Walter J. Hickel

Walter Hickel was Secretary of the Interior from 1969 to 1970, until he had a falling out with President Richard Nixon over the Vietnam War.

This interview was part of a series of public conversations with former Interior secretaries conducted by Charles Wilkinson and Patty Limerick, cofounders of the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado at Boulder. The series was cosponsored by the Nature Conservancy and Headwaters News.

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Patricia Limerick: An introduction to the career of the Secretary of the Interior and two-term governor of Alaska, Walter J. Hickel.

Walter J. Hickel believes very deeply in the obligations that one human being holds to all of his or her fellow human beings, and one result of that belief in the sense of a larger community that ties one person to another. One result of that belief has been his frequent episodes of public service.

And another result is his habit of courageously and directly expressing his convictions and judgments, making him a remarkable, independent, outspoken public figure. In other words, you are probably not going to agree with absolutely everything that Secretary Hickel says tonight, but on a number of occasions and episodes, it is pretty likely that you're going to agree intensely, and you're going to say to yourself "Why don't we have more public officials who have the courage to take this line of thought?"

Secretary Hickel was born and raised in Kansas. His father was a tenant farmer, and so not only did the eldest son in the family, Walter J. Hickel, know a lot about work and the outdoors and the responsibility of that work, he also knew a lot about why ownership matters, as he saw his father unable to purchase the land that would give him a permanent title to the farm.

Secretary Hickel also had an early impact on the Western United States as a boxer, and in the late 1930s, a California boxing champion broke Secretary Hickel's nose, evidence of which you will soon see, but that person who succeeded in breaking the nose lost the match three rounds later.

Walter Hickel arrived in Alaska in 1940, with a legendary 37 cents in his pocket. He worked as a logger, a bartender, a railroad worker, then as a builder and a developer. Observing the state of affairs in Alaska, he became an ardent and effective advocate for Alaskan statehood.

In a very ironic prelude to becoming Secretary of Interior himself, he lived for a while in a territory in which almost all power lay in the hands of the Department of Interior, and in the hands of the special interests that had courted Interior's good will. After the successful fight for statehood, Walter J. Hickel became Alaska's second governor.

Walter Hickel was an active figure in Richard Nixon's presidential campaign in 1968, especially in the Western states. After the election in 1968, with two more years to go in his term as governor, he received a phone call from the newly elected Nixon asking him to serve as Secretary of Interior.

Getting this flattering phone call must have been the highest part of this story, the best part for a spell. An early press conference in Washington generated ripples of controversy. Secretary Hickel declared there "He did not believe in conservation for conservation's sake," and to some critics, that was that. The idea that he might have other reasons to believe in did not occur to those opponents.

His confirmation hearings in January of 1969 were quite an ordeal, with senators assuming the worst about his character and his convictions, and with the interrogation going on for days and days, making Secretary Hickel the last Nixon cabinet official to win confirmation.

As other historians have noted, one might have expected Walter Hickel to come out of this ordeal
with a grudge against environmentalists. But no, as historian Bruce Flippen says, "Hickel took away from his confirmation process not a burning desire for retaliation but a keen awareness of the potency of the new environmentalism. And he almost immediately began to surprise his critics with his forceful actions on behalf of environmental values."

Secretary Hickel had only been in office a few days when he faced a huge environmental crisis. In late January 1969, a massive oil spill occurred in the Santa Barbara channel. These leases for offshore drilling had been granted under the previous administration, but dealing with the consequences still became Secretary Hickel's burden and opportunity.

He shut off offshore drilling for a phase; he wrote strict new regulations for offshore oil production; he established a principle of liability without cause for oil drilling by which the company was liable with or without proof of who or what caused the spill. He sued Chevron to enforce that company's compliance with environmental regulations on their drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.

As Secretary Udall observed in his visit here last month, the Congress during the Nixon administration continued the trends of the preceding administration, passing important environmental legislation, as listed here: the National Environmental Policy Act; an important prelude to the Endangered Species Act, the bigger one that would come in '73; and also, an action to secure the land claims of Alaskan natives, a cause for which Secretary Hickel was a crucial advocate.

Here is a too-brief and too-quick set of examples of actions Secretary Hickel took in his tour of duty at Interior: By creating student councils on pollution and the environment on college campuses, for instance, Secretary Hickel built ties with college students, a development that would bear important consequences.

Explaining his actions in designating the great blue whale for the endangered species list, Secretary Hickel made his famous remark, I quote: "It would be a crime beyond belief if, in the same decade, that man walked on the moon and man destroyed the largest creature God ever put on Earth."

Like Secretary Udall, Secretary Hickel felt that some rivers should remain undammed, and he recommended against the Devils Canyon Dam on the Snake River.

He urged President Nixon to support Earth Day and to make it a national holiday. And he supported the building of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline, pushing for close environmental regulations in line with the conditions of the arctic.

A rarity in the Nixon cabinet, Secretary Hickel visited campuses and pursued ongoing conversations with college students, as well as with his own children. He became, in large part because of those conversations, more and more concerned over Nixon's Vietnam policy and over the administration's hostility toward war protesters.

And finally, in May of 1970, after the Kent State deaths, Secretary Hickel wrote a forceful letter to President Nixon, asking him to deal respectfully with his critics.

Nixon did not like receiving that letter. And his disapproval of Hickel's position began to ricochet around in gossip and indirect commentary, leading to a final meeting on Thanksgiving Eve—a particularly nice Nixonian touch, I think, to pick Thanksgiving Eve for that—in which the president called in Secretary Hickel and fired him.

As Hickel said sometime after his dismissal from the Nixon administration, "Just because I crawled out of a snake pit doesn't mean I'm a snake."

Even though environmentalists had attacked Hickel during his confirmation hearings, when he departed from office, many opinions had shifted, as shown in this editorial cartoon showing business barons celebrating Hickel's departure while the animal trophies on the wall express their dismay.

President Nixon suggested to Secretary Hickel that he go quietly, but going quietly is not really in the operating manual of this individual, so he soon published a book of his reflections on the issues raised during his time in Interior.

In "Who Owns America," Hickel asked his fellow citizens to think about the long-range meanings of ownership and of the legacy that the owners of public lands and private lands in the United States, the legacy they would leave to the future.

"What good would it be," he asked, "If one owned it all and left emptiness in passing. In reality, one has but a lease on ownership during one's lifetime. The success or failure of how something is used depends upon how it is left."
Walter Hickel's longtime friend and associate, Malcolm Roberts, assembled the sharp and often inspirational observations of this quotable person, and this became the book "The Wit and Wisdom of Wally Hickel." Here are a few representative quotations and really "teasers" that represent Secretary Hickel's conviction that "business cannot only steer by the bottom line and that free enterprise left totally free will destroy itself."

Here are a couple of examples of Hickel's determination to make us factor human well-being into our environmental calculations: "If a man is cold and hungry and unemployed," he says, "he is in an ugly environment regardless of the beauty of his surroundings."

And here are some of his reflections on the fundamental and inescapable relatedness of environmental issues to human issues: "The challenge," he says "is not to isolate man from nature but to make man compatible with nature."

After he left Interior, Hickel returned to Alaska, declaring to many that he was happy to be going home. Serving another term as governor in 1990-1994, increasingly you could say that he shifted from being Secretary of the Interior to being what we might call Secretary of the Exterior, creating two new organizations: The Northern Forum and the Institute of the North to deal with transnational arctic issues of environment and community.

In 2002, Walter Hickel published a book summing up his convictions on the proper relationship between humanity and nature. Among its many thought-provoking messages "Crisis in the Commons: The Alaska Solution," reminds us once again that matters of economic justice cannot be excluded from the idea of an improved natural environment.

"We will not conquer pollution," Secretary Hickel declares, "until we conquer poverty."

Since we have this quotable individual here ready to start speaking, I will make just a couple more points and then we will move on to the conversation.

Here are two photographs: One of Secretary Hickel and his wife Ermalee with President Ronald Reagan and another with the two of them with President Bill Clinton, as visual indications that one would not exactly call bipartisan but might more appropriately be called transpartisan, along with a quotation that indicates that Secretary Hickel has never allowed partisan loyalty to constrict his independent and self-determining habits of thought.

I quote: "I am a free-thinking and impatient man. I do not always go by the book." Though I would put the exception, of course, except when he has written the book in which case he is utterly consistent in that.

As these quotations indicate, our distinguished guest tonight does not play it safe. He is a person with a constitutional immunity to the affliction known as cynicism. ... This is a person who cannot be stereotyped as this last slide shows. Let me read this last quotation.

"The conservationists cheered me when we fought against pollution or when we preserved park lands; they attacked me when we advanced the Alaska Pipeline and the North America energy grid. My friends and associates in business were equally perplexed. I was not their guy. I was not anyone's guy."

Ladies and gentlemen: Walter J. Hickel, Governor of Alaska, Secretary of the Interior, and historic defender of the rights of the American people, young or old, to hold and express their own opinions.

And again joining me, Malcolm Roberts and Charles Wilkinson.

WH: Thank you. Hello.

Nomination as Secretary of Interior

Charles Wilkinson: Secretary Hickel, thank you so much for coming down to Boulder. Let me begin by asking you to tell us some of the things that happened at your confirmation hearings.

To some of the public, when the president nominated you, they stereotyped you. You had been in favor of the Alaska Pipeline, you were critical of Secretary Udall's land freeze when he shut down mineral leasing and mining patents in the state of which you were governor. And you made some of the statements that Patty alluded to shortly after you were nominated. But it wasn't a stereotypical person who testified at those hearings. Perhaps you could tell us a bit about that; of what went through your mind and what you said at those fairly lengthy hearings.

Hickel: Well, first let me say that I didn't seek that job. We had lived under the Department of the Interior in the Territory of Alaska, and I never saw
such exploitation where the federal government had control.

The Department of Interior, they appointed our governor. They appointed the man who ran the Alaska railroad. They made all our decisions for us and they really didn't understand the uniqueness of that country.

And to make decisions based on if we were just like Kansas, Oklahoma or Texas ... When you get north of 60, it really changes. But when you get north of the Arctic Circle, the whole world changes. I never found any malice in Washington prior to those hearings or anything. But I found a lack of knowledge.

When Nixon asked me to come, the first phone call, I turned him down. I said, "No, I have too much to do up here." We're a commonly owned state. We're the only place on earth that's owned in common. Only half a percent private. While all of the states are regulatory, we're the only state in the union that has the obligation of ownership. There's a lot of obligation to that. So I told him that.

The attorney general had called me and I said, "John, I've got too much to do here." And he said, "Don't you have it in pretty good shape now?" And I said, "Well, it's in pretty good shape but there's lots to do."

Anyhow, Friday night the vice president called and was just very nice, didn't know why, and I didn't realize they were going back and telling the president all of these things. The president called me at my home Sunday afternoon, Sunday night his time. He didn't ask me to become Secretary this time. He said, "Wally, I am going to announce that you're my Secretary of Interior. I hoped you'll keep it quiet for awhile," and he hung up and I cried. It's true. What are you doing to do?

I'll talk about the hearings but let me tell a little bit prior to that. You know I'm a great believer that Alaska couldn't survive on the politics just alone. It needed seniority. If we were a state close to the United States, it would be different. But we're way up there. And those economic interests that tell the Department of the Interior what to do to us, we didn't have a voice.

**Voices for Alaska**

We had two territorial leaders: Senator Bartlett and Senator Gruening who were very important. On that election in 1968, two weeks before I went to Washington, Ernest Gruening got beat because he had fought a lot of those issues. I was shocked. ... " I said, "I don't know what we're going to do, we lost our senior senator."

Nixon called me in New York in the first part of December, about the 8th or 9th. Remember, we had elections just a month before that. I was talking to the president and a newspaperman came up to me and said, "I have a telegram for you." I had been really concerned about Gruening losing that election; he's a Democrat. The telegram said, "Senator Bartlett just died." In three weeks time we had lost all our seniority. I was shocked.

I gave it to the president and he read it. He wasn't sworn into office yet. He said, "Wally, what are you going to do?" I said, "Mr. President, I don't want to be a senator. I'm not a legislative person. I'm an executive; I'm not a good administrator. I'm an executive."

I said, "I think I'm appointing Ted Stevens." Now Ted Stevens was not necessarily a supporter of mine, a Republican. He lost the general election for the Senate in 1962, when we first became a state. He lost the primary three weeks before that.

The president looked at me and I said, "I'm thinking of Ted Stevens." He said, "Wally, do you have the courage to do that?" And I just walked away. I saw one of his Secret Service people and I said, "Find me Ted Stevens."

A few hours later, they called me back and said they found him in Mexico. He said, "He's given up politics. He's lost two elections straight and he doesn't want any part of it." I said, "Get him back here." We got him back and I appointed him. Not because he was a friend or anything but he was a survivor and he understood Alaska. ... Today he is the primary leader of the Senate.

If we had just had young people in there, we would have had nothing. He's got the strength to explain the owner's state to them. To tell them what's the obligation of government. I mentioned this thing. Now the hearings.

**Confirmation Hearings**

I appointed Ted before the president was president. Went back for the hearings and Ted's on the committee, and Senator Jackson was chairman of the Interior Committee. I knew him.

CW: This is Henry "Scoop" Jackson?
WH: Henry Scoop Jackson, State of Washington, a Democrat. And Magnuson was the other one, a Democrat. They had seen my battle from 1952 on. I took it to Washington; I took it to the president of the United States. Took it to Truman's office. Took it to Eisenhower in 1954. They were kind of on my side but, that confirmation hearing – it went on and on.

There's a 482-page book, I think, on my hearings. It's amazing. But I never got mad. But it went on and on. I wasn't even confirmed for the inauguration.

Malcolm Roberts: Could I interrupt? Could you tell about the wonderful Oliphant's cartoon? Was it Conrad Oliphant's cartoon at the inauguration?

WH: It was the Washington Post. After all the hearings and all this stuff had come out and Herblock's cartoon came out and it was the president was walking toward the White House with all the cabinet, and behind me I was jumping around trying to get my pants on.

And I called him up and said, "That's a great cartoon. Sign it and give me a copy." He became a lifelong supporter. It didn't make me mad.

The hearings went on and on, and I wasn't even confirmed for the inauguration. Finally they had a hearing, an executive hearing. Scoop Jackson was there and all the cabinet people, the senators. It was Frank Church from Idaho. It was off the record, no press down there.

He said, he told his whole committee, "You know, we probably went too far this time." I didn't say anything. Finally I was confirmed and it was amazing how they kind of turned around. I've always said, "God helps you if you're trying to do the right thing with your heart."

Santa Barbara Oil Spill

So I was confirmed and the president called and said, "Wally, go to Camp David. You've been through a terrible thing." So I went up to Camp David, I left my chief of staff in Washington. I was up there one day and he called me. He said, "Mr. Secretary, they've had a terrible oil spill down in Santa Barbara." He said, "It's really bad." And I said, "Well, get me a plane, let's get out there." And I hadn't even been in my office yet. I got down there and we flew out to California and the Coast Guard met me and god, the people. It was rough.

They flew me out to see that. There's pictures of that. I saw this tremendous flood of oil. And the people were saying, who was in office, and they were saying, "Take that Union Oil thing. Do this. Do that." I was at the Biltmore Hotel in Santa Barbara that night. It was 1:30 in the morning. Fred Hartley was there, Union Oil. I didn't know what authority he had. It didn't make any difference. I said, "Fred, I'm going to shut you down." And he said, "Mr. Secretary, you don't have the authority to shut me down." That stopped me for about a second and a half. I walked over and looked him right in the eye and said, "Fred, I just gave myself the authority."

I walked out of there. I got on the phone and called the attorney general's office and got the answering service. It was very early in the morning there in Washington, about 5:30 or so. I said, "You find me a way that I can shut them down, I just did that."

I got on a plane and went back to Washington and got back there about ten o'clock the next morning. The attorney general called me and said, "Mr. Secretary, we think we have something that will really please you. We found a regulation that was put in in 1834 that says that the Secretary of Interior is responsible that our natural resources not be wasted." I held on that and won the case.

The problem with that was I got the regulations sent to me the first day down there in their office and the previous administration had given them [Union Oil] the right to drill offshore, and I didn't mind that. But the regulations they used were the same as on land. So in reality, Union Oil didn't break any regulations.

So I go back out to Santa Barbara and it was really wild. We had a meeting in a convention hall; there were two to three hundred people. They were saying, "Get Union Oil. Do this." I said, "Wait a minute. They didn't break any laws. We didn't have the right regulations." And they calmed down. I said, "That is not Union's oil. It belongs to us. It's the commons."

I closed down them and we had hearings later. But those hearings were tough. I had no animosity. I sat there. God must have caused that spill in Santa Barbara because it brought the commons in to me.

Alaska was the commons. I had had that battle since 1951 when I took it to Washington. It started the environmentalist thinking. It started that thinking and it became a busy two years. But that was part of the hearing. Long story, but I don't know how to make it shorter.
CW: Not only did you not have any animosity toward the committee but you took them all out to lunch.

WH: I invited them all to lunch. I'm trying to think what did I give them then.

CW: You gave them a copy of the hearings.

WH: That's right. I brought them to lunch and Scoop Jackson came in and said, "Governor, here's some things you want done." I said, "No."

I had the whole Senate Committee there over at the Interior Department. I said, "No, I'm not here to ask anything." I gave them a copy of my hearings. That's the kind of humor you had to have. I didn't do it to prove anything. That's just the way I do things.

CW: You really did compile an impressive record from an environmental standpoint. Talk about your views as they might have changed or evolved over time. Or did they stay the same?

Was there something that you began to see differently when you took office in Washington?

WH: No. I knew the Interior Department. I told you they ran the Territory of Alaska. In 1959 when I was trying to figure out how to make this thing work, an attorney for the BLM came to me and said, "Wally, it doesn't work that way here. The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 changed all that."

Mineral Leasing Act of 1920

Teddy Roosevelt was both a developer and a conservationist. He tried to talk the Republican Party left in there — the last 10 years of his life he tried to explain the commons that the American people owned in the parks and stuff like that.

He died in 1919. In 1920, Congress — you want to talk about a Communist act — I agree with it, but they passed the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 after Teddy Roosevelt died. It stated in there that all the energy resources that are now in government hands shall forever stay in government's hands. That didn't affect America too much because all the homesteaders owned their stuff. In Alaska, less than half a percent.

Although we were bought from Russia, we were a commonly owned country. Like Russia, or Africa or any place else and how do you make a democracy work in that?

I came up with this idea of the owner state and that's when I went to Washington. It was 51 years ago last January; Truman was president and told him why. A statehood bill had passed the year before that in 1951. I called about that time. I wanted them to send Herbert Hoover up. Can I tell that story?

I didn't know who the Republicans were. I was a kid out of Kansas, went to Alaska in 1940. Hoover, I understood. I said, "Send Hoover up." I called the chairman of the National Committee. In those days you had to make a phone call by going down to the federal building. I went down there and made the phone call. God, he must have thought I was in Mars. I was in Anchorage, Alaska, and that was a long ways in those days.

Finally, the governor of Washington, Langley called me. He said, "Mr. Hickel, it's January. It's cold. Hoover's an older man. We can't send him up there." He said, "We want to help you. We have three young senators. You can have one of those." That was amazing. To come to Alaska in January. One was named Duff from Pennsylvania. One was named Nixon from California; and the other was Walker of Idaho.

I knew Walker was on the Interior Committee, and boy, we knew who was on the Interior Committee. So I chose Walker. I never knew Nixon. So he came up and boy he listened to me. When I went back to Washington that next January, he was doing anything in the world to help me out. I didn't see President Truman until a little later but I saw the vice president twice. He said, "Young man, don't worry. All the other states make it work."

I knew he didn't – I walked right around in front of him and poked him in the chest. I said, "Mr. Vice President, it won't work." Then I went down and Taft wanted to see me.

MR: Governor, explain that the statehood bill that had passed the House only gave the state 3 million acres …

Alaska Statehood Bill

WH: Yes, the statehood bill had passed the year before. That's why I called Walker, I called for Hoover. It gave us 3 million acres out of 365 million. Nobody complained. They didn't understand it. It
gave us no management of fish and game, nothing. Statehood in name only. That's why I told the Vice President, "It won't work."

Taft was against it. Taft of Ohio, Butler of Nebraska, Schippel of Kansas, Cotton of New Hampshire were the leading seniority senators that were against statehood.

I went in there. Taft wanted to see me and I spent over an hour in there. No notes, just talking. I said, "Senator, this won't work." I said, "We need more land, 3 million acres, my god, what the heck's that?" Finally, he said, "Well, how much land do you think you need?"
I hadn't thought of that. I blurted out, "A hundred million acres." Then I thought, "My god. I wonder how much land we have?"

Then Walker called the Interior Department right quick and he said, "Wally, it's OK. You've got 365 million acres. I said, "Boy, I should have asked for more."

That's how we got to 103. Taft had to leave and go out on the Senate floor. I thought all the senators' offices were right there so I started to walk out behind him. Three senators jumped in front of me and said, "Young man, don't embarrass the senator." I said, "What do you mean."

PL: You were walking out on the Senate floor?

WH: The Senate floor. I walked right out on the Senate floor with him. What do you do? The senators stood there and Taft then spoke and he said, "We don't want to kill this bill. We want to recommit it." And he talked for a long time. Finally, before he wound up, he said, "We've got to listen to that young man from Alaska." And boy, that changed everything. They asked me for a few commitments. Would I do this, would I come back and help?

It was a long way from Washington D.C. to Alaska. You just don't know in '52, '53 and '54, how far that is. But it used to take me — I'd fly all day to get to Seattle, it would take me six to seven hours. Be an hour and a half there. Take a Northwest flight into Chicago; take about five or six hours there. Layover a couple of hours. Finally get to Washington D.C. I remember making 10 trips in one calendar year at my own expense. I didn't have any money. To be there because I had committed, "When you want me there, I'll be there."

That's how we got the most unique state in the union. There's nothing like it. We had a thing in that bill. That's why Cotton, Schippel, Taft and Butler supported it. Butler died in '56. We had a thing in there that said, no matter what kind of bill they passed, we have to vote on Alaska, if we accept it. We had a lot of stuff in there, 100 million acres and all that.

I remember Cotton saying about a year before it passed; maybe it was a little less than that because I was up in the balcony. He said, "You colleagues must understand this is unusual legislation and cannot be changed by this body alone without the consent of Alaska. They all knew that. They passed it. We went back to Alaska. We had the vote and voted overwhelmingly. That's a very unusual thing. Let me talk a little bit more.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act

You know, I tried to do a lot of things after I got out of office that the governor had to do. Then Carter became president and he took, with the ANILCA Act, 125 million acres from us. Nobody said a word. I was shocked. If they take two feet off your land, they have to pay you for it. If they take 125 million acres — if you want to steal, don't steal a dime, steal billions and nobody will care. Well, they did that and I cried …

CW: This was land put into different preservation designations, wilderness –

WH: It was taken from us. They had the right to take it but it was a taking. Just like they had the right to take land from you if they're going to build a road, but they have to pay you for it. I couldn't get anybody to listen.

Governor of Alaska

Finally, I came back as an independent governor — well, this was in '78 or '79. I ran as an Independent for governor. The Republican Party didn't want me. I wasn't their guy. I used their thing but they didn't own me. So I ran as an Independent — six weeks to election was all it was, it was an unusual thing.

I beat both the Democrat and Republican Party and so I went into office. I started to check the records. I looked at the royalties and stuff we were supposed to claim. I got it all from the Treasury Department, and
there were billions in there. That the governors before me, Republican and Democrat, didn't have the courage to go after them because they wanted to get re-elected.

**PL:** Those were owed by the oil companies to the state. These were royalties that were owed to the state by the oil companies.

**WH:** Yes. There was Exxon, BP and Arco. I didn't fly to Houston and London. I knew these people. I brought them into Prudhoe Bay in 1960 and I said, "This is how you drill. I'm the foreman of the ranch." That's why, if you're in Kansas or Oklahoma or one of those places down here, maybe 150 farmers would own it and they would have their own attorneys and accountants and they were not used to the fact that the governor was given all this power.

In 1956, we wrote a constitution, had a constitutional convention, gave the governor of the state of Alaska more power than any Republic on earth and stated right there, if he doesn't do the right job then we have to replace him.

I fought and I fought and I finally came back as governor and I looked at this stuff. And without going to court, in my office, not their office, I collected nearly $4 billion for less than 500,000 people.

Dick Oliver -- head guy in London I know well -- wrote me a note which I have for history: December 1954, thanking me for bringing that to closure, and they paid us nearly $2 billion. Now that's foreign to the government of the south 48 states because they don't do that. They're regulatory and they like to get elected and they play this game. Well up there, we like to do those things too, but you know -- I won't say some of the language I used. But we had a different thing.

**The Northern Forum**

And that's why I formed the Northern Forum and that's why I've taken it to Russia and China and Norway, Finland, Sweden. That's why we've had at least three meetings here. The last one we had in St. Petersburg Easter weekend. They turn out by the dozens. We have now 24 regions of Russia that belong to the Northern Forum. ...

**CW:** The one thing you've tried to do in the Northern Forum is include native people.

**WH:** That's exactly right.

I said, "Mr. President, this is not a legal or an economic issue, it's a moral issue." And he came out from behind his desk and he said, "I'm going with Wally." And that was the native land claims settlement, just like that.

**CW:** Let me ask you a question. When you came in as Secretary, it was a time when there was an upsurge in interest in native issues. The tribes were getting more active and you worked on a number of those matters, but tell us about two.

I'm thinking of your stance on the return of Blue Lake to the Taos Pueblo and then tell us -- and again, Alaska ended up with a 103 million acres at statehood and the Alaska native corporations ended up with 44 million acres, and I think you had a role in that. Tell us about those two issues.

**Alaska Native Claims Settlement**

**WH:** OK. The first one: Native land claims had been gone for 100 years or more. I remember the president called from the White House about March of '69 and he had the attorney general's office there, the law offices, and the Treasury Department, Commerce and all that. And they said, "Mr. President, the natives don't have any legal claim. We bought that land." Commerce said, "They don't have an economic claim. We paid Russia for it. He said, "So there's no reason to make this settlement, it's been going on for 100 years." The President said, "Let's hear from Wally."

I said, "Mr. President, I agree with Justice and the Attorney's office. They don't have a legal claim. And I agree with Treasury and Commerce, they don't have an economic claim." I said, "Mr. President, this is not a legal or an economic issue, it's a moral issue." And he came out from behind his desk and he said, "I'm going with Wally." And that was the native land claims settlement, just like that.

So you don't go in to a president, a pope or a prostitute or whomever you're talking to — say exactly what you think. If I had said, "Mr. President, no I don't think; yeah, they probably don't; yes, maybe; You're not going to get it. You talk to them just like two and two is four. And I've learned that from over 50 years of going to Washington.
Blue Lake and the Taos Pueblo

The Blue Lake stuff in New Mexico. The senator from New Mexico, he was on my committee and there's literally a basic law. In fact, when the cabinet met for the first time, he said, "When you get a letter from a senator, try to answer. But if he's on your committee, you must answer. Congressmen, do the best you can." Well, there's 400 congressmen, you can't fight the whole thing.

CW: This is Senator Anderson?

WH: Montoya. He wrote me a letter and I had taken the land, some of the sacred land the Indians claimed for years, and I said, "They should have this." It's the top of a hill. And the Blue Lake thing, I did the same kind of thing with that. He wrote me a letter, it's in the file, it was unanswerable. He said, they could call you anything, you can't sue a senator.

My young aide at that time, Dave Parker, is now head of the American Gas Association; he was in his twenties then. Every morning he'd bring in the stuff, and he'd say, "Mr. Secretary, you have to answer this letter." Next day, he'd come back in and he'd say, "Mr. Secretary, you have to answer this letter." I didn't say anything. A couple of days later he said, "Mr. Secretary, you have to answer this letter." I said, "Take a telegram, "F--- you, strong letter follows."

I tell you, that went around the world. I'm out in California giving a talk about a week later, and somebody said, "Governor, what about that telegram you sent to Montoya?" But it worked. I could have said – but I didn't. I said it just like that and walked out.

MR: Mr. Secretary, the Taos people, the old chief who played such a role in convincing you why those lands should not be logged and why they should remain.

WH: Well you mean –

MR: Taos, Blue Lake.

WH: Oh, yes. Anyhow. I did that and did it for him and said it made a lot of sense. I'm a little bit — no, I'm not that good. I'm both a conservationist and a developer, and you have to be that. There is no wealth without production. You can't have a civilization in Alaska while doing nothing. So I always fought – I'm on the board of the Nature Conservancy in Alaska. I listen to all sides. But if – I'll tell a little more story about the energy thing.

When I was Secretary of the Interior, there was no Secretary of Energy; there was no Secretary of Environmental Protection. It was all in my office and I ran that thing just like I was sitting here. I ran it. I didn't ask a lot of questions, but I had a long history of Interior Department from the time I lived in Alaska, all those years.

U.S. Energy Policy

WH: I was holding the oil imports below 20 percent. The Eastern Senators called a meeting at the White House. It was led by Sen. Muskie, a real nice guy. They were putting the heat on; they had the votes for me to raise the import quota for oil. It was ten cents cheaper over there and all this stuff and I had to raise it.

Commerce did the same thing, they agreed, yes we ought to raise the import quota. President said, "Wally, what do you think?" I said, "Mr. President, if we take those import quotas off in five years, that oil with neither be cheap nor available." So we kept them on until I left and then they took them off. In a few years, we had the Arab embargo and today ... we're importing nearly 60 percent and that's why we have the Middle East problem.

If a nation is not independent of energy, it's not independent. It can be dependent upon steel from someplace, shipped from someplace, but (not) energy. If you're not independent, you're not free. And I took that to many presidents. President Bush, the father, he understood that. He should have pursued further when he was in the Middle East. This President Bush understands that. But economic interests don't want competition from the commons.

We have the biggest gas deal in North America. They sat on it for 30 years and haven't done a damn thing. They helped Congress pass that regulation, no receiving terminals on the West Coast, a number of years ago. Now they're vetoing that. Like in Australia, I didn't tell that story.

BP has that lease. The lease is simple. I know the leases. We ran the whole thing and it says this: "If you can't prove you tried to develop that or produce it in five years, they take the lease away." So they can't have all this common gas that we have going someplace, if they don't develop theirs, they lose their leases.

The Indians have the same thing. The East is a little
bit different but the same kind of thing. We have to be tougher. The American people say we can't be tough with those people; they're just bottom line people. We're bottom line, too. We can't do anything. So it's really been a battle.

That's one of the problems, the president of any party, that's why they have a problem today. If they were short of anything, it doesn't make much difference. But if it's energy, they blackball you. And if we quit importing energy, there's environmental groups in the country that say, "Don't drill ANWAR, Don't drill ANWAR."

Look at the thing we went through to open Prudhoe Bay. My god, it was awful. But one oil field in Prudhoe Bay, and Prudhoe Bay is big and so is NPR Fjord and all that, we supplied 20 percent of all the oil to America. Exxon didn't want that oil line. Now if we could just get the people to, get the government to see, that ... we have to produce oil ourselves. China sees this very clearly. China's moving into this side of the Urals, I spent a lot of time there.

CW: Let me ask you one last thing. Because people in the audience want to ask you some questions, too. Occasionally, there is a firing that is a badge of honor. A firing from a position, such as Secretary of the Interior.

WH: That didn't bother me a bit. I didn't want the job in the first place.

Hickel's 1970 Letter to President Nixon

CW: You sent this letter to the president that was not quite as stern as your letter to Sen. Montoya, but it was an act of conscience, and you were really writing that letter on behalf of the young people of the country. Tell us what moved you to write that and the events that followed.

WH: OK. In 1970s, there was confusion in the young of America, I put together an organization, no money involved, called SCOPE, Student Committee on Pollution and Environment. They all worked at their own expense. They started coming in and saying, hey, we're going to have trouble over there in Vietnam. They were a little bit concerned about how the federal government was reacting to some of these things. They'd talk and I'd have meetings with them. I told the White House some of this stuff.

CW: And you had six boys of your own.

WH: Yes. But I wasn't thinking about that as much as where the American government was going and the president. We had a – Henry Kissinger is a very brilliant guy. He's really brilliant, but he came out of central Europe and he thought the whole world was the Eastern United States and Europe, and Cleveland was way out West. Seriously.

Nixon had me do some things that he [Kissinger] didn't like, he sent me out to South Pacific to solve that problem, gave me all the authority in the world and Kissinger didn't like it. He said, "Mr. President, there's only 90,000 people there – who gives a damn?" Well, that's Kissinger.

But Kissinger is bright, and he was convincing Nixon about the tragedy that might happen in Vietnam. The young people were feeling this cult thing going on. He talked about five- and six-story underground fortresses thirty miles behind the line. And I said, "Henry, we'd know about that if it was there. We have no reason to believe that."

Long story short, it kept growing and growing and the young people were getting more aggravated. Pretty soon, the president called a meeting at seven o'clock at night in the White House. The only people there were the Cabinet, the president of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House. The president walked out, never asked a question — he knew there was a division. He said, “I'm going to announce that we're invading Cambodia and Vietnam.” He said, “We're going to have a problem.” After that, they started another round. The young people were coming in.

Then Kent State happened and it blew. That's when I sat and wrote that letter to the president. The letter was made public and the person who was running our communication department had resigned about 10 days before that and we hadn't filled it. The press called and wanted to know about the letter that I had supposedly written to the White House. Dave Parker took it over. They were handing it out to everybody.

Halderman called me and said, yes Dave Parker had delivered a letter to the president but, I think it was the Washington Post or the Times, had a little article about my writing a letter to the president. The next day, the letter was printed all over the world. So what's the problem. Then they came and talked to me. I think I wrote that in April?

PL: It was May.

WH: They started coming in, calling me from all over the country. Then Kent State came and our own
National Guard shooting those college kids. Well, what was going on? It was out of control, there was nobody guiding the thing. And they flocked into Washington, it must have been nearly half a million. I went down to talk to them because they wanted to see me. It was a little dangerous because they'd come and rock the car and then the people would see and say, "Oh, it's Secretary Hickel."

Finally, the Secret Service said, "Governor, we can't protect you." So I called my legal guy, and I sent them down and went back to the office to deal with it by phone. They were settling down. They were settling down but boy it was bad. That was a bad situation. Do you want any more of that?

PL: Well, Nixon's reaction to the letter and the outcome. 

WH: He didn't say anything. He didn't — He talked to me a little bit. They sent Morrie Stands over and wanted to know if I'd like to be the first head of NEPA. They'd set up a department for that. I said, "No, I don't want to go to NEPA. I have too much to do here." And that's real. It happened like that.

Finally, all these things in the paper about Hickel's going to get fired, they're going to replace him and all this stuff. You'd see the press, you'd see how the leaks were. They can get a chief of staff to call somebody and it was going like wild. Finally, Thanksgiving Eve, the president called me to the White House. It was Wednesday afternoon. I think he did that because the next day was Thanksgiving Day and there wouldn't be press out or anything. It was Ehrlichman and myself and him. Haldeman wasn't invited in. Ehrlichman was a little bit, not quite as powerful determining on everything.

The president talked about we'd like to sometime have a quiet transition. And I thought to myself, "Well, what's happening here?" And he'd like to do certain things and he looked out the window and he talked about when he first came to Washington and the job he did.

I said, "Mr. President, I tried to tell you about the oil companies and how we ought to watch that, especially in the oceans and the commonly owned area. Ehrlichman said, "Mr. President, that's true." He said, "The secretary did try to warn us on some of those problems."

He [Nixon] was going on and on and kept talking about a quiet transition and offered me certain things. I said, "Mr. President, announce it right now. I am tired of all this crap. I'm going back home. I don't want another job." And I walked out of there.

Haldeman was sitting right there and I said, "Haldeman, call the press; tell them I'm going home." Wow. And that's how I went.

I got back to the office and it was kind of late at night as I recall, and it was jammed with press and TV cameras and everything. I walked right in there and not without a note.

And I told them, I said, "The president just terminated me a few hours ago and there is nothing I can say to help the situation and nothing I would say to hurt it. But given the hostility when I first arrived, as you people know well, and some of those tremendous decisions I had to make immediately thereafter and trying to do a good job for the president and all the American people and still survive as an individual, I had to do it my way."

And I walked out. And that's the way I went home. They said, "well, where you going?" And I said, "I'm going home." And I went home. I didn't want to come in the first place.

The point is, don't say, "Mr. President, maybe, yeah I could probably do that." That doesn't work. Tell them two and two is four if they ask you. A lot of these guys, they ask is two and two and they say, "well, I think it's five minus one and a half and that's three and a half plus three-quarters is four and a quarter minus a quarter is four. Two and two is four, you know. That's the way I operate. I didn't change a lot of my thoughts because I didn't have time. I wasn't even seated as Secretary of Interior when Santa Barbara happened and it happened to be on the commons was my thing. We own it, it's not their oil, it's ours. That changed a lot of thinking in the world and it started to come around.

Earth Day

PL: Speaking of that, could you talk about Earth Day and what you wanted to do with Earth Day?

WH: I went to the White House personally and I said, "Mr. President, that's a great idea. The young would love it. Make it a national holiday. We have all these other holidays. Earth Day should be." And he wouldn't do it. Some of his advisors, I've named three already. They said, "Oh, that's not important." But Earth Day was a great thing because God even understands Earth Day. It's not for
environmental or development, it's Earth Day. Understand the Earth. And the Earth was made not for the whites, the blacks, the Jews, the Catholics, the Romans, the Empires, the German, the English, it was made for all people and that's why it was owned in common.

Nobody is going to homestead the ocean. But it's an obligation and without strong government police, they rape the ocean. My god, that's why I put the blue whale on the Endangered Species list. Less than 200 of them. Nobody cared. No one owns something, no one cares. At 84 percent no one cares, because no one owns it. But I care, because we own it. So you do it for the benefit of the total, and not for some leader, some oligarch or some company.

That's what broke the Russian thing, that's what broke the Chinese thing. That's why they can't go to a democracy like America. And that's why I put together the Northern Forum in 1992 and everything north of 60. And the Alaska Solution, we are in common. We are the only spot on Earth that wasn't communist, unbridled capitalism or socialism. It's the owner state and they see that and it's catching on like wildfire. That's why I wrote the book.

Cambridge University had me over there and said no one teaches what you're talking about. We'll help you. I set up the Institute of the North about 10 years ago to teach that. Most of them are young kids or Russians. About 10 years ago they said, there's no textbook to teach it. So I wrote the textbook, "The Alaska Solution." It's just thoughts I believe in and it's out there. There's copies of it around here. I don't know.

My belief goes back to when I was a little boy. There were 10 children. We were born Roman Catholics and I had dyslexia real bad and I couldn't read and so the sisters would read to me. My parents knew I was a little different. I was her oldest son of 10 children with two older sisters, and we were tenant farmers. But we weren't poor. We just didn't have any money and that's a lot of difference. I was milking cows in the morning to help my father when I was 5 years old. I was out running a gang plow with four head of horses when I was 8 years old. I was doing this and being happy. That's the way I was. I wasn't thinking about oh, do I really want to plow that field. Oh, that's great. I'll do this.

I guess it has to do with vision because vision is in the future. If you just focus too close to the bottom line you can't think. You've got to do it. There's nothing there. You have to look forward. Think ahead and then look back. It makes life easy. It's so much fun.

I remember once climbing on a windmill. In Kansas, we had no electricity and no water, but we had a windmill. They had a little platform around them, maybe 40 feet in the air. I'm a kid, and I'm always looking. Kansas is flat. I climbed up this windmill and crawled across this platform and I hung on, I couldn't get back. So Mom saw me up there and ran out to the field to get dad about a quarter-mile away. He climbed up there and got me. Didn't get mad or anything. So I got down and Mom said, "Walter, why'd you do that?" I said, "Mom, I looked out there a long ways. If I had strong enough eyes, I could see the back of my head." It was that flat. I was jumping up and down. She never got mad. But that's me, that's the way it is. I've not changed yet.

Words to Live and Die By

PL: Tell us what you're going to say to St. Peter if there's ever —

WH: On the commons, I've said when I go up to see St. Peter and if he doesn't have a seat for me, I'll say, "Sell it, give the money to the poor and send me back. I'm not through yet."

I think that way. People with vision look ahead and no matter how bad or tough it gets, like with the president and Kissinger still, the more they fought, the higher I raised. And the more they'd fight, I'd keep going up. And I watched them destroy themselves. When I got up here, I went home.

PL: Tell us about your mother's advice on aggravation.

WH: My mother knew I was a little different. I was her oldest son of 10 children with two older sisters, and we were tenant farmers. But we weren't poor. We just didn't have any money and that's a lot of difference. I was milking cows in the morning to help my father when I was 5 years old. I was out running a gang plow with four head of horses when I was 8 years old. I was doing this and being happy. That's the way I was. I wasn't thinking about oh, do I really want to plow that field. Oh, that's great. I'll do this.

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Questions from the Audience

PL: We have questions.

Question: Mr. Secretary, what advice do you have for young people going into politics today?
WH: Stay free. Seriously. If you stay free, you'll say things that will get done. If you say, "I don't know about this. Maybe this will work." Come on. To the young people I would say, "Whatever you believe in your heart, stay free and say it. And then it's effective."

MR: Could I add something to that please? The last time you ran for governor, you ran as an Independent, and all the oil companies opposed him as they always have in his political life, despite the fact that he opened up Prudhoe Bay. And as he was winning in the last week, they came in with $100,000 and they gave it to the campaign. After he won, he called them all in and gave them their checks back. Now that's staying free.

Q: What has happened to the Republican Party that found the balance or compatibility between developing Alaskan oil while protecting the Alaska wild lands, endangered species and lands.

PL: The balance that you represented, and still represent. The balance between development and environmental regulation and liability.

WH: The wealth of the world's people in the tropic, subtropic and temperate zones around the world is the wealth that they grow with cotton, cattle, corn, wheat, those things they can do in those countries. When you get north of 60, above the Arctic Circle, it all changes. God put the resources there in oil and gas, coal and diamonds and fresh water, and those kinds of things. There is no wealth without production. The Republican Party is a good, I belong to that and Lincoln belonged to that. But the Republican Party, especially the great lobbyists, they say, "less government, no government" that kind of thing. It just doesn't work in the collective society and that's the reason Russia and China can't go the American way. I don't know if I've answered your question.

PL: How do you feel about the difference between –

WH: My thoughts and the Republican Party? Well the Republican Party basically thinks everything is private. And I agree with that but what about the collective world? The collective world of 84 percent? They don't talk about that. They just exploit it. And the greatest exploitation I ever saw was in Alaska during those territorial days.

There are two kinds of exploitation still happening. One, they come and take and leave nothing, and the other is what the federal government does, lock it up and do nothing. And they're both taking. The economic interests have tremendous power. That's why we haven't developed the North Slope gas, I mentioned that. They have to develop that or they lose it. Government, the real kind of government that belongs in Asia and Africa and those parts of the world, requires a government that says this is the way you do it. That's foreign to government. We don't teach it. They don't teach it at Harvard, they don't teach it at Yale, they don't teach it at Cambridge. That's when Cambridge had me over there, "no one teaches what you're talking about, we'll help you." They came around two years later and said we need a textbook. So I wrote a textbook; there it is.

Q: Mr. Secretary, how should the U.S. promote energy independence? Is the problem political or technological?

WH: Political. There's no doubt about it. Prudhoe Bay, there's no problem on how to do it. As I mentioned before, we have to be independent of energy. You go down to Long Beach, California, and every 10 acres see these pumps, pumps, pumps, all over the place. Nobody says a thing. But Prudhoe Bay? You can't do that. ANWAR, you can't do that. The first well we drilled up there. I said drill and the next well is six-and-a-half miles away. We don't have them every 10 acres.

Prudhoe Bay is the finest oil development spot on earth and I have traveled here. I've seen it. So they want to fly to Prudhoe Bay. How are you going to do it without energy. As I mentioned here, we're 60 percent now. We're no longer free.

PL: You are quite a supporter of alternative energy.

WH: Absolutely, it's necessary. But you can't say, let's quit oil, gas and all that and then start to figure out how to get hydrogen. Come on. It's a way of turning around and doing it. When I see, I see the future and I tell you. In the next few years, President Bush has a problem. I know him well and I know his father. But he has a problem with oil – well, 60 percent. Can he tell those Iraq people, this that, I saw the power. If they don't ship us anything, what will we do? You don't want to drill in Prudhoe Bay but you'll drill like hell in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas, every 10 spots. And we're up there in first class, saying don't do it. But who's really making that happen are the lobbyists in Washington, D.C. And I sat in that board of directors with the president and 10 other guys. I've seen that power.

Q: I was going to ask another follow-up question to
that but I think you addressed it actually. It was a question concerning is drilling for oil or petrochemicals sort of the only answer. I think you answered it. You do think alternative energy—

**H:** You can have alternative energy. I'm a great believer in alternative energy. For example, let me tell you about Iceland, the country. The president of Iceland called me when I was at a Scotland Energy meeting a year ago last January. He said, we're a country, but nobody recognizes us as a country. They're way up north too. He said you've got to lead us to the Northern Forum. I hadn't brought countries in. So I flew down to see him. He said, Governor, you've got to leave us in. Grimsson, a great guy. They do a lot of things because they don't grow wheat, corn, stuff like that.

By the way, I had President Grimsson over to Alaska about a month ago. The first president of any country that just came to Alaska to understand the commons that we do. They've done things the free world hasn't done. They have a filling station, the only one on earth, in Iceland that you can go and buy hydrogen for your car. That's where they go because they can't raise wheat, corn and cotton and all that stuff. They've got to do what they do.

Now the biggest aluminum company on earth is going to open a plant up there because they have cheap electricity. Do you know where they get it? Geothermal. We have all kinds of geothermal in Alaska. Oh, no, we don't want to do that. That's going to be in competition. Well, God put it there and it's free. They're using it and they're making it work. Now, they've got this electricity so cheap that aluminum can be made there and they're flocking in.

All I'm saying is that Western civilization is a great civilization but it's got to figure out why Russia and China had the revolution and couldn't make communism or unbridled capitalism work, and they're looking for a solution. That's the Alaska Solution, that's why I wrote the book.

**Q.** Mr. Secretary, do you think that most of our youth has progressively become more apathetic in regard to our government, as well as to U. S. history. If yes to the latter, why do you think this has happened and how do you think it can be improved?

**WH:** Yes. The best way I can put it in my part of the country is I have several grandsons, 32 on down. About a year-and-a-half ago, one of them came to me and said "Grandpa, there's no future here." Young people see, they see the future. He said, "Yes, I can get a job with Wal-Mart or I can get a job as a bellhop, there's no future here. So he went to Novosibirsk, spent about four or five months there. Novosibirsk in Siberia, its about 3,000 miles from Moscow. I've been there.

He said, "hey, that country's moving." Now he's home. In November, he's going to Vladivostok, and a federal, some federal agency over there, the U.S. consulate. So he's going to Vladivostok. Believe me, I've traveled that whole country. That country, this side of the Urals, which is quite a ways out of Moscow, is as rich as anything on earth but not in wheat, corn and those things in a temperate zone, but in diamonds and gold and silver and coal and timber.

Timber, a little south out of the Yiago Forest, and it's rich. We didn't want that being developed under communism because that's going to be hard to compete with. So now who's moving in there? China. China had the country over 3,000 years ago. China's monolithic. There's only two mongrel countries on earth, that's America. Every nationality in the world is here. The other is Russia. Eighty provinces in Russia. These two mongrel countries should come together. I took that to the Russians in the late '60s, early 70s. I saw it. When these mongrel countries come together, then you're going to see some progress. I know, I've got to keep telling the story or what the hell.

**Q.** Mr. Secretary, all the agency heads in the Department of the Interior, BLM, Parks Service, Fish & Wildlife, are political appointees. In contrast, in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Chief of the Forest Service is a career professional, not a political appointee. Which do you feel is the better model for resource management?

**WH:** I see nothing wrong with the political process, if they stay free, and if the leaders then try to do what's best for the people in the regions and not just the political process. You can have your own people but in a democracy, people should have the voice and not just some appointee for a long time. The Park Service does a pretty good job on some of those appointees. But in the long run, democracy has to have the people involved and it's been very successful, if we can just turn this corner and have some resemblance of Teddy Roosevelt giving us the discipline and not being afraid to say what has to be said and not worrying about political consequences.

Yes, there's some danger in that, but it's better to have the danger of that one leader than to have the whole country sorting in mush and not doing anything. I
hope I've made myself clear on that but that's what you have to do.

**PL:** I had a very tough time limiting myself to quotations from Secretary Hickel that I could use in the Power Point so I'm just going to close before we thank him for coming with a couple of ones that I was really struck with that we didn't get to include.

This is one on permanence: "There is nothing permanent enough in this country to fit a Michelangelo, so how can there be a Michelangelo? How can he come forward? He cannot do a mural in a steel-and-glass courthouse that after a few years has a sign on it "Demolish. I-95 passing through."

And then one that has obvious bearing on his company and everything you've seen about him: "There is no retirement for the creative."

**WH:** Thank you all for listening to me. I appreciate it. I speak what's in my heart. And when I listen to a person I don't want to hear what he says, I don't want to read what he says, I want to hear him say it. And Malcolm knows, he's been around the secretary and when these guys come in. I say, I don't want all their paperwork. Bring them in. Because I look them in the face when they talk. The eye reflects the mind. Clear eye, clear mind. It's true of any nationality.

The face reflects the heart. Open face, open heart. If they come in without a clear eye, I don't want them. Because they're not speaking with their heart. If they speak with their heart, they're like a little kid: "Hey, Mom, I can do anything!" You know what I mean? That's what I do. I do it all the time, Malcolm knows that.