

EVERETT DIRKSEN'S WASHINGTON

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Produced and written by:	James Benjamin
Directed by:	Nicholas Webster
Director of Photography:	Edmund Bert Gerard
Edited by:	James Algie
Research:	Anne Boggan
Unit Manager:	Gerald Myers
Executive Producer:	Lester Cooper

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EVERETT DIRKSEN'S WASHINGTON

VIDEO

AUDIO

TEASE

DIRKSEN MAKING SPEECH

DIRKSEN:

I think often of the hired man who went to the farmer one evening and said, "Boss, I'd like to borrow the lantern." He said, "What for?" "I want to go down the road this evening and spark my girl." With a rather contemptuous snort the farmer said, "Young fella, when I was your age, I didn't take a lantern when I sparked my girl." He said, "I know you didn't, and look what you got!" (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

APPLAUSE AS DIRKSEN ENTERS
RECORDING STUDIO & GREET
ORCHESTRA

Now, where's my piccolo?

Well, I'm glad to see you all this morning.

SMITH (V/O):

This is the story of the last of a breed -- or maybe the first. For Everett McKinley Dirksen anything seems possible these days.

DIRKSEN:

GREETING GIRLS IN CHOIR

....what's the chances of me singing with you?

GIRL SINGER:

Very, very good.

DIRKSEN:

HE WALKS INTO SOUND
BOOTH

And let's enjoy it.

So this is where you'd like to have me.

SMITH (V/O):

DIRKSEN IN SOUND BOOTH

With more and more actors going into politics, this politician -- the Senator from Illinois -- has gone into show business. At 72, he has been ranked the fifth best-selling male vocalist. And when he cuts a record, Everett Dirksen is every inch the performer.

DIRKSEN:

DIRKSEN READS LYRICS AS
ORCHESTRA ACCOMPANIES HIM.
SONG: "I HEARD THE BELLS
ON CHRISTMAS DAY."

I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had roll'd along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bow'd my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men."

SMITH (V/O):

Whether on or off the record, Dirksen spells power. And those who know best, respect him as the second most powerful man in Washington.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

LBJ ON PODIUM AT DINNER
HONORING DIRKSEN

The man that you honor tonight is often accused of being my fifth column on the Hill. (LAUGHTER) And I want all of you to know that Everett Dirksen is the only column that I haven't complained about all year long. (APPLAUSE) He is a great American, he is a great human being, and he is one of my dearest friends. (APPLAUSE)

OPENING BILLBOARD

ANNCR:

"Everett Dirksen's Washington" is brought to you by --

COMMERCIAL
(B.F. GOODRICH)

EVERETT DIRKSEN'S WASHINGTON

P A R T O N E

SMITH (V/O):

ZOOM IN ON CAPITOL

In its 168 years, the Capitol building in Washington has seen legions of legislators come -- and go.

DIRKSEN ARRIVES, GOES INTO ELEVATOR, INTO OFFICE.

Thirty-five years ago, an obscure Congressman from central Illinois arrived to take his seat for the first time. He is still here. Everett Dirksen, now the senior Senator from Illinois, is still on the move.

CROWD IN OFFICE

So many people want to see him today that the rug on his waiting room floor must be replaced every other year.

SMITH ENTERS SENATE SMALL ROTUNDA

The Senator and I were to meet in the small rotunda of the Senate wing -- the Capitol's oldest section. Its cornerstone was laid by George Washington in 1793. This was a fitting place to meet one of the Capitol's longest residents ... to talk of its history and of the momentous years he had spent here.

DIRKSEN AND SMITH IN
SENATE SMALL ROTUNDA

SENATOR DIRKSEN:

Well, Mr. Smith, fancy seeing you here.

HOWARD K. SMITH:

Senator, of all the 100 Senators and 430
Congressmen, you look most at home in
these surroundings.

DIRKSEN:

Well, I've been here long enough, a third
of a century, either on one end of the
Capitol or the other.

SMITH:

Senator, when Congress first came here in
1800, I understand that this section was
all that was up.

DIRKSEN:

Yes, this housed just about everything that
the Federal Government had.

SMITH:

Now I wonder why we can't economize that
way today.

DIRKSEN:

Wouldn't it be wonderful now, when you stop
to measure it against the Gargantuan
dimensions of the government today.

THEY BEGIN WALKING
AROUND ROTUNDA

SMITH:

These columns here, they have a special interest, I understand. They are possibly the oldest part of the building.

DIRKSEN:

Yes, this little rotunda, as we call it, was the first one to be built as a part of this wing. You will notice the tobacco leaves for decoration here. That was a little fillip to that very distinguished President Thomas Jefferson because Jefferson was a great experimenter with all manner of agriculture commodities and among other things was tobacco. He regarded tobacco as our basic American crop at that time.

SMITH:

When did you first come to Washington, Senator?

DIRKSEN:

I was elected in 1932 and came to that first celebrated 100-day session under Franklin D. Roosevelt. And there has been a lot of history since then, as you so well know.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

And of course, if there was a chance to get in a political plug, which I'm not going to do, I might tell you who is going to be the next President of the United States after 1968. But maybe I better not do that. (Laughter)

SMITH:

Don't restrain yourself.

DIRKSEN:

Yes, but we don't want to be unfair ...

SMITH:

It is known that politicians talk about politics....

DIRKSEN:

Oh, sure.

SMITH: (V/O)

Since his Capitol years started in the House of Representatives, it was to that side of the building that we headed. I asked him if he could recall his impressions when he arrived here, back in 1933.

THEY WALK FROM SMALL
ROTUNDA TOWARD HOUSE
SIDE OF CAPITOL

THEY ENTER A CORRIDOR
OF THE HOUSE WING

DIRKSEN:

Obviously, I had never been in Washington and I never saw this building in my life until I came here as a member of Congress. I was then thirty-six, thirty-seven and you can imagine the impression it made on a boy from the country who had never been here. It was just overwhelming, every part of it.

SMITH:

Which of the two Houses did you enjoy more?

DIRKSEN:

Well, I had the greatest affection for the House of Representatives and for its informality.

SMITH: (V/O)

THEY ENTER AN
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
ROOM OF THE HOUSE

Most of the work of House and Senate is done in committee. We stopped in one of the ornate meeting rooms of the House Appropriations Committee. With the portraits of some of its former chairmen looking down, Mr. Dirksen talked of his committee experiences, including work on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty which he helped to pass in 1963.

DIRKSEN & SMITH IN
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE ROOM

SMITH:

I would guess that you came here at the peak of the depression, or the depth of the depression. This must have been about the most important Committee there was at that time.

DIRKSEN:

I remember one thing that has never been fully disclosed and that was how we had to hide money in an appropriation bill when it looked as if the public wasn't quite ready for it. That's what happened in the so-called Manhattan Project out of which came the atomic bomb. You had to hide lots of money.

SMITH:

When you hid money for something like the Manhattan Project, did you know what you were hiding it for?

DIRKSEN:

We had an idea, but nobody else did.

SMITH:

The Vice-President at that time didn't know about it ... Mr. Truman.

DIRKSEN:

He didn't know about it. No. And of course you resort to the prolixities of language in order to hide money in appropriation bills.

SMITH:

The philosophy of the nation has changed radically about government spending since those days.

DIRKSEN:

Yes, when I came here the entire budget of government was about three and a third billion. That was for everything: Army, Navy, all the civilian agencies of government, everything. About three and a third billion. Now our present Administrative Budget for the fiscal year is \$135 billion. I remember when I first knew Reed Smoot, the Mormon Senator from Utah. I didn't know him well, but I mentioned to him one time that I was astounded the way government grew, money-wise. And he said, "My boy, it will never be different. The country goes from one plateau to another, always in an upward direction." (MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

The other day I saw a speculative item on the budget to the effect that at the rate of growth, we'll see the time when our budget will be close to \$750 billion. Now \$750 billion is three-quarters of a trillion. We haven't got quite accustomed to that word trillion yet.

SMITH:

Senator, in that period when you first came here already the issue of intervention versus isolation was beginning to grow. Would it show up in a committee like this?

DIRKSEN:

Yes, it would because in these requests for money, where agencies had to articulate their function, depending on how intent your convictions were with respect to isolationism or interventionism you just held hold of the purse strings, held them tight. It showed up in that fashion. But that was quite an issue as you remember.

SMITH:

Senator, you were from the Middle West. When did you make the transition from isolation to intervention?

DIRKSEN:

I don't quite remember. But there was a point where I remember that I made a short speech on the floor of the House and it was carried in full on the editorial page of a great many newspapers. There is a certain something that gets into your consciousness and that's probably it. Call it understanding if you like. And then in due course in my time came the second of the wars. See, I served in the first one on the front. My son-in-law who is from Tennessee, who is now in the United States Senate, was in P.T. boats like the late President John Kennedy in the Pacific. That was in World War II. Now I have got a grandson coming along who will be fourteen. I have been thinking about him. That's why this thing implants itself into your sensitivity when you think about war. This had a lot to do with hardening up my attitude on the nuclear bomb.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

I thought, Goodness, can't we find an answer to all this before that time happens, because he only has to go four years. And then he'll be ready to be grabbed by the conscription office route, as you know. That's not a long time.

SMITH: (V/O)

THEY WALK TOWARD THE
HOUSE CHAMBER

Near the committee rooms, and in the center of the House wing of the Capitol, is the Chamber itself.

DIRKSEN:

HOUSE CHAMBER

Howard, we might take a look at the Chamber of the House of Representatives. There are 435 members in the House. Now they do not assign any seats to the members because of the size of this body. Now, if you'll notice the podium, that's where the Speaker of the House sits. And on each side of him are portraits. On one side is a portrait and a beautiful thing of Marquis de Lafayette. Now the other portrait you readily recognize; that's the portrait of George Washington. You take a look at the center aisle, it automatically divides the parties.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

It's here where the President comes to deliver the State of the Union message and to address joint sessions and where Chiefs of State coming from other countries also address joint sessions. There have been some very momentous speeches delivered in that chamber.

CHAMBER DOORS CLOSE

DIRKSEN AND SMITH WALKING
DOWN CORRIDOR IN HOUSE
WING

SMITH:

What is the hardest decision a member of Congress has to make?

DIRKSEN:

Well, war would be a decision like that. The nuclear bomb would be such a decision. Most anything that has got blood and death, loss of treasure, anything like that attached to it becomes a difficult decision. Now, I have seen members as a matter of fact confronted with a decision like that have such intense conviction about it that they would actually weep and even say they were going to leave or quit. "I'm not going to go through this agony any more."

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

That's something to see a grown, mature, confident person really weep tears over a decision. I think it is an answer to those who think that this is just a bundle of cynicism down here. Well, it is anything but. Because we feel as deeply about these matters as do the people.

WE LOOK INTO THE PRAYER ROOM

Well, Howard, it's well to take a look at the Prayer Room which was established in 1954 here in the Capitol. The members can come here and get the peace and joy and the solitude that their souls so desperately need in moments like that. You'll notice that stained glass window which shows George Washington at prayer. And then the quotation is from the 16th Psalm, beautiful thing -- "Preserve me, oh God, for in Thee do I put my trust." It is indeed a very inspiring place.

E N D O F P A R T O N E

BUMPER

ANNCR:

"Everett Dirksen's Washington" continues after this word from the B.F. Goodrich Company --

COMMERCIAL

EVERETT DIRKSEN'S WASHINGTON

P A R T T W O

ENTER STATUE AREA OF
CAPITOL

SMITH: (V/O)

There is a part of the Capitol building -- which Senator Dirksen and I now entered -- where the great collection of statues is kept ... donated by the home states of those being honored. From the South, statues of Jefferson Davis of Mississippi and Robert E. Lee of Virginia -- leaders of the Confederacy; from New England, the founder of Rhode Island, Roger Williams; the Franciscan missionary to California, Junipero Serra; and from New York State, Robert Fulton. One statue which attracted us, as it does most visitors, was that of Will Rogers, the noted humorist of the 1920's and 30's.

WILL ROGERS STATUE

DIRKSEN & SMITH AT
ROGERS STATUE

DIRKSEN:

I knew Will Rogers slightly. I knew his son much better because his son served in the House of Representatives when I was there. He, of course, didn't have Will's humor, I can tell you.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

When Will's friends once suggested that they place a statue of him in the Capitol, it is said that what he replied is this -- "Well, if you do, put it where I can keep my eye on Congress." And so here he is, and right in the midst of it, and you see him looking right into the chamber of the House of Representatives. But he was a great fellow. Of-course, one of the great humorists of our time. And such delightful and refreshing humor, as you so well know.

SMITH:

I suppose the sense of humor you are famous for has been a great help to you in many ways.

DIRKSEN:

Oh, yes. You know you can illustrate things with humor when you can't do it any other way. Lincoln knew that. I think that I told you once before when they got out this new issue of greenbacks during the Civil War somebody said to him, I suppose it was Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury at that time, "Is there an inscription for these?"

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

Lincoln puzzled for a moment and said, "What was it that Peter said to Paul: 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give thee.'" I thought that was delightful. (Laughter) Now there is one other thing about humor that I should mention. This reminds me of it. It has a biological effect. You can talk to an audience for twenty straight minutes and maybe they get just a little weary particularly if the speaker is high up and they sort of crank those neck muscles and their eyes begin to close a little. At that point a good story, one that they call "good for a belly laugh," is appropriate. The blood comes out and they are just as perky and lively as they ever were. That's the magic of the story I have discovered. Now there are things here in Statuary Hall, a good many of them and I think we ought to make our way over there to have a look at some of these other interesting things.

SMITH: (V/O)

INTO STATUARY HALL

Its history and its architecture have made Statuary Hall a hall of echoes. From 1807 to 1857, it was the Chamber of the House, until its unusual accoustics and a growing membership caused it to be vacated.

DIRKSEN:

DIRKSEN & SMITH IN
STATUARY HALL

This is a rather celebrated place here. You see, the House of Representatives met here when Lincoln was in Congress. He was elected for one term 1847-1849. And John Quincy Adams served here when he got back to the House. I have remarked on occasion he wrote in his diary, which is an interesting thing, that he didn't get nearly so much thrill out of being elected President as he did having been elected to the Congress of the United States. That, of course, I can pretty well understand.

SMITH:

THEY LOOK AT BRONZE
PLATE ON FLOOR

Now what is this brass marker?

DIRKSEN:

Now, this brass marker is set approximately where Adams sat, and where he suffered his final fatal attack.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

There's a peculiar accoustical quality about this hall, known as the whispering echo.

HE WALKS ACROSS HALL
AND WHISPERS TO FLOOR

"This is Everett Dirksen, member of the United States Senate. I hope, Howard, that you hear me. Can you hear me? Did you hear me?"

SMITH:

That is remarkable. This is a bad room to keep secrets in.

DIRKSEN:

DIRKSEN REJOINS SMITH

You know, it is said that Adams made use of that echo, by eavesdropping on what the opposition was planning and then outmaneuvering them.

SMITH:

I see William Jennings Bryan here. He shared with you the qualities of an orator.

DIRKSEN:

This is an interesting three-some I must say. Senator La Follette of Wisconsin, Senator Long of Louisiana and Bryan, not Senator Bryan, but Williams Jennings Bryan, twice a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. (MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

Incidentally, he was born in Salem, Illinois.

SMITH:

Oh, is that right. Did you say you heard Bryan speak?

DIRKSEN:

Yes, I heard him speak at home when I was a lad of high school age. But I got engaged in an oratorical contest down in Lexington, Kentucky. That is a good many years ago when I was a student at the University of Minnesota. Bryan was a featured speaker and all the contestants came in. I saw him at breakfast all alone at the hotel and I thought, here is my chance. So timidly I walked up and said, "Mr. Bryan, my name is Dirksen, I come from Illinois and you were born in Illinois. I would like to ask you two questions." He said, "My boy what are they?" I said, "I've noticed that you made that huge crowd hear and you didn't have all these amplifying gadgets that we have today." "Oh," he said, "that's very easy.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

All you have to do is talk to the last row in the audience and everybody else will hear you." I said, "I've got one more question. What do you do about these newspapers that say these mean and evil things about you." "Oh," he said, "my boy, I don't read them." (Laughter) I have found that useful myself.

SMITH:

Senator, you were talking about speaking. How important is it to be a good speaker in Congress today?

DIRKSEN:

Well, what do you think speech is after all except an instrument or a vehicle to convey thought. And, of course, the more crisply and precisely and clearly it is done, the better, because after all that is your instrument particularly in public life. You should be able to emphasize what you want to say. But over and above everything else, clarity. Make it clear to the person that is listening.

SMITH:

Do you think that any votes or minds are ever changed on the floor of either House by speech?

DIRKSEN:

Oh, yes. Not often, but sometimes and it depends on the nature of subject matter and obviously on the type of a speech you make. I think it has happened twice to me. Once on civil rights because I dug out that quote from Victor Hugo allegedly written the night he died in his diary when he said, "An idea, whose time has come, is stronger than all the armies on earth."

SMITH:

What was the other time?

DIRKSEN:

The other time was when I was on a sugar bill and it was late at night. I prepared for it and we had a full Chamber. I laid into it and several members came down and said, you will change some votes. Now you hear it from your members. You are not particularly conscious of it yourself until they tell you.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

**THEY ENTER THE GREAT
ROTUNDA**

Now this is the Great Rotunda. It's the center of the Capitol as you can see. It joins the House and Senate wings. The dome is made of cast iron and it is the third largest dome in the world. In Civil War times this served as a barracks and as a hospital.

CENTER OF ROTUNDA

And in this same hall, Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy as well as our other martyred Presidents lay in state.

WASHINGTONS' TOMB

Two floors beneath the center of this Rotunda is a tomb that was actually built for the bodies of George and Martha Washington. But, you see, the Rotunda was not completed until long after the Washingtons had passed on. Well, in the nature of things, their family decided not to disturb the graves at Mt. Vernon.

FRESCO ON CEILING

But overhead, Washington looks down on the Rotunda in a giant painting by the artist Brumidi who decorated so much of the Capitol. It is called the Apotheosis or Glorification of Washington. You see him with Freedom and Victory seated beside him and then the thirteen figures that represent the original thirteen states around him.

SMITH:

STATUES OF PRESIDENTS

The Rotunda is indeed the hall of Presidents. There are statues here of the great generals who became Chief Executives -- George Washington; Major General Andrew Jackson, hero of the War of 1812; the Civil War's General U.S. Grant. There are the humanists, such as Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, who rose to lead the nation. And the Great Emancipator himself, Lincoln.

DIRKSEN:

LINCOLN STATUES

You see the standing figure of Lincoln is the only one that was actually done from life. Strangely enough, it was sculpted by a young girl, she was only seventeen years old, her name was Vinnie Ream. She got Lincoln's permission, I expect in large part, first, because she was only seventeen, but also because she was very poor. Now that head of Lincoln is by Gutzon Borglum. I knew Borglum quite well. He was as temperamental as any artist could be. He is the author of those huge figures on Mount Rushmore in South Dakota that you can probably see for fifty miles. It is really an amazing piece of work.

EXTERIOR, EAST FRONT

SMITH:

Outside this rotunda, the East Front, is where the Presidents are inaugurated.

DIRKSEN:

That's right. Twenty-five Presidents have been sworn in there on the East Front and there they have given their inaugural addresses rain or shine. Now here before the Capitol is where Lincoln said in his second inaugural, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind the Nation's wounds, to care for him who should have born the battle and for his widow and for his orphans. To do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

STILL PICTURE OF
INAUGURAL

JOHN WILKES BOOTH IN
CROWD

Some historians say that in the balcony above Lincoln stood the assassin himself, John Wilkes Booth.

...

THEY LEAVE GREAT
ROTUNDA

SMITH:

Senator, the Rotunda is the dividing point between the House and the Senate and when you left the house it was kind of a dividing point in your career, wasn't it?

DIRKSEN:

Well, yes. The House is behind us now and the Senate is here in this wing. This is the part that was burned by the British in 1812.

SMITH:

Didn't you resign from the House?

DIRKSEN:

Yes, I did. I developed eye trouble. They diagnosed it as corneoretinitis which I suppose is rather common except for one thing, those are those little hemorrhagic streaks on the eyes. They didn't know whether they were malignant or not. I finally had five or six physicians look at me and I recall the morning they called up and got on a conference call. Half of them thought that I ought to go to Johns Hopkins Hospital and have the surgeon over there look at me. Well, you can imagine the shock that maybe there had to be an eye removed. So I got on a train and that is where I started my prayers. When I got over to Johns Hopkins, the physician said, or the surgeon, "Well, are you ready for the enucleation?"

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

That is a sixty-four-dollar word for taking out your eye. "No, doctor," I said, "I'm not." "What do you mean you're not? Why did you come here?" "Well," I said, "before I got here I got another doctor." "Where did you get another doctor?" I said, "While I was on the train." "You couldn't have." "Yes," I said, "it was easy, He is away upstairs." "Oh, you are one of those guys are you?" I said, "Yes, He talked to me and He said, 'Don't let them take out your eye.'" "All right make up your mind. I'm going to be gone three months." "I don't care if you are gone three years, I'm going to keep my eye. That's my good eye you see," I told him. That is the story there. Then when I got back home -- I quit of course. I wanted to raise some flowers; I wanted to go back to a law office. Then the delegations began to come, "You have to run. You have to run for the Senate." I said, "I don't have to do a thing of the kind." They said, "Well, look, our Governor was licked, our Senator was licked by a half-million votes. You have to run."

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

"I don't have to do anything of the kind."
Then one night around the dinner table I
said to my wife and daughter, "Kids, after
dinner we are going into my study and we are
going to settle a question: Do I run or do
I not run for the Senate? Each one gets
five minutes under the House rules. And
when you are through we are going to vote.
And when we vote whatever that vote is that
is going to be it." So we voted. They
voted 'aye' and I voted 'no.' I said, "We
run for the Senate. Not I run for the
Senate." That's how I landed here and I
have been here now quite a long time and will
soon be finishing eighteen years in the
Senate. Shows what happens to you.

THEY WALK OFF

E N D O F P A R T I I

BUMPER

ANNCR:

"Everett Dirksen's Washington" continues
after this word from the B.F. Goodrich
Company --

COMMERCIAL

EVERETT DIRKSEN'S WASHINGTON

P A R T III

SMITH: V/O

CORNFIELD

When Everett Dirksen retired from the House of Representatives in 1949, he returned to central Illinois ... farm country ... to his home town of Pekin ... today, with a population of 28,000, but just a small village on the Illinois River when he was born there.

MAIN STREET

STATUE

The Civil War was still a raw memory when Dirksen was a boy. This was Lincoln country

CEMETERY

Abe had lived nearby, had even tried cases here.

GRAVESTONES

Many of the men of Pekin had fought and died for Abe Lincoln and the Union.

RESIDENTIAL STREET

The Dirksens lived on the outskirts of town where the German immigrants had settled.

TRUCKING SHOT, HOUSES

It was known as "Beantown" because, scratching and scraping to keep alive, they had raised beans instead of flowers in their gardens.

(MORE)

SMITH: (CONT)

STILL OF BABY
EVERETT

Everett McKinley Dirksen, age 1, in 1897,
the curling locks already in place. The

STILL OF THREE
BABIES

Dirksens were a good Republican family.
Everett's twin was Thomas Reed Dirksen,
after the Speaker of the House of
Representatives ... his older brother,
Benjamin Harrison Dirksen, after the former
President.

TOM & BEN

Everett's twin, Tom, with brother Ben,
recalls the boyhood years when money was
hard to come by:

TOM DIRKSEN:

TOM

We weren't what we would call poor, and we
weren't rich either. As I say, Dad died
when we were young and mother struggled
along with us boys and we had a large
garden. In fact, we had the whole block

STILL OF FAMILY HOME

where we lived, and we raised a lot of
vegetables, and we had seven cows, six of
them were ours, and we had one that belonged
to the hotel, and we would milk the cow
morning and evening, and the milk we would
take to the hotel and my mother got so much
money per month for taking care of the cow.

BEN DIRKSEN:

BEN

Dad's wages, you know, were only about fifteen dollars a week, and you know with three boys, that didn't go too far, and there was no chance really to lay anything too much aside, and if mother hadn't been the conservative one, and probably could stretch a dollar, and make two out of it, well, it would have been very rough going.

STILL OF MOTHER

TOM DIRKSEN: --

STILL OF EVERETT AND
DOG

Everett was just like the rest of us. We all went down the street with a broomstick with notches in it, you know, and buckets hanging on the notches and we travelled, oh, I guess about ten, twelve blocks from home delivering milk, and that was morning and the evening, so we had a lot of chores to do.

STILL OF EVERETT AS BOY

Well, usually as soon as Everett got out of bed before he really had his shoes tied, why he had his nose in the book and he was reading and so on and it was mostly school books.

BARN

I know on a Saturday morning when he would go out in the barn and he would start preaching, you know.

(MORE)

TOM DIRKSEN: (CONT)

TOM

He'd maybe have something in school, a school play that he'd take part in, and oh, he would preach and preach and we could hear him from the barn to the kitchen, and my mother says Now, sometimes now just listen to him talk. And that's the way it went on from time to time.

SMITH: (V/O)

STILL OF EVERETT AS
FOOTBALL PLAYER

In high school, Everett played football and developed his skill as a speaker, on the debating team.

STILL OF EVERETT
AS A YOUNG MAN

Although his brothers quit school, Everett did not. He even worked his way through the University of Minnesota ... then served on the Western Front in France; as an aerial observer, floating over the lines in a balloon.

STILL OF EVERETT
AS A SOLDIER

TRUCKING SHOT, STORES

Although he longed to be an actor, a speaker, a playwright, his stage ambitions had to give way to earning a living. Among the many ventures he tried was a bakery on Court Street, which he and his brothers ran when they were young men. Along with Tom and Ben, Everett learned to make rolls and bread and helped put the pans in the oven.

STILL OF BAKERY

(MORE)

SMITH: (CONT)

CU OF BAKER
EVERETT

But he liked people and he spent more and more time outside -- delivering the baked goods and making friends around town. His way with words was becoming well known, and he began accepting speaking engagements. And the people liked what they heard.

BEN

BEN DIRKSEN:

Had a little fellow come into the bake shop there one morning, and he says, "Just heard your brother." And he says, "You know I could listen to that man all day." And I says, "Well, just why;" I says, "What's so interesting about him?" Well, he says, "You know he talks in our language, and I can understand what he's talking about."

SMITH V/O:

WIFE'S HOUSE

He decided to go into politics. After winning the girl who lived in this house, he ran for -- and won -- the office of city commissioner. Then came a race for Congressvictory in 1932 ... eight terms in the House ... retirement ... and, in 1951, back to Washington as the Senator from Illinois.

STONE MARKER ON FRONT
LAWN

(MORE)

SMITH: (CONT)

SMITH ON CAMERA

People who believe in Fate -- that there are special places carved out for men; a man just has to hunt around til he finds it -- may find their belief confirmed by Mr. Dirksen. Like a good many other men who have worked in this building -- like Lyndon Johnson and John Kennedy, not to mention Congressman Lincoln of Illinois -- Dirksen made no real mark in the House of Representatives. He was one more stereotyped conservative, with nothing remarkable to say and no appreciable influence. But when he officially crossed that Rotunda from House to Senate, he was like a hand going into a well-fitted glove. The Senate is what he was born for. In the Senate, oratory and debate count. There is more scope for that quality every good politician must have -- showmanship. There is more room for maneuver and the subtle exercise of persuasion. President Franklin D. Roosevelt used to tell those who wanted something done -- Clear it with Sidney ... meaning the great Labor leader Sidney Hillman. Well, in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, the rule of success has been -- Clear it with Dirksen.

(MORE)

SMITH: (CONT)

He is not a Senator; he is the Senator -- the man who gets legislation passed, or stopped. His residual conservatism has shown in his campaign to cancel the Supreme Court's one-man, one-vote ruling and a few other lost causes. But he is the man who made the difference in passing the great rights act of '64, the voting act of '65, the nuclear test ban treaty and much else of the legislation that is changing America.

SMITH: (V/C)

THEY ENTER SENATE
RECEPTION ROOM

To talk of the years and events during which he has gained national prominence, Senator Dirksen and I began our tour of the Senate wing of the Capitol in the ornate Senate Reception Room. Here, Senators can come, from the Senate Chamber, to visit with their constituents.

SMITH:

Who ~~are~~ **the** Senators whose portraits I see around the wall.

DIRKSEN:

They are here because of a contest that was inaugurated by, I think, the late John Fitzgerald Kennedy had something to do with it.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

These are blank ovals and they decided that **maybe some portraits** ought to grace them. The question then was, who would you select? Who, in the judgment of those who were going to ballot on it, who were the great Senators? These are the five who finally turned up: Henry Clay of Kentucky; John C. Calhoun of South Carolina; Daniel Webster of Massachusetts; Robert La Follette, Sr. of Wisconsin and Robert Taft of Ohio.

SMITH:

You knew Taft, didn't you?

DIRKSEN:

Well, Taft, I knew very well and served when Taft was here, when he was the leader of the Senate. He was a great person, had a brain, but he has been described as a real work horse and **he was**. The fellow just startled me at **times by his** capacity both physical and **mental**. Taft was a giant in every sense of the word.

SMITH:

How do you think he would have done as President?

DIRKSEN:

I think he would have made a great, great President. Now, you know that one who was competing for the limelight like Taft was in that period was Arthur Vandenberg. I knew Vandenberg very well. We were sitting in his office one day. I knew that he did not get along with Taft so I said, "Now Arthur as man to man, you tell me what is your estimate of Bob Taft." Puzzled for a moment, he finally said, "Probably the greatest Senator who has come to the Senate in the last fifty years." So you see coming from somebody who didn't get along too well with Bob Taft that was a great compliment, I'd say.

SENATE LOBBY AND
CHAMBER

Behind us here, Howard, is the Senate Lobby. In the past, people have wanted to petition Congress or the Senate, or get Senate members off the floor to listen to their grievances, and for their special requests, they would come here in this lobby and that's how that term started -- lobbying. Now the public is barred. Now you'll note that today directly off the lobby is the Chamber of the Senate of the United States. There the Vice President presides over the Senate.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

As in the House, the Republicans sit on the Presiding Officer's left, and the Democrats on his right. The desks, unlike in the House of Representatives, are assigned, and they are assigned according to seniority. Those with longest service get their pick. Now on either side of the aisle in the front row are the desks of the majority leader and the minority leader and those of the party whips. Even during sessions, the quiet appearance of the Senate Chamber is quite deceptive I can assure you, for in there some of the great issues of our day have been debated.

SMITH:

DIRKSEN & SMITH IN
SENATE RECEPTION
ROOM, AS BEFORE

What to you were the memorable issues here in your time?

DIRKSEN:

Of course, Civil Rights on which we worked for a long time.

SMITH:

That was in 1964.

DIRKSEN:

Yes, **but** earlier than that. We started in 1959, and I had a great deal to do, I say that modestly, with every Civil Rights issue we ever had. But the major bill was the one that took most of our time; and in fact was written in my office. Hubert Humphrey sat in, and the Attorney General and others, and we just plowed ~~away~~ around that table in my office until we finally got it written.

Then, of course, I was ready to defend it on the floor. President Kennedy asked me about that and had me down to the White House a good many times. I said, This won't do and that won't do, this will do, and we finally shaped it up and managed to sell it to the Senate.

That was one thing and then the Nuclear Treaty. I had gone back and read that ~~article~~ in the New Yorker written by John Hersey ~~about~~ Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And then I plowed around to get the later detail on it. I go back to that every once in a while. But thinking about it, the ghastly death, you know it was an amazing thing.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

There was a river there and actually the heat caused that river to boil. People trying to escape that inferno rushed to the river and jumped in. They didn't realize they were jumping into boiling water. So that is the ghastly and grim aspect of nuclear power when it is set in motion for that kind of a purpose. I thought something has to be done. I would devote what talent I have to get this thing over if we can. I attended all the hearings, I heard all the aspects, all the scientists and I exposed myself to every argument, pro and con, before I came to a final conclusion. There were other big issues also.

SMITH:

How do you take to the reputation that you have developed. Originally, you were thought to be a right-winger, now the left wingers think that you have done marvels.

DIRKSEN:

Oh, they do that all because of one particular issue. I am an Abraham Lincoln, garden-variety, middle-of-the-road-Republican. That is about as well as I can express it. (MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

PRESIDENT'S ROOM

Now I ought to call attention to the fact, *although* you have already noticed these beautiful chandeliers and the ornateness here, there is a room like this at the other end, beyond the so-called Marble Room or the corridor. That is referred to as the President's Room. Presidents used to come there and sign bills. I believe President Lincoln was in that room when he received the message from Grant that Lee was ready to petition for a cessation of hostility and an armistice in the Civil War. One hundred years later, in 1965, in this very room, President Johnson signed the voting rights bill into law. So you see there's a strong link here between past and present events. The room is very quiet and restful and beautiful and there's a *dignity about* it that befits our respect *for* the office of the Presidency.

SMITH:

DIRKSEN & SMITH IN
SENATE RECEPTION ROOM,
AS EARLIER

Senator, you have been here during the time of five Presidents. Could you give me a little sketch about some of them. How about Franklin D. Roosevelt?

DIRKSEN:

DIRKSEN AND TRUMAN

Well, I wasn't too intimate with Franklin Roosevelt. He called me on occasion to come down and witness a signing of a bill and give you a pen. I got to know President Truman much better. Probably the fact that he was a mid-westerner had something to do with it. But President Truman was very approachable. I looked upon him as a neighbor actually, next door, since he came from Missouri. Quite a person I must say. Now with Eisenhower, having served as a whip for Senate on our side, and then later as leader, I got to see him a good deal because we'd have these meetings every week, the so-called leadership meetings

DIRKSEN AND EISENHOWER

SMITH:

At the White House.

DIRKSEN:

Yes. And you'd go there frequently at his invitation or request. We became intimately acquainted and that intimacy is lasting all down through the days. I have occasion to call him every once in a while, particularly when he is at the farm in Gettysburg. I like to just check with him from time to time.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

DIRKSEN AND KENNEDY

Then, of course, came John Kennedy. He and I were very good friends. We served in the House and we served in the Senate. He had a lovely gracious personality. We were quite intimate and he called me to the White House very frequently.

DIRKSEN AND JOHNSON

Then, of course, with Senator, President Johnson, he and I got to know each other when he was a doorkeeper on the third floor in the House of Representatives. Later he was elected to the Senate; then he became Senate leader. He was leader when I became leader. So we have had a lot in common over a period of years.

SMITH:

DIRKSEN AND SMITH

Senator, no one has had the experience who is now in the Senate that you have had. Why is it that President Kennedy seemed to have such **bad** luck with Congress and President **Johnson** originally had such good luck?

DIRKSEN:

Well, I do not believe that President Kennedy had bad luck with Congress. It just took a little longer to get the things done that should be done.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

Because there was nothing imperious about President Kennedy. In other words, he relied entirely upon persuasion and on an entreaty in order to get you to see it from his side of the aisle. Quite often with some modification, I could do that. The Civil Rights Acts were notable in that respect. There was one nice thing about it: Every time that you carried the torch for him, he would call you up almost immediately to thank you without any intervening operator. Sometimes I would get home, the telephone would ring and he would say, "Ev, this is Jack." And I would say, "Hi, Jack." Mrs. Dirksen gave me quite a scolding on that. She said, "You just don't refer to the President in that fashion. You refer to him as Mr. President. I said, "I'll never forget."

SMITH: (V/O)

PULLBACK: OLD SENATE
CHAMBER

This is the room where it all began. It was here, in 1800, that Congress convened for the first time in the Capitol -- to listen to the address of our second President, John Adams.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN AND SMITH
ENTER

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

Here is the Old Supreme Court Chamber. But maybe I ought to say the Old Senate Chamber because they met here for about 40 years. You see, it was here, in 1801, that Jefferson was inaugurated, and two years later, in 1803, the Senators who occupied this chamber ratified the Louisiana Purchase. The Supreme Court met here for a long time until we built them a nice glossy white marble building over across the way. If I remember rightly, I think the Monroe Doctrine was uttered here, too, under President Monroe. 1823, as I recall. It has had a heavy impact on our foreign policy from virtually that day to this.

SMITH:

Senator, sometimes they say that Congress's power is dwindling in relation to the President's power. Do you think that is so?

DIRKSEN:

I think you get that at times. Sometimes the one is up and the other is down. At times you will get a very assertive Congress and a President who is not so strong and, if I dare use the word, not so imperious, and they tell him off a little bit, you see.

(MORE)

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

And then they assert themselves. Then maybe you get a stalemate. Of course, sometimes, you get a stalemate between the House and Senate. Once we had this rather interesting curiosity of two committees, Appropriations of House and Senate, determining whether or not they were going to meet on that side or on this side. Finally they picked out this Chamber as sort of neutral ground. But there is one thing I don't want to forget and that is what Webster said when we were dedicating the cornerstone of the Capitol and when all the functions of Government were up here except that this part from 1812 on was immobilized for a time. Because this is the part that the British burned. They brought all these documents and papers down there and set them on fire. What a cruel and heinous thing that was. I think that I can still hate them for that. But I won't. I think you would be interested in what Daniel Webster said in 1851 when they were laying the cornerstone for the Capitol extension because these are really great words. (MORE)

EXTERIOR OF CAPITOL
AT NIGHT

DIRKSEN: (CONT)

Hessid. "And all here assembled, whether **belonging** to public or private life, with hearts devoutly thankful to Almighty God, for the preservation of the liberty and the happiness of the country, here unite in sincere and fervent prayers that this deposit and the walls and the arches, and the domes and the towers, the columns now to be erected over it, may endure forever. God save the United States of America."
I think that is a magnificent piece. This is a marvelous place.

HOWARD K. SMITH:

DIRKSEN AND SMITH

Thank you very much indeed, Senator Dirksen.

E N D O F P A R T I I I

BUMPER

ANNOR:

"Everett Dirksen's Washington" continues after this word from the B.F. Goodrich Company --

COMMERCIAL

EVERETT DIRKSEN'S WASHINGTON

PART IV:

SMITH:

SMITH

Senator Dirksen is the most influential Senator in the Senate. As his party's Presidential candidates have failed, he has in fact been the nation's number one Republican for eight years. In addition he has now graduated into a kind of Washington monument -- one of the things tourists come to Washington to see. In public life, a man's spectacular surface features often hide the fact that he has a core of impressive substance. Senator Dirksen's magnificent vocal chords, his shock of turbulent curls surmounting a face formed of some kind of unmanageable plastic, his unfailing sense of humor that breaks up every solemn occasion, have given him the reputation of being a kind of character. His recent success as a recording star has reinforced that reputation. It becomes easy to forget that those features are just decorations on a statesman of considerable moment.

(MORE)

SMITH: (CONT)

He began as a consistent right-winger. He has now shucked off labels. If you can persuade him, and meet his terms, you can win him for causes that are downright liberal or left-wing. The norm of values on which he can be persuaded, and on which you have to meet his terms, are quite simple to state. At the heart and core, Dirksen is quite simply ... a patriot.

DIRKSEN: (V/O)

What's right with America? Her heart is right, the great throbbing heart of this country. Is there an earthquake in Chile? Is there a tidal wave in Japan? We are there first. And the great swelling heart of America always responds. That's what's right with America!

CAPITOL ROTUNDA
DOME AND STATUES

CREDITS

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ANNCR:

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