The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project
Foreign Service Spouse Series

SUSAN INGRAHAM

Interviewed by: Jewell Fenzi
Initial interview date: April 5, 1991

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mrs. Ingraham accompanied her husband, State Department Foreign Service Officer Edward Clarke Ingraham, on his assignments in Washington, DC and abroad.

Environment
Australians

Madras, India 1954-1956
Leprosy Clinic volunteer
Household help
Marshall Tito's visit
Nehru
Environment
Living conditions
Chief Justice and Mrs. Earl Warren visit
Christmas

Washington, DC 1957
Indonesian language study
Policy re wives' language study

Cornell University 1957-1958

Djakarta, Indonesia 1958; 1959-1960
Cub Scouts
American Women's Club
Housing
Sukarno
Climate
Schooling
Local household help
"Efficiency Report"

Medan, Indonesia, 1958-1959

Washington, DC 1961-1966
Sarah Rogers pre-school volunteer
School operations
Minorities
Headstart Program
Giddings School
Volunteer reading program teacher
Democratic Party social programs

Rangoon, Burma 1966-1969
Environment
National Days
Children's education

Washington, DC The National War College	1969-1971
Islamabad, Pakistan Village Health Clinics Schooling India-Pakistan war Visit to India Lahore evacuation Grand Trunk road Afridi bus line American Women's Club General impressions	1971-1974
Washington, DC	1974-1977
Singapore	1977-1979
Washington, DC	1979
Lake Forest, Illinois	1979-1980
Washington, DC	1980

INTERVIEW

Q: This is Jewell Fenzi on Friday, April 5, 1991. I'm interviewing Susan Ingraham at the Woman's National Democratic Club.

I have one question. The minute I started working with your biographic data and I noticed that you went off to Cochabamba, Bolivia, as a first post as Principal Officer's wife. Had you had any training? To me, it's just mind boggling. You went up to 15,000 feet and immediately...

INGRAHAM: Principal officer-there was no other officer.

Q: I know. I mean, you were it. And then you had a baby there. I mean, how did you..did you have any training at all? There was minimal spouse training at that point.

INGRAHAM: That's right. There was none and I was working in New York City and I didn't quit when Ed went down and took the Foreign Service exams and so forth because they said it may be years before he's called, even after he passed the exams. So we just

forgot about the Foreign Service and kept on with our jobs in New York. Once called, Ed had to go down for a training program in Washington and so he quit his job and went down for his three-month training program and then came back to New York and waited for two months. I was the family breadwinner (laughs) at that point. My paycheck had to take care of us. Of course, we had no idea how long it was going to go on but, anyway, we finally got notice that we were assigned to go to Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Q: What were you doing in New York?

INGRAHAM: I was working for "The New York Times"; college and school service department.

Q: Yes, yes.

INGRAHAM: That's the job. It was a wonderful job.

Q: Yes, which you gave up to go to Cochabamba.

INGRAHAM: (laughs) Yes, which was really leaping off. Just the plane ride in..we stayed about three days in La Paz, Bolivia, and met everybody socially who was in the American Embassy, which was fun and I....you know, friends that we made there were friends for life. Those wives all wanted to be helpful. They all said if you need anything, but it's a long hop down to Cochabamba. I think there was a once-a-week plane connection between Cochabamba and La Paz. We were isolated. We spent the first three or four weeks in a hotel, trying to find some place to live. The retiring Consul left a couple of days after we got there and the house that he rented was no longer available. We had to find our own house and we had..everything we had to do by ourselves. There was no one to help us. This turned out to be a real problem. There was no physical exam for the wives before we left the States. The husbands had to pass a physical, but the wives and children were just baggage (laughs)... just baggage. And, during our days in La Paz, which followed our Cochabamba tour, one family came out with a little two-year-old boy whom they put him to bed for a nap. He never woke up. He died in his sleep. He had some very minor heart condition which would probably have cleared up as he aged but, of course, they didn't know it because they hadn't had physicals before they left. Years later, at least twenty years later, I was in the Foreign Service Medical Department one day, waiting for my turn for a physical. The nurse called out a family group name. A husband and wife and about two kids came and stood in front of her desk and she asked "You're going off to La Paz?" They said "Yes." She said, "You must go see Dr. So and So for a special series of altitude exams." She ticked them off, and I was listening (laughs). They are really covering everything these days before they send anyone out there.

Q: Is Cochabamba higher or lower than La Paz?

INGRAHAM: It's lower, lower than La Paz. Cochabamba was 8,500 feet. It was really pleasant, never hot, always a little cool actually, but it was delightful and bright, bright

clear sunshine. And the city was charming. It was a small Spanish-style town. The Indians were Quechuan, spoke Quechua and were descendants of the Inca. Beautifully dressed, wearing dozens of skirts, heavy wool skirts they tied on with a drawstring, and they wore bright shawls and stovepipe hats which were white. They looked like hats that you used to see on Irishmen - a tall white hat with a wide brim. It was made out of wool, braided wool. It was coiled and woven together and covered with shiny white paint. It was heavy as lead. That's what the women wore in those days. They had long black braids tied together with a special string across their backs. Really very colorful people and very, very nice people.

Q: Sue, you were the only American in Cochabamba?

INGRAHAM: An American secretary came down. She kept saying "I don't know how I ever wound up in Cochajojo". It was also her first post. This was right after the war, you know. They were expanding the Foreign Service so that was fun. And we had four or five American military families who were training the Bolivian Army in Cochabamba. And we had a Public Health man, Eloy Barreda, and his wife. They were Americans from Brownsville, Texas and were bilingual in Spanish and English. They were great friends. We also had a Rockefeller Foundation man. He and his wife had spent their whole life in various South American posts and this was their last posting. They were a source of tremendous information and helpfulness of all sorts.

Q: Did you have other missions or was there another diplomatic [mission]?

INGRAHAM: There were. There was one other career consul there. There were also honorary consuls. I made a point of meeting the wives of all these honorary consuls. They were Bolivians who served, who would write visas for people for five or six different governments. I forget what countries. The one other career consul was from Chile and his wife and I really were great friends. She couldn't speak any English and I couldn't speak Spanish but we met once a week and practiced the other one's language. (Laughs) We managed to communicate nicely if not accurately. Of course I was studying Spanish every way I could think of and, since there was no one around to speak English to, I was learning fast. Anyway, she was a good friend, she was a lot of fun. I tried to find her afterward but I never have. Let's see, what else can I tell you about Cochabamba?

Q: It's seems to me that you took it all very much in stride. Was there never a moment when you looked at it and said "Cochabamba, Bolivia, why am I here?"

INGRAHAM: I sometimes wondered what in the holy heck I was doing there. I had to..for
instance, I learned how to make bread because you just couldn't buy bread and in that bright sunlight and at 8000 feet it was quite a different matter. (laughs) Of course, I had never made it anywhere else so I didn't have anything to unlearn. We had a crazy puppy that we got from somewhere and one day I put the bread dough out in the back yard and he ate the dough and it rose inside of him and he swelled up. I thought it was going to kill

him.

Q: But I take it he survived.

INGRAHAM: Yes. We laughed, but the poor dog didn't think it was very funny. We thought he was going to die.

Q: Well, you really seem to have fond memories of what must have been not an absolutely easy...

INGRAHAM: Well, yes. We enjoyed ourselves there, even the baby part of it. In our house we had no telephone and we had no hot water. We had running water but no hot water. We had a kerosene stove that was very complicated to operate but we had a little mother's helper who was about twice my age and who managed everything and... I asked her what kind of a baby she wanted when I went off to the clinic. We had to call on a neighbor with a jeep to run me off to the clinic in the night when we decided the baby was due. It wasn't the middle of the night, it was about eight o'clock in the evening. I asked her what she wanted, a boy or a girl, and she said she would like a boy. And so, when I came back from the hospital I said "Here's your boy" and she said "Muchas gracias" and that's just about the last I saw of the baby except to feed him every few hours. But, anyway, I had a lot of that sort of company and support all around me. The women, the American women there, like Mrs. Bevere, the Rockefeller wife, who made a point of giving me instructions and the American women really clustered around. We had one other American baby born there, in the military group, and she and I exchanged information and equipment. Later, during our days in La Paz, there was a revolt or, what would you call it?- an uprising up in the mines. The mine workers turned against their American bosses, the engineers who were running the mine, and dynamited them. They did just terrible things, blew up two or three of them, tied them up and tied sticks of dynamite to them and blew them up. And the wives and children were evacuated and came through coming out through La Paz. This happened when we were in La Paz. And John, our baby, was about three or four months old when this took place. We were transferred shortly after he was born, only a few weeks old, when we were transferred out of Cochabamba because Washington closed the post for economy reasons. One of these departing mining company wives had a whole lot of American baby food, little jars of liver and, I think, apricots, whole boxes of them and I bought them from her and that's what I fed my baby. I had the notion that because the food was from the States it was better than anything I could get locally, which of course was ridiculous. I don't know how long those things had been sitting around in the mountains. (Laughter) But the little helper, Luisa, came up with me from Cochabamba, although she was leaving Quechua country and going up to where the Aymara Indians lived. She didn't like them but she couldn't trust me with the baby so she came along with us to La Paz. And she started feeding him quinoa, which is a grain that only grows high in the altitude and it's apparently very healthy, has a tremendous amount of food value in these little kernels of quinoa. It looks, grows like rice. Something like rice.

Q: Did she make him sort of a pablum?

INGRAHAM: Yes, sort of a cereal, exactly. And he fattened up. His cheeks got all rosy. So, he made it, we made it. We all survived. Cochabamba, we really enjoyed it. We had a good time there.

Q: I was just going to ask you. The research that I did this morning said that in, from 1825 to 1947, in Bolivia, there were sixty revolutions, seventy presidents and eleven constitutions. Was there a lot of political upheaval?

INGRAHAM: We were two and a half years in Bolivia and in all that time there was a period of twelve days when we were not in a state of siege. We always kept a packed suitcase. I had evaporated milk and a bottle of boiled water and pablum cereal and changes of clothing for all of us. The suitcase was always there the whole time we were in Cochabamba and most of the time in La Paz, although in La Paz we were in a bigger group and we figured the air force could get us all out in an emergency. But it wasn't anything that kept us on edge.

Q: No curfew or no...?

INGRAHAM: There were periods when there were curfews and there was also, in La Paz when we were there, there were a couple of bombings very close to our house. But, it wasn't actually directed at the Americans, so we didn't feel singled out, targeted. In the end, we were glad to leave La Paz because it was too high to live in in comfort and my husband hates cold weather and was always cold. Our house was without heat. Everywhere in Bolivia we only had little room heaters and things like that. They were dangerous and didn't heat evenly...used up too much oxygen. You couldn't use them for very long at a time so it was just not comfortable.

Q: Because it gets up to 15,000 feet, doesn't it?

INGRAHAM: Twelve. The city is twelve and a half thousand and we did take skiing trips up as high as 15000 (Laughter) The cars wouldn't run at that altitude. We'd go up to about 14,000 and they just chugged and stopped.

Q: Just stopped. One thing that is unusual, I think, about your early years is that you never stayed anywhere very long, you were just moving all the time weren't you?

INGRAHAM: Two years was the maximum, the normal assignment. What was among the unsung agonies of Foreign Service life were moves within the country. That's what I think was back breaking. You get settled in a house and then you move to a different one or you move to another city in the same country. And I think that's very hard.

Q: So you were only in La Paz for about a year?

INGRAHAM: About a year and a half. Yes, we were in Cochabamba for just over a year and we were in La Paz for about a year and a half.

Q: And then you went to Hong Kong?

INGRAHAM: Right.

Q: Quite a change.

INGRAHAM: Ed loves to say that we asked for Hong Kong because we thought it would be better than Bolivia, and ten minutes after we stepped off the plane, we said, "Yes, it's better." (Laughter)

Q: And you were evacuated from Hong Kong to the U.S. I was trying to figure out why, because the Chinese, the Communists, had taken over China in '49 . What happened? I couldn't find anything about a major incident in Hong Kong in the 50's, '51?

INGRAHAM: It seems silly now but it was the Korean War. When China came into the War they just decided to get all the families out of the way because they didn't know what was going to happen. This was when the Chinese crashed through our lines in Korea and drove us south below the something-or-other parallel. The Americans thought, gee let's get the families out of here in case it spreads. President Truman had declared the Korea police action in June of l950 so the American army first became involved just as we arrived in Hong Kong. Six months later they just decided to get the families out. We were urged to hurry out to the post because they needed us immediately. They had to have Edward in Hong Kong right away so we rushed out as fast as we could get there. Got out there to find that, one, there was no house for us to live in and, two, there was no job for him, no desk, no chair. (Laughs) So we spent six weeks in a hotel with, of course, one baby and I was already pregnant for the second baby. The saving grace was that there were also three other American families in this hotel and we four women had a good time together. We spent our days palling around together and shopping and visiting and studying Chinese. The other three had come out of Peking on short notice, and they'd come out without their personal effects. They'd had to leave with just one suitcase after the Communists had entered Peking. In fact, two of these families had lived under the Communists for one year. They were very interesting people and we always managed, the four couples, to have dinner together in the hotel every evening. Of course, we were all stony broke but we'd get a bottle of wine and the Peking people would always say "Next year in Peking". They all wanted to go back, they just loved Peking. I've always wanted to see it for that reason.

Q: So you had almost a year at home?

INGRAHAM: Yes, I had a year in the States.

Q: With one baby and had another?

INGRAHAM: Yes, when the new baby was born, I was only... In those days, you weren't supposed to travel on a plane if you were beyond the eighth month. There was a ship, but I would have had the baby born at sea. So I just had to fake it about traveling on the plane. The baby was born about two weeks after I got back to the States. I went to my parents in North Carolina, and they just turned themselves inside out for me and for Johnnie and for the new baby and we were just loved and fussed over and spoiled and had a marvelous year.

Q: How nice.

INGRAHAM: Yes.

Q: And then went off to Perth?

INGRAHAM: Right. I caught up with Ed out in Perth.

Q: Did he come, did you not see him for a year?

INGRAHAM: He had never seen the baby. The baby was almost a year old and he had never seen him. You know, in those days, we just couldn't move around as much, and anyway, we simply didn't expect to. We never telephoned one another. We just wrote letters. That's the way it was.

Q: And so then you went all the way out to Perth with two children?

INGRAHAM: Right, that was quite a journey. I kept missing connections in various odd spots. Because the very first flight I took was delayed for hours, I missed my overseas connection from California out to Hawaii and beyond. I was on British Airways, in all kinds of different places, spending hours in the airport in Hawaii. The trip was terrible. One of my favorite memories of that trip: an Englishman came up to me in Hawaii and he said "I see that we are scheduled to go on the same flight in to Australia." He was quite an elderly man and said he was going out to visit his children and grandchildren in Australia. And he said, "I can't hear the announcements and if you will just monitor the announcements and get me on the plane, I'll be glad to look after the children for you." So I left the two boys with him and headed for the ticket counter. I looked back and here was my little baby who was not walking yet, almost a year old. He had a part of the man's hearing aid that he had put in his coat pocket, with a little battery. The baby was banging the hearing aid, bang, bang, bang, on the edge of a chair. (Laughter) I thought, oh dear, this is going to be one terrible trip.

Q: How many hours did it take you to get out there?

INGRAHAM: Oh, it took forever. I started on a flight out of North Carolina. I should have flown to Washington and started from there but when I called some woman in the

Admin section at the Department and asked her if I could do that, she said "You might wind up paying for the whole trip if you don't go directly from your nearest destination." So I started out of Ashville, North Carolina, and the pilot came back to me at one point and said, "I just discovered that you're headed for Australia." And he said "What in the world are you doing on this flight? This is a milk run, we've never gotten anywhere on schedule." So that was the beginning.

Q: That was your beginning.

INGRAHAM: We got as far as San Francisco and the people at the airport said, "Oh, this is going to be terrible." They started looking for a flight for me. They put me on a United flight, I remember, into Honolulu. And then after Honolulu and the Englishman, the kids and I were put on something called BCPA , British Cross Pacific Airway, or something of the sort. That got us to Fiji, and from Fiji we got on something else which got us into Sydney and we were overnight in a hotel in Sydney and the next day we got on a flight to Perth. On many of these trips the pilot came to talk to us because we were such an oddity. One Australian pilot came and said that the airlines had really united the nation of Australia. He said the west was so far from the east and there's this vast desert in between, and until we could fly back and forth we really didn't know very much about each other. He said "now we're getting closer together." Later, during our days in Perth, there was a group of people who came across the country by car. When you traveled this way you always went in a caravan, not just one car but two or three traveling together to cross the desert from the east into Perth. There was a famous cricket player who was coming out to play a demonstration game in Perth. He and his caravan broke down in the desert during the night. They just had to sit in the desert all night long, and a group of aboriginal Australians loomed up out of the darkness, painted in white, and danced a corroboree around them and then vanished into the dark again. We had another really far out place, but it was a place where they spoke English and they had foods we ate.

Q: But Perth must...I see you're principal officer in...but Perth must be a lovely place. There again, isolated though. I mean, really, gosh.

INGRAHAM: It was lovely then and it's lovely now and it's so different. We visited it just recently and it's entirely different. It was a wonderful town. We were such heroes. We were accustomed to Americans being disliked, Yankee-go-home philosophy, all over Europe, but in Australia, out there in Perth, they were completely isolated during the war. They said that one day during the war they saw some smoke stacks on the horizon and they didn't know whether the ships were Japanese or what. They turned out to be American and from that day to this the people of Western Australia have been busy saying thank-you. We were considered cousins and we were welcome everywhere. Ed had had to officiate at all sorts of ribbon-cuttings and I had to give the opening speech at the ladies' hat parade. Everything that went on in Perth we were involved in. We really did have a great time there. I had a special story I was saving up to tell you about Perth but I can't think what it was now. Something that went on while we were there. If it comes to me....

Q: So from there you went to Madras, which must have been quite a change?

INGRAHAM: Yes, it was indeed.

Q: I'm amazed. From South America to Hong Kong to Perth to India.

INGRAHAM: These were all tremendous psychological changes.

Q: Yes, cultural and psychological.

INGRAHAM: Yes. Change and we were often on our own. As you say, we were the only American officer in two cases. I think the biggest shock in coming into Madras was for my little Aussie boys. In Australia, people were rather prim. We ladies never appeared on main street without hat and gloves after noon time. In the morning it was all right, you could go down in your tennis shoes and a skirt. Nobody ever showed up on a street in shorts in Perth in those days. Now, they never show up in a skirt.

Q: You never know what they are going to show up in.

INGRAHAM: The boys had an ayah, who joined us the day we got off the airplane. She would stand in the bathroom with them when they were bathing, and they didn't like that. They didn't like having anybody around. But they quickly got over it, especially since she picked up all their clothes and bathed them and took care of them. By this time we were beginning to meet a lot of very exciting people. The Governor of Madras gave elegant parties for visiting officials of any sort. He had moved into the old British Raj palace. It was a beautiful, beautiful house with gorgeous grounds around it and little deer wandering through the gardens and what not. One time we were invited to a garden party for Marshall Tito, who was visiting South India. It was a lovely party. We were strolling around the gardens, and Marshall Tito and a little entourage including Sri Sri Prakash, the Governor, were walking from group to group around the garden. We looked at Marshall Tito and decided that, for one thing, he had steel teeth and wore a bullet-proof vest. He looked very out of place among the languorous, soft saris, dhotis, sandals and white cloth on all the men. He looked ridiculous in his western suit. Anyway, he came past us and we all shook hands. After he wandered on, Ed said, "There's Nehru!" And there was Nehru, strolling along, all alone. He had on a Congress hat and his regular costume and the rose in his lapel. We asked the Indian friend we'd been talking to if he could introduce us to Nehru. He said he would be happy to. He shepherded us over to Nehru and as he approached, Nehru smiled broadly and said "Oh, you, you!" They clutched hands and smiled at each other and our friend then introduced us to Nehru. We chatted about the weather and trivialities. Then an aide came up and took Nehru off to meet some other people. After he left, our friend, Lobo Prabhu, who had been an ICS man, said, "Do you know why he knows me? We said "No, why?" And he said, " I was his jailer..." The two had gotten to be good friends. I thought that was a pretty good...

Q: Interesting, to be introduced to Nehru by his jailer.

INGRAHAM: And they greeted each other very warmly.

Q: Well, he was obviously kind to him.

INGRAHAM: Yes, yes.

Q: Well, you stayed in Madras for three years, that must have seemed an eternity after all those short moves.

INGRAHAM: Yes, it was about two and a half years. The nicest thing was moving right into our Madras house and never leaving it until we left. And our furniture, our household effects had arrived before we came. A staff of servants was standing there waiting to greet us. So we were at home from the minute we arrived and that did help a lot.

Q: It makes a big difference, doesn't it.

INGRAHAM: It does. We had one other wonderful experience while we were there. Sri Sri Prakash gave a fancy dinner party for Chief Justice Earl Warren. Because the Consul General's wife was out of town, I was seated on Earl Warren's right so I was his dinner partner for the evening. But before dinner Sri Prakash, who enjoyed destabilizing his American guests, told Mrs. Warren that he hoped she'd be satisfied with her place at the dinner table. He said "One American woman once complained to me about her seating place at the table and said she didn't think she should be so far below the salt." And he said "I can't understand why she complained as long as we all get the same food." And of course Mrs. Warren was looking very uncomfortable. She looked over at me with a sort of "how terrible" look. So I took a deep breath and said "Your Excellency, I've heard you tell that story before and I hope you won't judge all American women by that one."

Q: Good for you.

INGRAHAM: As a matter of fact, when he told the story before, it was an Englishwoman. (Laughter)

Q: So this was his stock in trade tale.

INGRAHAM: Fortunately, he just smiled and ignored it but I think it made Mrs. Warren feel a little better.

Q: Two little things.

INGRAHAM: And then we had our next baby. It was in Madras and was a very exciting business. The doctor was a woman, an English missionary doctor. She had a huge hospital, a maternity hospital, and she had lots of young Malayali nurses that she trained

there. When the baby was about to be born, they brought a huge clock into the room, tick tock tick tock, and as soon as the baby arrived, everybody in the room yelled "Six o'clock!" The doctor said "That's for your horoscope. You have to know the moment of birth when your baby was born, exactly at six, very auspicious." She was a missionary, a Methodist missionary, prim, with her hair cut very severely. She was fascinated by all those quaint customs, local beliefs and so forth.

Q: Adapting to the local culture.

INGRAHAM: Right, enjoying it.

Q: So, goodness, you had one child in Bolivia and another one in India and another one at home.

INGRAHAM: The other one would have been a Hong Kong baby if I hadn't been packed away.

Q: Or if you are born at sea, what are you? American?

INGRAHAM: I don't know. That was one of the reasons why we... (laughter)

Q: So he could be President.

INGRAHAM: Right. Exactly, so he could be President.

Q: Well, then, after ten years in the service, you finally got to come to Washington for a year for language and area studies. Did you get to study Indonesian at the same time?

INGRAHAM: Yes. Once again the government didn't pay for it, by the way, but we did arrange for the wife of one of the instructors to come and teach us. There were three of us studying Indonesian at Cornell that year, three Foreign Service families. And we wives would meet once a week at my house and have tea and conversational Indonesian. We had lessons, too, that we were taking, but we had to pay for those separately. I just point that out, it was a small irritant.

Q: No...

INGRAHAM: From a feminist viewpoint.

Q: No, but you know, there is no reason why you, who were not an employee of the Department of State, should have had to pay for your own Indonesian lessons, because your husband was going to be assigned to Indonesia.

INGRAHAM: But I suppose you could look at it the other way around. Since I wasn't an employee, they weren't obligated to pay for my lessons.

Q: Well, they do now.

INGRAHAM: That's because we pushed for it. One of the wives out in Singapore, I remember, said, "We should absolutely insist that any Foreign Service wife can sign up for any course in any language at the Foreign Service Institute at any time, for free. The argument was that the Foreign Service Institute couldn't afford to pay for all that; you would at least have to be assigned to a post. Well, as you know, you're assigned to a post and you have to leave a month later. That's hardly time to learn a language, so why shouldn't you, when you're in the States, go in and study a language, any language.

Q: At least a major language.

INGRAHAM: I think they finally said that as long as there's space in the classroom, yes you can come. That's the way they settled it. Now I believe a Foreign Service wife can simply walk in, or sign up, for any one of the language courses. And...

Q: Space available.

INGRAHAM: Space available. I think they usually have between eight and 12 in a class and if they have 10 [it is a fight], a fight worth fighting for.

Q: Very well worth fighting for. So the Indonesian language obviously had a school.

INGRAHAM: Southeast Asia program. John Eccles was the head of it, and George Kahin was the Indonesia expert ...and they both [were] real experts in the field, very, very well known in Southeast Asian affairs to this day.

Q: What was his name?

INGRAHAM: Kahin, George K-A-H-I-N, George McT. Kahin. He's retired.

Q: So there again, in Indonesia, you went to Jakarta, then you went up to Medan, so that was another change.

INGRAHAM: Right. There again, we had housing problems. It was really wild. Living conditions under Sukarno were really terrible. First of all, we wound up in a little prefab. There were eight American government prefabs, and they were pretty miserable. Ours wasn't big enough for the five of us. But another house became available shortly, and we were so pleased with it. It was in the city, near the only railroad line and near the canal. It wasn't a busy canal. The house was a little old Dutch house. It had a square roof, shingled, with wooden shingles, and the train went by twice a day, very noisy, spewing sparks out of the smokestack.

Q: Oh, no!

INGRAHAM: But luckily, it was almost always raining in Jakarta. About once a day we'd get a rain shower, so the shingles were almost always too wet to burn, except now and then they would catch fire and it was one of the jobs of the servants to leap up with a bucket of water and pour it over the shingles. And when it rained, it rained right through the roof. Another job for the servants was to run around the house, placing buckets of water to catch the rain as it came in. It was pretty miserable living. The kitchen was separated from the rest of the house and the servants had to run back and forth with the food. It was really out of another era, but it was fun, too. And we were in town, which was a little better than being out in suburban Jakarta. It did mean taking the children seven miles to school. We had a chauffeur who worked in the mornings only, a young college boy, very bright and attractive and I liked him. But I always rode with him when taking the children off to school - because his college pals would come by and play chicken games on the road with my precious children in the car. So I always rode out and back with him almost every day. I didn't dare trust him to drive the kids without me in the car.

Q: So you might as well have driven yourself.

INGRAHAM: Right, except that it was dangerous on the road and if an American got into an accident we felt the whole Embassy might be in trouble, so they discouraged us from driving on our own in Jakarta. One of our drivers did have an accident before he came to work for us. We had two different kids working for us, and the first one had to go to court when his court time came up. He told me about it. Without clearing it with my husband or anyone else, I decided to go. I thought it would be fun to see what the courtroom was like and so forth. So I asked him where it was and if I could come and he said, "Oh, yes." I went and it was quite an experience. Everything was constantly overly supplied with people in Jakarta. They were pleasant people, happy, clean, nice people, not pushy or difficult in any way at all but there were always hundreds of them everywhere. I got into a makeshift kind of building, and a man came up to me and said he was the chauffeur's father. He was a very gentlemanly old fellow and so he said "We can wait here." We sat on a bench and waited, people running back and forth in the hallway that was open to the street on one side, with the building on the other side, a common style of architecture in Jakarta. I couldn't see any court room or anything that looked the way I expected a court room should look. Finally, his name was called. His father said "Now it's our turn." So we filed in to this room, jam-packed with people. The judge was sitting behind a desk, just an office desk, and our little driver was sitting in a chair looking terribly nervous, and all these other people were milling around. We found seats and sat down. Then all of the sudden, the judge called on me. He said it in Indonesian, but he asked for the European lady to please identify herself, so I stood up and gave my name and said I was the employer of the driver and that he had always done a good and careful job for us, which he really had. It was the other person who had the friends. Well, within a few minutes, it was all over and he was dismissed. I never knew what he had done wrong, if anything. Later, the other servants told me that it probably helped a lot that I was there. The authorities didn't want me nosing around and seeing how really basic their

arrangements were for legal processes.

Q: Were there angry professions when you did mention this to the embassy?

INGRAHAM: I told my husband about it later. John Henderson, who was Ed's boss, said "I thought I made it clear to you that you should never get yourself involved in anything like that." I was -gulp- (laughter). I don't know whether it was a black mark on my husband's record or not.

Q: Yes, we were still in the efficiency reports then.

INGRAHAM: Oh, yes. I did see what he wrote about me. He said I was a fairly decent wife who busied herself teaching English classes or something like that.

Q: Did he really say that? Fairly decent wife!

INGRAHAM: Something like that. He liked me, we were good friends. His wife and I were wonderful friends. But he thought I had put myself in a very vulnerable position by going out like that. I think he was right, I had. Luckily, unless it reflected on my husband's career, it didn't reflect on anything else.

Q: Interesting. And then, after that, back in Washington for almost six years. What did you do during that time?

INGRAHAM: That was when I became involved with the Sarah Rogers Pre-School. It was just at the time of integration. In fact, we picked a house in Maryland because Virginia was still fighting integration at that stage.

Q: Could you describe the background of the Sarah Rogers School and how you got involved with it and how it was an integrated school. Start with the incident with the little boys being expelled, and a bit about Sarah's background.

INGRAHAM: Well, shortly after we settled in to Bethesda, a friend of mine asked me if I would work in the home study program which was being established there to help kids who needed assistance with their homework. That was where I met Sarah Rogers. She had decided that it was time to set up a little pre-school, because the children really needed help from the very beginning in their own homes. They never had books. They didn't know how to handle pencils and so forth.

Q: These were minority children who were integrated?

INGRAHAM: Yes. There's a little neighborhood, a small community of blacks, one of two or three small communities of blacks scattered through Montgomery County. I was in the home study program, preschool, that dealt with the kids in Cabin John, Maryland. The way Sarah had gotten into all of this was this: she was staying temporarily in a home

where the cleaning woman had a fit of tears in the kitchen one day. Sarah wanted to know what was wrong. It turned out that the cleaning woman's high-school-age son had been expelled from school because he had misbehaved. He was in a school that had been newly integrated. He was one of about four black kids in that brand new school which had just, for the first time, included black kids. And all the blacks were expelled. When Sarah discovered that, she got the parents of the boys together and then went to the school. Within very short order, the children were brought back into school. And Sarah started tutoring them in the afternoons. She got more friends to tutor their friends. Then she started with younger kids, and finally decided we should get to those kids before they even got into school. That was when I came into the picture. We started working with these little youngsters, about five of them. The county, very grudgingly, allowed us to use a basement, a damp little basement, with three very moldy rooms in the basement of a house in Cabin John. The upstairs rooms were used as a clinic every now and then. About once a month, public health nurses would show up and have a baby clinic and other clinics in the upstairs rooms. When the nurses were up there, they would come down and scold us for making noise. They were as mean as they could be. It was a strange period. People were trying to get used to living with blacks. We persevered, and after a couple of years in that basement, we decided that we should have a summer program. We talked the county into letting us use empty classrooms in Cabin John in the summertime. We hired a teacher, a professional teacher, and this was a big step up. The parents by this time were very interested in what we were doing and were very helpful. It was a preschool where parents took...a co-op preschool. There was only one black parent who could come. The others were working as house cleaners, and if you asked them to give a day to the school it would be asking them to give up a day's pay, of course. So only one came, but she stood in for all the parents, for all the black kids, and each of us took turns. We had two Tuesday teachers, and two Monday teachers and so forth. They were all suburban housewives, like myself. I was the Monday teacher. After a couple of years we asked a church if we could use their premises, and were very warmly welcomed. It was a little Episcopal church in Glen Echo, Maryland, just a very short distance across a one-way bridge from where the kids had been going to school. Then the Unitarians eventually took over. We decided we should have a full-time professional teacher, and that meant we had to get two hundred and fifty dollars together every month, to pay for the teacher. And those parents worked so hard to get that money together. The rest of us went around from church to church and begged for money. I set up a system whereby churches would contribute twenty-five dollars a month to our preschool for ten months. I got ten churches to contribute. We worked awfully hard, organizing for that paid teacher, but it was a matter of enormous pride for the community. And by that time the kids were doing so well that a couple of white mothers from Cabin John Gardens asked if their kids could come to our school. So we canvassed the Gardens and asked people who had children three and four years of age if they'd like to send them to our school. That was an interesting thing. I remember one young mother, who couldn't have been seventeen and had about two children. This was in the white community there. She said, "I hear you got niggers in that school." I said we had five and we had room for fifteen in the preschool. So after thinking about it for a while, she said she thought she'd send her child. Another woman said to me, "Well, the teachers don't get any pay. How do I know they are good

teachers?" Of course we weren't charging anything for the school. I said "I get paid six dollars an hour when I tutor children, and their parents have to bring them to me in my own basement, so we are teachers. We do get paid." As it happened, there were a couple of professional teachers among us anyway . So that mollified her. Well, one way or another we easily got ten kids, and then we began getting requests for the next year. It really mushroomed. We always took the black kids first. I mean, it was their school and they had priority rights in it. Eventually, within a few years, we began meeting at the Unitarian Church. They agreed to pay the teacher's salary single-handedly, and that was such a relief not to have to collect that money for the teacher's pay. Then, not too long after that, Head Start, the official Head Start program, was developed. So, of course, our kids were taken over by the Head Start program. But we had kids who were on scholarship to other preschools around the neighborhood. That was another Sarah Rogers breakthrough. There was one kid at the Presbyterian Church and one at the Montessori Schools, and they began asking us to send them black kids. They wanted black kids in their schools, and the kids had to have a health exam before they could go, and it cost forty dollars to have that health exam. That was just too much for the parents to cover, so Sarah went to that little clinic upstairs, the one that had been raising such Cain because we'd made a little noise. She said "What do you mean that you're going to charge these kids forty dollars for a health exam." She just bullied them into giving free exams to those preschool kids, and that broke a logjam in the county health services. It seemed that they had just never bothered to include the blacks in the county's free health service. Well, shortly after Sarah raised such a fuss about those free exams for the preschoolers, I was in Cabin John one day picking up the kids. Here was this darling young woman, starchy white uniform, little cap on. She was going door to door, saying " My name is So and So and I'm your nurse and if you want any help, you come to me. I'll be right here on days X, Y, and Z." She introduced herself to everybody in the community and made friends with them, just sat and visited in their living rooms and told them how to feed their babies, how to prepare food , all kinds of things. It was really a tremendous step forward and it was all because Sarah had gotten it...

Q: Well, I think you're being modest, I'm sure you helped.

INGRAHAM: Well, I would never have thought to do it, it was Sarah who...

Q: Well, she initiated it and she couldn't have done it alone.

INGRAHAM: Oh no, she had to have all of us helping, but I would just never have thought to buck the system. Sarah was the type who would.

Q: Is that what you did principally while you were here?

INGRAHAM: I also taught in an inner-city school three days a week and that was fun. It was arranged through a club, The National Womans Democratic Club. My fellow workers were two very important women. We would meet one day a week and go down to the Giddings School in Southeast. Of course, we fell in love with the kids in the

school. One of the other women was Phyllis Nitze, Paul Nitze's wife, who has died recently, and the other was Peggy Kenney. Her husband was the Democratic National Committee chairman that year. He was an important politician and I think he had once been Secretary of the Navy, which was what Paul Nitze was doing at the time Mrs. Nitze was working at Giddings School. Anyway, that was fun too, meeting these women. They were ten years my senior and interested in trying to do something useful about integration and the problems of the blacks in Washington. So it was great fun. The Principal of Giddings School was a very impressive woman. She was not only Principal to the children, she was kind of a community organizer. She had boxes of clothes that she distributed to needy families. All kinds of things went on in that school. It was much more than just a grammar school. Evidently all that vanished over the years, because of other pressures I suppose.

Q: Then Burma.

INGRAHAM: Um huh.

Q: You go bouncing around the world again, in the other direction.

INGRAHAM: Burma was marvelous. We were there for three years and we moved into one house and stayed in that one house. It was a very quiet time. The Burmese government was not close to the Americans. Because it was a neutral country, there were representatives from just about every country in the world so we had a big diplomatic corps. There was always a national day. Every afternoon we all played tennis. Then we'd go into the house and shower and put on our long dresses and go out to the one hotel to celebrate somebody or other's national day. This was absolutely routine.

Q: There must have been about a national day every other day.

INGRAHAM: There was. Once in a while, there would be several. Every single evening we were out somewhere or other.

Q: The children were with you then, or were they at school?

INGRAHAM: Our first-born by that time was in university in the States. Since there was no high school in Rangoon, our second went to Woodstock School in Mussoorie, India, and the youngest one was with us. She was ten by that time, our baby born in Madras. I didn't like all this separation and that part of it was rather hard. But the kids seemed to survive it fairly well, especially the middle child. He did all right. And the older one got by but he really didn't like college and he was the one in the family who was a student. I think the trouble was he just wasn't in the right college.

Q: Well, he was awfully far from home, too.

INGRAHAM: For the first time. And he was younger than the other students. He'd

missed a whole year of school and they'd just jumped him up. In our various moves, he missed all of third grade for instance. I think sooner or later that catches up with you. He was one of the very youngest in his freshman class and also one of the smallest. It was quite a struggle for him, I think, and he really never did enjoy college, and he was the one I thought would be perfectly at home in college.

Q: I think it sounds like it was partly circumstances, maybe, too. Did he have grandparents?

INGRAHAM: My father....my mother, who was close to him, died not long before we left for Burma, at Christmas of '65, and we left the following summer and he went off to college that following September.

Q: Speaking of Christmas and holidays, you said you left for Madras on Christmas day?

INGRAHAM: We departed from Madras.

Q: How did that happen?

INGRAHAM: Well, Christmas wasn't really celebrated in Madras in those days. There was a huge Christian community and they sang Christmas carols beautifully but it was not a particularly big holiday. I think banks might have been closed on Christmas day but everything else was open. It wasn't an official holiday. And the airline was supposed to have left the day before but for some reason it was delayed so instead we left on Christmas in the afternoon. It was a very gloomy Christmas.

Q: I was going to say, the year we didn't have Christmas. Your children must remember it that way.

INGRAHAM: One thing I remember particularly about that departure was sitting in the living room waiting for the car to come to take us to the airport, and I was so depressed. I find it terribly depressing leaving posts. I had on a pair of stockings. The boys were sitting at my feet, playing with each other and trying to keep their travel clothes clean. Jim, who was five years old by that time, said "Susan has sore legs but it probably doesn't matter, does it, Johnnie?" He used to talk over everything with his older brother. John turned around and said, "She doesn't have sore legs, those are stockings, those are things American women wear." Jim had never seen me in stockings before. Anyway, we finally did get out to the airport and to Bombay. In Bombay who should meet us there but an old friend from our La Paz days, who took us to his house and fed us a Christmas dinner. He was married and had little children and there was a Christmas tree and so we had Christmas after all. We didn't expect that.

Q: Oh, that would have been so dreary! And then you arrived in the United States from Jakarta on Thanksgiving Day in 1960.

INGRAHAM: Yes. We arrived in Cochabamba on Thanksgiving also, by the way, and we did arrive...

Q: And there was nobody there to have you to dinner for Thanksgiving?

INGRAHAM: No, in Cochabamba there certainly wasn't. No, there was nobody there, period.

Q: And that was your first post, oh, dear.

INGRAHAM: I think we actually arrived the day before Thanksgiving on our way home from Jakarta, but we landed in New York and my parents came to New York along with my brothers, both of them and their wives, so we had a big meeting, a Thanksgiving family gathering in New York. Then I came back to Washington, and my parents took the children with them to North Carolina, while Ed and I tried to find a house. We had a couple of weeks to house-hunt, living in a hotel in Washington. Then we got our house and it was not quite finished. We moved in during January. We went down to North Carolina for Christmas. That's right, we arrived just before Thanksgiving.

Q: Well, then we go off to Islamabad.

INGRAHAM: From Burma. We had two years in the States in between, or almost two years. Maybe I didn't list that.

Q: Oh, Washington, yes. Because it goes from one page to the other. Yes, you were back in Washington for two years.

INGRAHAM: And then in Islamabad, let's see, what can I tell you about Islamabad. Once again, we moved right into our house which was very comfortable and out near the Margala Hills where we took walks every afternoon. We were completely out of children by this time. Two in university and Liz, the youngest, in Woodstock School in India. Once again, there was no high school in Islamabad. Or there was, but it went up to ninth and tenth grades and she was entering eleventh so she went off to Woodstock for two years. She'd get back now and then, at holiday times. In fact, that was probably the most exciting thing about Islamabad. We were there 1971 to '74 and the war with India, which ended with the establishment of East Pakistan as a separate country of Bangladesh, took place during our days in Islamabad. And Liz was over in India in school. That school is up in the mountains. It starts in April and runs right through until about Thanksgiving time. It closes at Thanksgiving and reopens at Easter because it's so snowy up in the mountains that it's difficult to live up there, especially since they don't have any heat in the buildings. It's an old missionary school, stoic. So we decided to drive over and pick her up at Thanksgiving. We got across the border into India and drove to New Delhi and visited with friends there and then went on up to Moosoori, which is another six hours uphill. Beautiful drives, but long hard trips. And collected her and came back down to New Delhi and had a big Thanksgiving in New Delhi with a whole bunch of American

Embassy people and some wonderful Indian friends that we had known for centuries, who had been local parents for Liz and for our son when he was over there in Woodstock. We started back to Pakistan. By this time the war was imminent on both sides of the border, both in the east and the west. We got to the border crossing and there was a barricade across the road and nobody around. We tried to move it and couldn't. Finally, a little boy came wandering out of nowhere and Ed told him we must get through. Finally an older man, probably a soldier dressed in civilian clothes, grudgingly moved the barricade. We got up to the border crossing and they grudgingly let us through to the Pakistani side. They were very...only because we were diplomats that we got through. We got over on the Pakistani side of the border and the Pakistani customs officer walked out with a tray of hot coffee, milky coffee. Oh, it was so welcoming. And we drove on through to Islamabad. The border was a very peculiar business in those days. You had to drive fifty miles down from Lahore on one side and cross over and then fifty back up to the main road. The two armies were of course all trained by the British and they all knew each other. They closed the borders at sundown and they played each others national anthems and lowered their flags. On the border crossings it was a very nice war. Anyway, we got into Lahore and our good friends there, with whom we usually stayed when we were in Lahore, were all gone. They were all up in Islamabad, living in our house. They had more or less closed down the whole city of Lahore except for the daddies were still in town but the families had left. That was the way it worked. And the families were either being sent off to Afghanistan or to Islamabad or wherever the Admin section decided to put them.

Q: But not home?

INGRAHAM: They did not send them back to the States at that point. We decided not to overnight in Lahore, decided we'd better get back. So we started up the GT road (Grand Trunk) this ancient and honorable route. It's an ancient road, it was built by the Moguls in the l600's and it really unites all of India. So here we are traveling on the GT road, which is just bumper to bumper with trucks and cars and bullock carts and everything else traveling. And there were all these beautiful Afghani style trucks coming down from Islamabad and Peshawar and Rawalpindi. They were painted bright colors and they had things like scenes of the Virgin Mary or bucolic scenes of camels or cows. Cows and pigs, things that you don't see very often in that part of the world. Very bright colored trucks and all of them had a sign above the windshield saying "In Givernment Service." Apparently they had all been commandeered for the war effort. All this traffic was coming down toward us and here we were working our way up to Islamabad. We got up to the house and found, first of all, on the gate post where our name generally was, a big sign put over it "George E. Miller, III". This was the son of our friends from Lahore, and he had turned our house into his house. (Laughter) So we got up to the house and we had just opened the trunk of the car to take out the luggage when this terrific air raid siren went off and the war had begun. If we'd been a day later, we couldn't have got through the border, or couldn't have got out of Lahore. We were terribly lucky to get back. We were home then for about three weeks. It turned out to be rather fun, to tell the truth. Had we known exactly how long the war was going to be, we would have enjoyed the whole thing. But there was a curfew and we had to block out the windows and what not and we

couldn't turn on lights anywhere except in one curtained room. That's what we settled for in our house. All the women and children who had been living in Islamabad--which by the way is a diplomatic enclave, an entire city built just for the government--had all taken off for other places, so there were all these lonely men and the Americans. The American women weren't forced to leave like the other foreigner women. So we had kind of a constant rotating dinner party. We would sit in the evenings, visiting with these foreign men who would eat dinner with us. I remember one conversation, an Englishman and a Belgian talking, and the Belgian, no it was a Frenchman and an Englishman. The Frenchman was saying that his family, the French wives, had had a terrible time getting up to Afghanistan. They'd got on a bus as scheduled and as soon as they got to the Khyber Pass the bus stopped and off-loaded all of them onto a rickety old non-air conditioned bus that took them the rest of the way. The fancy air conditioned bus they'd rented went back down and got another busload. The Englishman listened and he said "Oh, our women didn't have any trouble at all. We hired the Afridi line." The Afridis are the bandit tribe. That is their role in life. They are the bandits that control everything through the Khyber Pass. So they had the Afridi bus line. He said "We hired the Afridis and all the bribes were paid right here in Islamabad." (Laughter) Anyway, we would sit out on our upstairs balcony where we had some big potted trees. It was very comfortable in the evening. We used to sit up there and watch the sun go down and have our drinks and listen to the jackals that would start singing to each other across the hillside. Wild animals up in the Margala Hills. While the war was on, we would watch the Indian Air Force dropping bombs over the airport. We could see...it was like fireworks. And as I say, if I had been sure it was only going to last two weeks, which is what it did, I would have perhaps enjoyed the whole show. At least we had Liz home and our boys were not in that part of the world. It was all over very quickly. However, not too long after that war, a man came to the American Women's Club meeting. He was a world health man. I think he was a Swiss. He said he had just come out of the Thar Desert, which he described as a benign desert near the Pakistan/India border. There's desert on both sides. He said, in the two weeks of this war, first the Indian army came through into Pakistan and they burned the roof trees of the houses of the Thar desert people. Wood is almost impossible to come by. They just used it for firewood. Then the Pak army came back and pushed through to the other side. He said the war was only two weeks, but one million people are homeless in that desert. He had all this cloth that the Thar desert women embroider, and he was selling it. He said "They need the money and here's the cloth." It was done on old flour sacks and any sort of cloth. They had done this mirror work and beautiful embroidery, so we were all buying up the cloth like mad. And jewelry, beautiful silver jewelry that these desert people made and wore and traded. It just gave me an entirely different picture of one million people whose homes were ruined by this little skirmish.

Q: Echoes of that today.

INGRAHAM: Right, yes. Anyway, Pakistan was really very pleasant although our sympathies were always quietly with India. We always felt that it was a shame that the two countries were ever separated. It should be one nation. All the same, we certainly enjoyed our life in Pakistan and had a good time there. We came back from there and

once again...

Q: You were here for several years.

INGRAHAM: Once again, it was fairly short, shorter than we expected, about two years I think, not quite that long.

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BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Spouse: Edward Clarke Ingraham

Spouse Entered Service: 1947 Left Service: 1980
You Entered Service: Same Left Service:

Status: Spouse of Retiree

Posts:

1947-48	Cochabamba, Bolivia
1948-50	La Paz, Bolivia
1950-51	Hong Kong (evacuated to US, February 1951)
1952-54	Perth, Australia
1954-56	Madras India
1957	Washington, DC (language and area training)
1957-58	Ithaca, NY (Cornell University)
1958	Djakarta, Indonesia
1959	Medan, Indonesia
1959-60	Djakarta, Indonesia
1961-66	Washington, DC
1966-69	Rangoon, Burma
1969-71	Washington, DC
1971-74	Islamabad, Pakistan
1974-77	Washington, DC
1977-79	Singapore 1977-79
1979	Washington, DC
1979-80	Lake Forest, Illinois
1980	Washington, DC (Retired fall of 1980)

Spouse's Position: Principal Officer, Political Officer, DCM

Place/Date of birth: June 13, 1921, Vincennes, Indiana

Maiden Name: Susan Hartman

Parents (Name, Profession):

William Edward Hartman, businessman, established small advertising agency in Detroit, Michigan

Mary Frances Glass Hartman, housewife

Schools (Prep, University):

Bloomfield Hills High School, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 1939

National Park Junior College, Forest Glen, Maryland 1941

Simmons College, BSc, Boston, Massachusetts, 1943

Date/Place of Marriage: January 25, 1947, New York, NY

Profession:

Dartmouth College Alumni Magazine 1943-44

College and School Service Section, NY Times 1944-47

Children:

John Edward Ingraham, b. Cochabamba, Bolivia 9/19/48

James William Ingraham, b. Hendersonville, NC 3/15/51

Elizabeth Ann Ingraham, b. Madras, India 10/26/55

Volunteer and Paid Positions held:
At Post:
Cochabamba
Organized fund raising for hospital milk fund
La Paz

Red Cross volunteer
Perth

Fund raising for West Australian University
Madras
Leprosy clinic volunteer
Djakarta
Cub Scouts, American Women's Club activities
Islamabad
Helped set up village health clinics with American Women's Club

In Washington, DC:
Helped set up and worked as volunteer in integrated preschool, formed mainly of FS wives (the late Sara Rogers and Catherine and Ruth Forman were leaders, 1961-64)
Volunteer teacher in reading program in Washington, DC grammar schools (through Woman's National Democratic Club)
Collect dollars for Democrats, money for hungry, etc.

End of interview