

## **Bill Goodwin**

### **Recollections of the 1954 Shooting in the House Chamber: Part One**

Eyewitness account of the shooting in the House Chamber on March 1, 1954.

*Interview recorded November 2, 2009*

And I was standing in the doorway of the cloakroom looking out, just watching things as it was going on. It was very quiet. No one was talking or moving. And then, right directly kitty-corner across from me, in the gallery, visitor's gallery, in the corner over there in the southwest corner of the Chamber, there's some movement. I just looked up. I saw the movement out of the corner of my eye and I looked up. And this man stood up and he had a dark suit on. Tall, lanky guy, had a dark suit on. I just...it just caught my eye – when he moved, I mean. I looked up. He reached inside of his coat pocket and pulled out a pistol. I just—"That is a pistol." I couldn't believe it. I knew it was a pistol. He had his—And he started shooting right away. Then everybody started hitting the ground. Some Congressmen, like myself, just stood there looking at the guy. Even some Members of Congress, I heard them say later on that they thought it was firecrackers going off. And they weren't looking, just heard the pop, pop, pop, pop. And he was shooting. And then the—I remember the gun stopped and he emptied it out. He pulled the clip out, threw it down on the floor, pulled another clip out of his pocket, put the clip in, and he started shooting again. And his gun jammed about that time. While—About the same time, the second man stood up. He pulled out a gun and he started shooting. He was in a light blue suit, I remember that. A lighter suit. Maybe gray. And he started shooting while the second guy was reloading, and did his shooting. The second guy, or the first guy, with a second clip, his gun quit on him, or jammed. And so he turned and ran up the steps, out of the gallery. And I learned later that, as he ran out into the hallway out there, a cop was coming and nailed him. Just hauled off and slugged him good and flattened him.