

Interview

WILLIAM RICHARDSON

Reel 1

1:00:00:00

(shot 1)

(POSS MOS B ROLL OF W.R. DURING SETUP – SITTING, LOOKING, ETC.)

(shot 2)

01:01:47:00 QUESTION: --your education, your military service, for example.

01:50 RICHARDSON: Uh, I was born in ... Kalihi, right after World War I in 1919. Uh ... uh, then I—the family moved up to Kaimuki and I—I went to Aliiolani School, which is uh ... oh, a few blocks away from [CLEARS THROAT] ... from where I lived. It was one of those English standard schools, you know. And um, when I got to the eighth grade, they ... seventh grade, they built Roosevelt High School, so I went there. And graduated in 1937. In 19 ... then I went to the University of Hawaii; finished there in 1941. And went off to law school in Cincinnati, Ohio. **(02:48)** And ... before I was through, the war had started, so I ended up finishing at Duke University. And uh ... entered the service in ... June of 1942. And uh ... then active duty was in early 1943. And I went to officers candidate school in Fort Benning, Georgia, and was out ... the—was in the infantry and went to ... Camp Roberts, California, and then went overseas from there.

03:36 QUESTION: To the Philippines?

03:37 RICHARDSON: Yes.

(shot 3)

03:39 QUESTION: Let me make a hero out of you.

03:41 RICHARDSON: No.

03:42 QUESTION: You didn't do much fighting in the Philippines. Tell us a little bit—

03:44 RICHARDSON: No—

03:44 QUESTION: --about that experience.

03:45 RICHARDSON: --no, no, no, I uh, had uh, uh, enjoyed my service time. I can remember when ... when I left uh—well, when uh, you know, w—we didn't travel by airplane yet, it was uh, still by steamship. (03:50 SLOW ZOOM) And uh, I remember ... getting on a ship one night and when I got up in the morning, there must have been a hundred and fifty ships around. We were all headed some place and ... uh, to New Guinea.

04:27 QUESTION: M-m.

04:28 RICHARDSON: And uh ... the rest is—is history.

(shot 4)

04:30 QUESTION: But you were captain of a Filipino outfit in the Philippines?

04:35 RICHARDSON: Yes. I don't know how I got in there. But uh ... uh ... I had a platoon of uh, Filipinos. And uh ... got to—to uh, know them quite well. Especially when I was in the Philippines, you know.

04:55 QUESTION: You said you chased the Japanese up the mountains—

05:00 RICHARDSON: Well, uh, they—they were up the mountains, and we were down below. No, we really didn't want to chase them, and they didn't want to come after us. It wasn't the thing to do. [CHUCKLES] And we left—uh, left it at that.

05:12 QUESTION: And let the war end.

05:14 RICHARDSON: Uh, let the war end. They—they were up there, we were down below; they weren't gonna bother us, we weren't gonna bother them.

(shot 5)

05:20 QUESTION: Tell me a bit about your ethnic background. You're part-Hawaiian, part-Chinese.

05:25 RICHARDSON: Yeah, I'm ... Hawaiian, Chinese ... and I guess they tell me I was Scot—uh, Scotch-Irish. So half Chinese, 'cause my mother was Chinese. Then uh, my father was uh ... three-quarters ... Hawaiian, and one-quarter ... Scotch-Irish-English, whatever that ... made up.

(shot 6)

05:53 QUESTION: And so when you grew up, how Hawaiian was your household? Was there a lot of Hawaiian tradition in your household?

06:03 (VERY SLOW ZOOM) RICHARDSON: Oh, there was a lot of Hawaiian tradition in—in that um ... and a lot of Chinese tradition as well. Uh, and I—I enjoyed uh, being with both. Well, we liked the luaus and liked the Chinese food, and uh ... w—were made to go to Chinese school and—and go learn all about the Hawaiians that we could. But you know what? At that time, they were trying to get us all to speak English properly, and so we were in a way prohibited from speaking too much Hawaiian ... but to learn the English language.

(shot 7)

06:48 QUESTION: Who prohibited you; your parents?

06:49 RICHARDSON: N—no, we weren't really prohibited. But Kamehameha Schools, you remem—remember, they—they uh, punished the kids that went to Kamehameha School uh, for—for speaking Hawaiian. And the idea was to learn—to get to speak English properly.

(shot 8)

07:10 QUESTION: Did you have any relatives that you can remember, Hawaiian relatives who spoke longingly of the monarchy or spoke about the horrors of the overthrow?

07:22 RICHARDSON: Not—not very much, because ... my father, because I was born in Honolulu—that was after World War I, the—the r—the rest of the family live in Lahaina, Maui, or in—in Kohala. But

we were the ones that stayed in uh, in Honolulu. And as I understand it, the mustering out day was two weeks, and that was it. We didn't have—they didn't have the GI Bill of Rights.

07:58 QUESTION: M-hm.

07:58 RICHARDSON: So that's ... why I ... was born in—in Kalihi, where ... they were paying seven dollars a month, I guess, for rent. And then my father built our house up in Kaimuki.

08:12 QUESTION: And what was his business?

08:14 RICHARDSON: Oh, he was a—he was a bill collector, he was in the real estate business and uh ... super salesman. Selling everything from soup to nuts.

08:25 QUESTION: And he was a veteran in World War—

08:27 RICHARDSON: World War I; yes.

08:31 QUESTION: And so quite proud of his Americanism and—

08:31 RICHARDSON: Oh, yeah. Yeah; and—and then that's why uh ... we stayed in Honolulu.

08:38 QUESTION: M-hm.

08:38 RICHARDSON: While—while the—the rest of the family, my two older sisters that were born during the war had to stay in Kohala. And then they joined us after—after the war, and I—and then I was born in ... in Honolulu in—in Kalihi.

(shot 9)

08:59 QUESTION: Do you remember in the pre-war period, I mean, when you were in high school at Roosevelt or when you were in elementary school, do you remember any discussion of statehood in civics classes or statehood for Hawaii, or was there any talk in your household about it?

09:19 RICHARDSON: Yes, there was. But it—it—it wasn't the most important thing of the day, I would put it that way. Uh ... but uh, once—once I got to college, then ... uh, statehood became a subject that uh, we all discussed. And there—we—we felt there was a chance there that we could get a better start in life ... when we do become a state. But it didn't seem as though it was a thing around the corner. (09:57) Uh, the uh, uh, I would say that—that uh, because of the economy and the—the—and the sugar and then pineapple uh ... were king ... or kings, so that there wasn't ... too much of a thought there. You know, so it wasn't really until I uh, I was through with college and—and—and out of uh, and ... well, through with college that there was—there was this push for—for statehood.

(shot 10)

10:32 QUESTION: And then you go off to law school. Most of the guys did it after the war. You were actually—

10:38 RICHARDSON: Yeah, I—

10:39 QUESTION: --a little bit older.

10:39 RICHARDSON: Yeah, I was a little bit older. The—the draft had come on, and I—I—I (10:44 ZOOM TO TIGHT CU) had gone off to—to war, and then—and I was there when—when December 7th came. And so uh, and we were sort of cut off from—from Hawaii uh, and so I—what—all I did was go down and—I went down to University of Kentucky and I said, Hey, take me now. [CHUCKLES] I—I—I'm going to run out of money anyway, so just take me now. And uh, and they said, okay, fine; come, we'll enlist you right now and you can be a private, but go back to school. (10:22) Uh, uh, well, that's great with me. I'll—I'll uh, I'll go back to school. And—and uh, by the time I was through, then ... uh, by the time they called me uh, into the Army, I—I was done.

(shot 11)

11:37 QUESTION: But by my calculation, they must have had you on an accelerated program, 'cause you were done by 19—

11:42 RICHARDSON: Oh, yeah. Yeah; law school was supposed to be three years, but if you went through two summer sessions uh, or one

summer session and wrote another uh, paper or two, uh, you could finish in two years.

11:54 QUESTION: So you didn't experience martial law back here in Hawaii.

11:57 RICHARDSON: No.

11:57 QUESTION: You didn't experience any of that.

11:59 RICHARDSON: No, I didn't at all.

(shot 12)

12:00 QUESTION: Then when you got back to Hawaii after the war, did you hear anyone talking about martial law as being unfair and this would never have happened if we were a state?

12:11 RICHARDSON: No, they—it—it was too far gone already. Um, it seems that uh, martial law ... w—was—was a forgotten subject by that time. And—

12:23 QUESTION: You got back in what year?

12:25 RICHARDSON: I got back in 1945. Yeah; in '45.

(shot 13)

12:32 QUESTION: And you start practicing law?

12:34 RICHARDSON: I spent a little more time in the service. I was with the ge—Advocate General's Department in—in uh, Fort Shafter until I finished up. And uh, then I started practicing law.

12:48 QUESTION: With whom? Or by yourself?

12:50 RICHARDSON: Uh, by myself. I—I was a one-man gang.

12:54 QUESTION: What kind of law did you? Any—

12:55 RICHARDSON: Well, anything I could pick up. Uh, most of the other fellas went into the—into government service, you know. And

the prosecutors would—would chase after you and the City Attorney. They needed lawyers.

13:08 QUESTION: Uh-huh.

(shot 14)

13:10 RICHARDSON: And uh, I decided to go out on my own.

13:14 QUESTION: So you're back home in 1945, you're practicing law by yourself. What were the opportunities or possibilities for a young Hawaiian-Chinese, part Scotch-Irish lawyer in post-war Hawaii?

13:29 RICHARDSON: Well, there was a lot of legal business around. The small stuff we could pick up. Um, but—but the big-time stuff was with—with uh, sh—sugar and—and—and pineapple. And—and this is—is just beginning to come in from the mainland. You know, Pan American Airways put up a company, Sears Roebuck uh ... but uh ... I decided to stay ... an independent.

(shot 15)

13:59 QUESTION: Did you try to get on with any of the larger lawfirms in the—

14:05 RICHARDSON: No, and I—I didn't uh, even think of that. I—I don't know whether the opportunities were there or not, uh, but I—I did think uh, that there was uh, very little ... uh, little chance to uh, get up in—in—in um, big business or—or in the upper echelons of—of—of—of—of government. (14:32) Because everything came out of Washington, anyway. The—the Chief Justice was from Texas and—and uh, the members of the court were from Tennessee, and they had their connections um, through ... uh, well ... right out of Washington, the Interior uh, Secretary uh, was really controlling Hawaii.

14:57 QUESTION: M-hm.

14:58 RICHARDSON: As far as the government was concerned.

15:00 QUESTION: And so Territorial Hawaii was a pretty closed up place in terms of power?

15:05 RICHARDSON: Completely closed up.

15:08 QUESTION: Uh-huh.

15:09 RICHARDSON: And—and that's—that's probably why I—I—I got involved in the statehood. I—uh, I—I ... and s—being with—with mainland uh, people right during the war and—and began to see that they had a little something that uh, that I didn't have, and sort of wished I could ... be in the same position as—as they were.

(shot 16)

15:36 QUESTION: When did you start politics, I guess is ...

15:38 RICHARDSON: Well, I—I think about the time—my father was a Democrat from way back. Uh, but uh ...one day I ran into a fella named Jack Burns. In fact, he was uh, that old stone face that uh ...never talked to anyone. (15:56 SLIGHT PAN RIGHT AND ZOOM IN) In fact, he walked—uh, I—uh, I saw him for the first time crossing the street around—around Fort and King. And uh, I said—I said, Hello, Mr. Burns. And he didn't even look at me. He walked across the street. And then when he got across to the other side, he said, Say, Mr. Richardson, can I talk to you? And I said, Well, what do you have in mind? And he said, Well, why don't you come over to the office; I—I—I'd—I'd like to chat with you on it. And that's when I [CLEARS THROAT]—I started thinking about some politics.

16:37 QUESTION: Where was his office at that—

16:40 RICHARDSON: Well, he was at City Hall. I think he was head of the Civil Defense by that time.

(shot 17)

16:46 QUESTION: And so you joined that famous group that started meeting in the Civil Defense office—

16:51 RICHARDSON: Well, yeah. Yeah; I was in that—in that—that cell group. They—they were uh, they were looking for some Hawaiian kids, you know, and uh, I guess he saw me as one of 'em.

17:03 QUESTION: Uh—

17:04 RICHARDSON: So I became a uh ... kitchen cabinet.

17:08 QUESTION: But there was a dozen or so people or—

17:12 RICHARDSON: Yeah; even less than that. Uh ... couple of 'em had already finished uh, uh, school. Sakai Takahashi, for example ... uh, who became treasurer. Uh, but ... most things had to come out of Washington. Uh ... the small-time—time stuff was—was here, but we couldn't—you know, you couldn't become a judge or anything like that unless you ... you came out of Washington or you were—or a coast Haole, as we used to say. [CHUCKLES]

(shot 18)

17:48 QUESTION: So most of the judges in the territory, the primary officials, were Haoles.

17:58 RICHARDSON: Almost all. Almost all. Every—from the Circuit Court up, anyway. They were all Haoles. Uh, there—there weren't—there wasn't anybody else.

18:09 QUESTION: And anybody in the legal community recognized that, the—

18:13 RICHARDSON: Oh; oh, yes.

18:14 QUESTION: The judges—

18:15 RICHARDSON: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. They—they were all ... appointed out of Washington, and—and you had to have some connection, anyway, to—to uh, get that appointment. And uh, and approval had to come out of the US Senate.

18:31 QUESTION: Who were some of those names? Could you give me—

18:34 RICHARDSON: Oh, uh ... Stainback, who became governor later. Kemp; uh ... uh, Stainback from Tennessee, Kemp from—from uh, Texas. Uh, Brown from Ohio. Uh, Wilson Moore was a local ... uh, well, no, he may have started away—uh, uh, from away. He—he uh ...

19:00 QUESTION: But all Haoles, all—

19:01 RICHARDSON: All—

19:01 QUESTION: --were appointed—

19:02 RICHARDSON: All Haoles, all out of Washington. Most of them with a connection with the Secretary of Interior. Uh, but the local ... uh ... plantation managers and owners uh ... were calling the shots.

(shot 19)

19:25 (ZOOM OUT) QUESTION: That had to make some of you young guys who'd just come out of the—who'd just been fighting overseas and gotten your law degrees, must have made you pretty angry.

19:32 RICHARDSON: Oh, yeah. And almost ... hopeless that we could ever get that. Uh, I know I never would have been Chief Justice. Uh, there's no other answer to that.

19:47 QUESTION: Tell me about the extent to which statehood was—in all of those political discussions you guys were having in the Civil Defense office and later on at the Democratic Party developed in the 50s. To what extent was the discussion specifically about statehood as the means?

(shot 20)

20:07 RICHARDSON: Well, the uh—

[INTERRUPTION] (POSS B ROLL: R LOOKS AROUND AS CAM RESETS)

(shot 21)

20:20 QUESTION: Okay. Again; to what extent was statehood as an issue particularly important in the Democratic Party agenda?

20:29 RICHARDSON: One—it was one of the issues, perhaps. But we were more interested in uh, in—in—in uh, the Mayor's Office and—and working for—for the government. Uh, uh, there were plenty of jobs. Um ... it was not that important ... uh, to a young ... lawyer.

Y—y—there was plenty of work around and you didn't have to go into that. But whe—when Burns came along, he—I think he kind of talked us into it. (21:03) Uh, he had us meeting there about once a week ... in his office. There were only a dozen or so of us. Um ... most of the others hadn't come back yet. For—Dan—Dan Inouye had not come back yet, uh, Sakai Takahashi was around. Uh ... Bill Norwood, he was one of those in the—he worked for Castle and Cook. Uh, and Gibby Rito, uh, he was with Lewers and Cooke. Um ... m-m—

21:39 QUESTION: Dan Aoki.

21:40 RICHARDSON: Dan Aoki—

21:40 QUESTION: Yeah.

21:40 RICHARDSON: Well, Dan Aoki and—and Mike Tokunaga, they—these were classmates of mine. Dan was. Uh, I mean, Dan uh ... Aoki was. Uh, I—

21:53 QUESTION: At the University.

21:53 RICHARDSON: At the University. Right. Uh, we graduated together.

(shot 22)

21:59 QUESTION: Why did it take so long to realize statehood for Hawaii? What were the opponents arguing?

22:11 RICHARDSON: The uh—they said if—if you—if you fellows think you're good enough to uh ... run Hawaii, maybe we could take something halfway and—and let you elect your own governor. Uh, that wa—that's—that's what they had given Puerto Rico too, you know. Um ... it wasn't that important to me in the beginning. 'Cause I—I had plenty of work. Um ... I—I—I—I wasn't gonna ... go too far out of the way in the beginning. But when they started saying that, you know, we were ... we were only—we were gonna live the rest of our lives as—as—as uh, second class citizens, well, then be—began to get under my skin and I thought, well, all right, then ... start working for it.

23:08 QUESTION: M-hm.

23:12 RICHARDSON: And uh ... then uh, the—well, you know the rest of the story. Burns uh, was out there. We—we started out having little, quote, cell meetings uh, and uh ... there were only ... half a dozen or a dozen of us.

(shot 23)

23:32 QUESTION: And then in '54 of course is the—

23:35 RICHARDSON: Well, '54—just before '54, then we—we started really operating the—thi—this was very interesting, because he was—Burns was the Civil Defense Director, and he had this whole—the whole State of Hawaii uh, sectioned off, and we were supposed to go out and—and get uh ... find out how many shovels, how many hoes we had, because there might be another—another atomic attack. So ... uh—

24:04 QUESTION: So was that real—

24:04 RICHARDSON: So we did. Yeah, and—and so I had one little section of—of Manoa. And uh ... Dan Inouye had another section. In fact, I think Dan in—Dan—I think Dan Inouye was the—was the fourth district at that time was on that side of nu—of nu—of Nuuanu. And uh ... I forget who the other was. But anyway, we had the whole state divided up.

(shot 24)

24:30 QUESTION: And then there was the union support too.

24:32 RICHARDSON: Well, the union support, we didn't know too much of—about the—the unions. Burns did. The—the unions were—uh, well they were involved with—with uh, you know, the—the longshoremen and uh, they had some hukihuki, perhaps, between the—between ILWU and AFL. And uh, in—in—through all of this, uh, there was uh, the strike of a long time ago and—and uh ... and there—there was a—

25:11 QUESTION: The 1949—

25:11 RICHARDSON: The 1949—

25:12 QUESTION: --dock strike.

25:13 RICHARDSON: Yeah; dock strike. And it was hurting everybody, but uh, I didn't get involved in that because this was ... between management and—and ... and the union.

(shot 25)

25:26 QUESTION: But didn't you guys have to play sort of a delicate role with the union because of the allegations that it was Communist and had a lot of Communist members and so on?

25:36 RICHARDSON: Well, this uh, uh, I don't know where that started, but that was ... that—that was played up in the newspapers a lot. But uh ... I didn't care for the idea when somebody said uh, you—you—you're either Red or you're ... you're a citizen of Hawaii. I mean, that uh, that kind of hurt, but I—uh, my friends didn't ... bother about—about that. (25:40 ZOOM OUT) Uh, I—I—I think this was uh, an argument between uh, between the unions and the management, and—and we were caught in the middle. But it didn't bother me that much.

(shot 26)

26:17 QUESTION: Didn't you have a wife who was a Republican?

26:20 RICHARDSON: She was a Republican, a banker's daughter as well. Uh, she was—and she said, You know, uh, uh, I don't know any other Democrats, but uh ... I guess I'll stick it out with you.

26:32 QUESTION: Did you—

26:35 RICHARDSON: And uh, and ... but she stuck it out with—wi—with—with me right through ... all the terrible hell and—and the—and the—when—when they accused ... half of us as being either Red or—or uh ... ~~maybe—maybe some foreign ideology.~~

(shot 27)

27:02 QUESTION: I believe when Burns runs for Delegate in 1954, you actually become chairman of the party, don't you?

27:07 RICHARDSON: Yes.

27:08 QUESTION: Of the Territorial Democratic Party.

27:10 RICHARDSON: Yes.

27:11 QUESTION: Opposing—

27:11 RICHARDSON: I suc—I succeeded Burns.

27:13 QUESTION: Right; in '54 or '56, one of the two—

27:16 RICHARDSON: Yeah.

27:17 QUESTION: And then you hold that post for some—

27:19 RICHARDSON: Well, until we got statehood.

27:20 QUESTION: Until you got statehood.

27:23 RICHARDSON: Yeah.

27:23 QUESTION: You were the chairmen of the Democratic—

27:23 RICHARDSON: Yeah. In the meantime, I was clerking in the uh, in—in—in—for the Senate.

27:30 QUESTION: The Territorial Senate.

27:30 RICHARDSON: Territorial Senate.

27:31 QUESTION: And Burns loses in '54, but he wins in '56 and is elected Delegate to Congress.

27:40 RICHARDSON: Yeah; the '54 one was uh, uh, uh, wasn't very much uh, by—

27:45 QUESTION: It was a hundred votes.

27:45 RICHARDSON: Uh, but you know, it wasn't that important ... uh, to one of the soldiers. [CHUCKLES] Well, maybe to the upper

echelon, uh, whoever they were. But um ... when we took over the Legislature in—in '54, it was ... it was a bi—big thing and—and uh ... uh, at that time the—the governor, I—I think it was King. Uh ... he vetoed most of the—of the bills that were passed.

(shot 28)

28:22 QUESTION: Now you ultimately are going to go to Washington on several occasions, if I'm not mistaken—

28:28 RICHARDSON: Yes.

28:29 QUESTION: --to testify.

28:29 RICHARDSON: Right; I testified uh, on many occasions on di—on different subjects. Um, Burns um ... uh, when he was Delegate, I—I ... I would go up and stay with him. And—and uh ... and he'd—he'd give me my marching orders. Uh, say this guy is for Hawaii, this guy is not for Hawaii, and this guy is the enemy territory, uh, just stay out of there or go do what you can. Uh ... in fact, I went over with this—with a group that uh, filled up one airplane. I think it was a Pan Am airplane, we all went up together.

29:15 (CAMERA RESETS) QUESTION: This was in '57 or '58 or '59; one of those years?

29:22 RICHARDSON: Uh, w—well, yeah, '56.

[END]

Interview

WILLIAM RICHARDSON

REEL 2

02:00:00:00

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

(shot 1)

(POSS B ROLL: WANDERING CAMERA, CU HAND, JACKET, ETC)

00:28 QUESTION: Did he ever give you any—

00:30 RICHARDSON: Oh, no, he—

00:32 QUESTION: --trouble about being a ...

00:33 RICHARDSON: Oh,no; no. They—they were—they were actually nonpartisan.

00:38 QUESTION: Uh-huh.

00:40 RICHARDSON: [CLEARS THROAT] They—they didn't know any Democrats anyway.

00:44 QUESTION: Right.

00:44 RICHARDSON: Nobody working for First Hawaiian knew any Democrats.

00:48 QUESTION: Right; right. Democrats were from the other side of the tracks.

00:54 RICHARDSON: Right. She only lived a couple blocks from me, all her life.

00:57 QUESTION: Oh, really?

00:58 RICHARDSON: Yeah.

00:59 QUESTION: Where'd you meet her?

01:02 (CAMERA SETS MS) RICHARDSON: Oh, she was playing the piano or something on the day when I—I'd come home on the streetcar and walked past her house.

01:07 QUESTION: Oh.

01:09 RICHARDSON: Two blocks away; all her life.

01:09 QUESTION: When you were in school.

01:12 RICHARDSON: Well, when I was pau too; when I started to practice law.

01:16 QUESTION: And that's when you got married?

01:18 RICHARDSON: Yeah.

(MS?) [GENERAL CONVERSATION]

(shot 2)

01:28 QUESTION: So when you went up to Washington, you literally became a lobbyist.

01:37 RICHARDSON: Well, I supposed you'd—you'd say that. Yeah; we had to pay our own way to get up there, though. But—and then Burns put us up in his house, in his apartment.

01:46 QUESTION: So there'd be two or three of you sleeping on his couch—

01:48 RICHARDSON: Well, at—when the time I—uh, at the time I was there, I was the only one. But—but I was in John—John Junior's ... room, so ...

01:58 QUESTION: And then you'd go up to the Hill and—

02:00 RICHARDSON: I'd go up to the Hill with him in the morning, and uh, he'd have my marching orders, and he'd tell me, Well, you g—you gotta go talk to this Congressman or this Senator, and here's—here's what his position has been, and you go up there and—and do a—the—this is—this is the subject we thought you might want to take up with him.

(shot 3)

02:22 QUESTION: So he knew where the votes were—

02:25 RICHARDSON: Yeah.

02:27 QUESTION: --for statehood and who was against it, and who was in between.

02:29 RICHARDSON: Right; he—he—he knew all that. I just took my marching orders. Uh ... some of the fellas were ... related to those who I had served with uh ... in—in—during the war, and he would give me that background and uh ... everything he could—he—he—he could provide me uh, would be ... what I'd—I'd—I'd want to have. And—and ... just sent me out in the morning, get—go to work with him in the morning, and uh, in the evening he'd come over and—and uh ... check to see how we did. Uh ... uh, and—and the—the others around were doing the same thing.

(shot 4)

03:13 QUESTION: Did you ever testify before any committees on behalf of Hawaii's statehood?

03:19 RICHARDSON: Yes. Uh, I forget which ones they were. Um ... I forget which committees they were. But yes.

03:30 QUESTION: And I understand when you were attending one committee hearing, you actually saw a former Hawaii journalist fall off her chair. Could you tell that story?

03:42 (SLOW ZOOM THRU 04:11) RICHARDSON: Oh, yeah; the—I uh, I—I remember this rather clearly. There was uh, a Congressman from New York. I forget his name now, even. Uh, and he said uh, They're all a bunch of Communists in Hawaii and—a bunch of Reds. And this woman next to me fell off her chair. And I picked her up and I ... she said, Thank you, I'm—I'm Cobey Black from I think it was the Star Bulletin. And I—I told her who I was, and ... had a good friend there. You know, she was—she—she—she—she was really incensed that they called us a bunch of Reds.

04:23 QUESTION: But there were people in Congress who really did think Hawaii was run—

04:27 RICHARDSON: Oh—

04:27 QUESTION: --by Communists.

04:28 RICHARDSON: Yeah; particularly this guy from New York, a New York Congressman. And uh ... uh, I don't know where they got their information from or who was feeding it to 'em.

(shot 5)

04:42 QUESTION: As a non—to a significant degree, a non-Caucasian, when you went around, a non-Haole, when you walked around to those Congressional offices, did you run into any prejudice or any sense from any Southerners that perhaps no one—

05:00 RICHARDSON: No; no, I didn't. Uh, perhaps it's because Burns had decided on where I would do the most good. You know, I don't think he was going to send me to some office where the guy was gonna call me all kinds of names. [CHUCKLES] He—I mean, we were there to get the votes. And uh, he wouldn't have sent me somewhere where it wouldn't do any good.

05:22 QUESTION: I've read letters, Burns would write letters back to some of you guys telling you that so-and-so, the member from some district in Pennsylvania—

05:36 RICHARDSON: Yeah.

05:36 QUESTION: --will be arriving on the Lurline—

05:39 RICHARDSON: Oh, yeah.

05:39 QUESTION: --in Honolulu, will you pick him up at the airport and show him the usual routine. Would—

05:44 RICHARDSON: Right.

05:45 QUESTION: Did you do that? Were you—

05:45 RICHARDSON: Right, right, right. I—I'd go down and do that. I'd take big—take my family down and ... pick him up and tell 'em, well ... you

can—you can spend the weekend with us out at the country place if you like. Just ... come along, do what you want to do.

06:03 QUESTION: So you'd take Congressmen around?

06:05 RICHARDSON: Oh, yeah; yeah. It was ... it was—it was kinda fun.

06:11 QUESTION: And would you take them on tours or—

06:15 RICHARDSON: Oh, he'd have to do what I was gonna do. I—I uh, I wasn't gonna ... go some place fancy. He was gonna go to the beach with my family if he wanted to. Come out to the house.

(shot 6)

06:29 QUESTION: Was this the house out at Laie?

06:30 RICHARDSON: Yeah.

06:31 QUESTION: Is it still there?

06:33 RICHARDSON: It's still there; we rebuilt it.

06:37 QUESTION: Right, right, right. And can you remember any specific Congressmen, their names, that you entertained?

06:44 RICHARDSON: No; I ... I do remember a lot of the court people, though. [CHUCKLES] I mean, one was the Chief Justice. Uh ... uh, two Chief Justices, as a matter of fact.

06:56 QUESTION: From other states?

07:03 RICHARDSON: Yeah—well, no, from the United States. When—I remember Warren coming down, Chief Justice Warren. Who had been governor of California.

07:03 QUESTION: And you—

07:04 RICHARDSON: I—I took him out there, and—and we ... we went and took in some of the uh ... uh, some of the lesser covered areas. It was fun for me.

07:19 QUESTION: Chief Justice Earl Warren—

07:20 RICHARDSON: Well, we—he went out with me. I don't remember exactly what the date was. But ...

07:27 QUESTION: I'll be darned.

07:28 RICHARDSON: But he went out, he went out with this suit and took his—took his uh, coat off and uh, he said, Well, I want to go see what's up there. Well, take him up in my old ... old Ford that I had bought from ... the surplus—the—the surplus Fords that they had—

07:52 QUESTION: Now—

07:54 RICHARDSON: --during the war.

(shot 7)

07:54 QUESTION: Why did the statehood bill pass in 1959? Why do you—was the time just right or to what do you attribute it? We've heard that Burns—

08:05 RICHARDSON: Well—

08:05 QUESTION: --didn't do it, George Ley Leitner did it. We've heard that—

08:08 RICHARDSON: Well, g—Ley Leitner was very good to the—to the—to the uh, nisei kids down in—in uh, Louisiana. Uh, George was very good. I think the uh ... you—how—what was that question you—

(shot 8)

08:34 QUESTION: Why do you think it happened in 1959? Was it Burns' strategy that did it or—

08:39 RICHARDSON: Oh, I—I'm—I'm—I'm sure it was his strategy. But I mean, he couldn't have done all of this himself. But uh, h—he—uh, his strategy wa—uh, uh, was this. Alaska and Hawaii had come up together. I think we were probably better uh, m—m—more ready, I would say, than Alaska. Alaska still had its—its problems uh, uh, growing pains, and uh

24:37 RICHARDSON: Well—

24:38 QUESTION: --corrupted by the system?

24:38 RICHARDSON: I—I tell them what I thought when—when I voted that way, and what I did, what I had in mind. And i—if they think I was—I was wrong, then they can go ahead and ... and change it, and do it their way. Do it ... a way that—that uh ... perhaps satisfies them, an—an—and that I'm out of the picture now. If they could do it that way, fine. I—I—I have no objection to their doing it ... as independent American citizens, now. And uh ... do it un—uh, within the system. You know, an—and uh ... more power to all of them to get more things for Hawaii.

25:31 QUESTION: You're not saying for Hawaiians, but for Hawaii.

25:36 RICHARDSON: Uh, well, I'm saying it's almost the same. For ha—for Hawaii, for the Hawaiians, it's for as well.

(shot 19)

25:44 QUESTION: Have we lost anything because of statehood, or are there things about Hawaii that you miss that you think—

25:49 (SLOW ZOOM TO CU) RICHARDSON: We didn't lose anything. We only gained from being a state. I mean, look at—look at what we—we have. I know I never would have been Chief Justice, that's for sure. Uh, but uh, now w—uh, we have a say in everything. Look at what Dan Inouye brings back to—to Hawaii for military housing, uh, and—and l—and look at what it means now that—that uh, ha—that Hawaii is uh, is in the center of uh, uh, almost the center of the universe, as far as ... uh, a—as uh, uh, nations living together is concerned. And look at—look at how China now is—is beginning to make its way into ... in—in—in—into the power structure of the world.

26:40 QUESTION: M-hm.

26:22 RICHARDSON: And we're right there. Well, uh, Hawaii ... will lead the nation in that.

(shot 20)

26:54 QUESTION: You mentioned something about, for example, the recognition that Dan Inouye and others of the 442 and some—not just 442 guys, but other—with the Congressional Medal of Honor.

27:06 RICHARDSON: Oh, yeah. About uh, about two years ago, uh ... uh, through the efforts of uh, of Senator Akaka, he decided to get Congress to look ... at all of the uh, the Silver Stars that were—were um, were granted, uh, especially looking at the—the Asian groups that were in the Texas uh, that went out to save the Texas group. And uh, he came up with about twenty-one of them uh ... all recipients of the Silver Star. **(27:49)** And when they looked at it again, these twenty-one, while half of them might have been dead already, were deserving of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The highest honor we can give. Uh ... that could not have happened were we not a state; had we not had ... a Senator.

28:20 QUESTION: What do you do with the argument that statehood—

[END]

(NO B ROLL)

Interview

WILLIAM RICHARDSON

Reel 3

[01:00:00:00 THRU 01:14:40:00 IS DON HO SHOW]

(shot 1)

01:14:41:00 (CAMERA SETTING UP FOR CU, THEN PANS R-L)

QUESTION: What do you do with those people who say statehood made it acceptable for a lot of folks to come to Hawaii, more people to come and visit, and it spurred the tourist industry and it resulted in the desecration of Waikiki and the overbuilding of the islands? How do you respond to that, that statehood contributed to that?

15:09 RICHARDSON: Oh, that's ... it's a lot of bunk. The uh, statehood was helpful to all of us. We—we became full-fledged citizens and uh ... I don't see how we could ... be any better off ... than as a state.

(shot 2)

15:29 QUESTION: What about the next part of that argument, that those of you who argue that, those of you of the generation who argue that are guys who wore the uniform and went through World War II, and you guys are full of this pro-American stuff, and we would have been better off maintaining some degree of sovereignty, and we could have slowed the development?

15:53 RICHARDSON: Well, sovereignty uh, might or might not be uh ... an advantage. Uh, I'm not trying to argue that. But ... but certainly, statehood was better for us. Uh, we got a say in Washington now, we—we—we're in the highest deliberative body in the world. And we can name our own leaders. Uh ... I—I—I just can't see any ... uh, uh, a—a—any ... any l—lesser ... uh ... uh, uh, uh, value or—or anything than being uh, a citizen of the United States and a full-fledged state. Even with any other person.

(shot 3)

16:47 QUESTION: How did it affect the appointment of judges in Hawaii, and—

16:52 RICHARDSON: Oh ... when I started, the—the—the Chief Justice was from Texas. Uh, it was Kemp, I think. The um ... and the governor was Stainback from—from uh, uh, Tennessee. Um, and then they moved into the Supreme Court, we had the um, they were a three—three-member court then, and—and he—he—and uh, Stainback moved into that as well. Um ... they

had one local—local uh, man after while was—was Rice from Kauai. But uh ... all of the judges ... came home. They—they—they were gonna be people who made their way in our town as—as practitioners. Uh, uh, I—I—I—I see it no other way.

(shot 4)

17:55 QUESTION: Rather than from outside.

17:57 RICHARDSON: No, I ... outside, fine. You can come in and—and—and ... earn your keep. And if you do well ... I know the people of Hawaii will recognize that. And you'll have your say in Hawaii. And that's—that's going on right now. You can come from away ... earn your—your spurs ... and take your place with the rest of ... with the rest of us. We're not gonna cut you out because you're a mainland Haole or something like that. That's not gonna be so. You got a—you got an equal opportunity to—and make the best of it, and you'll be a beneficiary.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

(POSS B-ROLL: REMOVING MIC, HE EXITS, EMPTY CHAIR, ETC.)

[END]

...um ... historically ... when ... in the West anyway, when—when ... states were admitted, they were admitted in—in pairs. (09:27) One was—they would—they would have a Republican and Democratic come in, and I think there was some criticism on Burns for—for deciding that uh, Alaska should go first. Well, it made a lot of sense to me. Maybe I was just eating this stuff up, but uh, it made sense to me that th—the non-congruity question uh, uh, arose for both Alaska and Hawaii. Um ... but the Red uh, menace that they talked about apparently did not exist at all in—in Alaska. (10:03) But it did in Hawaii, mostly I think because of the ILWU and the strikes. So when uh, Burns said, Well, the better idea then is to pair 'em together and let Alaska go in first. I know there was a lot of moaning and groaning on that, because they—th—they felt that Burns w—here he is, first-time Congressman and—and he—and he gives way to Alaska. And Hawaii is standing behind. Well, of course, the strategy worked out right, that ... that we're gonna send a pair in, and—and ... so Alaska first. Well, strangely enough, uh, uh, Alaska was—uh, I remember Bob Bartlett was—was their ...uh ... their delegate. And they were—they were supposed to be ... Democrats? And ... and—and we—and—and—

11:03 QUESTION: And Hawaii was supposed to be—

11:04 RICHARDSON: Hawa—

11:06 QUESTION: --Republican.

11:06 RICHARDSON: Supposed to be Republican. And then when the—after the two states ca—when the two came in, it's turned a—turned around, just the opposite.

(shot 9)

11:15 QUESTION: Do you remember where you were in March when that statehood bill passed and how you felt?

11:19 RICHARDSON: I was right in Washington the day they were going to vote. (11:28 SLOW ZOOM FROM CU TO ECU) And Burns said to me, It's all set; they're going to vote now. And I said, Jack, can I go home? [CHUCKLES] So I caught the first airplane I could. And by the time I got home, the vote was c—was complete.

(shot 10)

11:39 QUESTION: He had you up there lobbying.

11:40 RICHARDSON: Oh, yeah. I uh, yeah, uh, I—I can remember one—one day uh, he told us to ... wear the old uniform, and I—and I—I could fit exactly in mine. I must—must have looked awful in the old uniform. But ... but he said, the—these guys are the—the soldiers that were in so-and-so outfit, and then you—you were in an outfit next door or something, and go see him. So I ... I'd go see 'em and I uh, I know I got scolded one day because I was in uniform uh, by some military guy who said, You know, you can't—you can't be out here lobbying in a—in a—in—in uniform. (12:25) Well, I thought for a minute, well ... the heck with you, brother; I'm a civilian now. I might be wearing this, I'm entitled to wear this as a—as a reservist. But I'm going to wear what I want to wear. That was the end of that.

(shot 11)

12:46 QUESTION: You guys thought in 1959 after statehood was achieved that you were gonna—you're chairman of the party now—that you're gonna now win obviously. Democrats brought statehood to Hawaii, you're gonna win the governorship, and yet 1959 was a tough year.

13:03 RICHARDSON: Oh, that was a tough year. The—uh, uh, Governor Quinn was—he was uh, he was—I mean, he was the incumbent. And he was very popular. Uh, we knew it was gonna be uh, a tough deal. And uh ... Burns decided for his own reasons that he would run for governor, instead of being a US Senator. Which ... would have been ... possibly a shoe-in.

13:33 QUESTION: And you lose the governorship.

13:35 RICHARDSON: We lo—we lose the governorship. Uh ... and it looked like we had lo—we had lost the next election as well. Because if he couldn't beat it when he—he ha—he was at ... the top ... uh, uh, uh, of his political uh ... time ... that uh, if he lost then, how could he win the next time.

(shot 12)

14:00 QUESTION: You also lost one of the United States Senate seats. You—

14:09 RICHARDSON: Right.

14:10 QUESTION: --lost control of the first state senate, as I remember. That went to the Republicans by, I believe, one vote. You lost the lieutenant governorship, that went to Jimmy Kealoha.

14:19 RICHARDSON: That's right; and they were—they were separate uh, separate positions too.

14:24 (SLOW ZOOM OUT FROM ECU TO CU) QUESTION: Which was one of the reasons, if I'm not mistaken, three years later they nominated a guy named Bill Richardson to run for lieutenant governor to have a balanced ticket.

14:34 RICHARDSON: Yeah; but there—there were a lot of guys in there running against me too, you know, including the ... attorney general and ... uh, it was knock-down, drag-out fight. But uh ... you know, once the nomination was over, then—those days we had to run uh, separately, and um ... I don't know; some of the old classmates ... showed up and the old military friends that I had just ... showed up and uh, I got in.

(shot 13)

15:11 QUESTION: And two years later when the Chief Justiceship becomes open, Jack Burns appoints you Chief Justice of the Hawaii State Supreme Court. And I wonder why you took that position. Did you have any thoughts about being ...

15:39 RICHARDSON: No, uh, but my—my uh, my—my wife and my family uh, uh, saw this as uh, someday they're gonna have me run against Jack Burns, and I did not want to do that. And then this is by chance that uh, Chief Justice Tsukiyama had gotten sick, and he was sick for a long time, the court—uh, I think for about seven months and the court really got way behind, couldn't move. And uh ... and uh, uh, people started talking about the possibility of running against Jack Burns, and—and I—that's something that I—I—I—I just couldn't stomach, and—and my—my—my wife didn't like that idea at all when they started talking about that. (16:27) So um ... when this other thing came up uh, I can remember the day uh ... the last day after Tsukiyama had died, the last day that he had to send a name to ... to the Senate, I had been acting governor for sometime, and Burns had just come in. And about twelve o'clock he s—he said to me, uh, What's this I hear about you—you're up for Chief Justice? I said, Well, I—I hear about that too. (17:06) And so he—he said to uh ... to Mary Isa, You get Mrs. Richardson on

the phone, would you? And so he ... he got her on the—she got him on the phone, and—or her on the phone, and uh, he said, Amy, uh, what's this about your husband being Chief Justice? Well, I knew what she was gonna say. She would say—she—she'd tell him, I don't want him in politics anymore. And—and—and if you want to name him that, okay. But he—he was silent for about five minutes. 17:34 (ZOOM FROM CU TO ECU) She just gave him the works and told him, I don't want my husband running in—for office anymore. And especially I don't want him running against you. And so he said, Well, uh, o—okay, we'll just think about it. He—he's just listening at that point. And he hung up, and this was about twelve o'clock and—and he said, Well ... well, we'll see. Well, about three hours later, I heard it over the radio that he had sent a name down to the Senate on the last day. And ... everybody was in the family, of course Dad particularly, you know.

(shot 14)

18:23 QUESTION: And you become the first non-Haole Chief Justice of any state in the union.

18:31 RICHARDSON: Yeah. And pretty young guy too, and—and not knowing my way around too well, but ... yes.

18:38 QUESTION: And by the time you retire in 19 ... 1980 ...

18:46 (TILT DOWN TO CU ON HANDS) RICHARDSON: '82.

18:47 QUESTION: '82.

18:47 RICHARDSON: '82.

18:51 QUESTION: '82; at that point, you are the longest sitting ...

18:57 (SLOW TILT UP BACK TO CU ON HEAD) RICHARDSON: Chief Justice.

19:00 QUESTION: --Chief Justice of any state—

19:01 RICHARDSON: Right.

19:03 QUESTION: --in the nation.

19:03 RICHARDSON: Right. And I—you know, I can remember when they thought, hey, what was this young guy doing here? But it's the youngest state, you got the youngest guy.

19:11 QUESTION: So when you were appointed, you were forty ...

19:14 RICHARDSON: I was—I think I was about forty-two. Something like that. And they—they wondered why this kid was com—coming in.

(shot 15)

19:23 QUESTION: You're Hawaiian, and you're a Chief Justice, and there is this ... the Richardson court becomes known for melding Hawaiian traditional law with Western law. Could you explain what that meant, Hawaiian law within the context of Western and US law?

19:52 RICHARDSON: Well, there—uh, uh, I—I'll give you one example. Uh ... uh, while ... the United States was in the throes of arguments going on between Colorado where the—where water was starting, and—and the water—if—if Colorado diverted all the water, by the time it got to California, uh, they'd go dry. **(20:23)** At the same time, we had the Hanapepe River; almost the same thing. The plantations having ... um ... one plantation on one side of the Hanapepe River needing the water and diverting it, tunneling it out. The other side, the same thing. **(20:44)** And ... by the time they were through with that, the water was running out for the taro patches and the rice patches down below. And that would be like California. And then so—so you—you see the result. And we decided, well, the water had to go the—to the people down in—in uh ... uh, at the—at the bottom uh, of ... uh, uh, of the river, the Hanapepe Stream. **(21:17)** Now—now y—now you have the Colorado problem being fought in Washington. And so it's the same thing; it was easy for me. Uh, uh, I knew which way I was going. [CHUCKLES]

21:29 QUESTION: That water rights case was a famous case.

21:32 RICHARDSON: Oh, yeah; that had been sitting around in the court for many, many years before—before I got there. It had been tried before then. But yeah, it was maybe ten, twelve years before it got to the Supreme Court. And uh, when I—when I got on, I didn't know any better. I thought, well, put it on, let's ... get going on it. And well, y—y—y—you know my attitude on that. So ...

(shot 16)

21:58 QUESTION: Did you have beach access cases too?

22:01 RICHARDSON: Yeah, I did; I did. Uh, and uh, I know on the East Coast they were divided. And even the West Coast they were somewhat divided as to what the sh—the shoreline monitor, where—where was public going to—going to go. And—but I didn't have any question on that. [CHUCKLES] I knew—you know, I knew we—uh, uh ... I would always go down to Waikiki, I can swim, I can—I can walk along the beach in front of Royal Hawaiian Hotel and the Moana Hotel, and know I'm—I'm walking on public lands. I realize I might not have been going through ... through the hotels, but I know if I went from one end where it was public, I could walk all the way down. Which—so was—again, it was easy for me that uh, this was uh ... this was public land.

(shot 17)

22:55 QUESTION: And you declared that wherever the high tide ...

22:58 RICHARDSON: Yeah; we—this was a Molokai case first, uh, but ... and we determined the um ... uh, high wash of waves ... was the line of demarcation. But the—all over the United States, they were divided on that. The low water mark, high water mark, or some other mark. And this was a Molokai case, as I recall, uh, an it was the Ashford case. (23:31) And uh, even then uh, people were not satisfied that—that Molokai should be the same as the rest of the states, so another bunch of cases came up, and finally we said, well, it's where the high wash of waves, and—and it's the naupaka line. And that's it. That's where it is today. Uh ... they haven't changed it, but uh ...

23:58 QUESTION: So did uh—

23:58 RICHARDSON: I—I—I don't think they will.

(shot 18)

23:58 QUESTION: You did it the traditional way. I mean, you came out of the war, you got active in politics, you got onto the court and you did many things that speak of your Hawaiian background. But many young Hawaiians now would argue that working within the system doesn't work. That Hawaii needs to be independent again, or there needs to be a state within a state, or sovereignty within the state. How do you respond to those guys? Were you a sell-out or allowed yourself to be—