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Tris Coffin  
7:15 P.M.

### DESCRIPTION OF CONFIRMATION HEARING

TRIS COFFIN: "Senator Richard Russell of Georgia is the kind of a gentleman any young lady would love to have as an uncle. He possesses an old-fashioned courtesy that is charming. He is worldly wise and tolerant of human frailties. He has a vast amiability that smooths over troubled moments. All of these admirable qualities were on display a few days ago in the Senate Armed Services committee room, which has the air of a well run antique shop. Two sparkling cut glass chandeliers, a long table covered with green felt, pitchers of ice water--none of the confounded modern contraptions and microphones that don't work, and boom out squeaks and assorted noises into loud speakers; none of the blasted glare of floodlights for television cameras--a quiet, contented, gracious air.

"Senator Russell was presiding at the hearing on the confirmation of John McCone, as director of CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE. McCone sat at the opposite end of the table from Senator Russell. The new Intelligence chieftan has a beautiful head of white hair, with the slightest suggestion of a curl in front, a face of chiselled coldness, and tight lips. His chin is square, and his eyes are clear and steely blue. Senator Russell was in good humor at the hearing. During the interrogation the new Navy Secretary and earnest Senator Case of South Dakota worried about the Senator's position on beef for the boys. Senator Russell said amiably, do you have any strong feelings on oleo? Another appointee admitted to being a Harvard professor. Senator Russell inquired solicitously, how are the new professors going along up there? Have they had time to find their way about the campus yet? Then abstractly he asked, I wonder when they're going to discover the oldest State University in the country--they meant President Kennedy, and the oldest State University is the beloved University of Georgia at Athens, Georgia, where Greek literature is read in the original.

"A non member of the committee, Senator Eugene McCarthy, came to the table at the committee's invitation and began reading a statement hardly complimentary to brother McCone. Senator Russell took this philosophically with a professionally calm air of an indulgent uncle, but Senator Stuart Symington during this reading made faces as a child will sometimes when the older folks are monopolizing the conversation. Symington expressed what from a distance looked like doubt, horror and upset stomach. He shook his head, he shrugged his shoulders, he rolled his eyes. He has a great talent for pantomime. Senator Symington interrupted to ask McCarthy whom he referred to as the most distinguished Senator from Minnesota--although this description was not in keeping with his facial expression--Symington wanted to know if McCone would have the opportunity to answer these questions in full. He had the air of a man, rushing in to prevent a grave injustice.

"Senator Russell said soothingly in his pleasant Georgia voice, 'Mr. McCone will have wide scope in replying.' Symington was pacified. Senator Case said the new mastermind of our Intelligence operations should reveal his stock holdings. He seemed quite perturbed that this was neither offered nor requested by the committee. Senator Russell said, 'Well, there is nothing in the law requiring it,' and not indicating yes or no. Senator Case sank back, apparently feeling better for the chairman's understanding.

of his interest. A very spirited lovely lady, with a red rose in her lapel, Senator Margaret Smith, said some of the information, if Case did not. She mentioned that McCone possessed a million dollars worth of Standard Oil of California stock. There was an immediate look of measured respect for the nominee from the ragged elbows at the press table.

"Mrs. Smith wondered out loud how the ownership of this oil stock would affect CIA's operations in say, the middle East. Senator Symington's pantomime began anew. It is not polite to make disrespectful faces at a lady, so the dashing Senator assumed instead a look of almost frantic concern. McCone answered, 'It would not affect my judgment.' That was that. Symington's face relaxed. The chairman nodded benignly to the lady to proceed. Mrs. Smith wondered if the CIA supported the political activities of Polish and Hungarian ethnic groups in this country. McCone decided not to answer that. Strom Thurmond next. The Senator from South Carolina has great shoulders from exercising with bar bells, and is reputed to be able to do more push-ups than any man on Capital Hill. He read a statement extolling McCone, having some difficulty in pronouncing such words as 'Loyola.' In a statement filled with such superlatives, the nominee himself seemed a bit embarrassed. During this extensive reading in a dogged voice, Senator Russell exercised his fingers, twirling his thumbs, and then gently tapping the table with his fingers. Senator Saltonstall next to him made scratches on a note pad, pulled off a sheet, tore it into several pieces, and began all over again.

"Others at the table had an air of polite inattention. Once Senator Russell leaned over and whispered an aside to Senator Saltonstall. That gentleman's face broke into a smile of pure joy, and all around the table, other Senators sat up with glowing and amused looks. John McCone's blue eyes showed a hint of a smile. The press table boys grinned as if they had heard a delicious secret. Of course none of us, except Senator Saltonstall had any idea what Senator Russell had said. It just shows the power of the man's personality.

"Maybe, come to think of it, the administration ought to investigate the products of the oldest State University. This is Tris Coffin."