haven't," Beau replied. "Tell it to me."

"It was about 2 o'clock in the morning," Clark began. "They had put Army cots in the senator's offices so the senators could snooze between quorum calls. Lyndon Johnson was Senate majority leader and orchestrating the attempt to stop the filibuster. Johnson was in his pajamas and about to lie down on his cot, but he got worried that Richard Russell might try to pull a surprise legislative maneuver sometime in the middle of the night. Johnson put on his bathrobe and slippers and hot footed to the Senate chamber. He stood just inside the doorway where he could look things over."

"As Johnson was standing there," Clark continued, "he saw Richard Russell, the Southern leader, walk in one of the other doorways to the Senate chamber. Russell, like Johnson, was dressed in his pajamas, slippers, and bathrobe. Russell had come down to make certain Lyndon Johnson didn't try to pull any surprises."

The two young men laughed warmly together over Clark's story.

"You've picked one of the great grey lions of the Senate to work for," Clark said, being the good Senate aide and working to end the luncheon on a friendly and upbeat note. "Richard Russell has succeeded in defeating or

weakening, with the filibuster, every civil rights bill that's made it to the Senate floor in the past 30 years. That's why those of us working for the civil rights bill call him, with fear and trembling, 'The Defending Champion.'"

"I know," Beau said, agreeing with Clark. "He's one of the Senate greats. But the civil rights forces are more organized and determined than ever before. It's going to be a terrific fight. You and I are going to see a lot of legislative bloodletting as the battle goes forward."

On a Tuesday in May of 1964, U.S.Senator Hubert Humphrey made his way though the Capitol to the office of Everett Dirksen, the Republican leader. Humphrey and Dirksen sat down, opposite each other, around a big mahogany table and began to negotiate a mutually acceptable version of the civil rights bill. Above their heads, a large tinkling glass chandelier gave an aura of luxury and sumptuousness to the proceedings below.

Other persons of importance were present at this symbolic first formal meeting between Humphrey and Dirksen. Mike Mansfield, the Democratic leader in the Senate, was on hand. Attorney General Robert Kennedy stopped by to represent the Justice Department and President Johnson. With Bobby Kennedy was his top civil rights legislation sidekick, Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach.

By this time, Clark Schooler was an astute enough observer of Washington folkways to note the significance of the meeting being held in Senator Dirksen's office. It sent a clear signal to the political cognoscenti that Dirksen was in control in this particular situation and was the most important person involved in the negotiations. Hubert Humphrey, Mike Mansfield, Robert Kennedy, and Nicholas Katzenbach would not have obediently come to Dirksen's home turf if they had not regarded Dirksen's support as a key element in gaining a 2/3 vote for cloture.

The meeting began with a severe jolt for Senator Humphrey and the civil rights forces. Senator Dirksen handed Humphrey a sheaf of more than 70 amendments that he wanted added to the civil rights bill. Humphrey was appalled by this action on Dirksen's part. But Humphrey needed Dirksen's vote for cloture and the votes of Dirksen's fellow Republicans in the Senate. Humphrey had no choice but to begin negotiating over Dirksen's giant pile of amendments.

Clark Schooler promptly decided in his own mind that Everett Dirksen, the Republican leader in the U.S. Senate, should be nicknamed "The Great Amender."

There was yet another meeting of the Senate aides supporting the civil rights bill. As usual, the first speaker was Ralph Shepard, who spoke with a great deal of discomfort in his voice. "Those 70 or so amendments were

prepared by Dirksen's demons," Shepard said. "The demons are a group of young men and women lawyers on Dirksen's staff who specialize in going through Democratic bills and finding Republican-style amendments for Dirksen to introduce and push on the Senate floor. Apparently Dirksen's demons went over the House-passed civil rights bill with a fine toothed comb and came up with 70 or more ways to weaken the bill."

Clark Schooler jumped into the discussion. "It seems to be happening just the way Clarence Mitchell and Joseph Rauh said it would," Clark opined. "We've started talking with Senator Dirksen, and the bill is getting more diluted and compromised by the minute."

"Sometimes you have to abandon your friends in a tough legislative struggle," Ralph Shepard replied. "It is harsh to have to turn our backs on strong supporters such as Clarence Mitchell and Joe Rauh over at the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. It is easy to offend your enemies. It takes far more courage to disagree with and work against your friends. But, as in this case, turning on your pals can be the precise action which brings legislative victory." [94]

At exactly that moment, two young men dressed in grey flannel suits and carrying bulging valises walked into the meeting. Clark had never laid eyes on the two men before. As they walked into the room, all conversation came to an immediate halt. The sudden quiet was both noticeable and somewhat disturbing. The two young men looked around the room, and all the pro-civil rights aides looked back at them. The stillness was broken when one of the young men said:

"We're from Senator Dirksen's office. Now that Dirksen and Humphrey are negotiating on the civil rights bill, we thought we should begin attending these civil rights bill meetings that you have been holding. We have some ideas that you might find helpful in writing a better bill and getting that bill to a successful cloture vote."

Clark Schooler was disconsolate. He had always thought that it would be pro-civil rights aides like Ralph Shepard who would write the detailed language of the civil rights bill. Among Senate aides the process was called "dotting the i's and crossing the t's." U.S. senators did not bother themselves with that kind of detail work. Senate aides did it. But suddenly it dawned on Clark that these two young men from Senator Dirksen's staff, and not Clark's pro-civil rights friends, were the one's who would do the detail work on the civil rights bill.

The two young men were, of course, two of those famous Dirksen's demons. They began introducing themselves to everyone in the room. There suddenly was a great deal of activity and conversation in the room as everyone stood up to formally meet each other and shake hands.

Dimly, in all the commotion, Clark heard a woman's heels coming down the marble floor of the hallway outside the room. He was only dimly aware that a person wearing a dress had entered the meeting room and was introducing herself to everyone along with the two young men. Clark did not really pay any attention to what the woman was doing and saying until she was standing right in front of him.

"Hello, Clark," the woman said, extending her hand for Clark to shake it. "It's nice to see you again."

The woman was young, and attractive, and suddenly very familiar to Clark. She was Bonnie Kanecton.

Yes. It was the same Bonnie Kanecton who was, like Clark, a Capitol Fellow. It was the same Bonnie Kanecton who took Clark skating at the Chevy Chase Club. It was the same Bonnie Kanecton who Clark had come to think of as his new girlfriend.

Bonnie Kanecton was a Dirksen demon.

No, Clark thought, correcting himself in his own mind.

Bonnie Kanecton was a Dirksen demonette.

In The Interim

The political party that has the majority of the members of the U.S. Senate is called the majority party. The party that has the minority of the members is called the minority party. But, due to the open and fluid nature of the U.S. Senate, the minority party often plays a key role in determining legislative outcomes in the Senate.

As was the case in the 1960s, there are very few straight party line votes in the U.S. Senate in the 2000s. The majority party in the Senate almost always needs the votes of a number of key members of the minority party to get major bills passed in the Senate. The result is to put pressure on the majority leader in the Senate to work with the minority leader rather than against him or her. And the phenomenon of the majority leader and the minority leader working together fits nicely with the idea that the Senate is a place of comity and cooperation rather than conflict and confrontation.

One well-documented theory holds that almost all the major bills that have passed the Senate throughout American history have been the result of bipartisan cooperation rather than straight party line voting.

83. Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, March 20, 1964, p. 580.

84. Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, April 10, 1964, p. 701.

85. Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, April 24, 1964, p. 797.

86. Merle Miller, Lyndon: An Oral Biography (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1980), p. 368.

87. Hubert H. Humphrey, "Memorandum on Senate Consideration of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," in Robert D. Loevy, ed., The Civil Rights Act of 1964: The Passage of the Law That Ended Racial Segregation (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 86-87.

88. Merle Miller, Lyndon: An Oral Biography (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1980), p. 368-369.

89. Merle Miller, Lyndon: An Oral Biography (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1980), p. 370.

90. John G. Stewart, "Thoughts on the Civil Rights Bill," in Robert D. Loevy, ed., The Civil Rights Act of 1964: The Passage of the Law That Ended Racial Segregation (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 95.

91. Stephen Horn Log, "Periodic Log Maintained During Discussions Concerning the Passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," unpublished notes, pp. 92-94. Also see also Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., "The Role of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights in the Civil Rights Struggle of 1963-1964," in Robert D. Loevy, ed., The Civil Rights Act of 1964: The Passage of the Law That Ended Racial Segregation (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 70.

92. These comments by Clarence Mitchell, Jr., on being addressed by his first name, are by recollection of the author.

93. For a complete history of Richard Russell's opposition to civil rights, see David Daniel Potenziani, "Look to the Past: Richard B. Russell and the Defense of Southern White Supremacy," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Georgia, Athens, GA, 1981.

94. John G. Stewart, "Thoughts on the Civil Rights Bill," in Robert D. Loevy, ed., The Civil Rights Act of 1964: The Passage of the Law That Ended Racial Segregation (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 97.