

## INTERVIEW OF ROGER STILLWELL

by Howard P. Willens

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- Willens: Roger Stillwell is a colleague of mine from many years who served on the Hill as an assistant to Congressman Won Pat from Guam. Roger, thank you for taking the time to assist me in this project. Could you begin by giving me a little bit of background about your education and early employment.
- Stillwell: I have a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Wisconsin and have a masters degree in public relations from American University. My professional background includes work as a journalist for the Milwaukee Journal Tribune.
- Willens: When did you get your degree?
- Stillwell: I finished my engineering degree in 1961.
- Willens: Where did you go to school?
- Stillwell: University of Wisconsin in Madison and also University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. In 1964, I moved to Washington, D.C. and I started working on the Hill and also started attending classes at American University, graduate classes. I finished there in I think 1968.
- Willens: When you began work at the Congress, what was your initial position?
- Stillwell: Elevator operator.
- Willens: I won't say anything about its ups and downs. Where did you go from there?
- Stillwell: Well, you can only go sideways because I'd done the ups and downs. I ran the elevator at night and went to school during the day, and it was the best job I've ever had. I can still get parking spaces. My old-time friends are now high-ranking in the police department. From there I went to the staff of Congressman Clement Zablocki of Milwaukee.
- Willens: When did you begin in that assignment?
- Stillwell: 1968. And I started working for his office as a legislative assistant and doing some foreign affairs work, which started to get me interested in that. He was ultimately Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. From there (I was there about a year and a half), I transferred over to Congressman Henry Reuss of Wisconsin, and I was the Assistant Press Secretary and Press Secretary for Mr. Reuss for a while.
- Willens: That was 1969?
- Stillwell: Yes. 1969. I stayed there for about a year. I'm probably a little ahead of myself. In November of 1969, I started work for Antonio B. Won Pat, who was then the elected Washington Representative from the Territory of Guam. He hired me to help him pursue a number of the lobbying concerns that they had—primarily to achieve his goal of having Guam have a delegate to the United States Congress. It was a fascinating experience, and I was glad to go aboard. Several years later, in 1972, the bill was passed. In 1973, I followed Mr. Won Pat to the House of Representatives and opened up his Congressional office and was his Press Secretary and Legislative Staff Director from then on.
- Willens: From then until when?

Stillwell: Until he left Congress, which was January 1985.

Willens: How did it happen that you were hired by Washington Representative Won Pat in 1969? Do you recall who introduced you and how it came about?

Stillwell: I'm embarrassed to tell you no, I can't. I had met a gentleman who was head of the Washington Press Club, and it's been so many years that I've forgotten his name, but I really liked him. He was an American journalist. We had a common interest in history. I liked history and geography. And he said, you know, if you're really bored with the Hill (and I was, doing the rather mundane legislative stuff—Reuss was later Chairman of the House Banking Committee, and that was his interest, that and gold trade, and that was not my interest in life, as much as I admired the man, his brilliance), but he said, you really want to get into the nitty gritty of things, and I know this fellow named Tony Won Pat who is a lobbyist for Guam. He's an elected lobbyist, and so there I was. I went down there, and that same day I ended up with a job.

Willens: Were there any Guamanians working in Won Pat's office at the time?

Stillwell: Yes. There was one, Juanita Sharfless, who stayed with him until the end. She was his secretary. I replaced an elderly gentleman, who I think had probably wanted to retire, to put it politely, and Mr. Won Pat was looking for someone a lot younger with some Hill experience and frankly a sense of how to lobby, a sense of how to handle the public, and (he hoped) with a sense of where Guam was. And I didn't have that, even though I'm a Californian. I had no idea where Guam was. The time between my initial phone call to him and the meeting was actually about a half hour, because he was leaving town that day, so I didn't have time to check up on Guam, to my embarrassment. He was quite sympathetic and understanding. He was pleased to hear that I was a Westerner and so forth, and he had a large topographical base relief map on his wall, and I said, could you just show me where Guam was. And he went up there, and much to our mutual delight, he couldn't find it on the map initially, because there were a bunch of bumps and squiggles there. And he did find it, and he said, see, even I can't figure out where it was. So we had a good laugh. He left for Guam. I didn't see him for three weeks after that.

Willens: Did he hire you on the spot?

Stillwell: He hired me on the spot. I started working the next day.

Willens: How did it happen that someone from California ended up at the University of Wisconsin?

Stillwell: My mother was in Wisconsin. I was in the Army in the late 1950s, and I was discharged in Europe and stayed over there working as a freelance photographer, which is a hobby of mine. I worked for a number of publications over there and enjoyed Europe but finally decided to come back. My mother by then was living in Wisconsin, and she had residency, which made tuition a lot cheaper. So I came back to Wisconsin in 1956 and just stayed there.

Willens: When you began work for Won Pat, how did you become acquainted with Guam's political status and its aspirations with respect to improving its status?

Stillwell: I read everything he had in the office. Basically, I had three weeks to do not much and to acquaint myself. So I knocked on doors. I called on friends that I'd made on the Hill. I essentially read everything. Mr. Won Pat at that time issued an annual report and had a number of copies downstairs. Ultimately, I was to write the remainder from 1969 to when he left office in 1972. Those annual reports were in book form, and it was a compilation of his accomplishments—what he had achieved, what he sought to achieve, what he didn't

achieve—basically a lot of good public relations. He made an annual speech to the Guam Legislature. So when I read the back materials that he had there, it was pretty easy to figure out what was going on. It wasn't a complex issue.

Willens: What was his political background in terms of party affiliation?

Stillwell: Well, he was always to me a Democrat, and actually Mr. Democrat and the founder (or certainly one of the founders) of the Guam Democratic Party. I can get some more information for you from some of my background data here. I didn't think we'd be talking about this in particular. In the early days, as you know, in Guam and the islands, the Democrat/Republican Party didn't exist. They had Territorial Parties and so forth. And frankly, I get them confused even today, much like the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. But he had been active with politics since the mid-1930s and was half Chinese.

Willens: Was he born in Guam?

Stillwell: He was born in Guam. His father was brought to Guam from Shanghai by the U.S. Navy. He was a cook. He and another fellow. And they married local girls. In Mr. Won Pat's case, his father forbid him to speak Chinese. He said, "You must be one of us." And of course, he grew up speaking the local language, which is Chamorro. Mr. Won Pat was an extremely bright man, a self-made man, became a teacher, graduated I guess from elementary school and walked to high school many miles. He was almost an Abraham Lincoln of Guam in many respects.

Willens: How would you describe him in terms of his personal attributes when you began working with him in the late 1960s?

Stillwell: Extremely dedicated and hard working. A very thorough man. He learned English from the Navy. And he learned how to speak English words by reading one of those great big old dictionaries, Webster dictionaries, the big kind you put on the stand. It was done in the 1920s and early 1930s. Some of his spelling was a bit archaic, but the man could edit a piece of paper like no one. He had a great deal of personal pride, and his devotion to Guam was second to none. I think he instinctively knew that because he was half Chinese and not all Chamorro, he occupied a very special niche in Guamanian politics. He had to succeed as a professional more so than someone perhaps who might have been all Chamorro who might have gotten along on family connections. In the islands, it's all politics and it's all family. Mr. Won Pat had no family.

Willens: How did he deal with that political disability?

Stillwell: He used the name Antonio Borja Won Pat quite effectively. Of course, he married a Chamorro woman. I forget what Anna's family was, but she came from a real large extended family. He was just very wily, very wise. And very trustworthy. He said he was going to do something; he did it. I guess people came to respect him.

Willens: Was there any overt discrimination of him because of his Chinese background?

Stillwell: Yes, he said there was. In a number of private discussions in later years, he actually opened up about it. It was very painful. The Catholic Church, when he was running for office, effectively lobbied against him from the pulpit, and there was a lot of discrimination, even up until the very end, by people in campaigns who would whisper about his being half Chinese and not a real Guamanian. Something he was extremely sensitive about. But he obviously overcame it. In the 1930s, he became head of a local body, the Territorial Legislature. I think it was basically just an advisory group to the Naval Commander.

- Willens: I guess in the 1930s—that was before the Organic Act of 1950—they didn't really have official authority to elect their own Legislature.
- Stillwell: Right.
- Willens: What did you learn in your early years with Won Pat about the reunification efforts between Guam and the Northern Marianas that was an important political issue during the 1950s and the early 1960s?
- Stillwell: The foremost fact I learned from Mr. Won Pat that it was an extremely sensitive political issue.
- Willens: Did he consider it a sensitive issue in Guam?
- Stillwell: Oh, absolutely.
- Willens: Did he ever express his views as to why the Guamanians in 1969 voted negatively on a reunification proposal?
- Stillwell: Yes. He thought first of all it (as you've noted in your notes here) that it was very poorly done. The whole campaign was botched from one end to the other. The U.S., instead of trying to make a very positive thing out of this to the Guamanians, basically left the Guamanians wondering whether they'd have to share the federal funds they were getting in those days, and it was meager, with the Northern Marianas. Also, of course, was the unspoken but very significant fact about the role of the Saipanese in World War II on Guam.
- Willens: Did he recall that as being an important negative aspect of the matter?
- Stillwell: Bitterly so.
- Willens: Was he personally subjected to any abuse by Saipanese during World War II?
- Stillwell: I don't know if he personally was. He never talked about it. But it's not an insignificant fact that soon after the invasion, his brother became what I believe was the first Chamorro publicly executed by the Japanese. He was I believe caught transferring notes between two groups of captured Americans, and under a bowl of rice or something, I think that's the story I heard, and he was executed. Somebody tattled on him (I don't know who), but he was publicly shot in front of the entire Won Pat family. And of course everybody else that was there. Mr. Won Pat never got over that and remained quite angry and bitter. I don't know of any personal involvement he may have had with Chamorros from Saipan, but it was clear that there must have been something there because, while he wasn't publicly antagonistic of their goals, he was a reluctant supporter, at least initially.
- Willens: Before he became a non-voting delegate, did he establish any relationships with members of Congress who were concerned with the insular areas, specifically with Congressman Aspinall?
- Stillwell: Absolutely. Yes. Oh, very close.
- Willens: Did you personally become involved in assignments then that were related to Congressman Aspinall and other members of the Insular Affairs Subcommittee?
- Stillwell: I remember meeting Mr. Aspinall at a meeting he had with Mr. Won Pat, and I remember the year, it was probably early 1970. It was in Aspinall's office, and I'd heard so much about Mr. Aspinall, and he was quite the character. At that meeting, after it was all done, I was sort of formally introduced to the Chairman, and he had known my other bosses and everything. We had a brief discussion. He said to me that he had the utmost faith

and trust in Mr. Won Pat. He said something to me then that I'll never forget. "Young man," he said, "one of the reasons that I like Tony Won Pat so much is that he never comes knocking on my door unnecessarily—only when he really has to. I like that." And boy, I'll tell you, that really sort of gave us a wonderful view of how Won Pat dealt with these people. He really knew that wearing out his welcome was not in his best interest. So he kept his profile low. He knocked on the door when he had to, and he got out very quickly. And they liked that. The Chairman alleged that an awful lot of other people from the islands didn't have that knack. He didn't want to hear from them every day.

Willens: One of the issues that I've been exploring is the extent to which Congressman Aspinall really was the most important influence with respect to Interior Department policy toward the Trusteeship in the 1960s. There are many documents that suggest that the Interior Department was necessarily concerned about Aspinall's views, and Aspinall seemed to not want the Executive Branch to exercise any initiative with the Trust Territory, but rather leave it to his committee. Did you have any experience with Aspinall with respect to his attitudes toward the Trusteeship Territory?

Stillwell: No, not at all.

Willens: Did you feel that . . . .

Stillwell: It doesn't surprise me.

Willens: He had the reputation of being a very strong Chairman. Was that your experience?

Stillwell: Absolutely. And he showed that several times, particularly during the progress of the delegate vote from Guam and the Virgin Islands.

Willens: Was he a supporter of that bill?

Stillwell: Not initially. No, not at all.

Willens: What were his bases for opposition?

Stillwell: As he said to me when I asked him that same question at a party, he was kind enough to say that his initial objection was the fact that in 1969 he had approved and passed legislation giving Guam and the Virgin Islands each an elected governor. And he apparently thought that was enough democracy for the moment and wasn't eager to push it. He had absolutely no patience for having delegates in the House. He didn't think they needed it. His attitude was that he was there. He would do their bidding if they needed and if he thought it was important, and enough is enough already. And that was just about the height of it.

Willens: How did the legislation get enacted then, given his opposition?

Stillwell: A very colorful series of discussions occurred between Mr. Aspinall and a gentleman, the ranking member of the committee next to him, Mr. Phillip Burton. For reasons that I'm not quite certain of, Mr. Burton embraced the legislation to create a delegate for Guam and the Virgin Islands. And he embraced it so strongly that he was able to overcome Mr. Aspinall's rather strong objections, and Phil Burton managed the bill so brilliantly in the Interior Committee that it was passed.

Willens: It came out favorable . . . .

Stillwell: It came out favorably. I forget what the vote was. It was a little narrow, but it came out. And it was quite clear that the move to the House was swinging towards passage of it. I mean there is a delegate from Guam and the Virgin Islands in the House of Representatives only because of Phillip Burton. If anybody thinks it's otherwise, they're sadly mistaken. I was there. I know what happened. On the floor, there was some question whether Aspinall

would lead the fight for the bill, would manage the bill. It was all crucial. I mean, Aspinall had never lost a floor fight. Never, in his entire political career. And as he told Mr. Won Pat and myself and somebody else at a meeting, he said, I have no intention of losing this one. He said, I may not have supported the bill 100 percent in the committee, but now that my committee has endorsed it, it has my backing and I will go to the floor and I will manage the bill and I will lead the fight, and it will pass. He did. It took a big man to do that.

Willens: Did Mr. Won Pat think that Congressman Aspinall understood the problems that he and other Guamanians had with their political status?

Stillwell: I think that's a complicated question that I can't honestly answer. But I would like to add this much: Mr. Won Pat was, if nothing else, a very pragmatic politician. He knew his people very well. He understood us as Americans, haoles, or whatever you want to call us. He understood where we were coming from and what our interests were. In that respect, he was very much like Phil Burton. And so what he did was he curried Mr. Aspinall's support and favor assiduously and did so so well that it was incredible. While Mr. Won Pat was Speaker of the Guam Legislature for six or seven terms in the early 1950s and before he came to Washington in 1964, I think it was, he managed to make sure that a street in Guam was named after him, and a few other things. He knew how to do these little things that meant a lot of these guys. But I don't know.

Willens: One reason I ask is that Congressman Aspinall was regarded, even by his critics during the 1960s, as being one of the best informed Congressmen about the insular areas, including the Trust Territory, and to some extent, his personal familiarity with the area and the staff assistance he provided in the form of one Mr. Taylor were very important to the measure of control and power that he had. So that's not inconsistent with your view of Aspinall.

Stillwell: No. I'm sure he did. Interestingly, I never dealt with Mr. Taylor to any extent. We always dealt directly with Wayne Aspinall. So it was a rather unusual relationship that he had with Tony Won Pat. But there's no doubt in my mind that what you're saying is true.

Willens: A few other names on the committee come up regularly in the documents. One was Congressman Saylor of Pennsylvania, who had a particular animus directed at the State Department. Do you have any recollection of Congressman Saylor and what role he played in considering these insular areas?

Stillwell: Yes. In my memory, it's a rather unusual role. Of course, he was the ranking Republican, and there's a street in Guam that was named after him, too. And if Won Pat knew anything, he knew how to play both sides of the political aisle quite well. And he liked John Saylor, quite a bit. And Mr. Saylor was, for the most part, extremely supportive over the years. In the end (if I remember correctly, he died while a member of Congress), he became much more reluctant to be supportive of the Territories. I don't know what it was that triggered it off, but Won Pat said that he clearly remembers John Saylor going from being extremely supportive to being much less than supportive. In fact, he was becoming quite the critic before he passed away.

Willens: Did he ever articulate what his principal criticisms were?

Stillwell: No, not that I remember. I just think he thought the islands may have been getting too much money. Again, he was one of those groups of Americans who I believe may have thought that too much democracy is too much of a good thing.

Willens: You did mention Phil Burton. Was it obvious to Won Pat and you that Burton was going

to be an important factor in the affairs of the insular areas?

Stillwell: Not in the beginning. Actually, I don't think that Mr. Won Pat had much contact with Phil Burton's office until the delegate bill became an issue. And Phil came out of nowhere. I had known Mr. Burton very slightly. When I worked for Henry Reuss, our office was next to Adam Clayton Powell's office. And that was during Mr. Powell's difficult days. Phil Burton served as his lawyer in his House and engineered things and Mr. Reuss was somewhat concerned and helpful of Adam Clayton Powell at the time and being a liberal Democrat and part of DSG and so forth. And so I got to meet Burton just superficially at that point and became aware of what an interesting guy he was and what a tough fighter he could be. But no, he wasn't a big deal with Mr. Won Pat's office, that's for sure. He wasn't one of the key players.

Willens: But he became one then after Aspinall was defeated. Was Aspinall defeated in a primary or in a principal election, if you happen to remember?

Stillwell: I believe he was defeated in the primary. And ironically, Wayne Aspinall was defeated for election in 1972. As a consequence, when Mr. Won Pat took his seat in January 1973, the 93rd Congress, Wayne Aspinall was no longer in the House of Representatives, and Phil Burton had taken over the chairmanship of the full committee. Ironic statement.

Willens: Can you give a capsule description of Congressman Burton based on your experience with him over the years?

Stillwell: Okay. Phil, as somebody once said, was a real son of a bitch but he was our son of a bitch. And had that not been the case, I probably wouldn't be talking today about these things. He was very strong willed and a real ideologue. And a partisan politician of the first rank. I'm sure Democrats miss him today.

Willens: Well, why would someone of those political skills have devoted so much time and effort to the insular areas?

Stillwell: Because Phil had been a labor lawyer in San Francisco. He wore his heart on his sleeve to some degree. Both he and Sala [his wife] were very much into minority issues. Of course, Phil was an Irishman. Sala was Jewish, European refugee, and she got him involved in that stuff very early. And he became very sensitized to these issues. Phil was just very aware of it. Of course, in San Francisco there are some Chamorros, a lot of Seminoles, and so forth there, so I guess they just felt it was the right thing to do. I don't know what the genesis of his real interest was. He just sort of went along with it. I think he looked at it as being a human rights issue. Much as I did, frankly, and he continued to do so. And we had some wonderful conversations. Some not so wonderful conversations. Going into his office was always a time for great anxiety for anybody, including Mr. Won Pat. He was sort of like the loose cannon. You never really knew where the guy was going to go at any given moment. And he was so dictatorial that it could be very upsetting. But you had to sort of stand back and understand that (a) it wasn't going to go anywhere unless it had his blessing (some issues); second, his political instincts were so incredible good. And that was certainly the case, for example, when the feds appropriated \$35 million to purchase a Catholic hospital in Guam. I for one never thought in a million years that the United States government would spend money to buy a bankrupt hospital from the Catholic Church. They did. I mean, the place was poorly designed; it was falling down; the doors were too narrow; the whole thing was just an absolutely monstrosity from beginning to end. But Phil did it, along with Senator Johnston.

Willens: Well, was it something that Won Pat wanted done?

Stillwell: Yes. Sure. Very much so.

Willens: Was it intended that the Guamanians would renovate the facility and continue to use it?

Stillwell: Well, Bishop Flores had borrowed a lot of money to build this hospital. They had it built by and funded and I don't know what else by some Koreans. The gurneys were too short. They were made for Koreans. The doors were too narrow to get standard-sized people through. The whole thing was a monstrosity. The Catholic Conference of Bishops here were freaked out because the church was really in hock over it, and so there were an awful lot of people who wanted to get it done. The Catholic Church, particularly Bishop Flores, wanted to get it done. Mr. Won Pat wanted to get it done. He had his differences with the Catholic Church. No doubt about it. But he was a Catholic. It was good politics. Again, he's pragmatic. So he could differentiate between what was good for Tony Won Pat and what was in his mind to do. And he always did.

Willens: Did he find it difficult to deal with Congressman Burton, given Burton's personal style?

Stillwell: Yes. Very difficult. You know, as time went on, there was a feeling that unless you were obsequious to Phil, you wouldn't get anything done. I think that there was a great deal of frustration about Mr. Burton's extremely high-handed tactics. But again, you do business with the devil, you have to do it his way. There really wasn't any alternative. Everybody else sort of understood and sympathized. Unfortunately, some of his staff echoed his attitude, very arrogant, and high-handed, and I found it particularly unpleasant to deal with his staff. I tried to avoid them as much as I could. But, you did Phil's bidding. But I think that one of the things that made the job a lot easier dealing with Phil was that Tony Won Pat was so likeable and so popular in Congress. I mean please, I'm not overstating this, I mean ask anybody. They loved Tony. He really knew how to make friends and influence enemies. I've got a legion of stories. He took Sunny Montgomery and turned her from being an absolute enemy of education for Guam to being a strong supporter simply by a few good techniques. So I think Phil understood that. He knew that you could depend on Mr. Won Pat for a lot of things. He counted very heavily on Mr. Won Pat's vote in the committee, as he did Ron DeLugo, and later on the delegate from Samoa. There's some funny stories about when Won Pat would give his proxy to both sides. And Phil would call up and scream and yell, what the Sam Hill, did that Tony do again? And of course, Mr. Won Pat would lie, oh, and then we would say, oh, he must have forgotten. Gave it to both sides. Well, gee, Phil, it's yours. And two minutes later the other side would call. That game was played so many times. And as mad as Phil would get at Mr. Won Pat, he would never stay mad at him for more than a minute, because he truly liked him. And Won Pat knew how to—I think I'd have to say it—manipulate Phil Burton. He knew where his buttons were. He pushed them on a regular basis. And it was amazing to watch him do this. Not a hell of a lot of people could do this on the Hill. Phil, as you knew, liked to drink. And it's not widely known that Congressman Won Pat kept at least one case of vodka in his office at all times. When Phil would be in his subcommittee office and want a drink or something, he'd call up and say, I need something, or his staff would do it, and you never knew who was going to do it, and it was our duty to grab a bottle and bring it over there. We were "step and fetch it" all the way. And if that's what it took, that's what it took. So the people of Guam bought more than a few cases of vodka, but you know, that's the way it goes.

Willens: Roger, I sent you some newspaper editorials and articles from 1972 and 1973 that reflected the reaction in Guam to the negotiations between the United States and the Northern Marianas. Do you have any recollection of Won Pat's reactions to the decision of the United States to open up negotiations separately with the Northern Marianas?



- Stillwell: I think he shared (Paul) Cako's opinion that it was pretty unfair for the U.S. to do that. He understood why they did it. He never questioned the wisdom of doing it. But I think he was always a bit upset (angry is too strong of a word) you know, with the U.S. decision to negotiate with the Northern Marianas and not with Guam. He very strongly held the view that the Guamanians had proven their loyalty to the U.S. so many times and under so many circumstances, had never rocked the boat, had been deferential to the U.S. military at times when they should have chased the bums off the island frankly. By Mr. Won Pat's own telling, they had suffered so much abuse and some human rights things there that he just couldn't understand it. No. He wasn't happy about it at all.
- Willens: Well, let me try to separate out some of the issues involved. I understand you to say that he thought there should be negotiations with Guam. Did he take issue with the people in the Northern Marianas who wanted to have a status separate from the rest of the Trust Territory? Did he have any reaction one way or the other to that?
- Stillwell: If he did, I don't remember it.
- Willens: Because as you can see from some of the early writings by Joe Murphy, there was sort of a sense of (not cynicism) doubt that the United States would ever agree to a separate status for the Northern Marianas at the same time they'd had a separate status for Guam. And there was some skepticism in the early articles that this would ever develop. As it began to unfold, though, and appeared to be more likely, the editorials became much more focused on the unfairness to the Guamanians of giving the Marianas a status that seemed on paper to be better than what the Guamanians had. Do you recall the Congressman trying to take any steps with the Executive Branch to bring about some revisiting of Guam's political status?
- Stillwell: No. He really didn't do much with the Administration, because he understood that it was useless. The effort by the State Department to enter into separate negotiations with the Northern Marianas caught everybody by surprise. It certainly caught the Micronesians by surprise, as far as I've heard from Ambassador Williams and the rest of them. So there's no reason why we wouldn't be surprised. And consequently, as you've noted, the reaction in to Guam turned to the unfairness of this. Mr. Won Pat was a strong advocate of that attitude and just wasn't very pleased with it. Not the Northern Marianas. He didn't begrudge them anything. He just wanted at least the same, if not more, for Guam. And when it didn't come about, he was very unhappy, for two reasons. One, he thought that the United States had done an enormous political injustice to Guam, an insult, frankly. And second, it sure as hell wasn't helpful to his own political image. There he was sitting in the United States House of Representatives, and he couldn't get the same thing for Guam that was given to the Northern Marianas, such as SSI, which is very important.
- Willens: That was one of the more important provisions?
- Stillwell: That was the one that always came up repeatedly. Because all of the rest is ethereal. You talked about control over immigration and everything else. In essence, Guam often had as much control over immigration as anybody. The H2 status certification process was given to Bordallo and yanked away by the Department of Labor because they just abused it much as the Northern Marianas has been accused of doing. So in effect, we knew they had it. What we were talking about was bucks, money. The SSI represented a heck of a lot of more money than getting Title XVI, ADC funds and so forth, as Guam and the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico now get. So yes, there was a lot of jealousy about that. But it was just the basic fact that the U.S. sat down at a table and said to the Northern Marianas, what do you want and this is what we're willing to give you. They had not at that point

done that with Guam, although there was a little bit of that give and take in 1950 when Mr. Won Pat led a delegation with two other men to negotiate the Organic Act. But he said it was basically this is what we're going to give you; take it or leave it. They negotiated a little bit. For example, Guam wanted a two-house legislature in 1950. Aspinall said forget it, that isn't going to happen, we're going to give you one. And of course, they did.

Willens: The decision to negotiate separately with the Northern Marianas was announced in April 1972. It had been preceded by several years of efforts by the Northern Marianas to bring this about and resistance within the United States bureaucracy. You mentioned that the Micronesians you know were surprised by this development. Did you have any particular recollection in mind as to their expression of surprise?

Stillwell: No. It was a collective statement that was told to me later by a number of people. I think they had all felt that the Marianas would go along and become part of the Republic of Micronesia or whatever it was going to be called.

Willens: There was a Guam Status Commission created in part as a reaction to these negotiations with the Northern Marianas. Did you or the Congressman have any involvement with that Status Commission?

Stillwell: Mr. Won Pat supported it, but no. As a staff, we basically didn't. We stayed aloof from those sort of things. He knew that it was pretty much an internal political thing, and certainly being the senior active politician—as I've said before, the man had been active in Guam politics since the mid-1930s, so there wasn't anything about Guam's political scene or people he didn't know—he just took the distant view. It was sort of the feeling that if something comes out of it and Guam wants to push it, he'll push it on the Hill.

Willens: I got a little confused in the politics involved in the Guam Commission. The Chairman was Senator Lujan?

Stillwell: Yes.

Willens: And he published over his name several articles on status that were extremely critical of the United States. Was he a Republican?

Stillwell: No. Frank was a Democrat.

Willens: So as far as you know, he and Won Pat were political allies?

Stillwell: In a manner of speaking, I suppose so.

Willens: The articles were so critical of the United States and so extreme in some respects that I think they might have caused Congressman Won Pat some difficulty on the Hill or with the Executive Branch.

Stillwell: Well, every once in a while you hear that. I mean, Ricardo Bordallo certainly caused Mr. Won Pat no end of personal embarrassment. But you know, he was so popular here on the Hill that it was possible for him to quickly disassociate himself from the stronger comments and just say, well, you know, they're frustrated, they're angry. And with Phil Burton being around, it really didn't seem to make much difference. It made a big difference to guys like Scoop Jackson, Senator Jackson.

Willens: How so?

Stillwell: Because they were from the old school again. And while they were supportive, you had to be awfully careful what you said and whose toes you stepped on. And some people are very jealous of their prerogatives. Some people very much took the master/servant attitude toward the territories. I can remember a debate going in our office whether to

call Mr. Won Pat a Delegate or a Congressman. We later on chose to use the generic 'Congressman'. The Library of Congress was very helpful and pointed out that anybody in Congress is a Congressman, including a Senator, a Congressman or Congresswoman. But we became very careful not to use the word 'Representative,' because we were berated for that at some point. I forget what happened. But some other member became quite irked and said, "He's not a Representative, he's just a Delegate," and so you learned your place. You learned to keep your place. That was Mr. Won Pat's forte. He knew where the line was, and he didn't step over it. And we made sure that we didn't step over it either as staff persons.

Willens: There were occasions on which members of the Marianas Political Status Commission visited with Guamanian political leaders to learn about some of the problems that Guam had experienced so that the Northern Marianas could try to deal with them during the negotiations. Do you have any recollection of any meetings that Congressman Won Pat had with members of the Marianas Political Status Commission?

Stillwell: Just vague memories. I mean, Eddie Pangelinan and Olympio Borja are the only two that I can really remember. Pete A. Tenorio coming in and sitting down and talking. And Mr. Won Pat politely listened to them. I think that they, particularly after the refusal of Guam to vote for unification, were probably as sensitized as anyone to the potential problem they had with Guam politically. They weren't fools. They knew what was going on. But Mr. Won Pat was always courteous. And ultimately, and I have to say this about Tony Won Pat, because he said it himself, he said, look, he says, we're all Chamorros. He said the only reason we're sitting across the table from each other divided is because of the U.S. in 1899. He said we all should be one, and the U.S. really failed in its obligation to reunite us after the war. It was a typical example of short-sighted thinking by the American government. And he was aware of that, so he did his best to be friendly, and I think he also instinctively understood that there were a lot of Saipanese living in Guam and they voted and so he wasn't going to bite the hand that could possibly vote for him. So again, he was just a good pragmatic basic politician. But he liked being a Pacific islander. He liked being a Chamorro. And he was sympathetic with them.

Willens: There is reference in the materials to a resolution that he introduced to try to bring about some revisiting of Guam's political status at the same time that the Marianas was engaged in negotiation with the United States. Did any of these efforts get anywhere?

Stillwell: Never.

Willens: Did Phil Burton have any view one way or the other with respect to Guam's desire to improve its political status along the same lines that the Marianas was?

Stillwell: Yes. I think his views could be summed up best by saying, Tony, we'll get to it after we take care of this. Phil was not one to spread himself too thin. He kept his eye on the ball. Phil Burton very much saw the negotiations with the Northern Marianas with the United States to be a wonderful testing ground to see how far we could bend the Constitution, as it were, what could be done to create a whole new political relationship between off-shore areas and the United States. It was very much an experimental process, and he worked very hard at it. He had some very strong ideas about what he wanted in that document, what he didn't want, what was doable politically, what he thought perhaps was not doable politically.

Willens: Do you have any examples?

- Stillwell: Yes. A delegate from the Northern Marianas to Congress. He was adamantly opposed to that, not because I don't think he didn't like the idea. Heck, it was just another vote; he would have been glad to have it. But it just wasn't doable politically in those days. It came too close after the Guam and the Virgin Islands delegate. He wanted a Samoan. He had his own priorities. But he did see that if you could do certain things, like get SSI for the Northern Marianas, he assured all of us that he could do better things for the other Territories.
- Willens: But one of the interesting aspects about that is that in my meetings with him and in his meetings with members of the Commission, my client, he constantly urged us all not to stray too far from the present status of Guam and the Virgin Islands. And at some points, he really asked us to conceal or package our unique provisions in ways that would not become visible to some of his constituents.
- Stillwell: Or colleagues.
- Willens: Or perhaps colleagues. So to some extent, he applied pressure on the Marianas to stay within the traditional mode. But your recollection is that he at the same time recognized that there was an opportunity here to develop a somewhat different form of status.
- Stillwell: And it was developed. I mean clearly, the Northern Marianas relationship with the United States is a much better one than Guam enjoys today or the Virgin Islands. There's not even any question about it in my mind. And Phil knew this was going to happen. But Phil was a pragmatist, and he understood that if you pushed too far, you tried to get a little too novel, too kinky perhaps with the interpretations, you were going to run into political problems, and Phil didn't want any of that.
- Willens: Yes, at one point he told the client not to let their lawyer, namely me, get out there too far in front in trying to do too many novel exceptions.
- Stillwell: I remember him saying that, by the way, in a meeting.
- Willens: Do you remember?
- Stillwell: Yes, very much so. Not with you, but I remember him saying it to the staff that sometimes counsel gets a little ahead of the client. As an attorney, he was quite aware of that. But he also knew that it was your job, I mean, to push, and had I had your job, I would have done it. And frankly, as a Congressional staffer over the years and as a consultant to the Northern Marianas, I'd do exactly the same thing today.
- Willens: One specific issue that came up during the negotiations involved the income tax provision. The United States was ready to agree tentatively that the Northern Marianas would have the authority to adopt its own income tax laws as Puerto Rico did at the time. When Ambassador Williams reported that tentative agreement to Phil Burton, he disagreed strongly with that and said that the tax arrangements in the Northern Marianas had to mirror those in Guam. Do you have any recollection as to why he felt that was of particular importance?
- Stillwell: Not offhand, no. I think we all felt that the Puerto Rican arrangement wasn't really very good, and I think he was concerned about the Northern Marianas paying taxes, making sure that they paid them, and making sure there was sufficient revenue from local sources to deal with this. But beyond that, no, I don't.
- Willens: Is it basically your reaction that during the Northern Marianas negotiations, Congressman Won Pat decided that he was going to remain essentially quiet with respect to the

negotiations and then make every possible effort after the deal was done to obtain the same arrangements for Guam?

Stillwell: Exactly.

Willens: Do you have any recollection of him trying to influence the Northern Marianas negotiations in any way?

Stillwell: No. I think he had decided, correctly so (as a staff we did discuss it quite actively) to remain a very neutral observer. He felt politically that anything he did to oppose the Northern Marianas scenario could be misconstrued in the Northern Marianas, maybe cause political grief in Guam. But furthermore, he understood, again, that what was going on here was the basis for improving Guam's lot. And again, from where I stood, Guam's frustration with the process didn't seem to be predicated on what was going on, just when it was going on. They thought they should have been first. So Phil made the argument that, "Look, that didn't happen, I'm sorry, but let's do the Northern Marianas first and see how far we can push Congress, and then you guys are next."

Willens: Did Won Pat get offended by the exclusion from the Northern Marianas negotiations of any representative from Guam? As you can see from the articles, there was some talk at the time about having a Guamanian observer at the Northern Marianas negotiations, and that was rejected. Do you remember any discussion on that subject?

Stillwell: No. It wasn't part of it. I think that Guam, including Mr. Won Pat, would have preferred to have somebody from Guam sitting in there. But Mr. Won Pat was a man who understood that there were political implications here. He understood the underlying hostility between Saipan and Guam to some degree, and it's still very much in evidence, frankly. And he probably would have understood that there would have been a lot of grandstanding and stuff, so, you know that was a local issue, and I don't think he got involved in it. He received fairly regular reports from the State Department, Department of Interior on what was going on, and we chewed them over, but that was about as far as it went.

Willens: Was he personally briefed by Ambassador Williams from time to time?

Stillwell: Periodically. Not very often, but periodically.

Willens: What was his evaluation of Ambassador Williams?

Stillwell: Don't know.

Willens: Did you participate in any of those briefing sessions?

Stillwell: One or two, if I remember correctly. They didn't seem to stand out one way or the other, and I didn't have much interest. Frankly, that was almost a local political thing, and we weren't getting into it. I was more concerned about legislation that was important to us. We understood the ramifications, though.

Willens: One of the interesting aspects of the documents is that Ambassador Williams consistently, from the very beginning of the negotiations, was concerned about the reaction in Guam. And he recommended several times at a fairly high level of the Executive Branch that something be done to deal with the legitimate Guamanian desire to have some re-evaluation of their status. And so far as I can see, essentially nothing was done, and that seems to be what the record demonstrates. Nothing was done in the late 1960s or the early 1970s.

- Stillwell: That's true. In talks with Haydn here in Washington about three years ago, he clearly expressed that dealing with Guam was given the short end of the stick, and he just thought that the U.S. really wasn't all that interested. Much like Puerto Rico, you know. I mean, like Senator Hiyakawa said, we stole it fair and square, so why should we give it back. Well, pretty much that attitude exists about Guam. What's in it for us? And that's always been the problem with Guam. What's in it for us as far as the U.S. is concerned.
- Willens: When the Covenant came to Congress for hearings and review, did you or the Congressman take any role in the hearings and consideration of the Covenant?
- Stillwell: My role was probably fairly nominal. Everybody in the senior staff was aware. I certainly was expected to keep up on. He asked me to attend some hearings periodically. We watched; we listened.
- Willens: Is it true that the hearings on the House side resulted in a late night vote on the Covenant that's been attributed to Congressman Burton? Do you have any recollection as to the circumstances of the House vote?
- Stillwell: No, I'd forgotten about that. There was something then, and honestly, I don't remember.
- Willens: The Covenant did go through the House very expeditiously after hearings in the summer, as I recall, of 1975, and it was voted on within a month or two.
- Stillwell: Well, like with a lot of things, you know. The delegate vote was the same way. It came late at night. That was one of Phil's tactics. It was a grand tactic. The fewer people on the floor, the fewer people who object.
- Willens: Did it surprise you as an experienced legislative assistant that the Covenant was basically put before the Congress on a take it or leave it basis? There's some discussion and dissatisfaction reflected in the documents attributed to members of Congress that they weren't given the opportunity to amend specific provisions of the Covenant.
- Stillwell: Yes, there was a lot of frustration on the Hill. That brings us back to Wayne Aspinall and his attitude. And Scoop Jackson and his attitude about the territories. Their attitude was, and in some instances continues to be, that the territories is Congress's game. Not the Administration's. And they're very jealous of the prerogatives—were then and remain so today in some instances. So they were quite unhappy about it. But Phil knew that if you opened up the legislation, it would be beaten to death. There really wasn't a strong reason for making the Northern Marianas a Commonwealth. And I suspect that had a lot of people in the Congress had sufficient time to really sit down and debate this and understand the ramifications—I said so then to Mr. Won Pat and he agreed and I said it to Phil Burton and he agreed—that it would never have passed the Congress. Because I asked Phil Burton one time, "Why are we doing this? Why do we need more colonies?"
- Willens: Did he have an answer?
- Stillwell: Not really. He said, "It's just the right thing to do. We've got Guam." But I think most people understood that this was a potential political can of worms. The American people had no idea what was going on. I mean, until now, most people don't even know the Northern Marianas are part of the U.S.
- Willens: Well, you will remember that there was substantial opposition that finally developed on the Senate side.
- Stillwell: Yes. Well, by the time it got over there, of course, it was a bigger issue. And of course the Senators are stronger individually. They're more capable of speaking out their minds, and

they don't follow their party's chosen path, as we all know. So yes, they had some real concerns. They take a broader view than the House of Representatives.

Willens: Well, going back to the House for a minute. Do you have any recollection of the lobbying efforts that were engaged in by Ambassador Williams and Executive Branch representatives?

Stillwell: Some very aggressive lobbying efforts. But I think once again that it wouldn't be unfair, I'm not sure Ambassador Williams would agree, but it seemed to be that he was pretty much beholden to do what Phil Burton wanted him to do. I think that, knowing how Phil operated, I wouldn't be surprised to hear Phil say, you know, "You just come and tell me what you're doing and I'll tell you whether it's acceptable or not." Phil was the engineer of that train in the House, and he didn't tolerate any interference from outside sources. But certainly Haydn Williams touched every base if he possibly could. I mean he was a pretty thorough guy, and still is.

Willens: Do you remember an assistant to Ambassador Williams named Richard Wyttenbach?

Stillwell: Yes.

Willens: I interviewed him out in Saipan several months ago, and he was actively engaged in the lobbying efforts. He recalled that the Executive Branch officials and the Marianas representatives worked together as a team once the negotiations were over and they had a common objective. Wyttenbach recalls that there was a very specific promise made to Congressman Won Pat and to Guamanian political leaders that if they supported the Covenant, they would be benefited by obtaining an equivalent status. Do you have any recollection of a specific promise made by either Burton or Executive Branch officials to Congressman Won Pat?

Stillwell: I never heard it. It wasn't me, but I never heard the Administration say that in any way whatsoever. It's not to discredit what Dick said. I mean, certainly he lived on Guam for many years, married to a local gal, so we trusted him. It certainly was something that was implicitly understood in discussion with Phil Burton and we expected it. We were disappointed but we were expecting it.

Willens: Why didn't it happen?

Stillwell: Two reasons. I don't think Phil lived long enough. And I think that also Phil may have underestimated the difficulty in getting SSI through. In those days, one of my personal focuses was getting the Presidential vote for Guam. I drafted the original legislation and wrote speeches. Mr. Won Pat's the only member of Congress to really testify on that particular point. He testified in the Senate twice, I think it was, maybe once in the House, and it was something I felt very strongly about, and still do. But Phil said he would push that legislation, amongst other things. But Phil did not endorse (and made it quite clear he did not endorse) the all inclusive concept of negotiating status as was done with the Northern Marianas. For some reason or other, he thought that wouldn't work for Guam or the Virgin Islands. He was adamant that instead he would take care of the little problems piecemeal, and he made it quite clear that he didn't want any part of that for Guam.

Willens: With respect to Phil Burton's attitude, did he feel that the overall negotiations with the Marianas and the negotiations with the Micronesians had persuaded him that this wasn't an effective way to address status issues?

Stillwell: Perhaps. I think he felt that one entire package was too vulnerable, and it was too much for his colleagues to swallow. It was too vulnerable, basically. And I agreed with him.

- Willens: Well, one of the things that I saw in the middle 1970s that happened in Guam was that the Guamanian political leaders basically comingled considerations of status and their own constitution. On the one hand, they wanted to have a constitutional convention that would elaborate what kind of governmental institutions they would have. At the same time, they wanted to improve their status by emulating the Marianas or improving on it. And there was considerable confusion as to which ought to come first. Do you have any recollection of the kinds of debates that took place on this issue in Guam during the 1970s?
- Stillwell: Better ask Arnold Leibowitz. I never could understand the constitutional convention. I thought the whole thing was the biggest waste of money and time I'd ever seen. Mr. Won Pat absolutely concurred. He couldn't begin to understand what the Sam Hill they were talking about or why they were wasting their time. But I guess it was just an exercise to blow off steam and have a good time. I think the Guamanians were so terribly frustrated politically with their inability to persuade the U.S. to go beyond that point, and frankly, the Guamanians have shown an unfortunate tendency over the years to be almost at times too damned acquiescent to the U.S. If the U.S. said jump, they jumped, and usually the question was how high. Maybe not so much today, but if the U.S. said we're not willing to negotiate with you, the Guamanians almost seemed to turn their frustration inward. So they had these wonderful, expensive constitutional conventions of which nothing came, as you know. So did the Virgin Islands. Same exercise in futility.
- Willens: Well, I made the mistake once, after the Marianas Constitutional Convention had concluded successfully, notwithstanding the walk-out. I was leaving the island and was interviewed by a reporter from the *Pacific Daily News*, and he asked me what advice I would give to the Guamanians with respect to their contemplated constitutional convention. I made some flip comment to the effect of well, they ought to exclude lawyers from it. That was published as I arrived in Guam to fly away, and it created an outrage from the local bar association. The nicest thing said was, "Well, who does this son of a bitch from Washington think he is giving advice?"
- Stillwell: Well, you know, I like Arnold Leibowitz a lot. He attended one of my son's bar mitzvahs, and we remain on good terms, but we always felt that the constitutional conventions for Guam and the Virgin Islands both should have been renamed the Arnold Leibowitz Memorial Funding.
- Willens: I see that he was recently at the installation of the Palau Republic.
- Stillwell: Yes. He called me and said, "Should I go out there?" And I said, "How do I know?" He didn't have any business out there. He had been invited in sort of an ad hoc manner. They hadn't offered to pay his way, but I guess he felt he was going to go out there and generate some business and if I know Arnold, he either is or was on Saipan for the purpose of talking with Froilan Tenorio. Trying once again to solicit business from him.
- Willens: Well, we can come to that off the record. We're talking about Won Pat's ultimate dissatisfaction with the fact that Congressman Burton and other members of Congress did not address the Guamanian status issue in the way in which he had hoped. Do you recall any conversations with him on this score in the last years of his term in Congress?
- Stillwell: No, not really.
- Willens: And your recollection is that so far as Burton was concerned, he felt that having gone through this exercise, it was not the most efficient and politically appropriate way of



dealing with status issues in Guam and the Virgin Islands—that one ought to deal with specific complaints on an individual basis rather than try to cover the waterfront.

Stillwell: Yes. He said that many times.

Willens: Now at the same time, the Guamanians now are seeking an overall revision in the form of a commonwealth act, and this so-called commonwealth act has certain provisions in it that limit participation in the critical decisions to the Chamorros. Have you had any experience in recent years with the Guamanian efforts to support this commonwealth act?

Stillwell: Just second-hand, that's all. Nothing directly, no.

Willens: Do you see any prospects for it?

Stillwell: I think it's dead, gone, history. Although Congressman Underwood and others in the Department of the Interior keep insisting that it's very much alive and going to spring to life at any moment. But I guess if you believe in Lazarus, you might believe in the Guam Commonwealth Act. But I haven't seen the first one; I guess I'll miss the second one.

Willens: I'd like to just mention some of the other Congressmen who figured in the consideration of the Covenant and solicit your help in sort of characterizing them as participants in this effort. Congressman Lloyd Meeds had played a role over time in status matters. What was your impression of Congressman Meeds and his interests in this matter.

Stillwell: A Westerner and just a good guy. I think as a lawyer—he told me once, because we've talked since he's left Congress a few times—he found it very fascinating. He was always very supportive of the islands, real supportive, just a good guy.

Willens: He actually proposed a constitutional convention bill at the very early stages of the Micronesian negotiations in 1969, and the Executive Branch sort of resisted his initiative there for a while until eventually they had no choice but to adopt it. But your judgment is that he had some basic sympathy, and as a lawyer, he was interested in the issues?

Stillwell: Yes. Very much so. Much like John Seiberling. The two of them were very supportive, there when you needed them, particularly Seiberling. But Lloyd Meeds was just an all around good guy.

Willens: What is your recollection of Congressman Miller's involvement in these status matters going back to the 1970s?

Stillwell: You mean George Miller?

Willens: Yes.

Stillwell: None at all. If he was interested, it certainly didn't show. I don't remember him being a role player at all. As a matter of fact, to be perfectly candid about it, with all due respect to the Chairman, and I may have missed it somewhere, I don't remember him being a player in territorial affairs at all when I was on the Hill.

Willens: He has expressed a recent interest within the last few years.

Stillwell: It seems so, maybe in the last few months. Just didn't care before.

Willens: Congresswoman Mink from time to time spoke out on the subject of Micronesia, and there was at one point some debate about whether the best way to deal with the Trust Territory was to annex it to the state of Hawaii. Do you recall any discussion, serious or otherwise, about that proposal?

Stillwell: No. It didn't go any farther. It went no farther than legislation that Senator Fong had introduced years before to annex Guam to Hawaii as a district. That irked Mr. Won Pat to no end. I'm sure that the rest of Micronesia didn't want to be part of Hawaii. You know, not everybody in the Pacific looks upon Hawaii as being the wonderful place that I think it is. They have their own views of Hawaii. But Patsy Mink again was very supportive. She was really tough on things like overcrowding on Kwajalein and nuclear testing for the Bikini Atoll people and so forth. That seemed to be where a lot of her interests lie.

Willens: How about Congressman Ketchum? What is your recollection of him?

Stillwell: Not much. I don't remember.

Willens: Congressman Clausen is someone that I recall visiting, because he was the senior Republican, I believe, on the subcommittee. He was always receptive and particularly interested in the military side of the issue. What is your recollection of his interests?

Stillwell: My recollection of Don Clausen is always going to be very fond. A fellow Californian, likes his cowboy boots, and just was an all around good guy, was one of the Republicans who stayed the duration, knew what he was getting into. He was, by the way, the man who went to the Rules Committee, who served on the Rules Committee, and spoke on behalf of the Guam/Virgin Islands Delegate Bill. And his support was absolutely critical to getting the bill to even go to the floor, which has nothing to do with what you're saying here, but that is just an indication of where he was coming from all along. He was very supportive.

Willens: How did he and Burton get along?

Stillwell: Very well.

Willens: They seem like very different personalities.

Stillwell: They were, but they got along fine. They're Californians. There's almost a California uber alles type of philosophy out there.

Willens: One of the issues that we encountered in all of our meetings with members of Congress was the need to justify why the Marianas wanted to spin off from the remainder of the Trust Territory. Do you recall opposition to the Marianas separate negotiations among members of the committee?

Stillwell: I don't, no. That would have happened before we really came to the Hill, so it was something I've never dealt with.

Willens: Who were the key staff people? Was Jeffrey Farrow there at the time?

Stillwell: No, Jeff wasn't there.

Willens: When did he serve on the subcommittee?

Stillwell: Jeff didn't come to the committee until Mr. Won Pat hired him, and I forget when that was. But he'd been over at the White House. He'd worked for Ron DeLugo prior to Carter's time and went back and forth to the Virgin Islands, so Jeff was not a player at all in any of this, as I'm sure he'll tell you.

Willens: Was Al Stayman on the Hill during the 1970s?

Stillwell: No. Al Stayman wasn't there. Let me see, Jim Berg.

Willens: Jim Berg or Jim Bierne?

- Stillwell: Jim Bierne on the Senate side, and in the early days, it was oh, my goodness, I have to get some of these names out. I've got them downstairs.
- Willens: I should remember them, too, and I have some names off the tip of my tongue, but I think they all came in the later stages.
- Stillwell: Al Stayman was much, much later. But there were several other people in the Senate, both of whom are dead now, I think staffers.
- Willens: How would you describe Bierne's role on the Senate side?
- Stillwell: Very critical. He's really quite bright and does his homework like nobody.
- Willens: He's been there a very long time.
- Stillwell: Well, he was. He started working with Scoop Jackson many, many years ago.
- Willens: Well, he and I are going to get together, he promises me. But I recall briefing him from time to time because Senator Jackson was basically not available to us during the negotiations. I don't think he was very much available to Ambassador Williams either.
- Stillwell: No.
- Willens: So Bierne was sort of a key player in at least the briefing efforts. There was criticism from time to time that Ambassador Williams failed to adequately brief members of Congress. I find that somewhat hard to believe, knowing him and knowing the documents.
- Stillwell: I heard it all the time, but I never understood that. I think what those statements expressed more than anything was an expression of frustration on the Hill about not being able to have a more direct control over the negotiations. There was an awful lot of desire by Phil Burton and so forth to really control these negotiations, I suspect, and I know Phil insisted at times in having his own staff there.
- Willens: Senator Jackson played a much lesser role in reviewing and controlling the negotiations. What was your assessment of his interest in the Micronesian negotiations?
- Stillwell: I don't know.
- Willens: Do you think Bierne's views toward the insular areas and particularly the Northern Marianas have changed over time?
- Stillwell: No. I think Jim is a very conservative person.
- Willens: Do you find now in your current capacity as a consultant to the Northern Marianas that he or perhaps others on the Hill are somewhat resistant to some of the unique aspects of the Covenant?
- Stillwell: I think they're leery of it.
- Willens: What particularly concerns them?
- Stillwell: Oh, well, you know, obviously today that's an easy question to answer—immigration, labor. Because of the rather gross and embarrassing problems in the Northern Marianas, the specter of whether we went too far too fast is being raised up again. I was surprised that some of this stuff made it as far as it did in the Senate. There were some people over there—Jim Gamble is a name that comes to mind—who was just I thought a terribly real obstructionist. Thank God for Jim.
- Willens: I remember a name. Tom Dunmire.
- Stillwell: Tom Dunmire. Yes. Well, he was on the House side.

- Willens: And he was a Republican.
- Stillwell: A Republican. Yes.
- Willens: Did you have any dealings with him?
- Stillwell: As few as I could. I never liked Tom. I never trusted him. A lot of people liked him, and Jeff Farrow certainly did, and so did others. But I just never felt comfortable with him.
- Willens: When the Covenant got to the Senate side, there was some opposition expressed by people as diverse as Senator Hart, Senator Kennedy, Senator Byrd, Senator Pell. Do you have any recollection now as to what were the principal grounds for those Senators opposing the Covenant?
- Stillwell: Not offhand, no. But frankly we didn't follow much of it on the Senate side.
- Willens: How about Senator Johnston of Louisiana, who came to this in his first term as a Senator and seems to have stayed with it over the last 18 years?
- Stillwell: To my great surprise, frankly.
- Willens: What was your evaluation of his interest in the Marianas or Micronesia more generally?
- Stillwell: Probably initially not much. He was much more interested in the Virgin Islands and specifically the impact on Hess Oil refineries.
- Willens: Why was that?
- Stillwell: Well, he thought that Hess was getting a free ride and competing unfairly with the refineries in Louisiana. And he made that point extremely clear in his first couple of months in the Senate in which Ron DeLugo went up there and testified on something and Johnston took over the hearing from I forget who was chairing it at the time and as the junior senator proceeded to lambast poor Ron DeLugo for what he thought was the unfair treatment by Hess to the competition. And he caught everybody by the room totally off guard, and we thought, oh oh, Ron's got a big problem. He obviously turned it into a somewhat positive thing, although I'm not sure that that has always been the case.
- Willens: When did you then leave Congress as an assistant?
- Stillwell: January 1985.
- Willens: And that was after . . . .
- Stillwell: I stayed on and I left and I went back on my own.
- Willens: And you've been on your own ever since.
- Stillwell: Well, yes.
- Willens: And how long have you been serving as a consultant then to the Commonwealth?
- Stillwell: Since January, this time. I've been twice as a consultant. I was a consultant for Froilan about 1986 to 1988 when he was Washington Rep and basically did with him what I did for Mr. Won Pat. And then obviously since January 1994 until now.
- Willens: What is your overall assessment of the way in which the Covenant has been implemented over the last 16 years? What have been the strengths of the relationship, and what have been the weaknesses in the relationship?
- Stillwell: I think it's a marvelous document. I think that it has shown to a lot of us that you can sort of broach new grounds when dealing with these off-shore areas and be quite successful. I think the strengths were giving the Northern Marianas a great degree of self-

government. I think the weaknesses were giving the Northern Marianas a great degree of self-government.

Willens: How do you think the Marianas political leaders have handled those responsibilities going back to Governor Comacho?

Stillwell: Poorly, for the most part.

Willens: Is that due in part to a lack of political experience or sophistication?

Stillwell: Yes, I think that's it. I sum it up to that, yes. I just think that the level of political sophistication in the Northern Marianas is so low at times, or has been so low, that frankly it's—and I don't want to be quoted as saying this—it's just simply appalling.

Willens: Yes, I think from time to time you could make the opposite argument, that they're very politically adept and manipulative and have had a fair amount of political experience. And when they saw that they now had an opportunity in which to exercise these prerogatives, they did so, with a vengeance. The Commonwealth seems to have labored under the difficulty, for example, of getting the two political parties to work together in a way to look for some common solution when they control different branches of government. That's been a recurring problem there, but it's been a problem that you have also in the Congress of the United States. So one is looking for ways to sort of help them reach compromise.

Stillwell: Let me back up just a little bit. I don't think as a staffer and as an American citizen that what Congress passed for the Northern Marianas was clearly understood by almost anybody with perhaps the exception of Phil Burton. And Phil has been quoted as saying (I was there when he said it at least once) that it's going to take a long time for the people in this country to fully understand what it is that was done here. And I really tried as hard as I could because I was a staffer to get behind his views on that so I could understand. It was just curious. Because it's a very, very dark, arcane area you guys were working in, and frankly I didn't have a lot of experience with political status. And I really don't now. But Phil seemed to understand that there would be problems down the road with some of the things that were going on. I think that he may have shared with Larry Gamble a desire to see how far you could push the Constitution and what could be done. And I understand why you raised your eyebrows. But they both liked to tinker with the thing, and as lawyers are wont to do from time to time, to see whether you can give it a new twist, a new expression. I honestly don't think that most members of Congress understood what was going on. I'd almost have to say that in retrospect people were paying so little attention to what was being said overall and to what was really being recommended that we adopt a new colony. And I call it colony, because I think that's what they end up as. But if we had to do it again, it wouldn't be done now. I don't think anybody with the exception of Tony Won Pat (and I don't know whether he was or not) was appreciative of the fact of just how xenophobic the Saipanese really are. I see it today constantly. I will never, never, as long as I live forget a meeting that I had with Governor Tenorio, and Lieutenant Governor Tenorio in 1987 during the height of all the problems over passports and when it was just plain embarrassing. The Department of Justice was blocking the issuance of passports to residents of the Northern Marianas. We were sitting inside the Governor's office, I'm talking about Pete Tenorio, of course, and he went back and forth, and as usual I was dumb enough to be the only haole in the room, so was taking the brunt of everybody's anger. Of course, the Governor was just a sweetheart. The Lieutenant Governor has always had a great deal of animosity toward haoles, and particularly didn't like me for whatever reason. Accused me of being a spy for Guam on many occasions. But I'm used to being

the minority in the room. I'd worked for Guam all those years and the Virgin Islands. I'd worked for them too. So I know the situation. So it came to the point when the Governor said, "Do you have anything to say, Roger, about all of this?" I said, "Yes." I said, "How important is that passport to you?" My question was predicated on the fact that as an American I'd always been told that my Italian ancestors came here just looking for gold on the streets and were so glad to be in America and blah, blah, blah, the usual political line how they killed themselves coming here. Yours did, too, you know, and just glad to be here. And boy, I tell you, the Governor looked around, and he said, "Does anybody here have a comment on Roger's question?" Because he thought it was a real good one. And nobody did. And I thought oh, that's really interesting. What he said knocked me off my chair. He looked at me and he said, "Well, I have to be quite honest to you. It probably means nothing to us." I said, how important is your citizenship, that was the question. He said at this point, it probably means nothing to us. I had never heard anybody say that before. Blew me away. Completely. Boy, was I naive. You know, I'd worked for Guam all those years, and there was always this line about we love America because they rescued us from the terrible Japanese and the flagwaving, and I used to sit and go, oh, you guys are crazy. I mean, you're being abused, but what the heck, you know, more power to you if you can live with it. Boy, the Saipanese don't feel that way at all. Didn't then; don't now. Maybe Eddie Pangelinan did, but the rest of them certainly don't. I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "Well, you know, most of my people aren't going anywhere." He said, "We expected, or some of us did, that after the thing was all resolved and Congress passed the law and we became a Commonwealth that the streets would be paved in gold, the feds would be marching up and down the street throwing money at us and so forth." He said, "None of that ever happened." As far as passports are concerned, he said, what the heck. Most of our people never leave the island, so they don't really need a passport. He said, but I think that given all this difficulty in dealing with the feds and all of that and misunderstandings, most of us, and it hasn't affected our daily life one bit. Now that was, of course, in 1987, I guess, or 1988. So boy, what a shock I had. Up to that point, I couldn't understand why I always thought I detected a real reluctance on the part of some Saipanese, in particular, I say Saipanese as opposed to Rotanese or Tinians because I didn't deal with them, to not be real enthusiastic about their relationship with the U.S. And pretend, or insist, I should say, that in fact they were a sovereign, independent country who happened to carry American passports and have free access to the U.S. Treasury almost upon demand.

Willens: You think that they were then very receptive to the effort in the mid-1980s to re-examine the document and support the proposition that they were sovereign and were not subject to U.S. laws.

Stillwell: Yes. Very much so. Oh, yes. There was a whole clique of those people, and I know they drove Eddie Pangelinan crazy. He's a good friend of mine. I like Eddie a lot, notwithstanding his political efforts. But, you know, because I would go to Eddie and I'd say, Eddie, what I'm seeing with Froilan is so terribly inconsistent with what I heard from you on the Hill or Olympio and all those guys. Neat guys. They'd say oh, we want this more than we want, you know, life itself or something, and jeez, I said, here now you're just saying, you know, he didn't understand it. He thought they were actively working to undo everything that had been done, and I had to frankly concur with him. And certainly Governor Tenorio, that Governor, Pete Tenorio, never was rude or crass about it, but he just was expressing I think the general views of his people. But I must admit I walked out of that room thinking the whole thing was a terrible mistake.

- Willens: You think the incumbent Governor Tenorio has a different view.
- Stillwell: Sometimes I'm confused. I'm not sure sometimes. He is a very complex man, much like Tony Won Pat, but more arcane than Tony. There's a lot of things going on in that man's mind that are really hard for me to read sometimes. I really do like him a lot, but it's really hard to know where he's coming from. World War II is very much in his mind, and I see that.
- Willens: Why is that?
- Stillwell: You should understand that his father was one of the interpreters brought down by the Japanese.
- Willens: To Guam?
- Stillwell: Yes. And Froilan, his mother, I guess whatever brothers and sisters he might have, and his father were, as he said, basically incarcerated or something after the war. I think his father was—his father's return to Saipan was delayed. I don't know if this is true of all of them or just a few of them, but he was suspected of war crimes. And I have heard, only heard, nothing specific, but rumbling, from Guamanians, including, no, not Mr. Won Pat, he wasn't one of them, but others, that Froilan's father was not a real sweetheart. He was a real son of a bitch. I don't know what he did, if anything. I don't know if he hit anybody, whether he shot anybody, or beheaded, I don't know what he did. But Froilan is real sensitized about that, and I suspect that that is one of the reasons that Froilan has displayed a marked tendency to deal with Japanese as opposed to statesiders, even though he's married to a haole. Even though he got U.S. citizenship on Guam while he was at the University of Guam. He makes a point of saying that. He does not have a strong preference for statesiders. Not at all. He much prefers Japanese. Prefers to eat Japanese food, talk with Japanese, be in their company. He doesn't like it here. He's not comfortable here. And if you know him well enough. It's not a criticism. That's just him. That's all. That's one of the reasons he's hired me over the years.
- Willens: Roger, I want to thank you very much for taking the time for this interview. I appreciate it very much.