

Chris,

Thanks for your message and sorry for the delay in responding. I wanted to check with my wife about posting the email, since I name checked her without telling her first. (So, our weekend began with, “Honey, I hate to have to tell you this, but two of your favorite people publicly trashed your great-grandfather...”) Anyway, we are fine with you posting the email on the WITH show page. Please just remove the contact info beneath my name (email/phone/address).

If you are interested in learning more about Huey Long, you will probably get more out of the 1985 documentary by Ken Burns than the most recent 2006 biography by Richard White, “Kingfish: The Reign of Huey Long.” While Burns skips over many of Huey’s accomplishments, the period footage and interviews give you a sense for the political civil war that was being waged in Louisiana at the time. Sadly, White’s version of Huey is rife with factual errors and simply reduces him to the caricature peddled by conservatives, as though Rush Limbaugh were his writing partner.

On the subject of corruption, you may be interested in this early statewide address by a young Russell Long rebutting the attacks on his father’s reputation: <https://www.hueylong.com/legacy/russell-long-speech.php>

Russell served in the U.S. Senate for 38 years (1948-1986) and was described by the Wall Street Journal as “the fourth branch of government” due to his central role in shaping national tax policy from the mid 1960s through the mid 1980s. Russell had a completely different style from Huey — low-key and collaborative — that was arguably more effective in achieving his legislative goals on a national scale. He shepherded the Medicare bill through the Senate and implemented many of LBJ’s Great Society programs. As Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, he was responsible for many enduring remnants of “Longism,” such as the expansion of Social Security for the disabled, the creation of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Employee Stock Ownership Programs (ESOPs), and public financing of presidential elections.

Thanks for taking the time to read my feedback and for keeping an open mind about Huey Long. (Maybe you could put in a good word with Rachel, too.)

- Jeremy