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AMBASSADOR ROZANNE L. RIDGWAY

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INTERVIEW

Q: Could we begin by talking a little bit about your hometown and where you were born? I know you've done this before.

RIDGWAY: Let me go through and if I haven't covered all the points we can back up. I was born in St. Paul, Minnesota and shortly after my birth on what is called the 'west side of the city' we moved to a home near Hamline University, within one block of Hamline University and stayed in that home all of . . . well, my mother is still there, so I guess now it is maybe fifty-two years that that's been the family home. I was the first child of my parents' marriage but I had an older brother from one of my father's previous marriages. I was in a marvelous setting that I think has perhaps shaped a lot of the way I see people and my life, and this I have not put in my interviews, but I think in terms of understanding what I think was an advantage. My father had been married twice before and each time his wife had died. His second wife had left him with a young son, and he always said in later years he decided that he wasn't going to go through that experience again, so he married a very young woman and there was thirty years' difference between my parents. I was the first child of that marriage and later was followed by a younger brother. I had the advantage then of [what] I thought, was the ideal family. My older brother was spoiled because he was the eldest and I because I was the only girl and my younger brother because he was the baby.

Q: And you all lived together?

RIDGWAY: We all lived together, and, in addition, my mother's mother and three of my mother's siblings, a sister and two brothers, were with us for a substantial part of my early years, and as they grew up and went their own way, my grandmother spent many years with us. In fact, my grandmother shared my bedroom. That was long before the standard home, you know, was five bedrooms and three baths; it was a classic home of three bedrooms and one bath, and so my brothers had a bedroom and my parents did and my grandmother and I, and it was very much part of my childhood that my grandmother and I were together.

And so there was a family of six people at the dinner table and as I say, young aunts and uncles younger than my mother who were a part of that life. But we stayed in that home and the grade school was across the street and I went to the grade school there, and the high school was six blocks away, and when it came time to go the university, I was very much a child of that neighborhood, well known to people there, and they offered me a scholarship which at that time was half tuition. And so with a half tuition scholarship and living at home and working part-time, I was able to get through school with really no financial problems. One didn't spend a lot of money but it was comfortable for me. My father had been, across the years of his life, in many, many careers. He had started out as a school teacher, had been a superintendent of schools, had left that career and had become an executive with Goodyear Tire Company, with General Tire Company, and then left that career after the death of his second wife and simply started fresh again--I mean, I never knew my father in those settings--and was a tire salesman and sold truck bodies and the like at a place in south St. Paul, Minnesota called the Truckers' Terminal and Supply Company. He went away every morning and drove about eleven miles to work and then came home in the evening, and was a salesman all of his life. My older brother, now dead, who died of cancer when he was thirty-eight, was very much of my father's salesman mold, and later, while he was a truck driver--I don't know if you've seen these trucks around in any city--he was on a bread route for a while and then did Frito's potato chips.

Q: I know exactly what you mean.

RIDGWAY: That kind of a driver, and then you develop your own little market in your corner stores around the neighborhood. It was a close family, a very parent-oriented family. In those years, which were tough for so many families, my father was a salaried person and worked on commission as well, so we did quite well. His second wife had been a concert pianist so her beautiful piano and all of those things were a part of our home, and successively each of us was given piano lessons. My older brother couldn't stand it. I did somewhat better; I was accomplished as a mechanic on a piano, but I had no particular artistic talent. My younger brother gave it a try and just simply wasn't all that interested in it.

Q: What is the space between. . .

RIDGWAY: Let's see, my older brother was born in 1930, I in '35 and my younger brother in '42, so five and a half, six, seven years, I would say. Again, also with lots of space on either side, to be . . .

Q: To be sort of an only child; each one was an only child.

RIDGWAY: That's right.

Q: The fact that three generations lived together must have given you a feeling of solidarity.

RIDGWAY: Oh, it's marvelous; that's right. And my father was a great story teller in putting kids to bed at night. He was a family man, he loved his family, and particularly my younger brother, in my father's older years, benefitted from the story telling. You know, he was born in 1884, and my younger brother in 1942, so the stories that he could spin were of something that other kids just didn't have the advantage [of] and with my grandmother at the table, the same kind of thing. We discussed the day's events, I mean it was a dinner table with a lot of conversation. Everybody sat down at the some time. We ate at five, which nowadays is an obscene time to be eating,[laughter] but we would eat at five. My father was at home and we were all cleaned up and dinner was ready and we talked about the day's events and the newspaper, and we, as we grew older, had wild discussions on politics and issues and then generally all helped with the dishes. Except in the years that I was taking piano lessons, I was notorious for saying it was time to practice just about the time it was my turn to do the dishes, and I got by with some of that I suppose.

As I say, we were all spoiled. A church-going family, we were Presbyterian, we did Sunday school and all of those things. My father sang in the choir and so Sundays would usually begin, when we were younger, Sunday School at nine-thirty and then stay for church at eleven and then home for the Sunday dinner.

Q: Did you enjoy it?

RIDGWAY: I loved it. I mean the whole setting.

Q: And a specific meal on Sunday? Did you always have a roast beef?

RIDGWAY: Roasted chicken.

Q: Oh, you had chicken.

RIDGWAY: Switched to chicken. My younger brother to this day can't stand chicken. But roast beef, and a blade cut roast, always the blade-cut roast. I can't cook it, I have not been able to do it. My husband cooks it better than I. But it was either roast beef or chicken, and again, the same six of us and in the dining room.

Q: And in the dining room, with the best silver and everything?

RIDGWAY: Well, sometimes not, because the chicken particularly had to go in the oven before you went to church, so when you came back, if you didn't get it on the table in a hurry it was all going to be “falling off the bone," was the phrase.

Q: There was a lot of ritual in your life.

RIDGWAY: A lot of ritual, a lot of predictability, a lot of high standards of school work. My father put a--we still have his scores for his examination to teach in Ohio--he took them in 1902 and they were scores like ninety-seven and a hundred, and things like that. We had very high academic standards. My older brother who was very bright, hated school, couldn't get out fast enough, and I loved it, and my younger brother loved it. But my older brother was a wonderful fellow who knew exactly what he wanted to do, and it was to drive a truck some day and get through high school; never wanted to go to college. My father hoped that he would and always talked of it, but we all knew that my father was dreaming.

Q: Your father, was he a college man?

RIDGWAY: No, he was not, in those days you didn't have to be to teach and that kind of thing.

Q: But he was certainly oriented toward the field of education?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes, it was a family that read, that listened to the radio together. We listened to, I don't know if you remember after Walter Winchell in those days, there was a Manhattan Melodies Program.

Q: Oh, yes. Yes, I remember.

RIDGWAY: You know, light opera and as I say, the influence of my brother's mother, the concert pianist, meant that music and piano music and fine piano music was a part of the tradition. My father had enjoyed singing and he'd had this whole other life in fine homes on the east coast in the good years that we only vaguely knew about. He always talked about dinners with oysters on the half-shell. We were real Minnesotans and that just sounded ghastly to us as we sat around our table with the mashed potatoes and gravy and the vegetable. It was another world to us.

Q: He must have been a very adaptable man.

RIDGWAY: Oh, he was, he was a marvelously adaptable man, very much contained within himself. Quite, as far as I could tell, and even in later years, looking back at it, realizing what he had left and to have the kind of a job he did. I know my mother has

been disappointed over the years, as the newspapers have written of my life, to see him described as a gas station attendant because this Truckers' Terminal and Supply Company was gas and trucks and tires and he was specializing in that, because she knows what a proud man he was. At the same time, he never seemed troubled by having been in a world of, now I'm talking about a man who is quite old, so I mean twenty years in the high corporate life. He was a fine golfer. I never saw him play golf. I knew he played golf, I knew he'd had memberships, I knew he'd played with some of the Ohio tire families around Akron, but we never saw that.

Q: You say he was on the east coast?

RIDGWAY: Well, it was Ohio, Mansfield, Akron, that area. We just saw flashes of it, the way he dressed. He went off to work every morning; he always wore Brooks Brothers or Three G's suits and when he got to work he put a jacket or something on top. But he went off to work that way, always drove a Packard if he could and you could see the kinds of things that he liked and what he had been, but he made this switch and never showed a regret.

Q: It occurs to me that that should be one of . . .

RIDGWAY: He wanted a different kind of a life.

Q: Yes, but also for you growing up that way, it would seem to me, that this would be very useful to you to have your values right.

RIDGWAY: Well, I think that's true, and we were raised on choices. We got an allowance . . .

Q: Money obviously wasn't . . .

RIDGWAY: Money was not it, and we had enough, and we were comfortable. I thought we were rich when I was growing up. I realize now that he did marvelous things with a very moderate income. We got our allowance from a nickel to twenty-five cents as things went up. And we would get something for extra things. I can remember killing potato bugs in our Victory garden. I'd get a penny for ten of them or something. I couldn't kill one now, but as a kid that was great fun. But then, that was it. If you spent it all, you spent it all, and we made choices very early. We had rules, bed time rules and things like that. But I don't recall any great resistance to them. In later years, when my older brother was still alive, we would sit around and laugh about the rules. A little tighter for him, maybe another hour for me and another hour for my younger brother, and we would get to laughing at the classic family situation of who had it the strictest, but it was all in good fun.

Q: Now I noticed your mother's name was Coty?

RIDGWAY: Coté. C-o-t-e, with the accent on the E. She was French Canadian.

Q: Was your father of English origin?

RIDGWAY: English, I mean they were all mixed up. I used to say I was English and French, but I think he probably had some German. My mother was French Canadian . . . it's just a melange of . . .

Q: What they call an American cocktail.

RIDGWAY: Yes, very much an American cocktail. We were a very warm family with a lot of attention paid to what we were doing in school. A lot of attention paid to the lessons of "Don't lie," "Don't cheat," "Be polite," "Be courteous," say, "Thank you," "Be respectful of your elders." While we could all talk and all of the rest, we were trained early on, when you interrupt you say the right things. If there were adult visitors, you could listen, but you should be seen and not heard on some of those occasions. And we had a little schoolroom in the kitchen if anybody's grade started slipping, then what you did after school, you did the algebra problems on the kitchen blackboard, because my father was a brilliant teacher and did know how to teach better than some of the teachers I had.

Q: He kept a close eye on what you people were doing?

RIDGWAY: Always. And so did my mother.

Q: How would you classify your parents? As very sympathetic? Authoritarian?

RIDGWAY: Authoritarian? No, my father was certainly the kind of a figure who would command respect through presence and education and this put-together view, and certainly we were spanked when things were really awful that we had done, and we could be put to bed early, but that was both of my folks. But authoritarian, no, we knew what was expected of us and they made that all very clear and in turn they, I guess, must have done what we expected of parents.

Q: Were you close to your mother?

RIDGWAY: Oh, I suppose I wasn't close to either of my parents, but when I was about twenty or so, which would have made my mother forty, I suddenly realized, you know, "this is really a terrific gal," and we have been very, very, close friends in all of the years since.

Q: Can you remember what triggered this?

RIDGWAY: No, I really can't. Actually, it could have even been a little bit later than that, perhaps even closest when I came back from Manila, my first foreign assignment. I had

added a dimension to my life, and I think to my personality, that I had not had before, where I had sort of been bookish and not in the sense of introverted, but you know I didn't date in school. Occasionally I would, but I never found anybody I was terribly interested in, and I knew how to dance but I wasn't invited to dances and things, and I was working part time, so I would forgo a lot of things in the evening because I was working. And I hadn't had a lot of time to laugh or do all those things, and I realize now, my mother has told me since, how she worried that I would not have a chance to have fun. Manila gave me that chance. I was such a junior diplomat in Manila. It's one thing to be a junior diplomat at a small post, but I was the last name on a thirteen-page diplomatic list. And I had the worst job in the embassy, that, in fact, turned out in my personal terms to be a very good job, but I was able to date and dance and all of the things I hadn't had time for. And I think I came back looking like a more complete woman to her, and certainly a woman, at that stage I was twenty-five, and it was just there, that was all, it was substantially different than [before].

Q: And you had more in common, I suppose.

RIDGWAY: Many more things in common.

Q: Your mother, I gather, was not a role model for you. She was the typical stay-at-home-keep-the-family-together-housewife, was she?

RIDGWAY: Well, you see in those days we didn't talk about role models, so I don't know what she was in my life in that sense. She did stay home. She had very high standards as to what the home should look like, what we should look like. She could laugh, she was pretty, and we took vacations together and did all of those things, and I'm not sure I was looking for a role model. Whatever she was, she was an admirable figure, and as I say, has become a friend, and even though she had that kind of a background I even now discuss career questions with her. She's just got good sense.

Q: I'm sure she has. What I was thinking was that you didn't picture yourself as growing up and leading the life your mother lived, in that sense?

RIDGWAY: It never occurred to me.

Q: So she was not, in my terms, a role model. How early were you when you learned to read?

RIDGWAY: Oh God, two and a half, three. We were all read to.

Q: Sure, very early. Can you recall any of the books that you enjoyed when you were young?

RIDGWAY: We were raised on Child Craft. I don't know if you know any of that collection, you know the "Princess and the Pea", and the princesses who danced all night

long and broke off the diamond branches and "Mrs. Brown's Car", and "Rumpelstiltskin" and "Cinderella" and all of those.

Q: As you got older did you go into . . . I read somewhere that you are a fan of Agatha Christie.

RIDGWAY: Uh huh.
Q: When you were young, did you read the Nancy Drews?

RIDGWAY: I did, I read Nancy Drew, the Bobbsey Twins.

Q: It's amazing how many of you women read the Bobbsey Twins.

RIDGWAY: But then you know, during the war, what I call the war, World War II, there was this series that came out of books, and they sold for about thirty-nine cents. I remember the price for some reason; they were always penciled in the corner-- hard cover-- and it would be like Ann Sheridan does such and such, and Ann Sheridan as a flight nurse . . . some movie star of that sort. They must have sold these things on some kind of licensing arrangement. So I would read that. I was not that great a fan of Doctor Dolittle. There were a couple of other series I forget. I was a veteran library goer. The library was only two block away; it was next door to the church. One thing I should mention on this, I had the hardest time explaining to people, that although I came from what is now called a metropolitan area of St. Paul, Minneapolis--University of Minnesota, the Minneapolis Symphony with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting at that time--we lived in this little self-contained neighborhood around Hamline University with the grade school, the high school, the church, the library, my college, my part time job at Montgomery Wards, all within a mile.

Q: It sounds like the ideal.

RIDGWAY: It was a small town, and Mitropoulos I would listen to as part of the grade school music appreciation program, going to hear them, but we weren't theater goers. We all went to the movies together as a family on Friday nights, and then, during the summers as a kid, before I started the part time work, I was always at the library. There were some authors, you know, you just had to pursue every last book. Nancy Drew was among them, Cherry Ames. Cherry Ames, who was a flight nurse. I remember that.

Q: Cherry Ames. [laughter]

RIDGWAY: The Big Little Books--do you remember the Big Little Books? My older brother would read those, Don Winslow of the Navy, and Tarzan.

Q: Oh yes, of course.

RIDGWAY: Well, those were books around the house too.

Q: What about the Anne books of L.M. Montgomery, the Anne of Green Gables series?

RIDGWAY: No. No, in fact, my mother is reading those now, because of the PBS (Public Broadcasting System's television series), and she is telling me I should read them. No, I didn't read any of those.

Q: What about the Twin Books? Not the Bobbsey Twins, but the Mexican Twins and the Dutch Twins?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: You didn't read those?

RIDGWAY: No, I never even heard of them until just now.

Q: No, really? A lot of you ambassadors have read those. Of course you are all early readers. How did you get along with your brothers?

RIDGWAY: Fine, there was enough space, and actually then, my older brother and I, I think were just very, very close. We would fight and have problems but there was a point, it was about eighteen, twelve, and seven, and certainly by the time it was twenty-six, twenty-one and fifteen, we were just terribly, terribly close, all three of us.

Q: Well, did you play a great deal with your male siblings? Did you play a lot of boys' games?

RIDGWAY: It was a little hard because this grade school of course had a playground with it, and so my brothers' friends would be the ones playing softball or some game like that {AND} we would tag along. And, again, there was a break period. When he was about fourteen or so he was too old for us. And there were a lot of girls. The family across the street from us had eight kids and the family next door to us had five and they were all closer to my brother's age, but then there was another step down and there were lots of kids in the neighborhood.

Q: And you were just sort of grouped together? Tag at night and . . .

RIDGWAY: Yes, and sometimes the older boys would all be standing under the street light down at the corner about eight o'clock at night and the little kids who wanted to be sort of close to them would be in another little circle, and we'd play kick the can and "Annie, Annie, Over" and things like that.

Q: You said that you liked to be by yourself at times and you liked to have time to yourself to read and so forth. Did you have a favorite place you'd go to do this?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: A tree-house or . . .

RIDGWAY: No, no, we didn't have a tree-house. One of the neighbor boys had a tree-house. We'd sit out on the back porch, wasn't a big porch across the front of the house or across the back of the house, but there was a porch.

Q: How about gardening? Did you do any gardening?

RIDGWAY: Well, we had the Victory garden during World War II.

Q: Of course, you were still little then.

RIDGWAY: I was still little. No, we didn't do any gardening.

Q: Except you were supposed to kill the bugs.

RIDGWAY: Kill the bugs, that's right. [laughter]

Q: Did you have any problems in your family with illness? Of your siblings? Was anyone seriously ill?

RIDGWAY: My younger brother was. My younger brother in 1951-52, I forget exactly now, had polio. That was quite a trauma for the family.

Q: I can imagine. It was during the summer, was it?

RIDGWAY: October of that year, I think. I was a junior, so it must have been the Fall of '52, '51 or '52. I was a junior in high school.

Q: Was there a fear that he might die?

RIDGWAY: Not after it was discovered what it was. Then it was the fear of the severe paralysis. But he came home, he had a lot of weakness, but when he came home, then the ritual with my mother is just beyond you. We had an old kettle she used to make bean soup in and she would put the damp cloths made of cut up blankets in that with water and put them in the oven and then you just keep wrapping him always in these hot cloths. It was a really rough job, but he ended up six-three and straight as an arrow. But it was a lot of work.

Q: There are three types of polio. I presume he had that bad one.

RIDGWAY: That bad one. That spinal type of thing that could have left you crippled, but I can still see her . . .he'd be stretched out on the floor and that heat would just hurt him so, and the stretching and the rubbing, but they did it.

Q: What effect did this have on you? Because that is a tough time for a girl to have her mother's attention on somebody else.

RIDGWAY: Yes, but my mother and I weren't that close in those years. I was pretty independent. I was working and . . .

Q: You were working in high school?

RIDGWAY: After school. My classes would end at two and I worked five or six hours after that.

Q: Every day?

RIDGWAY: Uh huh, [and] all day Saturday.

Q: Five or six hours every day? Good Lord! You must have had a lot of energy.

RIDGWAY: Well, I did. I got sick at one point in my senior year. I had just let myself go. School was easy, so I would come home and study. My father would come and pick me up so I didn't have to come home down the dark streets. We all just chipped in. My father always said from the time we were this tall, "Work is the mark of a civilized man." In those days they hadn't made the gender changes. We all just knew that. We made our own way, but we did so with pride.

Q: Why were you working so hard? Were you expecting to go on to college and you knew you had to save your money?

RIDGWAY: Oh, I knew I was going on to college.

Q: You knew that, that was a given, and this was sort of working towards it?

RIDGWAY: Well, I was saving my money for it.

Q: And you liked studying?

RIDGWAY: I liked studying and it was never any particular problem.

Q: Always at the top of your class?

RIDGWAY: Always the top of my class.

Q: Would you say that you are a woman with a great deal of energy?

RIDGWAY: Less now than I had as a youngster, and [if] there were days you would see me you would think I was a woman with no energy at all. I treat myself differently now. I work normally a fourteen-hour day, and I have since July of '85, and that's an average. I mean, it's expected. I keep asking myself, "Am I a workaholic?" and I'm not; I go home when the desk is clear and when I'm confident that I can say to the secretary [George Shultz, Secretary of State] can answer any questions he asks me about the things I am responsible for. On the other hand, that will often mean that on Sundays I won't change clothes. I decide I have to do something messy, sloppy, wicked, whatever, and so I won't stray from a bathrobe, coffee, and a totally crazy book to be reading.

Q: Good sensible thing to do, I'd say. Recharge your batteries.

RIDGWAY: And I have found that it keeps my brain from being battered, and so in that respect I have as much energy as it takes to get done what I think I have to do, and then I turn it off. And I can become a slug in an instant.

Q: Good for you. It's very good that you can compartmentalize like that.

RIDGWAY: Well, I don't enjoy it completely, in that I end up with a guilty conscience saying there are other things I should be doing, but common sense overwhelms that, and I don't carry an awful lot of burden around on that.

Q: You look just as young as you did when I met you a year ago.

RIDGWAY: I'm glad you said that; there are days it gets to me.

Q: Well, I can imagine, with such a responsible job. That, more than anything else, I should think would wear . . . and high pressure.

RIDGWAY: High pressure and a very visible job, as well.

Q: Exactly, exactly. What did you think you would grow up to be?

RIDGWAY: A teacher.

Q: You thought you'd be a teacher?

RIDGWAY: Everybody told me I was going to be a teacher, so I thought I was going to be a teacher. The teachers all wanted me to be a teacher. My father had wanted my older brother to be a teacher, then it was going to be my turn, and then my younger brother would be a teacher.

Q: Did you have any teachers of your own that you looked up to, that you thought, "Well now, there's quite an interesting person. I'd like to be like that".

RIDGWAY: No.
Q: Not even in college?

RIDGWAY: No, I met some very nice people, I met some very decent people, but I never wanted to be like any that I ever saw.

Q: When you were little did you join the Girl Scouts?

RIDGWAY: No, I hated that stuff. I kept trying, I joined Camp Fire Girls one time because a friend was in Camp Fire Girls and the first time they told me to sew a bead on my vest, I was out, forget it, you know. I played on some little softball teams and things, but I just wasn't interested in that stuff.

Q: Mother taught you the womanly arts, did she?

RIDGWAY: Not really, no. I can put a button on, but not if I can pay somebody else to do it. And we never had sort of formal cooking lessons: "Now, you and I, dear, will do this." It was never girls in the kitchen and boys outside. Anyhow we were such a close family you all ended up in the kitchen. And if you look back through our family albums, as I happened to be doing the other evening, there are some pictures there of a birthday, just before I went to Manila, and everybody was in the kitchen. And that has always been the case. My grandmother would mash the potatoes, my father would carve the meat in the kitchen, we kids would hold plates while mother was serving and anyhow we never really wanted to be apart from where the action was.

Q: From what you said, little things that you just let drop, such as your father wanted your brother to be a teacher, and then you, and then your other brother, it sounds as if there were no gender distinctions made in your family.

RIDGWAY: That's right. There were none. I had a terrible time explaining that to the women in this building. They think I have failed them because I'm not angry, and I have no reason to be. I can look back now and say well, maybe I should have been angry then, but I had no basis for feeling that I couldn't be anything I wanted to be. The same for all three of us.

Q: You seem remarkably free from any of those hang-ups. I have heard you speak, and it comes through very clearly that you're not an angry woman at all.

RIDGWAY: No, no . . .

Q: It goes way back.

RIDGWAY: It goes way back, we were all treated the same.

Q: What hobbies did you have besides . . .

RIDGWAY: None, I liked sports, I liked to read.

Q: Did you ever play with dolls?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes, that's the joke in the family. I must have had dozens of dolls which my mother picked out because they were the dolls that she wanted. Beautiful miniature furniture, beds, tables, whatever, and my favorite game was playing office. You recall the good old days when the cheese would come in a wooden box, and I would use that and my father's cancelled checks and sort them by alphabet, or sort them by number. I don't know what I was doing with them, but I would be sitting at what was supposed to be the table at which the miniature china was played with, and instead I was playing office. And all of these expensive dolls were thrown in this doll bed, much to my mother's horror.

Q: So you really didn't like dolls?

RIDGWAY: No, and I was good at sports, and I liked softball and things of that sort.

Q: Were you a tomboy?

RIDGWAY: Yes, very much so, and tagged after my brother a lot.

Q: All of these things certainly come through. It's good preparation if you are going to get into a business where you have to compete with men.

RIDGWAY: That's right.

Q: Your education was entirely in the public schools?

RIDGWAY: Yes, until college.

Q: Now, what about high school? When you were in high school, did you do anything in the writing line on the school paper?

RIDGWAY: I was editor of the school pa
per. I wasn't all that good a writer, but I had been editor of the grade school paper. I just did it. I mean, people would ask me to take these things on and I would do them, but I don't think I ever took a great deal of satisfaction from them. I edited the school paper, I was president of the Girl's Athletic Association, the Red Cross, the International Relations Club, you name it. I mean, I was always involved.

Q: Well now, International Relations . . . that's the first clue we've got about where you were going. Was that meaningful to you at all?

RIDGWAY: No, not at all. But I liked the world around me and we always discussed these things at home. The school had an International Relations Club, so I would just go. I was often just collecting things to do, more than was expected. "You should have extra-curricular activities" and so on. I had them.

Q: And you were popular among your peers, obviously, if you were president?

RIDGWAY: I would mention that it was somewhat different. I mean there are several kinds of popular. I was a part of a group, yes, and Homecoming Queen and somebody else might be the Valentine Sweetheart and I would be the editor of the school paper. And I would say, more respected, treated with, as I look back on it, a considerable degree of distance. But I was a part of that group, had lots of girl friends and we all learned to smoke together and all of those things. I don't know whether they've quit or not. But I certainly would never have been anybody's most popular person, because it wasn't that kind of popularity.

Q: But the teachers . . . you were probably one who was looked up to and voted most likely to succeed, or something . . .

RIDGWAY: Yes, all of that stuff.

Q: All of that stuff, yes, I get the picture.

RIDGWAY: But always with the sense of compartmentalization, as if you were somebody they didn't quite understand. There wasn't any animosity, there was just a distinction.

Q: What were your main interests about this time?

RIDGWAY: Getting through school.

Q: Just getting through school?

RIDGWAY: Get on to something that wasn't . . .

Q: And the idea of being a teacher didn't appall you?

RIDGWAY: It was ordinary. I wasn't being asked to teach at the time, so . . . it seemed a perfectly safe thing to do. Never thought of business. I wasn't interested in the sciences. I struggled with math and if I hadn't had that second or third hour of teaching at home, I think I would have had a real time with it. I came to grips with it over the years with my father helping out, and was good at it, but I didn't like it, and science . . . I did well in

them, but I was really memorizing everything and I never understood the concepts. In fact, I would guess that in terms of conceptual thinking, which I like to think I'm quite strong at now, I was slow in maturing. There are lots of things I'm slow in sort of incorporating into my life. Not with any disadvantage, but just, it was that way. Obviously I was choosing to grow and learn in a different life.

Q: Yet, you don't sound as though you were driven.

RIDGWAY: No, I was certainly determined I was going to be number one in anything I did, but it was easy.

Q: Well, of course, all of these things that you're telling me certainly would have a bearing on whether or not you went out with the boys in your class.

RIDGWAY: Yes, that's right.

Q: Because you obviously you could run rings around them.

RIDGWAY: I had a friend in the eighth grade and I think that was probably the last time I was seriously paired with anybody. That was in the eighth grade.

Q: Also it would account for why you enjoyed being with older people, your brother and his friends--more comfortable with older people, wouldn't you say?

RIDGWAY: Well, I was at least as comfortable with . . . but again, my mother was so young that it wasn't as if both parents were older. It's just that they weren't doing anything that I really cared to do.

Q: Now, when it came time to going on to college, you had had your sights set on Hamline right along, had you?

RIDGWAY: Well I had, it was there, it was a block away and the professors lived in the neighborhood around us, the daughter of the president was . . .

Q: You knew them?

RIDGWAY: I knew everybody. And from a cost standpoint, it meant that I could live at home, I had lunch at home. I was able to go back and forth. It was really an extension of high school for me.

Q: I see. How large a college is it?

RIDGWAY: It's up to about twelve hundred now, it was maybe nine when I was there. Affiliated with the Methodist Church, had a chapel requirement and really, our first two

years were almost all in required courses, in a language, science, philosophy or religion, the arts, music and that kind of thing.

Q: What were your favorite subjects?

RIDGWAY: Well, this is where the change came. I took along with every other freshman something called survey or history of modern civilization. I had registered as a political science major with a view to teaching political science and I think if you went back through all my documents, it says, "plans to be a teacher of political science." I didn't know what political science was but it sounded good, and I liked politics. I took this modern history survey course, and I watched this professor with a blackboard at his back tackle about a thousand years of humankind's history, and just make it the most interesting thing I had ever heard, and I instantly switched my major to history.

Q: Well that ought to stand you in good stead, I should think.

RIDGWAY: It did. I took a minor later in political science, or a second major actually, in political science but I switched to history and then I was really stuck. I didn't know quite what I was going to do with it, and teaching has always been, "to teach political science." I think most people thought I would teach history. I had also come to the conclusion I didn't want to be a teacher. I saw everybody studying methods and materials and . . .

Q: Would this be about your second or third year?

RIDGWAY: First year.

Q: Oh, really, in your first year?

RIDGWAY: I was privately changed. I didn't say an awful lot to anybody but I just learned about the Foreign Service. Pat Byrne [Patricia Byrne, ambassador to Mali and Burma] was featured in a Life magazine article in the mid-'50s and it was the first I'd ever heard of the career. And then I read Time magazine and things like that and I would begin noticing references to career diplomats or Foreign Service. I just quietly went about thinking in those terms. I didn't tell anybody, but I just thought about it.

Q: Oh, I see, and did you sort of fit yourself for it by studying languages?

RIDGWAY: Well, the language was required by the university and I just kept taking history.

Q: Of course, French.

RIDGWAY: No, I took Spanish. I took history then one day in my junior year, first half of my junior year, some Foreign Service officer on leave came to the college with a little

recruiting speech and had the application forms. So I took the exam in the summer between my junior and senior years, and here I am.

Q: Just like that, so you went back and finished your college?

RIDGWAY: Actually they wouldn't take me because I was too young, so I finished my senior year.

Q: You have to be at least twenty-one don't you?

RIDGWAY: Yes, I passed the oral in the first semester of my senior year and at the end of my oral they said I really needed to have something more in the way of economics and so I went back and took some more economics and public finance in the last semester of my senior year, 'cause I had finished all my majors by that stage. I forget the dates. I get to telling the story differently. It was either nine or four days after graduation I came to Washington and I was sworn in thirty years ago this year.

Q: Is that so?

RIDGWAY: Uh huh.

Q: My goodness, what were your odds at the time, of getting in? How many women came in with you?

RIDGWAY: Six.

Q: Six and you, seven altogether?

RIDGWAY: No, five plus one.

In a class of forty-two. It was the old fiscal year. It was June of '57, so it was a large class, whatever money they had left, there were forty-two of us and six were women. I'm the only one left.

Q: You're the only one left, the others drifted away?

RIDGWAY: Marriage, one suicide, marriage, left, that kind of thing.

Q: The attrition rate was much worse than among men?

RIDGWAY: Well, those were also the years you had to leave if you married.

Q: Oh, that's true, of course. Now, were you ever asked, either in your security clearance or at your oral examination, any of those terribly male chauvinistic questions that I've been hearing from other people?

RIDGWAY: I was asked if I were engaged. I was not. Did I plan to marry? I said I assumed so, but that I wasn't engaged at the moment.

Q: That's the extent of what they asked you.

RIDGWAY: Yes, yes.

Q: Can you recall anything about your oral exam?

RIDGWAY: Well, I think the phrase is, as I recall, I really nailed it. But I went to the small school. I was accustomed to talking. We wrote blue book examinations. I never did take a multiple choice exam at the college. The questions were compare or contrast, or what was the significance of, and I had been raised on four years of college examination that way. And I had been taught at home, I mean we all spoke at home all of the time. My older brother had gotten into trouble in school one time because he tried to pretend he knew something he didn't know, and so that always become the motto in the family, "If you don't know it, you don't know it." So I was asked a lot of questions that I didn't know, and said I didn't know. That really was it. It never occurred to me that I would fail. I realize now the odds were incredible in the ’’50s that a twenty-one-year-old, in fact at that time barely twenty-one, would have sailed through the way I did.

Q: I know. It's amazing, it really is.

RIDGWAY: So I wasn't nervous or anything, because of course I would pass. I think that now I'd be scared to death. [Laughter]

Q: I think that's lovely. You weren't nervous because there was no question about it. All right. Well, we're doing very well now. It's quite obvious you've done this before.

RIDGWAY: Not to this detail. most people don't . . .

Q: But your thoughts are very orderly.

RIDGWAY: I have a tough taskmaster on the seventh floor. I try to stay orderly.

Q: I should say. Can you recall any other anecdotes or any funny, interesting things about when you first entered the service, or how your family reacted or that sort of thing?

RIDGWAY: Oh, my family was quite startled, I mean, here I was . . . had lived at home all of my life in this very close family setting and I suddenly come one day and say, "I'm really going to join the Foreign Service," and they got accustomed to that and the examination and everything, I was working one day and I would always call home to see if I had any mail, because I was waiting for the results to come. I called one day and mother said, "Well, the letter is here." And I said, "Please open it " and she did, and I said,

"Well?" She said, "Oh." I said, "Did I fail?" She said, "I've never seen such low scores." And I said, "Mother, please, are they over seventy?" "Well, yes, they are." "Don't worry about the rest of it." [Laughter]

Q: That's our standard, right?

RIDGWAY: Yes. But it became very much a family project to send me off. My father helped me pick out a big trunk, and I needed a loan to get started because we had really paced it to the last day of school and he was in the hospital for some minor surgery at the time. I remember taking the loan papers up there so that he could sign them, because I had no credit and I needed a co-signer to get started going off to Washington. I came here to Washington and I went to the A-100 course and I looked around. And on this one, I've reflected a lot over recent years. I don't know what it takes to be successful in the Foreign Service. I know that my . . . I have seen the records, so I know that I was placed in the lower third . . . quartile of my entering class by the evaluators of the A-100 course, and I can only be amused by that at this stage of the game. I don't know what they thought they were looking for, but the evaluators clearly were Foreign Service officers.

I asked myself, "Do the differences mean that I'm not going to make it or that they're not going to make it?" It wasn't an active question in my mind, but I know it was there. And there was a lot of attempt at socializing in the class, and we went to 1800 "G" Street. It was a Foreign Service club of some kind, and for the first class party. They were drinking manhattans and martinis and talking about David Reisman's "The Lonely Crowd." We did not read David Reisman's "The Lonely Crowd". I had never heard of it, and I realize now what a great difference there is. Samuelson was the economics textbook then, as now. We had not used Samuelson in my economics courses. So here are all of these people pontificating on Samuelson and Reisman, names I had never heard before, drinking drinks I'd never seen. My family all smoked, my family would have a drink, it was never said that I couldn't have a drink, but we didn't drink manhattans and martinis. We were served tom collinses or gin fizzes or something of that sort.

This was all a new world and I wasn't so . . . well, I didn't fit. In class, people were . . . I never asked a question in class. I didn't know enough to ask a question, and when they got all done with the lectures I still didn't know enough to ask a question and so my ratings, as I read the narrative; you know: silent, passive, not an active participant in the class questions or the class activities. But we all have different ways of assessing where we are and what's going to be required and I guess I must have been in what I now recognize as my "watching and waiting and coming to grips with a better understanding of things" mood. They were wrong and I was right.

Q: You certainly were. I mean, that has been proved in spades.

RIDGWAY: But it was not an easy time. I lived up on Dupont Circle with two other gals and had some of those classical experiences where you sign a lease and three of you divide the rent and one of them turns up pregnant and you get left with the lease and you

have to divide by two and it makes a big difference to the budget. Trying to change a wardrobe from a college wardrobe to a work wardrobe and have a little bit of money left over.

Q: Clothes were still pretty formal in those days, weren't they? Gloves and hats and, you know, girdles.

RIDGWAY: Yes, they were, when I came out of . . . oh, yeah, the girdles. God . . . pantyhose, I think, were more liberating than anything in the '60s. But when the class graduated from the A-100 I got the job that was probably the least desirable in the class. But you know, again, I know people get annoyed with me when I say this, but I was lucky in that I learned something everywhere I went. I certainly learned in the A-100 course that I didn't have to be like everybody else, and that I simply wasn't. I couldn't fit that mold.

The job I got coming out of the A-100 course was answering public correspondence in the old International Educational Exchange Service, called IEES. [It was] part of the Department of State but it was at 19th and K, so the world was here in this building and I was at 19th and K, and I was working in an office of women. But I had a supervisor who was willing to tell me, "This is what needs working on." She said, "You know, you may think this diffidence is charming, but every time you come in this office you look as if you have one foot set ready to run out again." She was right. Another time I took in a letter and she asked me, "Is this the best you can do?" I didn't know what the right answer was, so I said, "I don't know." She said, "Well, take this back until you know." It was nicely done, it wasn't rude. So I took it back out, I looked at it, and I went back in and I said, "Yes, this is my best". I really didn't . . . I guess it was very human . . . I didn't want to tell her yes or no until I knew what she thought of it. And I said, "Yes," and she read it and said, "Thank you," and signed it.

The standard has been imposed ever since: when you put it on somebody's desk, are you prepared to say, "This is the best I can do?" She did not give me terrific ratings, [just] average ratings. On that old scale of something or other to six, I got three pluses and fours. I was still a language probationer. But I learned a lot. I was sort of safe, as well, from what I even see today in the Service, which is that too-quick an acquisition of some of those corridor techniques that sort of substitute being able to get around in the system for knowing what you're doing. So I spent two years there, and then my next assignment was as personnel officer in the Philippines, also a traditional sort of forgetter kind of assignment, but that was a worthwhile assignment as well.

Q: And what skills did you pick up there?

RIDGWAY: Not a one in terms of my professional skills, but I was the third of three personnel officers. I was at that time, that birthday party I was telling you about with everybody in the kitchen would have been my twenty-fourth. So I went out a few days after my twenty-fourth birthday, a long way from home. In fact I had come here, you see.

The department offered me overseas or Washington and I said Washington, because I wanted to grow up a little bit away from home, but not all the way.

Q: You didn't travel a great deal growing up, so this was a big step.

RIDGWAY: No, family holidays in Omaha and Ohio, but that was about it. And I just knew, in fact, I knew from the telephone call, my mother took the call, when I was still in Minnesota, and said the Foreign Service was calling, the security had been finished, the medical had been finished. They were calling to tell me I would be in the June class and what kind of an assignment did I want, Washington or overseas? She never said a word to me, and I said "Mother I think I'm going to say Washington. I don't think I'm ready to go overseas yet." And she said. "Well, that sounds like a good decision." So that's what I told them, so I came here first, by choice.

Q: Not only that; you'd never lived away from home before.

RIDGWAY: That's right.

Q: That's a big step.

RIDGWAY: So I went out to Manila in this funny little job; I was the third of three personnel officers, and what I learned then in the way of regulations and the rest has all been overtaken by the years of changing regulations. But I had an office tucked way back in the corner and I was something called Personnel, in a mission that had nine hundred Americans. I have heard of more things that people can do to themselves, their lives, their loved ones, and I've just sort of come to . . . I'm unshockable today on what trouble people can get themselves into, what tangles money and sex and liquor and everything can be. But I think I was a good listener. I think I came to understand a much broader world of the human condition than a lot of people I know. They just knew they could come and see me in that back office and they were sort of inching up on bringing their problem officially to the front part of the office. But there I was, tucked back there, and they could just come in and tell me what a mess it was. And there were a lot of things that I had never heard of before, didn't know people did those things or could get themselves in such a mess, and so I learned from that. I have not been shocked since that. Disappointed, but I haven't been shocked.

Q: Sounds like a very good job to take early on.

RIDGWAY: It helped me grow up. My own background, things weren't hidden from us, but there was just no exposure to that kind of thing.

Q: No, because the press was not as open as it is now. There are many things you can talk about now.

RIDGWAY: The extremes of wealth and poverty that exist in the world, the role of diplomacy, the limitations on diplomacy; it was good in a totally non-office fashion.

Q: Did you deal only with the American staff, or did you also deal with the . . .

RIDGWAY: No, I also handled local personnel, it was called at that time. Did a lot there. In fact, became in charge of local personnel. I knew many of them and anyhow they were all very sympathetic. They knew I was the person that was so far down the list that, you know, I never got invited anywhere or did anything. I dated regularly. I must have had a string of boy friends and men friends in my life. I went to all the dances, I went to all the nightclubs, I did all the gambling that was on limits, and that kind of thing. I just made up for every dance I'd ever missed in high school and every date I'd never had, and had a wonderful time.

Q: You were finally with people where you belonged. It makes a difference.

RIDGWAY: Yes. And could do that kind of thing.

Q: Now, after Manila you came back--no, you didn't--you went to Palermo.

RIDGWAY: No, I didn't; I went to Palermo, but I came home from Manila in November of '61 and it was quite clear then that my father simply wasn't going to make it. I was trying to help the family at the time, but I was only still an FSO-7 and . . .

Q: Was this compassionate leave you came home on?

RIDGWAY: No, it was home leave. It was home leave and transfer, to take Italian language training and go to Palermo. My father died on March 20th of 1962 while I was in Italian language training. It would be about twenty-five years ago this week. I came back for that. My mother had been tending him for five years, she was . . . she had let herself go. She was, at that stage, would have been what? in her mid-forties, and she had let so many problems go. No sooner had my father died then she got desperately ill and she was in the hospital, major surgery, and later it was shingles and things of that sort, so it was not an easy time, but at least I was home within telephone reach and in Italian language training. And then I went out to Palermo in the summer of '62 as a vice consul.

Q: And this was a change of pace. You were a visa officer?

RIDGWAY: I was a visa officer.

Q: How did you enjoy it?

RIDGWAY: I loved it. I had a wonderful time. I tell all the junior officers who say that it's beneath them that those are the best years they're ever going to have, and the only time they are going to be able to tell stories about. Again, it's that human condition that . . .

Q: Well, probably your first stint helped you a great deal, didn't it? That is, in understanding people and knowing who's honest . . .

RIDGWAY: Well, by that time, you never know who's honest and who's not when you drive them to such pressure on immigration and the limitations. At that time (I've never forgotten the figures) the quota for Italy was 5,666 a year with hundreds of thousands of people backed up. I started out in the immigrant section which gave you a chance to nail your language down and be a little more comfortable with it because so much there was in the way of statements required by law and you could memorize them and work with them, and then after a year move to the non-immigrant section where you had to have the greater language skill, and try to make that judgment who will stay and who won't. But who's lying and who's not, and whose documents are false and whose aren't, and it's arbitrary; you have some sense of it, but you can still be wrong.

Q: Did you feel that your extreme youth was a drawback?

RIDGWAY: No, never. Some of those things never occurred to me. I thought I was doing what I was supposed to be doing, sort of growing up, through a position and acquiring responsibility as I went along.

Q: Because you certainly were very young to come into the Service. You may be the very youngest. I'm not sure. Well, how did you live in Palermo, what sort of . . .

RIDGWAY: I had an apartment. I had a maid that wasn't very good. By that time I was even deeper into the credit union because it was unfurnished quarters, so I bought the bedroom set, some living room furniture and a stove and a refrigerator.

Q: You were living alone, were you?

RIDGWAY: I was living alone, yes. Had to borrow enough also to buy my first car, which was a Fiat 600 that cost about $900. I was beginning to put some of the few little pieces onto my life in that way. And I dated a very nice Italian fellow. We all did. The post was fourteen officers and staff. Eleven of us were single. We ranged in age from oh, twenty-three, twenty-four, on up to mid-fifties in that single group, and we all just had a wonderful time.

Challenging, but we were, unlike Manila, where I was most often with the American crowd and dating and doing high school-college kinds of things in a totally American setting, now Palermo was my first real foreign assignment, foreign culture, foreign language, no outside American support systems, and it was a very meaningful assignment. I enjoyed that.

Q: And a wonderful country to be in too.

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes, so rich in artifacts . . .

Q: And you were able to get around.

RIDGWAY: With my little 600 went anywhere. You could go anywhere. You could go around the island or cut through the island or criss-cross the island. But I spent most of the time there on Sicily. I got to Naples once, and I went to Florence once, and I went to Rome once, and I took one holiday in Seville, but I didn't travel a whole lot.

Q: When you had the chance, did you swim and boat and that kind of thing?

RIDGWAY: Swimming. I'm not a real boater, but I enjoy swimming.

Q: What sort of sports were you able to do in Manila?

RIDGWAY: In Manila I golfed, played tennis, swimming. I tried flying but I decided I didn't like it.

Q: Oh really? I would have thought you'd love it.

RIDGWAY: No, I didn't, I really didn't. I tried again, in fact, when I got back to the States with some of the groups from Manila that were then back here, and they too would have thought, and therefore wouldn't I try it again? We followed Route 50 up toward Baltimore and picked out some clover leaves and I was helping trace them at the controls and the rest, and I said, "I really don't enjoy this." [Laughter]

Q: I guess that's one of those things you are born liking, or not. So you look back on your first foreign assignment with great nostalgia.

RIDGWAY: The first real foreign assignment was Palermo. I do with Manila as well, but Manila was not a Foreign Service assignment. That was from U.S. . . .

Q: That was US atmosphere.

RIDGWAY: Totally an American atmosphere.

Q: And now you knew the difference because you had seen the other. What particular skills do you think you picked up in Palermo?

RIDGWAY: Well, as with all these officers, I worked with a large staff of Foreign Service nationals, much older than I, far more experienced than I. I've been told . . . this sounds funny . . . I've been told in later life, most recently on this job, that I and this entire bureau have an arrogance which people find very difficult. I think the one thing I brought to my career was that I was not arrogant and I had learned, really, through my first three assignments, which were not the cream-of-the-crop for assignments, tucked away in small

corners, you know, I had really come to appreciate people, and I think I learned to be a good supervisor in Palermo. I learned to work with people even as I understood that I had responsibilities for them and I think that was the main thing that I got out of it; an appreciation for how a whole mission works together, and the importance of Foreign Service nationals. I had a large staff in Manila as well, but it was not mine to supervise.

Q: That's an interesting thought.

RIDGWAY: But I did learn there, and then by the end of that period, in truth, I was facing a degree of frustration. At the time I left Palermo I had been six years making FSO-6. I had been a language probationer, so that held me down. Then I didn't have competitive jobs and I had perfectly truthful efficiency reports which had been discussed with me throughout the year. People had told me where I needed to grow and change and things of that sort. But I really sensed at that stage--I was about twenty-eight--that I should be past the proving-myself time. I had looked at the Service, the Service had looked at me. When was I going to get to do the political work? And, in fact, it turned out that that is how it broke then, at the end of that assignment

Q: Well, let me see, the sixties . . . yes, in the sixties we had cones, didn't we?

RIDGWAY: No, not quite, not that early.

Q: Not that early, okay. I'm never quite certain; I know they discussed it for a while.

RIDGWAY: That's right, it was under discussion.

Q: So that you, in effect, did not have any particular specialty. You were wherever they put you.

RIDGWAY: As you can see, I did not. Yes.

Q: But you were sort of getting stuck in the consular.

RIDGWAY: It was either going to be consular or admin, you can see.

Q: So in 1964, then, you came back to the State Department.

RIDGWAY: That's right.

Q: And--no, even then it was another year before you made five. Do you want to discuss what you did back at State then?

RIDGWAY: Let me tell you how that broke, because when I left Palermo I was assigned from Palermo as political officer in the Hague. Without a lot of fuss I was assigned as political officer in the Hague, and I was very excited about it. And I left Palermo, I got on

the airplane and said good-bye to this gorgeous Italian who had been in my life, and the pilots went on strike. And so I got off the plane and I went back to B. J. Jones' home. You've met B. J . . .

Q: Indeed I have.

RIDGWAY: . . . the telephone rang from the office saying, "Washington is on the other line. Are you still here?" And I said, "No, I'm not." I knew I had to get home. I'd had a wonderful experience, but I really wanted to get back to Minnesota after two years in this totally foreign atmosphere. And so I said, "No, I'm not." And I went to Minnesota. I was then notified that because I had been unavailable I had lost my assignment to the Hague as political officer. So I spent a very long home leave the summer of '64 wondering what kind of a job I would get, when I then got a letter from George Vest welcoming me to the NATO job across the hall. So, again for those who plan and conspire and lay out all of the charts, I never touched it, and to this day George swears that he was given twelve final folders for that job. I was the only woman. He went through them all and I got the job because I had the skills he wanted.

Q: He told me that last week.

RIDGWAY: Did he? And they have to have been skills of willingness, application, and that kind of thing. So I came down here and, of course, that was the major career break. I mean, everything else flows from that.

Q: Yes, it really does, doesn't it?

RIDGWAY: I just think the only reason it happened was because I didn't take the call. Although I think if I had taken the call and Washington had told me, "Either you go the Hague or you will lose the assignment," I still would have gone home and taken my chances.

Q: Uh huh, sure. Those are awfully agonizing decisions to have to make, though, aren't they? Very difficult?

RIDGWAY: Uh huh,

Q: What specific things did you do in that NATO job in International Relations?

RIDGWAY: Well, I walked in, in September of '64 into an office, which, by the way, is a footnote, I never joined the women's lawsuit against the department, because one of the things in it was they complained about their office space and how the office space they got didn't suit them as officers. I don't know what the silliness of it was. Anyway, I was across the hall here, in a space that is shown still on the building plans as an area to expand the elevator shafts in the event it is ever required, and I shared it with a man.

My first job in September of 1964 was to take all of the memoranda of conversation of a recently completed visit by the then NATO secretary general, Manlio Brosio of Italy, and pull them together, main themes and notions, into an airgram (something we never see any more) to all NATO posts, so that they would be informed of what this secretary general was talking about at the time. Well, he was talking about NATO's political structure, the impending departure of France from the Alliance, [and] this expedition into nuclear policy called the multilateral force. I didn't know any of it. I would read and re-read the memoranda of conversation, but I didn't know enough to have it even take shape in my own brain, much less write it. Well, I struggled, and I got a piece of paper produced. I worked over the weekends and nights and everything else. I got a piece of paper produced and I got it typed and it was sent out. And it no sooner arrived in the field than all these telegrams started coming in saying, "Did the secretary general intend to change this policy?" and "had the secretary general really indicated that there was going to be this breakthrough in the structure?" I mean I had screwed up at least half a dozen major transatlantic policies. And so I straightened them all out. [Laughter]

Q: Tough way to learn, but boy, you learn.

RIDGWAY: Tough way to learn, and I was backstopping for the group of congressmen who belonged to something that's now called the North Atlantic Assembly. It was then called the NATO Parliamentarians Conference. I provided the weekly guidance in support of some established NATO committees that did political . . . that compared notes on developments in Eastern Europe among the NATO countries. And just a whole bag of general things, helped try to put together talking points for the secretary when he would meet with congressmen who wanted to talk about NATO and the like, and the job is still doing the same thing today.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: When I first took over this job, I ran into a young woman named Kristie Kenney, doing that job that I had twenty years before, and it's still a very good job. A lot of learning. You learn how to write, how to cast things one way, not to change the facts, but to change the presentation for the secretary rather than an assistant secretary, and for yourself rather than somebody else. And the difference between the time you are allowed if you are writing an airgram or a speech and if you are writing a telegram. It was a good introduction.

Q: Very important skills for a chief of mission.

RIDGWAY: Important skills, and once again, just a . . . you know, a set of supervisors which is a Who's Who in the Foreign Service. When I joined the office it was headed by David Popper. The deputy was Ronald Spiers. My immediate office was headed by George Vest. It was an office of three with George at the top. The second officer was John Gunther Dean, and then I was the third officer.

Q: Really quite a Who's Who, wasn't it?

RIDGWAY: It was a Who's Who, and over the years the other officers who came through: Mark Palmer, now Ambassador to Hungary; David Aaron, who was deputy national security advisor with Carter. There was just that kind of . . .

Q: Yes. Is it used as a sort of training ground for comers, as they say? I know that there are several spots . . .

RIDGWAY: That office still is. It is still.

Q: Yes, and it's very helpful to get these early in your career. You're not thirty yet, and you're already . . .

RIDGWAY: That's right.

Q: This is, of course, the key right here, the key to the future. Did you enjoy this? These must have been hard hours.

RIDGWAY: Oh, they were, and I didn't have a car or a parking pass in those days.

Second interview
April 21, 1987

Q: The last time we were talking we were . . .

RIDGWAY: We were all over the place.

Q: All over the place; no, we're still following in a good order here. We were discussing your job at NATO where you worked with such a splendid group, . . .I mean up here.

RIDGWAY: Across the hall . . .

Q: Yes, across the hall, and you were saying that it is sort of a training ground, considered a training ground for young officers, and you also mentioned in passing that although you had a very poor office you were sharing it with another man, and therefore you did not feel at all put upon, and you did not join in with the women's group on the class action suit. Now, did you have any other reasons for that, other than just simply that you didn't feel part of it?

RIDGWAY: I didn't feel that any part of their complaint was reflected in my own career. There were stories; I never saw the formal complaint, of course, but there were stories of getting jobs that were not career-oriented and then they recited them. Well, I had had

those jobs. Whether they were career-oriented or not, they hadn't hurt me. They cited office furnishings, and one example was that even the wastebaskets that were assigned to women executives were not executive-style wastebaskets. I don't have time for this and so I just didn't join.

Looking back, sure, I probably had some moments of being discriminated against. I don't know quite what for. There was a time, I consider myself a good writer now, there was a time when I wasn't a good writer. So maybe that would produce some discriminatory action. There was a time when I was too young to be given anything responsible. There was a time when maybe they did think I was, as a woman, better off in personnel or better off in consular, but, again, that had passed and by the time the suit came out in the early seventies, where people were asking for double promotions, I also had been sitting around in grade for a long time, and I really didn't like the notion of somebody getting a double promotion just because they won a lawsuit. Along with everybody else, I knew the promotions were scarce and I wanted my crack at it as well, so I just didn't see myself in any of the things that they were talking about. And I was never angry.

Q: You never were angry; you recognized what the times were, and there were ways to fight it, but that wasn't your way.

RIDGWAY: I wasn't even trying to fight it. I was coming to work every day and doing my job, and I never received criticism on the basis of being a woman. I received criticism for either being too timid, or for not writing for a larger uninformed audience, or for receiving an instruction from the White House to produce a four page paper and it was so important that I wrote twenty pages and it bounced, and I was forced to take it down to twelve and it bounced again. How could it be? I mean, this is so important? Well, I learned, if you really know the subject you can write a four-page paper. You can write four, you can write three sentences, but you learn how to write for an audience. All of those things I was in the process of learning. By the mid-seventies, Ron Spiers had called me to say, "You're the only officer I know who has done all of these weird things. I've been a political officer all of my life, I'm now about to be made an ambassador to the Bahamas, I need an officer who has done personnel, who has done consular, who has been from the bottom up, and would you come be the DCM [deputy chief of mission]? " How was I supposed to join a lawsuit that said that all of this was wrong? So I didn't do it.

Q: Do you think part of the reason for the relative smoothness of your career, as opposed to some of these women who did fight in the class action suit, was the caliber of the men you were working with?

RIDGWAY: Oh, no doubt. And the caliber of the work I was then given an opportunity to produce. I would say that from 1964 to 1967 and from 1970 on, I have generally, in the first couple of weeks of my assignment, been over my head, really scrambling, stretching, even on this assignment, I think, for the first two months, totally panic-stricken. How do you do this much? How do you learn all of these things? How do you give advice to the

president one moment and advice to a junior officer in the next moment? And so I've never, except for one brief period I've skipped from '67 to '70 when I was second secretary in Norway, I've never been given the kind of a job that was too easy. And I've been given jobs in association with men who were risk takers and who were willing to just hand it over and expect me to swim. And I did. It's not just the group that you know, the George Vests, Ron Spiers, John Gunther Deans, you name them, or the junior officers; a Mark Palmer, a David Aaron and I were the third junior officers at the time, but in ARA when I was there, a William Stedman, a John Hugh Crimmins. I learned so much in ARA. Again, for those people who say, "Well, if you are lucky enough to land in EUR," well, that's not true.

And a man named John Fisher, who retired from the service, I guess, shortly after I was there, who was a senior FSO-l. I really have always worked with good people. I haven't always had good bosses, by the way. Someone like John Hugh Crimmins found me at one point mired in a terrible situation with a very bad boss and he just took it upon himself to redraw the organization.

Q: Really? Because he knew what was going on?

RIDGWAY: He knew I couldn't get anything to him that made sense because it was always being rewritten. He had worked with me before, then a new officer came in, all of a sudden things are bad. He quickly figures out why. I didn't want to be disloyal. I worked for the man who was my boss. Crimmins just took it upon himself to make sure that both people were protected.

Q: Well by that time your reputation was preceding you.

RIDGWAY: Well, no. By that time I was an FSO-4 and Crimmins . . . if you ask Joan Clark who was in personnel in ARA at the time . . . Crimmins objected to my assignment on the grounds that I knew nothing about Latin America and I was assigned over his objection.

Q: And yet once you were there he was fair about it.

RIDGWAY: No problem. And he taught me so much about writing, and in that case, writing for oral testimony, a completely different task than writing for the written consideration of a problem.

Q: Would it be fair, then ,to say that it sort of boils down to the individual? That some men, put in the positions you were, would have drowned?

RIDGWAY: Sure, some men, some women.

Q: It's an individual thing, isn't it?

RIDGWAY: I think it's individual, I don't find a formula . . .

Q: But breaks do play a part.

RIDGWAY: You have to have the opportunity and you don't know when it's going to happen. The Ecuador desk for me could have been a dead end, although Joan Clark's recommendation was, "Take it. It is a desk. It's your own world that has shape. It's an opportunity you can't find in EUR." And that would have been sufficient, two years doing that, just to be a desk officer, that looks good enough. Nobody had any way of knowing that that was going to produce this wild conflagration known as the Tuna Wars which then had me branching out across Washington, throughout the department and then eventually taking on fishery wars throughout Latin America. And then, as you know, within two years becoming really an FSO-3, old FSO-3, ambassador and deputy assistant secretary. There was no predicting that. I do think that even if the Ecuador desk had not produced that kind of a major spotlighted opportunity, there was going to be enough in it as a desk alone to have moved me along at a decent pace.

Q: It seems to me the more areas you know about, the better you are going to be when you are higher up the ladder.

RIDGWAY: That's my feeling, although I have had fisheries to sustain me. Last week in Moscow at the luncheon for the secretary, the highest ranking person there was a deputy premier of the Soviet Union. He was my former fisheries negotiator. He was my equivalent in 1975, and then he went up through the ministry of fisheries, and then there was a major scandal which he was saved from, on into foreign trade, which you could do coming from fisheries, and suddenly he's the deputy premier of the Soviet Union. And so there is a world there that I can see.

At Frydenlund's funeral [Knut Frydenland, Norwegian Foreign Minister] in Norway a month before, at the sort of family reception, the Japanese ambassador, again it's an important relationship with the United States, came over, and he was my counterpart also in fisheries in 1977. So I think having a specialty is helpful in that it gives you something that you can be interested in the rest of your life. It gives you a set of continuing acquaintances as people move through their governments. And sometimes, if you're an unknown, as I have so often been in many of the jobs that I have taken, it allows specialists in another government to sort of vouch for you. Well, you may not know this person but we have worked with [her] . . ." so I think it's helpful. You've got to have something that represents a more than minor or passing interest. I've stayed with the fishing world. I love it.

Q: Do you? Well, let's take it right in order, after the NATO job . . .

RIDGWAY: I went to Norway.

Q: You went to Norway, as second secretary?

RIDGWAY: As second secretary. I was supposed to have gone to Norway (in 19 . . . again) in 1964 (when I had just gone to . . .) when George Vest took me into RPM. In about November 1964, Margaret Joy Tibbetts, who was going out as ambassador, called me to say that she . . . it had been recommended to her that I go as her special assistant and she wanted me to know that she had turned it down. I suppose the other thing I've always had, Ann, is people who are honest with me. No games played. People call up and say, this is the way it is. She called me up and said, "It's been recommended that you go as my special assistant. Number one, I'm a career officer, I don't need a special assistant and I don't like the system suggesting. I am going to need help, I know what I want to do I don't need staff around me. Second, I don't want an embassy full of women. And so I've said I just wanted you to know why I said no. But in a few years as you come out of RPM, if there is an opening in Norway, I would be pleased to have you serve."

Well, 1967, there is an opening in the political section in Norway and I just went. Was it wired? Well, I suppose it was, it had been wired for something like three years. It was a strange sort of a job, but again, if fisheries is my first major field of specialization in the functional sense, then Scandinavia is where I've spent the largest chunk of my career. That has become important . . .

Q: So you have an area.

RIDGWAY: I have an area, and I have now where I am. The recently deceased Foreign Minister, is an old and dear friend of mine from those days in Norway, he was younger, the party was out of office, and I was asked to take care of the Labor Foreign Minister, who was the deceased Foreign Minister's closest political friend, is also a very dear friend of mine. and so that helps, you see.

Q: And that counts for an awful lot.

RIDGWAY: You see, it does. If you stay in a region long enough, you eventually get to know the players and they get to know you. But I went off, it's the probably worst assignment of my time, and I would hope that, it was not easy. Norwegians don't make friends easily, they make friends for a lifetime when they do. It's dark in November, it's depressing.

Q: I know . . .

RIDGWAY: I said, I will not learn to make rugs, I don't want to cross-country ski and I hate bridge. Well, in the end of three years I packed the rugs I had made, and I brought home the skis I had, and I still don't like bridge, but I was helping people by being a fourth at bridge. And you have to adjust.

Q: Oh, sure, those winters are long and as you say, depressing.

RIDGWAY: They were long. They're a different winter than a Minnesota winter. And anyhow as I say, you're alone, and housing wasn't easy to come by because of tax policy in northern Europe, there is not a lot of investment in apartments and homes. And the job didn't really keep me occupied. There wasn't that much of a job there. Yet, they were difficult times for Vietnam. They were challenging with respect to the Greek Junta which caused problems in NATO and the Scandinavians were particularly incensed by that. Yes, then Norway in 1968 had a political plebiscite on whether Norway should stay in NATO, and then I had Margaret Tibbetts as my boss, who just said, 'Travel. Travel money for everybody, get out, move, look around, meet people.' I was the science officer.

Q: You were in the political section but also science?

RIDGWAY: Yes, but they needed a science officer, so I'm a science officer and I could meet the astronauts, you know, just little things that added to it. So it was pleasant enough.

Q: Well, if I may say parenthetically, one of the reasons that Margaret Tibbetts' didn't want you there at that time, under the first arrangement, was she thought it wouldn't be good for you, as well as for her self.

RIDGWAY: Sure.

Q: She told me that . . .

RIDGWAY: Oh, did she?

Q: She thought it was very patronizing and she thought it might be a dead end for you . . . and you were better than that. But she is definitely of the same cut of cloth, the good old professionals . . .

RIDGWAY: Oh, yeah, and I have said in public, on many occasions that this job when it finally came to me, it was ten years too late. It should have been Margaret Tibbetts' job in 1971. She was entitled to it by intellect, by achievement, by reputation, and instead they just restructured this bureau. They took all of the meaningful assignments away from her when she came back as Deputy Assistant Secretary. She sat in there, with nothing to do. Who needs it? She left at fifty-one, what a . . . what a waste. That's when she should have had it, they didn't have to wait for me or there may well have been others in the meantime who would have been encouraged if they had seen her in 1971 getting that job.

Q: But there is a generational gap here, and her generation just . . . it's a wonder she even got to be a Deputy Assistant.

RIDGWAY: Oh yes, yeah, in this bureau, for sure.

Q: Because it was so rugged, well, . . .

RIDGWAY: Well, anyway I was glad to get out. I did my three years. I arrived in June of '67 and I left in June of 1970. And it's a lovely place and I enjoyed working with her and getting to know her, and getting to know Norwegians and I'm still very fond of the place and I go back. I have close ties there, excellent . . . I learned that you could . . . it was my first overseas political assignment . . . that you could be candid even when you disagreed and that there was among colleagues of different foreign offices a comfortable . . . if each side thought the other knew what it was doing, a comfortable relationship, even when you were arguing over Vietnam.

Q: And did you have a great number of Norwegian acquaintances?

RIDGWAY: Not a whole lot, I had members of the Parliament, members of the Labor Party, members of the Conservative Party, a lot of correspondents. They are very difficult to get to know, I did not leave Norway with . . . leaving behind close Norwegian friends. They didn't make friends that way. They are probably closer now, over the years as we have stayed in touch, then they were at the time.

Q: Yes, it takes time to build a relationship with . . .

RIDGWAY: I just don't know what you ever do . . . Well it's not true in Finland, but then I was a different person and Finland's somewhat different.

Q: And you had a different position too.

RIDGWAY: Different position, there is a big difference in being a second secretary and being ambassador.

Q: Quite a difference! I was just curious because a person who was at the post with you told me that you were so outstanding at your job that when it came time to writing efficiency reports, some of the people who were senior to you said now what can we do for Roz, you know, to help her get ahead? And I just wondered, what particular thing did you do that you think merited their saying you did so very well?

RIDGWAY: I did very well with young labor party politicians.

Q: Young labor politicians, okay.

RIDGWAY: I really got to know them, and there were the protests against Vietnam, so I was out on the street in blue jeans and sweater and boots and marching in those protests, trying to see who was there. I was down at the student association meetings at night to listen to what was being said, and to have some sense of what the far left in Norway was doing. And I did entertain. It wasn't easy to get people to accept, but over a period of time I could get enough people for a good party. I enjoyed my American colleagues there and

sort of developed a tradition for Thanksgivings there, and away-from-home Christmases that I still try to follow. So maybe in that respect . . . I had the language.

Q: You had the language . . .

RIDGWAY: I had to learn it there. They didn't teach it at FSI. [Foreign Service Institute]

Q: What did you do, take early morning lessons?

RIDGWAY: You know, not terribly early morning. It was an hour during the day. It was not a difficult language. It is a nice language. And I did travel. I did get around the city, and I had good colleagues at the foreign office and at the Foreign Policy Institute, the Defense Policy Institute. My science officer helped me get known at the University of Oslo. And then were a lot of Americans who came through doing amazing things. The first seismic array system to see whether, in fact you could use seismic waves to measure the size of nuclear tests was done in Norway, the first foreign one in any case.

Again, since I was science officer, I was the liaison for the people from Lincoln Labs who came in. Well as you know, one of the major questions with the Soviet Union at the moment is, is the seismic measurement accurate enough? And again, here's some little thing I didn't have any background for, but there were nice people involved with it.

Q: Which in turn has given you a background for. . .

RIDGWAY: Yes, I know the language.

Q: Yes, isn't that curious how everything interweaves? How was Tibby [Margaret Tibbetts, ambassador to Norway 1964-69] as an ambassador?

RIDGWAY: She was terrific, she was terrific, but at a great personal cost for herself in that she wrote most elegantly, she could perform all of this analysis just in an instant.

Q: Very brilliant, isn't she?

RIDGWAY: Brilliant woman. She had a delightful sense of humor which many people didn't see, but occasionally it showed that essentially it was irrepressible and it would pop out-- some funny remark at a staff meeting. I didn't get to go to many, but occasionally enough people would be gone that I would be able to go to staff meeting. She didn't do it all. She had John Bovey as a DCM, wonderful fellow, again, broad, well read, could find culture always, and would read and interest himself and was engaging then for the rest of us. He also was willing to say to section chiefs, "Here it is."

So you never had the sense that she was re-writing, was criticizing, was bringing her super-intellect to something. She would let the process finish. And it was open in that sense and she had to sit back, and I think have many unchallenging hours in order to

allow for the development of the people there. I've thought about it since and I've tried to model myself as a manager in the same way. And she's right, and sometimes, not on this job where there is so much to go around, but in a place like East Berlin, maybe to an outsider it would look as if you're being lazy, but in fact you are letting the people do the jobs that have been assigned to do the jobs and you don't whoosh it all up on your desk and write and edit and have all of the contacts and always be the one that goes to the ministry. Very impressive.

Q: Well, one of the things that always motivated her, she told me, was that she always kept paramount in her mind what was best for the Service.

RIDGWAY: It was very clear.

Q: A selfless thing to do. In that sense, did you mean it was very difficult on her . . . or did you also mean in her private life it was difficult for her?

RIDGWAY: No, I wasn't thinking of it in her private life sense, just in this way. She didn't need any of us, she could have done every bit of political analysis at this post, hands tied behind her back, and I'm sure all of the economic analysis. She didn't do it, she let us do it. She let us take the risks, and she let her section chief do it and she didn't intervene in all of those funny little squabbles, even though the post was so small she knew about every one of them. But she let people grow, make their own mistakes, and have their own accomplishments, and no doubt it, as you say, was for the good of the Service. And the price was she had a lot of hours in her office and she must have been asking, "Am I going to die of rust on the brain?" But she paid that price. She would go walking in these wonderful rubber boots that had daisies on the side. That was the joke. I would say, "There goes the ambassador". These short yellow rubber boots with the white daisy, because she had nothing to do with her time; it was not a challenging post for someone with that set of skills.

Q: Yes, it's especially rewarding to see that you are being given challenging jobs because . . . it has been said of Frances Willis too [first career woman ambassador, Switzerland 1953-57], that she never was given posts worthy of her, as far as her embassies go. Throw-away stuff, so to speak.

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes.

Q: That's important about Tibby . . .

RIDGWAY: I never met Francis Willis. Certainly the challenge in those small posts--I mean, I've had two of them myself--is to let go and let people do the jobs that they're supposed to do and then if your own job doesn't have enough in it, well, it's too bad, you pay the price. You sort of have made it closer to the top than they have and it isn't fair to pull their opportunity away from them. That's what Tibby was doing all this time. She

entertained beautifully. I always took that away from that experience, how well she entertained, and how well she dressed and she kept a lovely home.

Q: She was a good role model, then.

RIDGWAY: Well, she was. We are different women; I wasn't saying that was the way I would do it, but I watched a woman do it and it could be done . . .

Q: With dignity . . .

RIDGWAY: . . . with dignity and real style. And with great respect from the government there.

Q: Really? Which is important. What was the favorite type of entertainment at a Scandinavian post such as that?

RIDGWAY: The buffet.

Q: The buffet, throughout the world.

RIDGWAY : She did sit-down dinners unless there was a cast of thousands, but it would be a buffet. That was all I could ever do; setting tables and things . . . no thanks . . . the laying out one table, that took care of it.

Q: Did you have your own apartment eventually?

RIDGWAY: Uh huh.

Q: You were able to live alone.

RIDGWAY: I was able to live alone. Now, I arrived, and I was told as I got off the plane, "so sorry. You don't have a place to live," and I spent from June of '67 until November of '67 bouncing around because housing is so difficult in Scandinavia, in finding apartments and things, and we did not have a short-term lease program. My next chance to take care of that was when I went out as an ambassador to Finland and found the same situation, and we persuaded the department that we had to go to short-term leases in order to hang on to apartments as we found them, they were so scarce. But I bounced around and I finally found a lovely apartment on Drammensveien Drive which was within walking distance of the embassy. It was a five-story walk up, but once you got up there it had a fireplace, big living room, big dining room, very nice place.

Q: Embassy furniture, I suppose?

RIDGWAY: No, my own.

Q: Oh, you had your own furniture? That was unusual for that time, wasn't it?

RIDGWAY: Well, I had gone to Palermo also with my own furniture. I and the [State Department] Credit Union had a close association for quite some time. Manila was furnished . . . I think Manila was the only furnished post I've ever had. Not counting embassies, after I went up that way, but . . .

Q: Oh, I see. Good old Credit Union, what would we do without it? Any final things you would like to say about that assignment before we move on?

RIDGWAY: I grew a lot, and I think I learned to live alone, not surrounded by lots and lots of friends.

Q: Were you lonely?

RIDGWAY: Very, very lonely. It was a very difficult assignment.

Q: Very difficult. Do you think much of that was the darkness, the eternal darkness [in winter]?

RIDGWAY: No, no, it was a lonely place. I think everyone who was there, all of the singles were lonely.

Q: Yes, and it was not such a large post either.

RIDGWAY: No. At the end, a small group of us, and one of my closest friends now came from that time, she was with DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency]. She arrived in 1969 and we discovered Sweden and we just started getting out of Norway. That was the only way to handle it. We would drive to Goteborg on a Friday night, stay and dance and sing, go shopping, and then drive home. And we took a trip to Greece and we took a trip to Copenhagen, but you never got that critical mass, then, to organize a few things to do otherwise. It was just a group of us all alone, in apartments that were nice enough, but they were not really what you thought you would have when you were in the Foreign Service. There is a young woman now, who is a lawyer over in the Treasury Department, who was the youngest officer on the staff at that time, and I know it was rough for her also. It was not easy. And you learn you've got to look inside yourself, and if you don't like yourself you are really in trouble. But that was enough of that kind of an assignment for me.

Q: Uh-huh. Do you usually find when you go abroad it takes you three or four months to stop feeling so dépaysée [out of one's element]?

RIDGWAY: Yes, yes, sometimes as much as six months. My mother always says "I used to worry, but now I know for the first six months these letters are all going to be "this is wrong, and I don't feel well" and that kind of thing.

Q: Was your mother able to visit you?

RIDGWAY: No, my mother hates flying over water. [Laughter]

Q: So that when you go to a post there really is a moat between you and your family, which psychologically I should think is an important thing, too. Then after that, from 19 . . .

RIDGWAY: Then I came back to the Ecuador desk. I've already introduced [that]. Margaret Tibbetts had been gone about a year, one year, by then, and I'd had a year with the political ambassador, which was an experience.

Q: Do you want to comment on that?

RIDGWAY: No. You know, there are different kinds of people with different priorities; they accomplish different things. Somebody I stayed in touch with later. He was a nice enough man, very distinguished. It's just that his view of the world was not mine, but that didn't seem to intrude because he really didn't spend that much time in the office. [Laughter] I mean it was a different bit of scenery. But Miss Tibbetts had been back by then, and she knew that there were no jobs here, at least I think she knew that. She and Joan Clark [then personnel officer, later ambassador to Malta] must have discussed it, because then one day Joan Clark just called and said there was a desk in ARA [Bureau of Inter-American Affairs], and I'd never met her. Oh, I had met her briefly in EUR, but not to think that she was looking after my career. So, I'm calling. "Tibby I've been discussing this," and "we've got this desk and I think it would be a good thing." I said, "Fine. You think it would be a good thing; I'll take it, I don't have anything else."

And I went back to Washington and took the Ecuador desk and then the whole fisheries thing developed in two years on a desk. By the end of that time I moved up to the Latin American policy office as deputy director, continued to do fisheries, did a lot of work on what was then called the CAS, the country analysis and strategy paper, that was to be prepared for every post. [I] became accustomed to dealing in goals and objectives and putting money and people against goals and objectives. Rather a false operation, but that's what was "sexy" at the time. I learned how to do press conferences, here, had to do some of that, went to the Hill a lot, with people. I developed Hill contacts I still have today. In fact, I urge officers here--they are somewhat intimidated by this--get to know the staffers up there, because these are people you'll know over the years. Some of the congressmen I know today I knew from 'way back, from those days. And traveled throughout South America, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, places I would never get now in business. Went to the OAS [Organization of American States] with the deputy secretary when there was a big case brewing there, the economic aggression by the United States against Ecuador because of this fishery war.

Met a very wide variety of American domestic interests, the scientists, the ecologists, the packers, the fishers, the processors, the unions, all involved in these fishing questions. I became involved. I began to meet people like Julius Katz,[asst. sec. for economics and business affairs] and because at one point, all of a sudden the International Coffee Agreement got tied up on the Hill because (Congressman) Sam Gibbons, who is still on the Hill, didn't want to pass it favoring Brazil until Brazil solved the problem of his shrimp fishermen. Julius Katz then called me up and said, "What is this? We've been negotiating this International Coffee Agreement for five years. It's on the Hill, and Sam Gibbons, a great statesman, suddenly tells me I can't have it because of shrimp. What is going on?" So, I was taking, this theme just took me all over the department and really all across the United States. It was a wonderful three years of growing, you could feel yourself growing in three years. I still was; I finally made FSO-3 in those years. I worked with John Crimmins [deputy assistant sec. for inter-American affairs], learned how to write, how to think, how to make decisions, how to analyze problems, all of which was building on top of what I'd learned from the superb group of people I'd worked with along the way. So it was just a honing and sharpening of skills.

Q: Honing of skills, yes, at a higher level; always an escalating level.

RIDGWAY: And with more public visibility for myself. Still a small circle, but nonetheless having to be responsible in public for decisions, no longer five layers back where the paper started, but perhaps the person who had given the most recent bit of advice to the person who was testifying.

Q: Well, did you then testify on the Hill yourself?

RIDGWAY: No, I didn't, but I would take the telephone calls from the staffers and things of that sort. I would talk with the congressmen over the phone and then I would sort of prepare the testimony for the John Crimminses who were going up on the Hill, and prepare the questions and answers and all of those books, and all by myself, because the Ecuador desk was a one-person desk. It didn't have this cast of thousands I have around now preparing it for me. It was good, exciting fun.

Q: You were working on that while you were on the desk. You commenced working on this on the desk.

RIDGWAY: Yes, the fisheries.

Q: I didn't realize that, I thought a desk officer concerned himself or herself with the Washington end of it.

RIDGWAY: Well, you do, but the year that I took over was the year that Ecuador seized fifty-one American fishing vessels. So, I'm answering the telephones from the congressmen saying, "What about my constituents who are in jail?" I'm on the phone to Findley Burns, who is the ambassador down there, who's saying, "What is Washington

thinking?" and I'm saying, "Washington is thinking that we are going to cancel the aid program," which we did. "Washington is thinking we are going to cut off foreign military assistance," which we did. He's calling me to say, "Well, Ecuador is throwing out the military group." And this issue which had been around as a funny little annoyance for twenty-five years suddenly became a symbol of why the ocean regime was out of date, and got completely out of hand. And so I just met everybody in the process. I mean, who else was going to do it?

Q: You were working on it at this end and Burns was doing what he could as ambassador there?

RIDGWAY: There, yes, as ambassador there, and I traveled a lot back and forth. Gulf was building a pipeline down there at the time. What was going to happen to the atmosphere around that pipeline. What was going to happen to American investment around that pipeline and associated endeavors? A desk is sort of central for everybody, and there was this one person. It's central for Washington and central for Quito. And you know the hours; long hours, Saturdays, Sundays, the congressional correspondence piling up, the requests for testimony piling up, and you just sort of lock the gears in and get going.

Q: Yes. Now, this brings us to a very minor thing, but what about parking in those days?

RIDGWAY: I did not have parking, at any [time].

Q: You never had parking?

RIDGWAY: But I lived close . . . well, when I had the RPM job, [Office of European Security and Political Affairs] the NATO job, I lived out on Shirley Highway at Southern Towers, which at that time the beltway was just being finished. It's inside the beltway now, but at that time it was . . . at that time I rode the bus. I took the 7X, went to work on the bus, went home on the bus.

Q: Well, one of the excuses that I have been given by some women was, they said they couldn't have a particular job because it meant working too late and the department wouldn't let women work late, and therefore they were deprived of the job. This never happened to you?

RIDGWAY: Nobody ever told me to go home because I was a woman.

Q: It's an excuse they used to use at some places to keep a woman from being a desk officer.

RIDGWAY: I did rent at Columbia Plaza when I came back . . . could barely afford it though. I had made the investment in furniture along the way, so I had a few things and I could move over there. But it wouldn't have made any difference. It is true, throughout

my career I moved closer and closer until I got married, when I went back out to Virginia. But I had my . . .

Q: Terrible hours.

RIDGWAY: They were terrible hours, but I've never heard the story about parking. You could take the bus. The men didn't have parking passes.

Q: No, but it's all right for them to walk the streets. Particularly working in the Operations Center; some people have said they couldn't get jobs in the Operations Center because they were women, and the excuse used was their safety.

RIDGWAY: The young woman I mentioned to you in Norway came back to the Operations Center from Norway in 1969. She rented at Columbia Plaza. She was looking for a place around here, but she took the job.

Q: She was permitted to have it? Then you see it makes one have to look further for the reasons why these people didn't get these jobs. It's not holding water, you know. It's very interesting.

RIDGWAY: And I don't know--you could check on this, Ann--at some point in this period, the department started paying taxi fares home at night. I don't know quite when it was, but to the extent that there was a problem, the department started covering it by taxi fares.

Q: I think part of this was a raping over at George Washington University campus, which of course, is not very far from here, and everybody got in a big hoo-hah over it, and I think that's what . . .

RIDGWAY: But those were the same years we [State] had the raping in the stairwell, people [males] in the women's rooms coming up over the sides.

Q: That's right.

RIDGWAY: I never heard of it. Nobody ever told me to go home.

Q: Then you were the deputy director. And you were there for one year?

RIDGWAY: One year, and that was when Ron Spiers . . . and then again, you see, at the end of one year I had a telephone call from PER [personnel office]. I should tell you in this place, by the way, at some point in here, some of these funny little stories. The career counseling function started up in the late '60s, mid-to late '60s, and I made an appointment. My career counselor was a man named Joe Biller. He had a fairly good reputation around; he was the career counselor. I made an appointment and I went to see him, and he showed me the PER analysis of my career, which was that I would be a

consular officer after this little excursion into political affairs, and that I would probably retire from the service as a senior O-4 . I was a six at the time, six or five at the time. So I came back and I was really distraught, and George Vest said to me, "Whatever in the world made you go to a career counselor? Just do your work." And I haven't been to a career counselor since then.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: Stayed away from the whole thing. In this period I was sitting in this job as deputy director of Latin America and all the rest, and I got a telephone call from my--by this time I guess we had career development officers--and my next assignment was coming up and I'd been three years and it was time I moved on, and didn't I want to be the director of the A100 Course [Basic entry course for FSO's]? And I said, "No." "Well, that's the best we've got for you; a wonderful job," and all the rest. I said, "I'm not the least bit interested." And the phone rang, oh, a week later, and it was Ron Spiers saying, "How about being DCM in the Bahamas?" Now, the central system must have known. Why call me up and ask me to do the A-100 Course, which would have been a dead end? So whatever the system's view of me has been it's never been the corridor view. They may have come together now, but back in those years, I don't think I would have done very well if the system had done all the placing.

Q: No, certainly not. Well, I can imagine you leaped at it.

RIDGWAY: I took it. Leaped at it.

Q: Anybody would.

RIDGWAY: I did leap at it, and I took the DCM course. I learned so much from that. I was so grateful for that one week of being told about values in the Foreign Service, our values and values in other professions. Just to have somebody . . . without saying right or wrong, I've never forgotten them saying, "There is no set of correct values, but you should understand your own institutional values." A week of that, a week of looking at case studies, and a week of being told how to keep the channels open with your ambassador. And the other little technique was, if your in-box is overflowing, you must be doing somebody else's job.

Q: A good point.

RIDGWAY: And I would remember that occasionally in the Bahamas, and sure enough, I would be re-writing stuff and it wasn't mine to re-write. It was for other people to learn how to write. So I took just a few little guides from that, but they have been very, very good throughout, and then off to the Bahamas. And it was a wonderful assignment. I did all kinds of things. Ron Spiers was just a terrific ambassador. He has all the right dignity and presence to be an ambassador, but when the day came to get the furniture assembled, he went and assembled the furniture.

Q: With you. He told me about that.

RIDGWAY: We got on the phone and called everybody, and we got everybody else involved. Jean [McCoubrey, principal secretary] was there.

Q: Was she?

RIDGWAY: The word was out, "the ambassador's car is at the embassy. What's going on?" Well, he was down there putting this furniture together. .so we all turned up, we all helped put the furniture together. We got a nice little embassy out of it.

Q: Yes, because this was the opening of a whole new embassy. That must be an exciting thing.

RIDGWAY: Well, it was a little place, but we did a good job. It was also a black government which was very suspicious of an American embassy which, as a consulate general, had only white ties, which played golf at all of the white clubs, accepted all of the memberships. Ron dropped every membership, didn't make a big thing of it. He didn't stand up and say "I want to tell the black community we no longer belong to white clubs." He just quietly dropped them and waited. Made sure that we did all the right things, went to the Parliament, called on the right people, and within about four months, they caught on to the fact they had a real pro. And then we got to know the government. It happens.

Of course, things have changed in the Bahamas. It's the same government. They've never left office, and things haven't developed quite as happily as we might have wanted. But he really gave us every chance to get off on the right foot in this newly independent country, [he was] an ideal choice for it. He left after a year and was succeeded by Sey Weiss.

I don't know to this day why I then didn't become a case study in the DCM course of failure because I, he and I, have laughed about it since, but we were totally different people. I not only knew the Foreign Service which he didn't know because he was Civil Service, but I knew the embassy, which he didn't know, and I may not, in fact, looking back on it, have been as cautious as I should have been about making sure that it was his embassy and not mine. I'm aware now of what can happen if you've been a DCM before, and how uncertain new ambassadors can feel. Whatever it was, I survived it and nothing bad came of it. It could have.

Q: Yes, it certainly could have. Were you chargé for a while?

RIDGWAY: Not for very much, for an hour, for a month.

Q: Because that seems to cause trouble.

RIDGWAY: That is not a male-female thing, that's a proprietary kind of thing.

Q: It becomes "my embassy."

RIDGWAY: I think I let go of that part, but there was still the fact I'd been there longer, I'd served with the previous ambassador, I knew the Foreign Service, I knew the Bahamians, I had wonderful friends in the Bahamas, and I was just very comfortable there. And as I say, [those] usually [are] the ingredients of disaster for DCM's.

Q: I understand DCM's have a forty percent failure rate.

RIDGWAY: It has to be all on personal meshing. No doubt.

In the course of that year I was called by the department and told I was going to the National War College, and I was also asked to sit on my first promotion board. So I came up here for the promotion board, the junior officer eight to seven board, and I stopped in at personnel and told them I wasn't going to the National War College; I wasn't interested. That I had had three years of political-military affairs. They didn't have to tell me what a uniform looked like or what the issues were. They said, "Well you've been selected for training so, how about the Senior Seminar?" So as an O-3 I was selected for the Senior Seminar.

I returned from the Bahamas exactly after two years in the Bahamas, from September of '73 to the end of August 1975. And in some respects, it's probably the assignment that has made it possible for me to survive the last years because when I took my medical--I turned forty in the Bahamas, had a wonderful fortieth birthday party; I'm told they still talk about it--but I came back and took my medical, and Dr. Antal, who is still the doctor I always request, said if you looked at the numbers you would have thought I was twenty-five. I mean, I was slim, trim, healthy; golf, tennis, swimming every morning; citrus fruit, light foods, fish; and an eight-hour a day job; lots of outside interests; a beautiful home to live in; nice people who've stayed friends over the years, you know, the Spierses and Genta Hawkins, down at Haiti now, people I really liked; and it was a bankable kind of thing for the years of high pressure and the like.

Q: One question I have on the DCM-ship. Isn't an ambassador permitted to bring his own DCM in?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: But Weiss did not wish to bring his own. Or how did it happen?

RIDGWAY: It was recommended that I stay. He didn't know many people in the Foreign Service. I don't know why he asked me to stay. I don't know how I survived.

Q: But you did have a bit of a period of strain you felt?

RIDGWAY: No, we never had a period of strain. No, just looking back on it, I thought, "My God, how did I ever get through that?"

Q: You said you could have been a case study for the FSI course.

RIDGWAY: It just never turned out; it didn't turn out that way. Because I was in a constant role of having to explain both the Foreign Service and the Bahamas to someone who is very strong, very talented, a national reputation in arms control matters, arms matters, political-military affairs, still has that kind of a national reputation. And here I am, telling him what time a car can go and what time a car can't go; who the people are he should meet. Normally would not have gone well.

Q: Would you subscribe to this idea, that a DCM's job is to make his ambassador look good?

RIDGWAY: Yes, but making your ambassador look good means making your country look good. It's not as if--I can use a crude phrase here--it's not a kissing of the backside. It's to make sure that that person, whatever skills they bring, uses the best of those skills to make the country look good.

Q: So, you were going off to the . . .

RIDGWAY: Senior Seminar. I came back to Washington from the Bahamas and stayed with friends of mine in Arlington to start the Senior Seminar, and I should say, which I probably mentioned before, I really do not like school. I tricked myself into this one by saying I wouldn't go the War College and here I was at the Seminar, but I don't like school. And I don't like sitting around and asking made-up questions just to look as if I'm interested in participating, and that kind of thing. I arrived a day late because I was playing golf in Florida between the assignment in the Bahamas and the Seminar and got caught by a strike, so I was not present on the first day when the class picture was taken. An omen, I think.

I arrived the second day of class and had, at the first coffee break, a telephone message to call Carlyle Maw [under sec. for security assistance] who was at that time the under secretary for something, I don't know what. And so I called, obviously, and he asked me to come by for lunch. I met him for lunch here that day, the second day I was in class, and he said to me that Tom Clingan who had been the deputy assistant secretary for oceans and fisheries affairs had resigned, and would I accept reassignment as a special assistant in that operation until they could find someone. I said, "No." I didn't want to go back to oceans work, I didn't want to be a special assistant, and it just didn't sound right somehow. He was quite startled and said the usual things: he'd never had a Foreign Service officer turn him down before, and the like, and I said, "I'm sorry you can't understand, but that's just simply the way I feel about it."

I went back to class and the pressure started, over a period of two weeks, about taking this position as special assistant to the vacancy that had been created, and I was the only Foreign Service officer who could do this. I was the only one with the background in oceans and fisheries, and it was very important and so on. Finally, Larry Eagleburger [deputy under secretary for management] called one evening about two and a half weeks into this, and said, "Roz, I'm sorry but I'm going to have to order you to take this job and to leave the seminar." I had been talking over the two and a half weeks, as one does, with people with whom I was staying, a Foreign Service couple. She's Nancy Mason, who is at present the Columbia desk officer, and she was just at the beginning of her career at that point. And somewhere, either while Larry was on the phone or immediately preceding it, she sort of said, "Really Roz, why don't you tell them the real reason that you don't . . . that you are tired of working for vacancies." A couple of the men in the class who knew what was going on, Bob Hennemeyer and people like that, were a little startled that I was saying "No," in a situation in which I was going to lose, and why wasn't I structuring it a little bit better?

So, in the course of the two and a half weeks, directly and indirectly, some other kind of thinking had been building up, and so when Larry called me at home that evening and said, "I'm going to have to order you," I said, "Larry why don't you name me for the vacancy?" Something I had never really done before. And I said, "I don't know who your candidate is, but I really believe that if you put my name out there, you would find, among the industry that has known me all of these years, as much support as anybody else you could be looking at." He said, "We hadn't thought of that. Let me look into it." It was like on a Thursday, and on a Monday he called me back and he said, "We ran your name and the other name that we had and the industry wants you."

So I left the seminar and became the acting deputy assistant secretary and then the deputy, in November of '75, and then the ambassador for oceans and fisheries affairs, because it has always been a position that carries both titles, in February of '76. The department's resistance was sort of in two stages. First, the department never thought of giving me the vacancy until it was put to them, and then resisted making me both the deputy assistant secretary and the ambassador because I was only an old style FSO-3. I pointed out that wasn't my fault; that was their fault. [Laughter]

Q: That could be remedied!

RIDGWAY: That could be taken care of, I mean, that was just . . . you know, I agreed with them it was a terrible shame I was still an O-3. [laughter] So that got taken care of and I moved into that job and really spent the next two years, it wasn't even two years-- September '75 until July of '77-- doing this and really testing myself. I mean, it was a field I knew, I was comfortable with, a brilliant staff of people not fully integrated into the Department, and one of the things I wanted to do was to get a staff of Foreign Service Officers who knew a lot about fisheries and some fisheries people who knew fish and began to learn something about diplomacy and put together a team. And we did.

The effort at the time was to try to withstand the congressional pressure to declare a 200 mile fishing zone for the United States, and the best way to do it. Some were arguing on the Hill but they didn't help us, the congressional campaign was very badly done. People were cheating with figures and their arguments weren't attractive. And I tried to stay away from that because I thought it was, quite honestly, the wrong campaign. It was a dishonest campaign, and I didn't want to get tarred with that brush. I was working instead along the course of action that said, if we could negotiate some agreements with foreigners under the old regime that accomplished what the new law was intended to accomplish in the way of strongly regulating foreign fishing, maybe we could show Congress that, rather than fly in the face of International Law by declaring a 200 mile zone, they could trust us to negotiate tough agreements.

But that didn't work, too many years of congressional pressure had built up, and in '76 the Congress passed the 200 mile law and it said that by March 1, 1977, all countries, and there are twenty-five of them, fishing off the coast of the United States must have brought their fishing under the terms of the new law or be thrown out forcibly. The law was not entirely consistent with International Law. It was very difficult to take twenty-five years of post-war ocean resource management which had been done internationally and move to a straight bilateral regime and get people to agree to having their interests harmed. But we had no choice and we started out.

Now I couldn't possibly have done this by myself, but I'm pleased with some of the techniques that we developed at the time. We had a good team of people, we got a lawyer in who developed what we called the model. Phonetically it became the model GIFA (Governing International Fisheries Agreement) and a large group of us worked on that model GIFA. We made it entirely consistent with the new law, we didn't resist what was in the law; I mean, we had lost that battle. We took the model agreement up to the Hill, talked to the people up there, asked if this would be satisfactory if it were the kind of agreement that came back. They said, yes it would. And we started out and Poland was the first. The Poles came here and then we met again up in Canada, had a large group of people with us.

Larry Snead, who is at present in charge of the Office of Fishery Affairs, was a new officer at the time who had been recruited from NOAA to come over and join the staff, from National Marine Fishery Service. We worked a couple of agreements together, and I showed Larry, who didn't know anything about telegrams and the like, how to write a telegram reporting on stages of the negotiation and that kind of thing, and then spun him off with his own team, so that more of us could get out there, and Larry was one of the people leading them. Another was a man who has since left the Service, named Lorrie Nakatsu . . .

Q: How do you spell that?

RIDGWAY: N-a-k-a-t-s-u. He picked up the Asia side and we got three teams going, but each of us working from the same model GIFA, each of us traveling with industry

advisors and lawyers who all knew what we were doing, and checking in with each other occasionally, because I was also supposed to be the deputy in charge of this otherwise very large office. And we got it done. Within less than a year, we re-wrote post-war International Fisheries Law, at least as it affects the United States.

We did some things that have had not entirely happy results, but it's what the constituency wanted, and as I said, they had won on the Hill. And if they didn't know where their own best interests were, I was tired of telling them where they were. We still have major challenges to the health of the resource off the coast where Canada and United States come together up in New England, that has not had the best results, in my view, either for the fishermen or the resource, but that's how they wanted it. We've withdrawn from major international organizations which gave you a broader scientific base. But neither the Congress nor the industry was willing to go along with what I would have called the more statesmanlike approach and they passed the law, we had no choice.

The administration changed in this period, and I expected to stay on. There were other exciting things we were doing, but they were just jam-packed years. I think I was on the road maybe 200 days out of that one year of time, with Morris Busby, who is now acting principal deputy over in ARA, filling in behind me when I was traveling. My now husband was a member of some of the delegations to Japan, to Mexico, as the representative of the Commandant. Just another colleague at the time. A special colleague, but still just a colleague at the time. I met him at that time, we became good friends at that time. On some of the delegations which tended to be small because of the expense, like in Japan where there might not be more than seven or eight of us, he was there as the Coast Guard representative.

I thought I would like to stay on, but as March 1 came and everything was in place, and we were successful with Congress. We got the law changed so that a Congress which was satisfied we were doing the right thing was then willing to reduce the amount of time the agreements had to lie before Congress before they came into effect, because the law had said something like, "lie before Congress for sixty congressional working days." Well, I would have had to have the agreements finished the next day after the law was passed to make that, but they changed it and they started passing separate laws approving each agreement. So, the good close relationship and many of my congressional contacts now go back to that period, and my ties in the legal world over here in the legal advisors' office started most extensively at that time. The sense that, you know, handed an issue and all of the responsibility that went with it, I could do it. That all grew, really grew at that period of time, but I was back in the field [where] I had always enjoyed the people, I had always enjoyed working with.

We tried to revise international tuna regimes and that didn't work. We tried to get the interception agreement on salmon from Canada. We got it started, but I couldn't finish it up. We notified the Soviet Union that our 200 mile law applied to the 1867 Convention Line out in the Pacific, but that remains an issue today. That still hasn't been negotiated in some of its impact. I thought I would stay on, and when Carter was elected, Patsy Mink

was named to become the assistant secretary for oceans, environment and science, so I went and called on her at home, said I would like to continue to serve and to stay on if she wanted me to. And she said yes. Warren Christopher came in as the deputy secretary, we continued to operate as before, but we very quickly learned that new people insist, frankly even in the face of facts, to do things their own way, and we had a very bad spring.

The agreements came into effect on March 1st, 1977, and in that first week, I was in New York negotiating with the Cubans on a new maritime boundary agreement and some kind of a fishery agreement that would take care of that. That hadn't really come under the 200 mile thing quite as bad, so that had been postponed. [Secretary of State] Cyrus Vance was in the Soviet Union with a new arms control proposal, on behalf of the new administration. Patsy Mink and Warren Christopher were here. And, much as we thought would happen, the Soviet Union, in the first week of the new 200 mile zone, began violating it. We had a system whereby when Coast Guard spotted a violation, it notified the State Department that there was a violation. There was a conference call. Sometimes they could be pretty weird if you were dealing with somebody out in Hawaii and it's three a.m. back here, but these were all off the East Coast. A conference call--Coast Guard, myself, the lawyers-- and a recommendation was made to Coast Guard to seize or not seize a vessel. I said, "Seize the vessel." And I was overruled by Patsy Mink and Warren Christopher. The argument was that I didn't understand the importance of the arms control negotiations in Moscow. The next day, I'm still in New York, another telephone call, another Soviet vessel, and I said, "Seize the vessel," and I was overruled again. And then a third vessel.

By the time the third vessel was there, New England was up in arms. They had sponsored the legislation, they had always said State Department would not protect their interests, and here we were. And it became just a terrible fight. There were congressional hearings, why had we failed to seize the first two vessels. Congress passed a law removing from the State Department, as best it could, any role in this whole question. In short, there was a terrible price to be paid. And my own sense then and now is, except it's even stronger, it is totally wrong to think that the Soviet Union links fish and arms control. We just played into their hands. It was bad policy, and it made us look weak. We were unwilling. We were so fearful about one thing, we were willing to sacrifice our interest in another area, and there is nothing but trouble down that road, and it caused us a great deal of trouble. I just sensed it was not going to be a happy time. So I finished off a number of things but I really went in to Patsy Mink and said, "I'd like to leave". Bob Brewster was her principal deputy assistant secretary at that time and I talked to both of them.

I was eventually offered the embassy to Trinidad-Tobago, and I accepted it and I, that evening, I went out again to visit my friends the Masons, who were then living in the District. We got to talking about it and drinking Gallo Hearty Burgundy and I got mad, and I said, "Wait a minute. I've done nothing but islands." The Philippines, Palermo, Nassau, and I knew where the other women had gone and I said, "You know, I don't want to do hyphenated islands. I'm better than hyphenated islands." Which you always are when you're drinking Gallo Hearty Burgundy. So Nancy Mason and I got out her atlas. I

went through the atlas and came to Finland, and so I marched in the next day and said I didn't want to go to Trinidad-Tobago, I wanted to go to Finland. Patsy Mink was annoyed with me at that time at any case, and we were keeping it civilized, but it was not a good relationship.

I was named for Finland but then I finished up the negotiations in Cuba. I flew to Havana as part of the effort both to get the agreement signed on the maritime boundary and on fisheries, and then to explore whether there might be some basis on which to open a dialogue with Cuba. That didn't work. I went down to Nicaragua to give another try at a new Pacific tuna regime, but only bought time. Canada had also then gone to 200 miles and we collided off of three major fishing areas. We collided off of George's bank in New England; we collided in Juan de Fuca in Seattle, and at the Dixon entrance. And we were going to need time. So I organized a very large delegation, some eighty people, and we, working with Len LeGault who's now the DCM at the Canadian Embassy, we sat down and hammered out a so-called interim agreement that organized fisheries in those three areas despite the legal dispute, pending the naming of eminent persons to tackle the long-term problem of solving those fisheries. And then I went off to Finland.

Q: You were working right up to the last minute?

RIDGWAY: Right up to the last minute. I really was. I was in Nicaragua in July and came back and sort of closed up my apartment and went off to Finland.

Q: Recapping just a tiny bit here. You told me the business of you being "only an FSO-3." Were you able then to be promoted?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes, I was trying to think of how it went. No, from that point on, if you look at the record, I was promoted to FSO-3 in 1972, to O-2 in '76, to O1 in '78 and to Career Minister in '80 or '81. '80 I think, maybe '81.

Q: Okay.

RIDGWAY: I mean at that point it just flew.

Q: Yes, yes. Now we are at the point of your becoming ambassador. The department nominated you then?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: And with the so-called blessings of Patsy Mink?

RIDGWAY: I think she was happy to see me go; that wasn't going to work.

Q: That was not going to work.

RIDGWAY: That wasn't going to work, and I was looking forward to another eighteen months of that same negotiating schedule, some of the problems repeating themselves, and it just did not interest me. I could tell I wasn't going to be able to sort of pull myself together for that same amount of energy that was required.

I was replaced by John Negroponte and that was one of the difficult periods because Morris Busby believed deeply that he should have replaced me. He had stood in for me all of the time that I was on the road and deserved an answer. We had some pretty teary evenings together, because we were close, and he was a wonderful colleague. But he had come into the department from the Navy. He had been combat officer and things of that sort on destroyers and was also in international law, and he came to the department as a Navy exchange officer, liked it, but he was an exchange on the ocean staff. He stayed in the ocean staff, became a Foreign Service Reserve Officer, and I didn't believe, even though he was very active and did so many things, I just didn't believe he was quite ready, and believed he needed a little more exposure. That hurt him deeply, and it hurt me having to do it. Over a period of time that has all come out just fine. He's just back in the department from a brilliant record in Mexico as the DCM. And I noticed he's, as promised, he will be the principal deputy assistant secretary in ARA..

So he has moved from these functional fringes, where you can be [stranded], [having been an {Naval} officer, he didn't start out in the Department], right to the heart of policy. I'm not convinced that would have happened if he had taken that other job. I think he would have ended up stuck in that area with no additional credentials. I could be wrong. But it's turned out well, and we have stayed friends throughout, but it was not an easy time.

Q: Well, you have described yourself, the way you have an accretion of knowledge and experience and how invaluable it was for you.

RIDGWAY: Yes, each little step along the way gave something.

Q: You would realize he needed that.

RIDGWAY: I thought he did. Now it was difficult when he confronted me with it, and said, "How could you do this to me? How could you trust me to act while you were gone, and not trust me to name me in your stead?" I had trouble explaining it, and so as I say, there were a lot of hours together, just the two of us sitting in this office trying to get the heart of what had troubled me. But we talked it out.

Q: Did Mink do anything to help you get this nomination, or did she just not stand in the way?

RIDGWAY: She just didn't stand in the way. Carol Laise [director general of Foreign Service]. was notified that I'd really like to go on and Bob Brewster knew the personnel business and they just--as I say, they came back with Trinidad-Tobago, and it sounded

good until I thought about it. I suppose at that stage of the game I was in my uppity phase. I was just a year and half from having told Larry Eagleburger I wouldn't go into a vacancy again. I was tired at this stage of being the little girl in the file room that steps in. I mean, we [women] are all raised to be, we take great pride in standing behind people. We take a great quiet pride in being the power behind the throne. I think that's total nonsense and very dangerous. I had to learn it the hard way. So I was sort of in that mood of "I don't want to do hyphenated islands," and then I got Finland.

Q: I've never heard them called that before.

RIDGWAY: I think that's what the women have tended to get. It became a joke later between me and Virginia Schafer. I don't know whether she told you about the time she and I sat with the same atlas and did. . .

Q: No, no.

RIDGWAY: . . . but she ended up, unfortunately ,with Papua-New Guinea, but it's the same kind of thing.

Q: But that was her choice. She wanted to go there.

RIDGWAY: That was her choice.

Q: She doesn't have the background you have anyway, the overall experience.

RIDGWAY: And we were comfortable with that, we worked out that one, one weekend.

Q: She thoroughly enjoyed it and did a good job.

RIDGWAY: Yes she did, she did a good job.

Q: Well, that was fine. But it's interesting to me the way you stood up the department in each case and made your point.

RIDGWAY: Yes, but I wasn't stamping my foot.

Q: No, no, but you stood your ground.

RIDGWAY: In fact, in most cases, I really had to always go down the corridor and have a good cry in the ladies room and then pull myself together and come back and do things I wasn't comfortable doing. I was raised to be the quiet one, that you were what your work said you are. Well, that takes you so far and then you get pushed around.

Q: That's right, especially if you are a woman.

RIDGWAY: Uh huh.

Q: I think that is something we all know very well. So, anyway, we've gotten this far. Now, with your Senate hearing, do you remember any details of the Senate hearings?

RIDGWAY: Well, my Senate hearings have gone the same over all of the years. I sit down. The chairman says, "The nominee is "and Senator Pell, who is, you know, fond of the oceans world, asks if he can enter some remarks on the record, and endorses the application. I was asked one or two questions about Finnish neutrality, of Finland and the CSCE Conference, Finland and the Helsinki Final Act, Finland and the Soviet Union. No more than three or four questions and it was all over. Those were the easy days of nominations. They've gotten harder since then. There was no problem at all.

Q: Well, what about the other job you had as an ambassador here?

RIDGWAY: Actually I did my hearings also for that. I'm sorry, that was a confirmed rank.

Q: That was a confirmed rank. That's what I wanted to get clear. I thought it was.

RIDGWAY: That was not a personal rank. I went up for hearings on that, but there the industry had already been fighting the department to get the 'acting' away. The industry came to the department and said get that "acting" off. We do not want to be represented by an acting deputy assistant secretary, we want to be represented by a deputy and we want her to have the title. So, that was pulled out of the department by this industry. The industry had told Larry Eagleburger they preferred me to the other candidate. So, that went easily.

Q: So that was really your first. You have been confirmed many, many times haven't you? So that was pretty pro forma in your case. The next thing would be the swearing-in ceremony. Is this the first time you were actually sworn in, in the sense that ambassadors to bilateral countries are?

RIDGWAY: I'm trying to remember how that went. When I was sworn in as ambassador for oceans and fisheries, I made a big thing out of it.

Q: Oh, you did?

RIDGWAY: I did and my mother came, and I have a niece and nephew and brother, and they came, and we had lots and lots of people, and that was all very nice. For Finland, my mother came, and my brother, and it was somewhat smaller. They've gotten smaller and smaller as we've gone along. [laughter)]

Q: As you go up in importance.

RIDGWAY: Well, something else sets in, we can get to at the time, because each was sort of situational.

Q: I see. At this time, my understanding is, that President Carter did not make the phone calls himself.

RIDGWAY: Oh, no, there was nothing, and I never met the president.

Q: You never met the president, nor had your picture taken, nor anything?

RIDGWAY: No, no.

Q: Don't you think it is helpful to be able to display that picture?

RIDGWAY: Absolutely, absolutely. In fact, when I put his picture out--and no one in Finland ever knew that I did not in my entire period of service ever meet the president--and I would have his picture out, which came to me just sort of printed with, "Best wishes to Rozanne Ridgway, Jimmy Carter," and someone would come in and say, "Well, I see you have a picture of the president. You no doubt have a great deal of contact with him." And I would say, tongue in cheek, but I would say, "Well, the last time I saw the president, he was quite reflective on such and such." Well, it was on television, but you know--[laughter] But I never said, "The last time he shook my hand," "The last time I saw him personally." I did the best I could. It was embarrassing and it left you without a rather important piece of diplomatic material. I made it up.

Q: You had to make it up.

RIDGWAY: Uh huh.

Q: He was a man who didn't understand ceremony did he, or the uses of ceremony?

RIDGWAY: He didn't understand the office of the president, the office. And none of his people did; it was a strange atmosphere. But it was the beginning of an administration and I've come to learn they always have a strange atmosphere. They have their own personalities, and I suppose it was no stranger than most. Certainly not as malicious as this [Reagan] administration when it came in, so I realize upon reflection it was just kind of different.

Q: But it is true that there is a great use in diplomacy for those little touches.

RIDGWAY: Yes, for those touches.

Q: All right. to prepare for this assignment what did you have to do well, you didn't have any time, did you?

RIDGWAY: No, I didn't really prepare for it. I got my apartment rented, I read in what I could read in. Made some of the appointments around town. Went up to Minnesota and bought a new wardrobe that I hadn't been able to do for a long time, and took off.

Q: You really didn't get the preparation or language training or anything like that. Did you stop over en route.?

RIDGWAY: I stopped over in the UK, not to spend any time there, but to change clothes.

Q: Oh, really?

RIDGWAY: I traveled in blue jeans, but took an outfit with me and in the changing of planes and the like, went into the public restroom and changed from blue jeans to a suit.

Q: An ambassadorial suit.

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: I'm sure you're the only [ambassador] who ever traveled in jeans. Now, can you recall anything about your first day?

RIDGWAY: I sure can. One of the reasons I changed, was that I had been told that there was a great deal of interest in Finland in my arrival. A woman ambassador, to be sure, was most of the reason, but an American ambassador as well. And I have really never even forgotten my arrival because I was flying British Airways, and when the plane pulled up, I now know the airport in Finland, but I didn't know quite where to look at the time. There was all this gaggle of people on the tarmac, but off to the side, what I now know as the VIP lounge.

And the plane pulled up and it was the kind of a plane that didn't pull up to a tunnel but had the ramp that came up to it. A little boy in first class looking out the window said to his father, "Oh, look at all of those people." By this time it was a straight Hollywood vignette of this rush of people following the stairs up to the side of the airplane. And his father looked out the window and said, "Oh, they must be for me." And I really was embarrassed for this fellow because we had been notified by USIS about this enormous interest in my arrival, would I have a statement and that kind of thing. But I didn't say anything and he got off the plane, and of course nothing happened.

And I got off the plane, and as I say, it was sort of a Jeanne Crain goes to Hollywood kind of movie you know, where everybody was running backwards taking their pictures, while they are walking backwards and following you and the lights and the TV cameras and the like. The next day the man who had said that, who was the new head of British Airways in Finland, sent a beautiful bouquet to the Embassy and said, "I didn't realize the welcome was for you and look forward to perhaps seeing you while we both serve in Finland" But the arrival was very much the way that my service during that two and half year period

was. The interest never flagged. My own sense of a warm, and cordial reception never changed.

Q: Very nice.

RIDGWAY: And I went through what wasn't my first press conference because I had been doing them throughout the fisheries years. And to the residence with the household staff lined up outside the residence to greet me. And to go on inside where the staff was all assembled in sort of an uncomfortable and stiff manner standing around in this big living room. That was late in the afternoon, given the time difference, I think I got in around three o'clock. I had dinner and wandered around in this lovely upstairs bedroom in a state of disbelief. That was the first day, that wonderful, wonderful change, but a dramatic change.

I don't know if any one along the way has tried to explain to you, at least among the career officers. I don't know the reactions of people coming in from outside, but there is no way in my view that I could have prepared for the difference between being a DCM or a senior officer here in the Department and being an ambassador. And I don't think you can describe to a younger generation of people what it is. You have got to go through it and you can almost feel the tearing of the cloth that separates you then from the rest of the people as you have moved on.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: Now, that could be personal, maybe nobody else went through it. But I sensed immediately that something was different, that my view was no longer up to a leadership, but was the leadership view. And it wasn't uncomfortable, I suppose indeed, I relished it, but I just knew instantly that something was different.

Q: You are on a different plane.

RIDGWAY: Completely different.

Q: There is a certain barrier, I think, between you and the others. That is something . . .

RIDGWAY: Well, there are two things, and I suppose if you are not careful you can get them mixed up. I happen to think that there is not only a separation between you and everyone else, and it is a separation which is important to maintain,--that's another lesson I can get to in a minute. I found that within myself that I was also consciously separating myself from the ambassador.

Q: Uh huh

RIDGWAY: And I almost became in my ambassadorial role, at least on ceremonial occasions, a third person.

Q: Standing aside, watching this thing happen?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: Do you think it is more difficult for an American to move into that role, than it might be for somebody from . .

RIDGWAY: No, no, because I've watched people move in as if they were born to it, and turn into total autocrats as if they [were owed] this privilege that had just been waiting for them to be discovered, to give it to them. I've discovered people who move into it very easily, don't become autocrats. It was just that I found as I moved into it that there was a difference. I was always aware of the difference between what I had been and what I had suddenly become.

Q: Well it's a very heady thing, and I have questions to ask you about afterwards. That's why this is very interesting. Is this the first time you've gone into this in such detail? Under the Carter regime, did you have to travel tourist class on the plane?

RIDGWAY: No, not at that point, no.

Q: They hadn't gone that way.

RIDGWAY: I flew first class.

Q: That saved one embarrassment Francis Cook had.

RIDGWAY: What was hers?

Q: She was in tourist class, and when the plane arrived everybody was waiting for her by the first class exit. She was on one of those French Comets, you know, the tourists went out the back. She had to wait until everybody left the plane so she could scuttle through first class! This is the sort of thing, I don't know how much money you save, but it isn't worth it.

RIDGWAY: It isn't worth it, no, even Jimmy and Tammy Fay Bakker are saying God wanted them to go first class. [laughter]

Q: Well, you were not the first woman ambassador in Finland, were you?

RIDGWAY: Yes, I was, the first American woman.

Q: The first American I'm sorry I'm mixing it up with Norway. I always do that.

RIDGWAY: No, Francis Willis and Margaret Tibbetts had both been there and Francis Willis had been the DCM in Finland.

Q: She'd been the DCM, that's it. Willis had been DCM. So this is a new thing for the Finns, to have

RIDGWAY: An American woman, but it also was also just as rare for them to have a career officer. I was the [third] career officer.

Q: Oh, really?

RIDGWAY: Third career officer, John Hickerson had been there in the '50s, Tyler Thompson had been there in the '60s and then I arrived in '77, and it was almost exclusively, if you look at the record, political. It's been a political post. They were delighted, not only with my being a woman, but, I would say, over the long run they switched the order. They were delighted to have a career officer.

Q: And they're pretty liberal as far as women goes?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yeah, that was a fascination, I don't mean that, I mean I was just besieged by requests, but I had an excellent information officer, a man named Dick Giblet, and we gave a couple of interviews to some women's magazines that had to do with arriving and the like, but we held off on substance until about October, and then I gave a major interview that laid out what I thought I was going to be doing.

And it was quite a provocative interview. I hadn't intended it to be, but it came across as provocative, and then after that, we, depending what we wanted to do, just picked and chose among constant requests. Lots and lots of magazines who were quite willing one month to show me in the kitchen and the next month to show me skiing and the next month to show me playing golf, if I were willing to give that many interviews, so we . . . depended upon the message we wanted to give.

Q: How did you feel about giving those kitchen interviews?

RIDGWAY: I never minded. I was happy to do it. Happy to do it. It was a part of diplomacy and people were interested.

Q: But they don't ask men about being in the kitchen.

RIDGWAY: They could if they wanted to

Q: They could but they don't.

RIDGWAY: Well, it depends on the men, look at Richard Perle on the front page of the Washingtonian magazine in his kitchen.

Q: Sure. That's true. More and more now. How soon did you present your credentials?

RIDGWAY: I think I arrived July 22nd and presented my credentials on the 5th of August, something like that.

Q: And this is customary?

RIDGWAY: It was about right, it wasn't too long a wait.

Q: Can you recall the ceremony involved.

RIDGWAY: I can, and certainly my first night that I was there, that first day was a sense of something that was different. But the way I articulate it now is mostly from the day I presented my credentials. And it's one of my most vivid career memories. I had a new dress, I thought I looked pretty good. The staff, we'd had an argument. The Foreign Office said three or four people could accompany me, and I said no, that I'd either be accompanied by two people, the DCM and the Defense attaché, or I would be accompanied by five, which would mean the political counselor, the administrative and economic officers as well as the other two about six. They said it couldn't be done, and I said, "You must understand I'm the head of a mission, and all of its parts are equal. Either they all come, or I will go down to the traditional two."

Q: Oh, dear.

RIDGWAY: And I said, "Ford [Ford Cooper, political counselor],I must explain to you that my view of a mission is that either all of the counselors go, including the heads of section who do not have counselor rank or none, and it will be the DCM and the Defense attaché." Well, he thought I was wrong, and I said, "I'm sure you do, but this is how I want to run things." The DCM, at the time I was changing DCMs, Sam Fry hadn't arrived, and he made the point. But my view of that was that there were a lot of things wrong with the mission, and one was that, that was the attitude that had prevailed. Because the USIS officer also was to be included. The Foreign Office said, "Fine."

And I tell the story [on Ford] now, only because we have been colleagues ever since, and I've been a great booster of his career. So the day arrived, and I was sort of in my best black bib and tucker, I was to have worn a suit but my luggage hadn't arrived, or air freight hadn't arrived, but I did have a dress with me, a black dress.
And we gathered at the residence. The [Finnish] chief of protocol came in, Ossie Sunel was his name, and said, the equivalent of, "Your chariot is ready, Madame." So we went out and it was a gray day, but a gray day has wind also in Helsinki. And as I went out the front door of the residence, there in front of me was this array of limousines, the president's limousine, and the embassy's own limousine which was going to be taking other officers. They made their way down the driveway, each had a military driver, the lead car had this lovely official [presidential] flag of Finland, which is bright red with the

gold lion rampant. The doors were swung open so that each chauffeur -----was standing on the far side of the car each chauffeur was standing, and the car I was to get in had this gorgeous military decked out attaché.

There are apartment houses nearby and they always fly the Finnish [national] flag, so you had these blue and white flags sort of snapping in the wind, and the neighbors all leaning out to see what the ceremony was, and I walked out, and even now as you can see when I tell it, I nearly fell apart. As I say, flags snapping, the color, as we went through the door, the heels clicking, and the salutes and the white gloves, and I said to myself, "This is not for Roz Ridgway, this is for the Ambassador of the United States. And honey, this is the only way you are going to get through this, is to remember that you are representing something, and so sort of hang on, because here we go." And I could feel my spine stiffen, I could tell I was barely holding tears back, there was a combination of elements of color and sound and ceremony, that really was wonderful.

Since I cry at parades all the time, it was tough. So we got into the limousine and proceeded slowly down the road, with the military attaché announcing to the palace where we were. And I had read all of the program as to what was to be expected of me, and so we slowed because we were a little bit ahead of schedule. The palace receives the usual parade of ambassadors, and I forget who presented credentials ahead of me that day, the Bulgarian or somebody I had to sit next to forever after.

Q: Oh, that's right.

RIDGWAY: So we slowed, and then we arrived in front of the palace. Of course it's right across from the marketplace. Again all that color, but when the people saw the flag that was being raised and recognized it as the American flag, then they all started to yell and carry on very positively.

Q: Did they?

RIDGWAY: So, we got out in front of the palace, into the palace gates, stood at the palace gates, [There are some marvelous pictures. I think the Department used one for quite some time in recruiting folders of me with this entourage behind me] while they played the national anthem. I reminded myself again, "This is for the office, not for you." And then to review the troops. Well, you try it in high heels on cobble stone. You have everything else going very nicely, and you are hanging on, and suddenly you realize that you are teetering as you review the troops. So I had to step away from the captain of the honor guard who was walking nearly shoulder to shoulder to me. It was easy for him, but I was on the hillock part of these cobble stones, that had had carriages go over them all those years, and they had ruts in them. So I stepped a little bit aside, reviewed the troops and on in.

And again this sort of everybody saluting and the like, that wasn't so bad, and going up palace staircases carpeted and so on gives you a chance to think. Although by that time,

you are really so detached from it all, I think, you don't know quite where you are. And through a room with attachés and military types all lined up, to turn a corner into a room I've since been in several times, remembering to step over the transom because they have wooden transoms in Scandinavia and you certainly don't want to sort of spill over and into the room.

Finally went in to a very long ceremonial room in which as you cross the threshold and start down the room, then you see the figure at the far end, and then you begin to hear, "The honor to present the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the United States of America, Rozanne Lejeanne Ridgway." And the things are beginning to ring in your ear that you never imagined would be possible, and your name is associated with them. [There is] the pride we all have in our country, and the very real sense that you have that you're representing the world's major power.

All of this as you're advancing across the room, and I presented the letters of recall and my own letters of credence and that was all accepted. Then we sat down and had coffee. And then I was all right. And from that time on I never again, even in East Germany or on later occasions never, never felt the enormity of it all as I did on that occasion and I've never been bowled over by it all, as I clearly was at that time. I mean, that was simply, you know, you will not disgrace yourself, your country, your mother, your father, your brothers, your family or anybody else by falling apart on this occasion. But it's one of great pride and I certainly had a sense of achievement. I had a sense of specialness but I didn't have a sense of, "By God, it's about time." It was just a very nice moment, but of the kind that makes you take a very deep breath.

Q: Would you have liked some familiar face nearby at that time?

RIDGWAY: No, no, I wouldn't have seen that familiar face. I had tunnel-vision; I was going through a ceremony, straight ahead, do what's expected of you, don't trip over this, and listen to the national anthem, but make sure that as it goes through your ears it doesn't attach itself to anything that's likely to bring tears. Just hear it but let it go, that kind of thing.

Q: Keep complete control of yourself. Some women have described their swearing-in ceremony in very emotional terms too. But this apparently was . . .

RIDGWAY: I never really felt that way over the swearing-in.

Q: It affects people different ways. Where were the other people that you took with you, in all this? Did they follow you behind or did they stay outside?

RIDGWAY: No, they followed me on through, and then provided a backdrop lined up behind me while all of this went on. Then [they] were taken into a separate room to have coffee with aides and staff while I then went with the foreign minister and the chief of state.

Q: Yes, that separates the men from the boys doesn't it? This is the one who gets to stay with the chief of state.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, we went back to the residence after that and the staff asked how things had gone. I was telling them what Kekkonen had to say, and this DCM came up to me and said, "Perhaps I should remind you that conversations with the chief of state are privileged."

Q: What nerve!

RIDGWAY: Well, I thought, well here's another lesson on what's wrong with this embassy where in a small embassy, [you] don't tell your staff what the president had to say. How else are they supposed to find out?

Q: Well, it's just commonplace anyway isn't it? When you came in and all those people were at the airport, how much of the staff was there? Your DCM met you?

RIDGWAY: Yes, they were almost all there, and the chiefs of section, and of course with luggage and cars and things, a large part of the administrative staff was there, they were all there.

Q: I just wanted to clear that up. Now let's discuss the DCM. You had already selected a new one.

RIDGWAY: Yes, Sam Fry.

Q: Sam Fry is the new one. And how did you go about selecting him?

RIDGWAY: The same way Ron Spiers selected me, I asked [myself] what don't I know. And I didn't know economics, as well as I should have, I think I know them fairly well. And Sam Fry had experience in economics. Sam had also served in Moscow, so he had the Soviet experience. We had served together in Norway, I knew him, I knew we could be comfortable together. I had great admiration for his work, he's a very solid officer.

Q: Very good, so that's why you selected him. But the other one was still in post.

RIDGWAY: About four months maybe. Three or four months, not more than that.

Q: And to, a career ambassador, the one before you.

RIDGWAY: No, no, it was not career.

Q: I'm sorry, I mean non-career is what I meant to say. He had been a DCM to a non-career. So that there wasn't any problem because you knew he was leaving.

RIDGWAY: He was leaving, yes.

Q: And how long was it before Sam . . .

RIDGWAY: I think Sam turned up at the end of August. And Jean McCoubrey turned up end of August , beginning of September.

Q: Jean, I'm sorry, the last name.

RIDGWAY: Jean McCoubrey, my secretary

Q: Oh, yes, and you of course, selected her.

RIDGWAY: Yes, she had been with me in the Bahamas.

Q: Yes, I remember you mentioned that the last time. She's such a pleasant person, isn't she?

RIDGWAY: Yes, we work well together.

Q: Yes, I'm sure you do. How often did you have country team meetings and staff meetings?

RIDGWAY: Oh, gosh, I don't remember. I like meetings but I don't like too many of them. I had a country team meeting once a week, but that was a big meeting, that was everybody, secretaries, every one.

Q: Ah, hah.

RIDGWAY: Secretaries, the NCOIC, USIS, you know everybody, all officers, all American staff, except I couldn't get all the Marines in the room so it was just the NCOIC.

Q: How many Marines did you have?

RIDGWAY: I don't know, seven or eight. And then if I go by my current pattern, which I think has stayed pretty well constant, probably twice a week, chiefs of section meeting.

Q: You find that's about what it takes to keep things moving along?

RIDGWAY: It isn't that it takes that to keep things moving along, it takes that to keep people feeling related to each other.

Q: I see, relating to each other, rather than to you.

RIDGWAY: Well, they all like a direct relationship with me, but I mean if you are going to feel part of a team you've got to build a circle.

Q: What was the atmosphere at these, a collegial atmosphere?

RIDGWAY: Collegial, I like to think that everyone knew [that] their humor, bad, bawdy or otherwise was permitted. Throw problems out.

Q: Did you sit in a particular place always?

RIDGWAY: I always did, but I asked the DCM not to.

Q: What was the reason for that?

RIDGWAY: Well, I'd learned a lot at this DCM course, and had stayed in touch also with the fellow running it, Harry Wilkinson, who used to run it for the Department, and over the years had talked management, thought management. I like management, and I was aware of what I often find least attractive in large organizations, that is, you blow a whistle and tell people to line up, and they can do it instinctively, and I don't think that's always very helpful. So that in the first staff meeting, the DCM was sitting at my right and the political counselor was sitting at my left; and then the next and the next and it makes people closed off and snooty, and they end up lacking humor even in the staff meetings because they are so worried about where they are going to sit. And I just said, first come, first served, insisted that the table be filled, I didn't like having all the secretaries and communicators along the back. And Sam Fry helped me by being totally unpredictable as to where he was going to sit.

Q: He understood what you were getting at?

RIDGWAY: We talked about it, yes, we talked about it. I always sat in the same place. Well, I'll tell you something else. I mean, there is only so much of this you can do, I mean there is only so much chummy humor kind of thing you can do. But I came out of a different management system and a management set of responsibilities in the fisheries job. There I was having to build fully equal teams who had authority, and we really did work in what I call circle management. Everyone knew each other's rank, and I didn't have to worry about whether I was getting full respect. But I was not in a traditional setting and in a traditional office or anything else. And I suppose I'd like to think of myself instinctively as a small 'd' democrat, so the questions never came up. Although I expect to be seated at the right place at the table and things of that sort. But when I got out to Finland and tried to do some of that at my first staff meeting in the bubble, I went in and everybody else had arrived. I walked over with Sam--and at that time with Bob Houston--and I walked in and everybody stood up. I said, "Oh, no, please don't, please don't." It's very dangerous. Not long after that I noticed that one of the Marines was pretty slow getting to his feet when I came in through the front door, and then a little later he barely managed to get to his feet at all, and a few days later he didn't get to his feet. And I

called in the NCOIC and I said, "I don't care whether he likes me as a woman or as an officer, but I am the ambassador, and he will get to his feet or he can leave." And I found that if you become too chummy you lose that extra little bit of authority that sometimes you need to keep control. I don't mean control in terms of the psychological sense, but people have to know who's in charge, who's leading, where they are going and back to the Jimmy Carter thing, you can't give up too much of that before you lose the respect of the office.

Q: That's right.

RIDGWAY: Now, at the same time, Harry Wilkinson came to visit me and found me in a bit of a state because I was trying to do too many things. Not trying to do too many things, I was just letting them get to me. Anyhow, I've always had trouble the first six months at any post, ambassador or otherwise. I'd suggested everybody call me "Roz" and so they were at the stage where out in public, in front of other people, they were calling me "Roz", and Harry Wilkinson arrived.

Q: That's bad judgment on their part.

RIDGWAY: He just took one look at the embassy, [and] he said, "Roz you've got to back off, you can't mother this place. You're right and you are comfortable with an informal management style ." These aren't exact quotes, but the message was, you've got to put together the informal collegial with the formal, or you're going to be in trouble.
So Sam and I had a long chat about it. It wasn't that he was responsible, I had sort of started this whole thing myself. We quickly put back into place some of the, what I would call, picket fences, that make the office different. And then it all settled down after that. But I couldn't be the ambassador and one of them.

Q: How did you do that, by him giving them a little talk?

RIDGWAY: No, I just wasn't available. It's not the kind of confrontation I like, and so that when the next time somebody shook hands and looked as if they were going to lean over and also kiss me on the cheek, just keep the elbow stiff, that's all it took. I didn't have to talk to anybody directly about it. And, it hadn't gone so far that I had to explain to people that I was backing off, except to Sam.

Q: You never had to send him out to do it?

RIDGWAY: I wouldn't have done that, no. So, then it was all right.

Q: Good, because there is a bit of a mystique about the office, isn't there?

RIDGWAY: Well, there is but there's also a remoteness which is not healthy. And you have to find your way to a balance, so that you know what's happening in your mission, so people are aware of your humanity, but don't encroach in such a way that it becomes

destructive of relationships within the embassy. That's what could have happened. It did not. But I was just lucky to have, frankly, a management expert, who'd stayed in touch with me over the years, come through and just spot it so quickly.

Q: Very good, and that was within this beginning period.

RIDGWAY: The very beginning period, yes.

Q: Well, I guess they don't teach you that at the ambassador's course, which you didn't take anyway.

RIDGWAY: No, and they don't teach it in the leadership forums. I took that little two day ambassador's course, but that was mostly for the political appointees. And I think people have not given a great deal of attention to these challenges of management. And I don't think anybody in the service many of the people I've met; I've often wondered if they've gone through this, or if they have, it's been quietly and they are embarrassed to talk about it. I don't know how you would warn people as they go out to take up new assignments about what some of these changes are. Or what to expect in the way of psychological challenge.

Q: No, and I think, too, perhaps some of it depends on the personality of the individual.

RIDGWAY: I think so, a large part.

Q: And how informal a style they prefer to have. Some people just happen to be very reserved anyway.

RIDGWAY: Yes, but they can also be so reserved that they need to be, in some respects, instructed as to what they miss from their staff when they are that reserved.

Q: Really, yes.

RIDGWAY: So, there's a balance in the middle, you have to put the two together, but I don't know that you teach it. I think you could at least describe the challenge.

Q: Yes, this is very interesting. Nobody else has discussed this with me. Well, what about your relationship with the head of state, and members of the cabinet and so forth.

RIDGWAY: I had very little relationship with the head, with President Kekkonen, I had very little occasion to. I had no problems with the prime minister or the foreign minister. I had access to everyone. I kept the ministerial contacts to myself. We conducted some business there, but I never minded calling on other ranking officials in the government.

Q: Did you apportion out who was to sort of get friendly with which particular officer in the government?

RIDGWAY: Sam did most of that, but you didn't have to get friendly in that fashion. It was an enormously friendly and open society. They wanted the American contact, they wanted the American ideas, it was just a question of getting it all organized, and out of all of the people who would have liked to have been close to, us not wasting it on the wrong ones, that's all. And Sam worked with the section chiefs on that. He tried to do representation, guest lists against goals and objectives and reporting requirements. That was sort of the way Sam checked it for us, to make sure that people weren't all entertaining the same folks, but not to take it away from section chiefs who liked to pursue their own friendships and their own interests and get the information in their own fashion.

Q: And you divided up the money that way, I suppose.

RIDGWAY: Well, we divided up the money, we talked about it a lot, and I'd had a lot of previous experience. In the Bahamas we had a system we took ten percent off the top against contingencies and the Fourth of July at the other end of the fiscal year. And in the pool that was remaining, everyone spent against the pool. It worked well. I announced the same system as the way I would like to go in Finland, and there was great unhappiness that came back to me through Sam. And I said, well, let's sit down, let's talk about it. So the section chiefs came in and said they really didn't trust that system. They didn't believe that the money would be available to them. So they would really just [like to know] however much it was, including nothing; they would just rather know ahead of time rather than to be fooled into thinking they had a portion of that. I don't know what that said about the previous regime. So we came up with a system that I have used since, and I've used some form of it here, which was to take the ten percent off the top and then I took fifty percent of the remainder. And then the DCM and the section chiefs did you know, twenties and tens of the remaining, sort of fifty percent of forty five percent is what it came down to. So then they had their predictable money, and you could break it down into quarters and they were all much happier with that.

Q: Yes, I see.

RIDGWAY: And then Sam watched over how that was spent.

Q: The number of things you have to be on top of when you are chief of mission is just incredible.

RIDGWAY: I don't know if you have to be; I think you do. There are colleagues out there who aren't. As I say, I've been interested, and my posts have been small enough. I don't know what life is like at a Class I mission, there's no woman around who does who is a career officer. Anne Armstrong [ambassador to UK], Jeane Kirkpatrick [permanent representative to United Nations] do, but I certainly know how Jeane Kirkpatrick ran USUN; she was not following that kind of thing for the most part.

Q: She herself didn't follow them?

RIDGWAY: No, she didn't follow them.

Q: How about your relationship with your diplomatic colleagues, were there many other missions?

RIDGWAY: There is in any capital around the world; there is always a NATO group. There are a lot of embassies. There is always a NATO group that gets together on a monthly basis at lunch at somebody's place. That's true, as I say, around the world. And in Finland the Swedes always had a strong ambassador. I suppose it would always be my NATO colleagues, the Swedes and a few others would invite me, some of the Eastern Europeans, the Poles. But I had good colleagues. Some were like me at some mid-level of their careers, and others were retirement posts. There's always some mixture, some are brighter, some are smarter. The British and the French ambassadors were neighbors, and I got, over time, to know them and came to enjoy their company very, very much.

Q: What about third world countries?

RIDGWAY: Well, there were some, but not many.

Q: There wouldn't really be much in the way of business flora them there.

RIDGWAY: No, Brazil, Mexico, but they are the big third world countries.

Q: What about Iron Curtain diplomats?

RIDGWAY: They were all there.

Q: I mean, what was your relationship with them?

RIDGWAY: I'd occasionally see the Yugoslavs, or the Yugoslavs would come by the house on some large occasion. It was a contested field between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union considers itself almost to have pro-consular functions there. It's not true and the Finns resist it. The Soviet Ambassador and I were not close, and we were not colleagues. When I arrived the Soviet Ambassador was the dean,

Q: Was he the dean?

RIDGWAY: Did all the proper things, but we didn't stay in touch, then he left. The new Soviet Ambassador was somewhat more professional, but what are we to talk about; I mean they're trying to pull Finland east and we're trying to keep Finland in the West, so

Q: I wondered if you had Czech and Romanian colleagues?

RIDGWAY: I did. The Romanian Ambassador was a woman named Maria Stanacesru. She's still there, must nearly be the dean now, herself. We enjoyed seeing each other, but she didn't speak any known language.

Q: Yes.

RIDGWAY: The Czech Ambassador and his wife were a fascinating couple. I have since seen her because she ran away and left him and married a Finnair pilot, and she turned up on a flight one night.

Q: Oh, no.

RIDGWAY: A Finnair flight when I was going off to Europe, and there she was.

Q: Now, what about the local Finns, apart from your colleagues among the foreign ministry and so forth. How many of the locals were you able to get to know?

RIDGWAY: As many as I wanted.. . .

Q: It's very friendly . . .

RIDGWAY: It's friendly, it's open, we have a lot of interest, they accept invitations, the newspaper editors, the sports page. The USIA and I would work together if they wanted to have an evening of talk based around a VCR, a Brzezinski press conference or something. We could fill the house up --across the political spectrum--with, if we wanted junior people, we'd get junior people, if you wanted seniors, you could get the seniors. You could get any political party, left or right. There was anyway we wanted to cut it, if we wanted to know labor better, why we invited labor.

Q: You invited labor. What about promoting American business?

RIDGWAY: I spent a lot of time doing that, working with the commercial attaché of course, and there was the confrontational, the provocative interview. My predecessor had said that the selling of ice breakers by Finland to the United States was the central issue in the relationship, and our willingness to purchase was in fact, the symbol of our understanding for Finnish foreign policy. Well, maybe he wants to set relationships up that way, but that's crazy. In my interview I said that I was not in Finland to sell Finnish ice breakers to my government, that Finland had a talented and skilled ambassador in Washington and he could sell ice breakers. I was in Finland to sell American products, and that furthermore I did not believe that ice breakers fully stated the interests and the ties between the two countries. Well, the headlines the next day were, "I'm not here to sell ice breakers," and ice breakers had become over several years the issue. The president spoke to me about it. I told him what I thought of that issue having been allowed to move right into the center of the relationship. And we still haven't bought Finnish ice breakers, and I don't think we are going to.

Q: Because there was something wrong with them, or what?

RIDGWAY: Because it's a vessel that goes to the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard goes to the Navy in wartime, and countries nowhere buy public vessels. That's how they maintain their own shipyards.

Q: Sure, I was reading the background notes on Finland today, and I was just trying to see what sort of businesses that we conduct with them. There doesn't seem to be an awful lot that we do.

RIDGWAY: Well, there's paper. We buy paper-making machinery. We sell a lot of licensed technology. We sell aircraft, we buy yachts, a lot of the gruyere [cheese] that you eat that you think is Swiss is Finnish. And the hockey sticks in the National Hockey League are Finnish. Hockey players these days are also Finnish. Now there is a wide variety in any sophisticated economies, meaning one large one, one small. And that economy has just done so well, and we are doing well in Finland. I'm very pleased, I like to think I was associated with part of that by getting the ice breakers out and saying, "This is nonsense, we ought to be straightening up the trade issues on cheese, on hockey sticks, and on specialty steel and getting to some of these central questions and you ought to stop appealing to me and get yourself some good representation in Washington and learn about regulatory agencies and grow up."

Q: And was your commercial attaché able to sort of encourage American businesses to come over there and bid on things?

RIDGWAY: Well, look, there's a total misunderstanding about what you can do in the US government and what commercial attachés do. Commercial attaché's for the most part are helping the small businessman who hasn't the faintest idea what to do and has a few things of something to sell. The big outfits, McDonnell Douglas and IBM and Xerox and 3M, they send their own people, thank you very much, they do not need American commercial attachés to make their appointments for them. But they do like to be able to call on the ambassador; they like to be able to talk about the general economic and political atmosphere; and if they are opening a new firm or cutting a ribbon for a new addition I always went. And if they had problems, importing things into Finland, or getting a fair bid on something, I was quite willing to associate myself with those problems.

Q: Were you ever in a position where you would hear about things and therefore alert some of the big ones back here, or do they always know about these things?

RIDGWAY: It depends on how big it is.

Q: Say they want a new phone system?

RIDGWAY: No, they know all that stuff. Sure, we'd report it. We'd see the little newspaper announcement or we'd hear that Helsinki is going to put in a new central switching system. We'd send in a business opportunity, but by the time we get there, the world switching community knows that the Helsinki system is either out of date or is coming up for renewal, and they're already there. McDonnell Douglas knew from the outset that Airbus was trying to push them around; there's not much that we do there. Once that arises then we help put their case forward. But they know, they come marching in about the same time you've discovered it and they've known it all along. And they also don't want us to handle it until it runs into a problem.

Q: Well, other than the ice breakers, what were your major policy problems?

RIDGWAY: I didn't have any policy problems. What I was trying to do was change the nature of the dialogue from a lot of fluff about how nice it is that these two friendly countries are around and how nice the Finns are because they have a sauna and they ski and they run, and get some understanding of what Finland is and is not. Get some understanding back here about what the US interests were, try to find a definition of Finnish independence and neutrality which was common to both sides, so that the Finns knew when we thought they were not being as neutral as they said they were.

On the other hand, Washington had to know when it came out and said, please express our concerns to the Finns that they are too cozy with the Russians or something, that the Finns alone had to manage that Soviet relationship. We are not prepared to defend Finland in time of war. Finland knows that. They paid for it twice. And I wasn't about to carry out instructions that had me go in and tell the Finns to get tough with the Soviets.

But there were other ways to tell the Finns to look to their own interests in how they were dealing with the Soviets. The political consultation needed broadening to include arms control and the issues of East-West politics. So we worked very hard at that. I had all the up front stuff, I could have given an interview every day, I could have been on television every day. No matter where I went, people took my picture, so all of that was not the problem.

The problem was on the professional side, to establish the links of serious discussion with the Finns, and to let Finnish professionals who had had no real dialogue, know that we had a serious embassy. And this was true whether it was the foreign affairs editor of Helsingin Sanomat, the big newspaper, the international affairs director of the Social Democratic Party. These people needed to know that they had serious interlocutors in the United States, and we spent a lot of money on seminars and dinners and late hours and things of that sort. And the sense that we were a professional team. And some of that has held over.

Jean, one time, said, "you are putting so much effort into this restructuring the administrative procedures in the embassy and identifying the fact that the household staff, many of whom had been there ten or eleven years, had no retirement program, no

ambassador had ever cared." A good administrative officer had brought to my attention all of these anomalies on retirement and job descriptions, [and] got that all cleaned up. Jean said, "How long do you think this is going to last after you leave?" And I said, "With luck five years. Because if people don't follow up it will erode. But at least for five years there will be a solid embassy here." She stayed in Finland after I left, came back to Washington, and I think if you asked her, she would say it was about right. It was about five years.

Q: In other words, this thrust of yours was done through all the different sections of the embassy, it was a full frontal attack.

RIDGWAY: Not that the embassy wasn't functioning, but it was a sort of plasticized operation and it didn't have depth to it.

Q: Well, maybe nobody really realized how they could all work together.

RIDGWAY: Well, it wasn't that, but I think you have leadership with different objectives, different understandings. My predecessor did some very important things, and I've had to pick up after him in other places. But he was a PR man. The American Embassy sat there quietly for thirty years just being there, nice people, but just being there. He came in, big PR blitz, moved up the visibility of the American Embassy, he kicked open doors that he was allowed to get by with because everybody thought he was an amateur. I walked in, and I didn't shut those doors. I left them open and then walked through them as a professional. I was not the one; if those doors hadn't been open when I arrived, I would not have opened them. I would have been in the earlier tradition of the quiet professional performer, but he had gained such visibility for the American Embassy that I just kept that level there. But what we needed then was to put something behind it, we had to be seen as serious people. And I didn't want to give any more speeches on how nice the Finns are, I wanted to give speeches to the Finns on what the responsibilities of a neutral are and what the responsibilities of a global power are.

Q: You had a good admin team?

RIDGWAY: Absolutely, I had a good team, period, all across the board.

Q: Were you able to select any others as vacancies opened up?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: No, that is always done back here. What about policy guidance from the Department?

RIDGWAY: Worked it very well, Bob Funseth was the country director for Northern Europe, a job Ford Cooper has at the moment, and I should quickly tell you that Ford Cooper later became my special assistant when I was counselor, and DCM to Paraguay. I supported his application to be DCM in Helsinki. He returned to Helsinki as DCM. When

he left Helsinki as DCM he came back here as country director for Northern Europe. We were answering something else.

Q: We were talking about policy guidance in the Department.

RIDGWAY: Funseth was the country director for NE. We had a very open relationship, he was very supportive. We could talk back and forth, and I never moved beyond that level. I didn't need to. I'm always happy to operate without guidance, thank you. And we all were very comfortable with him as NE and Bill Dameron, who is also back in the bureau, was the Finnish Desk Officer, good relationships. And we had money, people traveled out to the field, more often then we went home, but we did very well.

Q: What about VIP's, did you get many Codels?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: What about the secretary? Did he come?

RIDGWAY: No, the vice president came once. Mrs. Mondale came on her own, once, for Finland's sixtieth birthday in 1977, December of '77, and returned in '78 or '79, I forget which, with the vice president on a visit. Chief Justice Burger and Mrs. Burger visited once. The then secretary of labor, Ray Marshall and his wife and entourage visited. But we were not a way-station.

Q: Were you glad of that?

RIDGWAY: In a way. We were all having a good time, an easy time up there, but they can be, if done right, an extra resource, and they show that we are interested and paying attention. It's like your picture with the President, it's a tool, and it can be very helpful. There was no easy way to get to Helsinki, you were always changing planes somewhere and so people would fly over us or around us.

Q: Sure, one question that I haven't asked you is that when you went out there, what were you hoping to achieve, or had you not quite formulated what you wanted to do?

RIDGWAY: Hadn't quite formulated it. I'm glad now I didn't. I just probably would have had to discard all the ideas, because you have no feeling for it. I think you have to [recognize] it’s false to do it here, you've got to get out there and take a look at it.

Q: Sure. We've already talked about your treatment by the local press, which you said was excellent. Did any US reporters ever come?

RIDGWAY: Very few, I don't remember any. They were there from the New York Herald Tribune, they would stop in, you know, Johnny Apple and people like that, but I didn't see that many.

Q: But wouldn't they stop in to see you?

RIDGWAY: If they came to town, they would stop in and see me.

Q: To be briefed, I'm sure. How about consular problems?

RIDGWAY: No, we didn't have any consular problems, a local who drank too much. We didn't have problems. There was a Communist Party in Finland, and membership in the Communist Party is excludable, so every so often some high-ranking person would get his visa refused until we could get a waiver. And every so often they'd get angry that they had to carry a visa that showed a waiver, but those weren't major problems.

Q: You wouldn't probably have many American welfare cases?

RIDGWAY: Over a period of time a couple of cases of, you know, of kidnapped children from divorces and stuff. You get the wandering American, or the dead American, but it was just normal small post consular stuff.
Q: Any problems relating to your attachés or

RIDGWAY: Well, there's always a problem reminding people that you're not going to permit them to send anything out of the embassy that you haven't seen. And that attachés do not run their own foreign policy. But that didn't hurt, and something that got taken care of. Sam Fry was an excellent kind of a DCM, and everybody began to see that it paid off, and we didn't have problems. And I went to the attaché's homes when they invited me, and they sometimes accompanied me on my trips, the Army attaché and his wife did. No, there were no problems once you just simply made it clear you weren't going to put up with it, period.

Q: And that would also concern intramural rivalry, so to speak, you didn't permit that and they knew that.

RIDGWAY: They knew it, because I was there.

I had a lot of other stuff going on. I mean I was always, in the years afterwards, shocked to find out who was sleeping with whom or wasn't. I didn't know that stuff, or marriages that were on the rocks, how would I know?

Q: Did you have much trouble with alcoholism?

RIDGWAY: We had one Foreign Service National who had a severe alcohol problem, who'd been carried for years and it was just wrong. We had a great deal of agony, somehow people thought we ought to take care of him. We offered to, he wasn't interested, so we let him go. He was very valuable and bright man but anyhow he left. I think, among the American staff, I didn't see any spouses, some did.

Q: Not that you were aware of?

RIDGWAY: Yes, that I was aware of, but what do you do with spouses?

Q: Lets see now, how about inspectors, did you have Foreign Service Inspectors?

RIDGWAY: Yeah, we had an inspection while I was there.

Q: How did they treat you?

RIDGWAY: Well, they treated me very well.

Q: How did you handle official entertainment?

RIDGWAY: In what way?

Q: Who did the actual ordering of the food and . . .

RIDGWAY: I had a housekeeper, a very fine housekeeper.

Q: Was she Finnish?

RIDGWAY: She was Finnish, and a good cook. I lost a couple of cooks while I was there which are always traumatic occasions

Q: Oh, isn't it though?

RIDGWAY: But I worked with her, and we kept our menus about three weeks ahead of time. Jean and I did guest lists, but when I was entertaining I always had themes. It might be a political section proposal, so I would ask them to help me with the guest list, and then I would add a few names of people that I knew and wanted to include. Jean would get to work with local staff that had a little extra time and they did up the invitations and made the phone calls and things. The housekeeper did the local shopping and worked with me on the gross ordering from the PX in Frankfurt.

Q: Frankfurt, you got food from Frankfurt. How often did you order that?

RIDGWAY: About every two months or so. And the housekeeper and I worked on flowers, do one bouquet or three, that kind of stuff.

Q: Now, was this housekeeper a trained person when you got her, or did you have to . . .

RIDGWAY: She'd been in the household for about twelve years.

Q: Oh, good.

RIDGWAY: A little bit of a contest as to whose house it was.

Q: I'm sure, now what did you do? You had seated dinners I presume?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: And lunches of course.

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: Did you bother with having a host? Or did you just host by yourself?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: I know sometimes the DCM's have stood in as hosts.

RIDGWAY: No, if I wanted to have a one-on-one lunch, I had a one-on-one lunch. And if I wanted to have a dinner, I didn't pretend there was a host. I often got to the stage where on most large dinners I sat in the middle of the table, which put the guest of honor across from me, male or female. Otherwise the most junior American there was sometimes stuck at the other end.

Q: And did you try to include your staff at something on a rotating basis?

RIDGWAY: Yes. It wasn't so rotating; that doesn't sound quite right, but I kept track of who had been to the house, but depending on what kind of a dinner it was . . .

Q: Okay, but you managed to include everybody for something.?

RIDGWAY: Well, regularly. They were always at the house; there were always Americans at every occasion, except the one-on-one lunches.

Q: What about things like the Fourth of July and Christmas?

RIDGWAY: I got rid of the large Fourth of July entertainment and just did the cup of champagne kind of thing.

Q: And signing a book?

RIDGWAY: Signing a book from eleven to one thirty.

Q: You didn't have one of these all-out American bashes?

RIDGWAY: No, no.

Q: Anything for Thanksgiving, Christmas?

RIDGWAY: Well, I have a great Thanksgiving tradition I've sort of carried from post to post. I started in Manila. I would work the residence, and we'd pick up everybody who wasn't tied down, people in from Moscow or somewhere for the weekend. They'd brought the courier pouch over. Thanksgivings usually began around eleven in the morning and ended about three a.m. the next morning. And there was the group that all brought something for dinner, and then there was the group that had had other things at home, they came in afterwards for dessert. And there was another group that turned up in the evening. Thanksgiving was always done like that . Christmas, I believe I was there only one Christmas, and I didn't try to do anything. We had an embassy Christmas Party, of course, at the residence, but I think I spent one Christmas there and I was back in Minnesota for one Christmas.
Q: Did your people, your various section chiefs come to you and say for example, "I would very much like to have you invite so and so in the community?"

RIDGWAY: Yes, yes.

Q: So you did set it up that way, I see. And then of course they did their own inviting too.

RIDGWAY: They did their own, but they would make proposals.

Q: That's what I wanted to get at, yes.

RIDGWAY: And USIA was especially active on that as they would identify groups and we would have buffets, very casual, blue jean type buffets and such. Trying to get to the younger groups. I could always invite the Minister of something, but you get down to the Third Secretary level or the sports editor, for you know he's going to someday be the international affairs editor, talk to him early, those people. USIA were very good at that.

Q: Sure, and those are the ones to whom it's very, very important to go to the residence. They are not blasé about it, it's something they really remember. What about-on-the-job training for young officers, did you have any young officers there that you had to train?

RIDGWAY: We had one a young man named Larry Butler who sort of got the full weight of all of our desire to have a good mark in our efficiency report for training young officers. It's a wonder he survived it. [laughter]

Q: So, what did he do, rotate from one to another?

RIDGWAY: No, he was an economic officer. I don't recall that he rotated, no, he stayed in econ. But we criticized his writing and the way he dressed, and the way he acted and

all kinds of things. [laughter] He married a very, very nice girl from there, he's a father now.

Q: He married a Finn?

RIDGWAY: He married a Finn and he's back in Finland as the Chief of the Economic section.

Q: Is he? Tell me when you marry a Finn now, you don't have to leave the Service?

RIDGWAY: Not any more, that's all gone.

Q: Okay. Now, here is a terrible question. Can you think of any of your major successes and tell whether or not being a woman contributed to them?

RIDGWAY: I had at the end. There was one major success that caps the whole thing, and I think if you ask anybody who knows Finland, or ask any Finn who has watched the scene, I think it is still the major American diplomatic success for the last ten years.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: And why it should be is, I suppose, part of the Finnish scene, part of the Finnish-American dialogue which has always been difficult. Americans have trouble understanding neutrals. The Finns are western but have that long border with the Soviet Union. I spoke of deepening the dialogue and trying to bring the necessary subtleties and nuance to it, explaining the relationships so they could function intelligently as various issues came along. I had been making a lot of speeches and just spending a lot of time talking with an awful lot of people over those two and a half years, from the north of the country to the south, and doing a tango with some communist mayor up in Rovaniemi, to who knows what. Sort of long boozy afternoons with the former minister and former prime minister, as he reminisced over the Finnish-Soviet relationship.

When I got ready to leave in February of '80. I knew I was going to be leaving. I knew from December of '79 that I would be leaving. And I came back to post after having been home for Christmas, arrived back in post in January and sat with the staff and said, "Don't you really think that it's time we tried to express to a major Finnish audience what this relationship is all about?" We've been working to try to state it, we've been working to try and understand it, and if I'm leaving, is it possible for me to make a speech to what's called the Passikivi Society, which is the Finnish Council on Foreign Relations.

The inquiry was put out to them and the answer came back that no ambassador had ever addressed the Paasikivi Society. We said, well, a first time for everything. And they thought about it and came back and said, yes.

If you look at history, Finland had to abstain on the vote in the United Nations criticizing Soviet entry into Afghanistan. And the Finns were tormented that they could not participate. For days they knew this vote was coming, and which way would Finland vote? We were under pressure from Washington to push them one way or the other. I went in and I made the case, but I would not push, and they abstained. And they didn't know how to feel about that, that was a tough one for them. And they saw themselves as Afghanistan. And the world had abstained on Finland, and so they, suddenly all these years later, had to abstain on Afghanistan.

In the middle of this, of course, came this speech at the Passikivi Society, and we really worked our butts off on that speech. And the technique we had developed was I gave my speeches in English and I had a woman who had interpreted for me. .The speech was already interpreted and written out, and she and I read it together. We rehearsed that speech, and Jean was part of the audience in the living room as we gave that speech, over and over again, and where it wasn't smooth, rewrote it and the rest.
Q: People had copies of the speech?

RIDGWAY: At the time, we were working it, but people hearing it didn't have it. Anyway, the speech was given. I sent the speech, that speech that was to be given, to the president because it was a foreign affairs speech, and in Finland President Kekkonen really had the foreign affairs voice. I said, I didn't know whether he was planning to attend or not, but here was my speech. And come the evening, the Passikivi Society was jammed and there was the one seat up front, the audience laid out like this, the one seat in front of it. The President turned up to hear this speech, to give it obviously his blessing, because he had it. It talked about trade, it talked about Finland's [role], the role of the United States, the history of the relationship, all kinds of things. But the line that mattered, was the line that said, "The United States wants for Finland what Finland wants for itself, a credible neutrality." That remains the definition of American policy interests in Finland. And to this day, if you ask around, people will tell you that that speech, that occasion, is, and continues to be the expression of US-Finnish relations.

Q: And it was very well received?

RIDGWAY: Absolutely, it was well received. So, it was a cap-stone to be able to have myself, the stature to get up, to give a speech, to command the audience, to have the attention, to get the President there to bless this line, and to . . .

Q: That's terrific.

RIDGWAY: . . . to set for, what appears to be a lasting period, the framework within which we deal with each other. And I didn't write the speech, it was written by the information officer, against some ideas that I had. We all worked on it, Ford, everybody, that was THE message, and then there we were with the backdrop of Afghanistan. It relieved people. I expressed understanding, if not approval. I didn't put it in a much more delicately constructed speech, but that was the line.

Q: Yes, that must have been an anguishing time for them

RIDGWAY: It was.

Q: Because as you put it, they were Afghanistan. Did you feel that you had any unresolved problems when you left?

RIDGWAY: Oh sure, mostly in the trade field. And there will always be as trade grows between two countries, you get a constancy of problems.

Q: But on the whole you felt your mission had been a success?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes. Very much so. Oh, I left on a great rush of sense of achievement on my own part, an embassy fully functioning, enormous amounts of affection from hundreds of Finns who streamed through the house to say good-byes.

Q: That is the key I think to whether or not you've succeeded, isn't it?

RIDGWAY: Well, you can leave quietly and people can receive you well, but not take you seriously. It was the combination of the two that I think made it especially satisfying.

Q: Yes, now, we've gone over these. Did you have any problem with the wives at the embassy?

RIDGWAY: Oh, there were always problems, but . . .

Q: I'm not putting that very well. What I mean is, in many embassies there are women's groups and oftentimes the wife of the ambassador is the head of this. Well, of course, you didn't have a wife.

RIDGWAY: That's right, so I became the honorary head of it.

Q: Oh, so, you did it anyway. Oh!

RIDGWAY: They also had an elected head, but I went to all the meetings.

Q: Oh, you did?

RIDGWAY: Sure. We changed the name to "the spouses." The few men that we had didn't normally turn up, but I went. And I belonged, there was a Finnish-American women's group, I went to that.

Q: Oh, you did.

RIDGWAY: And took up the honorary chairmanship there. I enjoyed it, they were all interesting women.

Q: I'm surprised you had the time.

RIDGWAY: I made the time.

Q: Well, this is out of the pattern. That's very interesting. Sometimes it is the DCM's wife who does it.

RIDGWAY: Well, Sam Fry was a bachelor.

Q: Sam Fry is a bachelor?

RIDGWAY: We got to laughing we were starting to run a club for singles out there.

Q: But would you have done it anyway?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: You would have done it anyway. Parenthetically that is funny, isn't it? How about recreation, sports. What did you do to keep yourself in trim?

RIDGWAY: Well, this was before aerobics ever hit the United States, I went to an aerobics class twice a week and was a great fan of the sauna. We had a sauna in the house which I found very restful. Skiing on all my trips, we always had the skis on top of the car. A lot of my visits with mayors were, in fact, five or ten kilometers out skiing and then back.

Q: Is that right, is this cross-country?

RIDGWAY: Yes, it was cross-country. I belonged to a golf club. I tried tennis, but the courts were too far away, so I gave it up. I belonged to the golf club.

Q: Very good, and you traveled around all over the country, didn't you?

RIDGWAY: Traveled around all over, yes.

Q: Any other speaking engagements, did you speak quite often?

RIDGWAY: Well, wherever I visited, if they wanted a speech I would give one.

Q: Rotary and that stuff

RIDGWAY: Well, they didn't have that many, and I didn't do it quite like that. I did the Finnish-American Chamber of Commerce, or a university, or a seminar, a graduation, something like that.

Q: Yes, yes, lots of speeches.

RIDGWAY: But they were principally impromptu speeches in the course of a visit.

Q: Did you always have the same translator with you?

RIDGWAY: I tried to.

Q: Was she a FSN (Foreign Service National)?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: How did you get along with learning Finnish?

RIDGWAY: Well, I took an hour every day, first thing in the morning, not with any hope of learning it. It's a hard language, it's a ten month course over at FSI, but I enjoyed talking with the teacher, who was a Finn and who knew about Finnish language and literature, and I tried to learn a little bit about Finland through the language. I learned enough Finnish to be able to read through the paper in the morning and know generally what was news, so that I could ask what people might translate, rather than be told what they were going to translate. I was just more comfortable that way.

Q: Sure, sure.

RIDGWAY: And I gave one speech in Finnish while I was there, in fact the way the Finns give speeches, which is in Finnish, and Swedish or Norwegian. I had the Norwegian, so I practiced and practiced and practiced and gave one speech and brought the house down and made the front pages of the newspaper. And that was the end. Because it's an impossible language, and it had just taken too much effort to do that. I had enjoyed my moment showing off. Danny Kaye was in the audience on that occasion, and he was very impressed because you know he's got a marvelous ear. He thought my accent was pretty good, and my Swedish accent brought down the house because it was Norwegian, and they really laughed. They liked that.

Q: We mentioned before at the beginning of the impact of power on your personal feelings, on the very first day. As you settled into the job, how did that impact on your own feelings and your own image of yourself, being the chief?

RIDGWAY: It was easily absorbed in time.

Q: Was it?

RIDGWAY: Yeah, I don't think about it now. In fact there are occasions now, I am surprised at how much I have. But in time it became, it wore very comfortably. It's amalgamated now, it's far less that separate feeling.

Q: Yes, and also you have had this for so many years.

RIDGWAY: Yes, since '76 now in all of the settings, you know.

Q: Yes, but it must take getting used to. Now, what about the loneliness of being chief of a mission. We also touched on that a little bit.

RIDGWAY: Well, it was lonely. I had a lovely bedroom with a fireplace in it, and a yellow chair with an ottoman, and I would spend an awful lot of time there. I had a lovely study as well. I did a lot of reading, spent a lot of time alone, but I'm the kind of person who requires a great deal of space, so some of it didn't trouble me. If there were problems in the embassy, of strange variety, of complaints that American children ought to be able to eat peanut butter sandwiches in school instead of blood sausage. Things that would just annoy me, that the people would threaten important community relationships by wanting to fight with the Finnish school system over peanut butter. I would spend a lot of time on those occasions sort of wandering around and pacing and being very angry, and I think if somebody would have been around, that was fine. For years I traveled around with an old battered Royal typewriter, now so battered it had to be given away, and would write long letters home to my mother which didn't translate these problems, because she wasn't interested in that, but I would run through the calendar and share with her some of the things that had been happening. I enjoyed the reading. I never minded [being alone]. I had a terribly heavy social schedule in Finland. I turned down as many invitations as I accepted. I loved my evenings alone. You know, every two weeks the lady would come in to do the pedicure and the manicure, and you'd sort of spoil yourself. And on Friday nights after dinner the housekeeper would have turned the sauna on, which is itself a rather lonely, quiet experience, at least in the house, because I didn't have anybody else to share the sauna with. I didn't mind. It was lonely, but as I say, I have a great requirement for space. I solved problems by myself.

Q: You like quiet.

RIDGWAY: I like quiet, I love to read. Quite content to be in the place alone, it just

Q: Soothing. Recharge your batteries. Well, I can see that when you're with people all the time.

RIDGWAY: With people, and I couldn't step out the door without having somebody flash a camera in my face.

Q: Yeah, how does that goldfish bowl existence bother you?

RIDGWAY: It didn't, I loved it, had a wonderful time..

Q: Good, good.

RIDGWAY: It's kind of nice to be famous, you know.

Q: Of course it is.

RIDGWAY: You know you go anywhere in the city and people say, oh, there's the American ambassador. And in a country that's friendly if on a Saturday I decide to go do some shopping, I'd be strolling down the street and I could always tell when people were pointing at their neighbors, and it would always make me smile.

Q: And telling them who it was, yes. What about the official car, did you have occasions to use the flag very much?

RIDGWAY: I used the flag all the time. Friendly countries, before terrorism reached the level it has now. . .

Q: Before terrorism. How much things have changed,? Did you have any health problems?

RIDGWAY: I got sick a couple of times on too much to do and too many cream sauces that would sort of produce an upset stomach. A bad weekend or two wondering whether you had the flu or not. The doctor would pop in to say slow down, knock off the cream sauces for a while.

Q: Sort of an ulcer, a pre-ulcerous thing?

RIDGWAY: No, it was just, it was never pre-anything, it was too much rich food and too little time to think.

Q: And when you are tired, it doesn't work. Did you have any personal dangers at this time?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: Thank goodness. What about major honors and awards?

RIDGWAY: I guess it was in '78 that I got . . . my alma mater gave me my honorary LL.D.

Q: Uh huh.

RIDGWAY: I went to Finland having just received an Annual National Fisheries Institute Award for Person of the Year. That was nice, they awarded that out in Hawaii, so I took my mother out there to pick that up.

Q: How nice, that she was able to share that with you. That would be just before you went?

RIDGWAY: That would be '77.

Q: That would be '77. Fine. Now, let me see, where are we here? Well, now, you were not yet married, so those aren't applicable, they will be at the next post, these questions about that. All right now, wrapping up your experience in Finland

RIDGWAY: It's interesting, you are skipping over, you're assuming that people aren't dating, or how did they manage. . .

Q: No, you will date, but your date's ideas and opinions and so forth, unless he's living there with you aren't going to affect your everyday way of living, is what I mean. Whereas the husband does, because the husband's underfoot all the time. [laughter] No, I presume that you must have been dating because subsequently you married this man, that you . . .

RIDGWAY: That isn't who I was dating, but I mean, I was just interested you skipped over that whole part of the question of, how do you manage a personal life with a private life.

Q: Well, now that is why I was getting at this goldfish bowl business. Can you manage a private life in a goldfish situation?

RIDGWAY: With difficulty, but it can be done.

Q: Can be done, but don't you have to sort of meet in Paris, or something?

RIDGWAY: But you have to be super, super discreet and it can be done, but . . . yeah, you sort of have to, not necessarily meet in Paris, but you have to know that, in my view anyhow, it's one of the complaints I've had about the standards for the men, I think you have to make sure that the American ambassador does not become the subject of gossip.

Q: Exactly.

RIDGWAY: And while the community might or might not, but let's assume it might approve your choice of a companion, it's not any of their business and shouldn't become a topic of discussion. So there's always that, but if your dating responsible people, they feel the same way. So, you don’t but you do have to be careful, it just means that you can't quite be as free about it, or do the same kinds of things that other people might do.

Q: That's right, you have to have great discretion because there are always people who will gossip. And it gets around

RIDGWAY: Yeah, and your own staff will start it too. You have to really if you're there and you're single then you should look single.

Q: Yeah, exactly. But just for the records, at this time you were dating?
RIDGWAY: Yes, I was dating.

Q: Your . .well, it may not have been

RIDGWAY: It was not

Q: Okay, but you were dating somebody else. All right, now anything more you want to say about that

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: I mean about the post. [laughter]

RIDGWAY: No[laughter]

Q: No, I'm not after

RIDGWAY: No, I'm just curious because if you're dealing with the subject of women in the Service, most of whom, in these posts, most of whom have been single. The political appointees have been married. The career officers have been single.

Q: You're right.

RIDGWAY: We are all human and there is always that moment you might need somebody, anything from a good friend to a lover, but it's a challenge whatever the character

Q: That's right, whatever way it is.

RIDGWAY: Counselor of the department fits in wherever the secretary of state wants the counselor to fit in. Some of the most famous officers in the service have been counselor: Bohlen, George Kennan, Robert Murphy, more recently, Hal Sonnenfeldt. Bud McFarlane. Bud McFarlane replaced me as counselor, so it's that kind of a job. And I accepted it when it was offered to me with that understanding.

Q: This is the job that you knew about when you were home in December?

RIDGWAY: Yes. Harry Barnes called and said they wanted me to be the Counselor of the department. I was thrilled to death. The Finns who were broken-hearted to see me leave, were thrilled to death. Front page news, "President selects our ambassador for senior position" kind of thing. So if I had to leave, it was good that it was upward and onward. And I left Finland on something like the twentieth of February in '80 and I returned to the Department for work on the twenty-first, and it was the pits for a year.

Q: Was it really?

RIDGWAY: It was. I met with Cyrus Vance who gave me a piece of paper and told me what my responsibilities were. However, he erased several of them and gave them to Matt Nimetz who was leaving the job, and took these topics with him.

Q: And what was he going into?

RIDGWAY: Under Secretary for Security Assistance. Lucy Benson had left, had resigned, as Under Secretary for Security Assistance. Matt Nimetz who had been Counselor of the department moved over to take her position and I moved in to become Counselor. I realized within a week that I was there because they needed a woman's face to replace Lucy Benson. It was an administration that made a lot of noise about affirmative action. I asked when the staff meetings were because the Counselor is one of the principals of the Department. I was told I would not be included in staff meetings. The Counselor had been but with the change it was decided the Counselor would not be. I asked about the use of my car. I was told that the decision had been made that the Counselor would not have a car. Dedicated cars would not longer be available. The . . .and I never again saw Cyrus Vance, except the day he left. I protested to . . . it shows you how much I enjoy remembering this period . . . Warren Christopher, who was still the Deputy, who simply said, "No, we are not interested in large staff meetings." I said, "I'm a principal of the Department." "Well, there's too many of them," and so on and so on. So, I went back to my lovely office and tried to create a job. And I think I did fairly well. I took on Eastern Europe which has (unclear) certainly served me well. We had an interesting group of people, my special assistants were fine people, John King, Russ Surber, who were replaced as they left normally by . .

Q: What was that last name?

RIDGWAY: John King and Russell Surber, S-u-r-b-e-r. They were there when I arrived and stayed through their normal assignments and they were replaced eventually by Joanna Martin and Ford Cooper. There was an outside political appointee who had sort of been in the Department, named Paul Gallis. And he was a very nice young man and he stayed on. And a staff assistant named Mark Saffron and my secretary from my fisheries days became my secretary there.

Q: So you put together a staff.

RIDGWAY: I put together a team and we . . .I picked up what was left. I did Eastern Europe where I could be helpful down here to George Vest on some tangled issues in Eastern Europe. I traveled to Romania and Hungary on behalf of most favored nation trade status and human rights, and I testified on the Hill on those things. Ford Cooper was Deputy Director for Caribbean affairs at the time, and he was unable to get Seventh Floor attention to that little group of island states that have become so critical by events over a period of time. So when his leaders like Mrs. Charles and Tom Adams of Barbados came to the city, they couldn't get received on the Seventh Floor. Who's got time for these people? So people would appeal to me to give them the Seventh Floor look. The paneled office, lovely office, paneled office and on the right floor and all of that kind of thing. And so I took over the Caribbean business, I did Asia, I mean the South Pacific for the same reason. Areas that as you know, have since then, through a Grenada or a Fiji, or a [unclear] have become very interesting and they should have been watched a lot longer before, but they weren't so I picked those up. The beginning of immigration reform, and the illegal alien problem was there, so I worked with Ted Hesburgh [president of Notre Dame University].

Q: Oh, did you, Father Hesburgh?.

RIDGWAY: Umhmm . . . on the Select Committee for Immigration Reform. And oversaw the Department's effort on that issue. And I just sort of putzed around, I stayed busy, but it was never a real job. I did learn there was a thing called the Policy Resources Group, PRG, PRC, something like that, anyway, PPG, Policy and Program Group, but, which did the budget, the annual budget choices, and the Counselor had an automatic seat on that, and I took that seat. So I participated throughout the year on the budget process which I found interesting. And that would bring people also from the management side, saying, "Well, we can't get anybody else's attention, so when you go to the meeting would you please make the case for us?" But that was really all, it was sort of an embarrassing period of time.

Q: . Now, at the same time this might have an effect on your decompression so to speak from having been an AEP. This is a job with a very good title but you are not running the whole Department of State.

RIDGWAY: It didn't bother me all that much. I lucked out in 1975 and walked into one of the most beautiful apartments Washington ever had. And when I came back I put a lot of time, I'd never had time to decorate it. Got hold of a woman who remains a good friend, and still my decorator and say, from February to July of 1980, we put together just a spectacular presentation of that apartment.

Q: Did you?

RIDGWAY: It was in an apartment house with a year-round swimming pool and sauna, and I just took such great pleasure in my home and in coming home, and frankly for its kind it was a prettier house than the residence, I mean a prettier apartment than the

residence was a home. Both well decorated, but in terms of sort of top of the line, that apartment was special. So I enjoyed doing that. I had a chance to revisit with friends. Virginia Schafer and I became very, very, close friends at that time, and really enjoyed each other's company and played some golf together and that was just fun, getting to know, make a new friend. So it wasn't, those weren't the bad . . . coming back, I never paid that much attention to it. I came back, as I mentioned, I left Finland on the twentieth, flew all day, went to work in the Department the 21st and . . . my car wasn't back, no, I had sold my car, I didn't have a car. What was I doing for transportation? In any case, that first day in the office, I met with the secretary, and all the first bloom is there, with the staff, and the paper, and the like and I was leaving the Department and I got off the elevator on the first floor and sort of went through the . . . past the guards and said "good night" and kept on walking and nearly broke my nose. I simply wasn't thinking, nobody opened the door for me.

Q: That's right. [laughter]

RIDGWAY: Actually two things happened that night. I also had all of my money for a travel advance in my pocket and so while I was sort of standing there reeling from this door that nobody opened for me, a young woman came in crying and she had just been mugged and had had her purse stolen over here in the parking lot. And I said to myself, I also have forgotten the part where you open your own doors in this country, but I'm carrying around cash I shouldn't have. So I went back upstairs, put the money away and started out again. That is honest to God true, I was just in another world, and my usual pre-occupation, and I walked right up to the door, nobody opened it, and I just stopped a fourth of an inch short of flattening my nose. [laughter]

Q: Wow . . . it is funny [laughter]

RIDGWAY: It was a quick way to come back.

Q: I do think that says it very pithily though, it's a country where you have to open your own doors.

RIDGWAY: Yes, yes.

Q: Well, you were in this job, which did have its good side, at least in your private life, that was fine. And it went on for about a year, only a year?

RIDGWAY: Well, it really went on until the 5th of November, to the day after the election.

Q: Oh, yes.

RIDGWAY: And it was clear that there would be all of these changes, and I didn't know quite how things were done. I guess I still don't, and I began to think in terms of what

would happen next. I had been the Counselor and I had hoped that maybe in the next administration I would have one of the senior jobs in the building, or an embassy.

Q: Sure.

RIDGWAY: And none of that happened.

Q: This was under the Carter people, you mean?

RIDGWAY: Well, it wasn't just Carter people, I mean it was, starting on the 5th of November you get a combination of Carter people leaving, but leaving behind obligations that the next administration is supposed to pick up and meet because that's the way it's always been done. You also begin to get a heavier dose of day to day management of the career service for the couple of months of the interregnum, if I can put it that way. And the career service people in key places start taking care of this set of obligations. You have a transition team that is moving in and meeting up with Department career officers to plan for the next administration and they begin identifying talented people then, by reputation, or their own experience, that they are going to place. So you get a lot of placement things happening, a lot of decision things happening, and I frankly expected that I would be taken care of, and I was not. And I just sort of woke up one day and realized that I was plumb out of a job. And nobody had planned anything for me, and Harry Barnes had gotten himself India, and somebody else had himself going somewhere else. But little Rose was going to get left behind. I hadn't been serious for them ever, and there was no obligation and it was sort of kiss my fanny, and we worked all through November and December in 1980 to keep the Russians from invading Poland. I met finally the president . . . didn't meet him, I wasn't introduced to him, I was in the Cabinet room on the 7th of December, 1980, when we worked over the text of the statement that was intended to let the Soviet Union know that we were aware of a military buildup around Poland, we'd been following it for some days and that we would not permit it happen. But you have to say it in such a say that people see the threat but also don't see how empty it is, because what would we do about it if it did happen? And I saw a very diminished President, a little gray man, come into the room and sit there and be led by the nose don't know whether he wasn't interested, or if that's how the administration had always been run. But it was an awful performance. George Vest was there that day, he had this job. So there was some things to keep us busy and there was Christmas, that season. But I just realized it was all over. And I remained naive. On the 20th of January, I was here along with David Newsom and Ed Muskie and Ed Muskie's team because the hostage thing was breaking in Tehran, and everybody was doing split screen, the inauguration and the plane at the end of the runway and all of that. And when the inauguration started, and that runway still hadn't . . . you know, the plane still hadn't started down the runway, and it was quite clear what the Iranians were going to do, Ed Muskie got up, tears in his eyes, and the staff the same. We all said good-bye, Dave Newsom got him in the elevator, took him down-stairs and he was ushered out of the Department. That was the end of his stewardship. And the oath was all sort of going on at that time on television, and David and I sat there as the two senior officers, I thought.

And the next day the new team arrives and there's a staff meeting, and I go into the staff meeting as the counselor of the Department and introduce myself to Al Haig, and I blush about it now. I simply wasn't wanted, it was a rude new team. I thought I should be helpful, I had all of these things on Poland all done up with respect to personnel, with respect to the policy choices, handing them over, trying to provide for continuity. It was a joke. And I realize now, I just should have made myself disappear, but I also had nowhere to go, and the one thing that did turn out then, was I got out of the office, and the new team asked me to sit in the office of the Middle East Negotiator because it was a large posh office and there was so much competition for that office among the new politicos coming in that they wanted to be able to show it on the space chart as occupied. So Maryann and I, my secretary and I, picked up and went down and plunked ourselves in that office. And that was the end of it.

Q: So, you had gone from just being a token to being a zero . . . a space holder.

RIDGWAY: A zero, yeah, within a year. From a woman's face on an organization chart to a filled office on a space chart.

Q: Well, you've got me hanging on a cliff here, how did you get out of this? How did you get to be special assistant to the Secretary of State?

RIDGWAY: Made the title up.

Q: You made the title up?

RIDGWAY: Made the title up. Joan Clark was the new Director General. I sat down there and read newspapers and stuff, actually I'm even sort of ahead of myself. I mean, I just went home, I didn't have anything to do. I was saved by old skills, the . . . I got a telephone call one Saturday, and it was Walt Stoessel, who was the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. The Canadian foreign minister had come to town to meet with Al Haig to prepare for the President's March, 1980 first summit in Ottawa. Haig was briefed on the Canadian defense budget, NORAD, you name it, and the foreign minister walked in and said, "If you don't settle the problem of scallops off of George's bank, the visit will be a disaster." Haig couldn't believe it, I'm told. And sort of, I guess in his own inimitable fashion, said something like, "Who the hell knows anything about this?" There was silence in the room 'cause nobody on the new team knew, and Walt Stoessel . . .

Q: Walt Stoessel said . . .

RIDGWAY: Yeah, "You sent her home," so I was called in and I suppose I got there sometime around the first week in February. I occupied that Middle East negotiator's office and I was told to go fix it. And so I did, and I worked with Bill Clark [Judge Clark, deputy secretary of state] and I put together a very, . . . I really traveled very hard for a month. The interim arrangement that I had left behind in 1977, had produced a year in which a long-term treaty could be negotiated with Canada. That long-term treaty had been

negotiated by Lloyd Cutler for the United States. I forget the name of the . . . Marcel Cadieux for Canada.
Q: Marcel, M-a-r-c-e-l

RIDGWAY: Cadieux, C-a-d-i-e-u-x. And Lloyd Cutler had brought it home and very proudly presented it to the Senate for ratification and it was unratifiable. And it had been sitting in the Senate ever since and the Canadians were irate. And everybody was upset and the Senate was trying to negotiate it before they would ratify it and the fishing industry was trying to tear it apart. And so I started traveling, among the Senate, the New England Regional Fisheries Council, Ottawa, back to New England, back to the Senate, to New England, to Ottawa, to the Senate, all around, and found a formula to save the situation, but I was dealing with an administration that didn't know the issues, who wasn't interested. And Jerry Bremer was the Executive Secretary of the Department and John Kelly was a Deputy, and I couldn't get to people. They didn't want to see me, they just wanted this issue fixed. How could serious people have fisheries problems? They had no appreciation for it. They were all out there on this big global binge.

Q: Oh, no.

RIDGWAY: And finally Jerry and John just both gave me the same advice, "Roz, you're just going to have to make your own decisions." Well, I've never minded taking risks. I just kept committing the US Government and packages and things, with some support from Bill Clark, at least all I needed from Judge Clark. And then the day came to make all of the package work, where we had everything pre-positioned, where the Senate would call upon the President to withdraw the treaty, and the President would withdraw the treaty but propose that half of it be ratified, that half which led to the International Court of Justice and binding arbitration. The Canadians then had a day in which to deplore, be angry and say this is unfair and bad diplomacy. That was Thursday, Friday, Saturday. The President was to arrive on Sunday, at which point the issue was gone, everybody had had their little blowup and he arrived and the matter was settled. God, at the last minute, you know, Haig decides he doesn't know that he wants to start the trigger. Well, we finally, I just went to Judge Clark, and I said, "You're going to have to trust me. This is all wired, this is wired in the Senate, it is wired in Ottawa, it's wired in the White House at the working level, everything is pre-positioned, but you have to start it, by moving this letter over to the White House for the President to sign that says, yes, I've received the letters you Senators have sent me, and they can cross."

Q: And they can cross, yeah.

RIDGWAY: "You simply have to trust me." And it's very hard for them. Career officers, Democratic administration, Counselor and all the rest, but Clark did, and it worked, and eventually what went through the Senate, was passed ninety-six to nothing. And it's all over now, we went off to the Court of Justice and it was a bad chapter in American Diplomacy, that I had to repair and I had to repair it with garden shears, not a scalpel unfortunately, and garden shears are not quite as genteel, leave a different size scar. It got

done. I had needed a title to get that done, and so we had created this special negotiator title, Special Assistant.

Q: You and Joan did?

RIDGWAY: I created the title myself and Joan gave me the position number. And then I just never moved from it. Everybody else was over complement and wandering around. Eventually, famous people wanted that Middle East Negotiator's office, and so I got a little corner that had been the Staff Assistant's office and Maryann stayed with me at a desk and we stayed there for two years.

Q: What a saga!

RIDGWAY: I did the Czech gold after that, you know, somebody wanted to do it and get the job done and a memorandum went up to the Secretary recommending that I do it, I don't think he signed it off, I think Judge Clark did. It wasn't the kind of issue that would have interested Al Haig. And so I put that together, I negotiated it for a year, it had been around for thirty-seven years, unresolved. And that was good. I finished it up in February of 1982 when the gold from World War II was returned to Czechoslovakia in payment for our claims. I sat on promotion boards for USIA, promotion boards for State, I chaired the Secretary of the Year Award, I chaired the reporting . . . the Director General's reporting award, I sat on the Political Officer of the Year Committee. I did what I could, but I generally was through work by three o'clock in the afternoon.

Q: And at this, you were generating most of this yourself?

RIDGWAY: Yeah, or answering, Joan and people around the building were sort of asking me to do things.

Q: Funneling things to . . .

RIDGWAY: I was able, I made my first trip to Czechoslovakia in March or April of '81 on the Czech gold issue and I did a lot of traveling on that to Prague and to Brussels. I worked a lot with the Hill, private groups, it was the only way it was ever going to be solved. I went to Zurich, had a good team of people down here on the Czech desk and they got very excited about it as they saw that maybe at last we were going to solve it. But it wasn't full-time. But I had . . . when I finally saw what was going to happen, I forget who called whom, but I think I called Ted and said something like. I mean we had exchanged notes and we had seen each other, or he had come by, or he had called and said something like, "When things slow down, if they slow down, maybe we could get together," and so I called him and I said, "What about the 2lst of January? Because things I know are going to slow down."

Q: You mean with the new inauguration?

RIDGWAY: The day after the inauguration. I knew, I could tell by then what was going to happen. We had a date for lunch on the 2lst of January, and we were married a little less than two years later. So I had Ted, had a good friend in Virginia, Joan Clark, and I had family and somehow or another I got through two rotten years.

Q: It must have been very hard on morale though.

RIDGWAY: Terrible . . . But a lot of things happen. You suddenly realize you married the Foreign Service.

Q: Yes.

RIDGWAY: . . .and it didn't marry you. That you are finding all of your identity off of the Service and where you are in it, not in a way that makes you weird, but in a very human way, as I know, men as well as women marry their jobs.

Q: Absolutely, absolutely.

RIDGWAY: And suddenly it's not there, and I suppose what I went through for two years was my equivalent of a divorce after twenty-five or twenty-six years, with all the same effect, and it's not easy.

Q: You husband . . . not your husband then, but Ted . . . was assigned here, was he here in Washington?

RIDGWAY: He was here, he was in the Coast Guard Headquarters until the summer of 1982 when he was assigned to Alaska.

Q: Oh, very good. Yes, when you say equivalent to a divorce, you mean as far as the impact it had on you . . .

RIDGWAY: The impact it had on me, I had no where to go, I wasn't fifty, I couldn't claim a pension. Your pride is gone, your friends are suddenly not your friends, and you really know . . . you REALLY know who your friends are. People who don't look at you and decide that, I really ought not to have a cup of coffee with this person because you don't want to be sitting with losers. And believe me, it happens.

Q: I've heard that. You become a pariah.

RIDGWAY: You don't become a pariah, you disappear.

Q: Oh, you disappear.

RIDGWAY: You know, it's like Ralph Ellison's "The Invisible Man," it doesn't happen only to the Blacks in this society. In any institution or society, of which the Foreign

Service is one, you're an embarrassment, so people don't see you, better off not to see you, except for the people who count. The ones that really count, the folks that are genuine and who never were friends or colleagues because it was a way up or reflected glory kind of thing, but just like your company or your ideas.

Q: Boy . . .

RIDGWAY: And I think I probably came as close to just shattering under it as anybody can.

Q: I'm sure.

RIDGWAY: But as I say, I have good friends in Virginia, and Ted was there, and it wasn't all that serious at that point, but he was there.

Q: Let me just get this straight, when you say "in Virginia," you don't mean the state, you mean Virginia Schafer?

RIDGWAY: Virginia Schafer.

Q: Yes. You probably had some that lived in Virginia too, but I just wanted

RIDGWAY: Actually I did, but most of them lived in the District at the time.

Q: Yeah, Did this cause trouble sleeping and that sort of thing?

RIDGWAY: Heavens no, I drank too much to not be able to sleep.

Q: That's not good for your liver either.

RIDGWAY: No, it's not, and it's not the best kind of sleep either.

Q: Of course it's not . . . yeah . . . but isn't that something? I had no idea you had to go through all of that, from your record you know.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, it doesn't show that. But Joan and Virginia, the George Vests, they all know what that period was like. I would not do it again, but there simply was not any choice at--forty-eight, or whatever I was at the time. I couldn't do it. I wasn't forty-eight, I was forty-six I think. I was just a long way from being able to retire. They aren't the best years for a woman to match, so you're forty-six to forty-eight, you've got all the trappings of success, and you are nothing. And it's humiliating and (unclear).

Q: Because it's such a small organization in a way, and everybody knows.

RIDGWAY: Everybody knows, I had this Czechoslovakian thing to give it a bit of decency, but that only lasted until February of '82, and then I was sitting around from that time on.

Q: Is that right? Well, how did you get out of this trough you were in. I mean, that's about all you can call it, is a trough.

RIDGWAY: Well, Bill Clark, Judge Clark kept trying to put my name forward for things. It went forward for Sweden and didn't get anywhere. It went forward for Assistant Secretary for IO, and it didn't get anywhere. Larry Eagleburger who became Under Secretary, tried to put my name forward for this job, as he always has, Larry has always recommended me for any job that he has ever left. That didn't work. And then, East Germany became available, and Larry and Judge Clark got together. And Larry asked to see me one day, and asked if I would accept the embassy in East Germany and I said, "East what?" And he said, "East Germany." And I said, "Sure." He said, "That's all you are going to get." And I was pleased to get the embassy.

Q: Of course. I can see that your attitude toward going out this time would be entirely different . . .

RIDGWAY: It sure as hell was.

Q: . . . Than the first time.

RIDGWAY: The bloom was off.

Q: The bloom was definitely off. Wow!

RIDGWAY: Yup, so about this time, Ted got his assignment to Alaska. Virginia was headed for Papua New Guinea. Ted and I drove home together, across country and got home, I've never forgotten the day, it was June 17th, 1982, and we got home and the White House Patch was calling and I got my telephone call for East Germany on that day. So that then was all sort of nailed down. Ted drove on to Alaska.

Q: You were on the West Coast?

RIDGWAY: Minnesota. He went on to Alaska and I came back to Washington and his Change of Command ceremony was in Alaska on . . . in July of '82, and I just suddenly thought that fellow shouldn't go through his Change of Command ceremony all by himself, so I flew up to Alaska, and it sort of began to straighten itself out about that time. We decided in September that we would marry even though it was going to be strange. I was sworn in as Ambassador to the GDR in October, closed up my apartment, went home for Christmas. Ted and I were married on the 2nd of January, 1983 and went on a honeymoon, and he returned to Alaska and I went to East Germany.

Q: Where were you married?

RIDGWAY: In St. Paul.

Q: In St. Paul. Well, that was sort of a better way to spend your time than the previous two years. And after your honeymoon you went to . . .

RIDGWAY: East Berlin.

Q: East Berlin. And he went back to Alaska. You must have had terrible phone bills.

RIDGWAY: We didn't, it hurt too much.

Q: You didn't try to do that?

RIDGWAY: Uh-uh. You have to . . . we sent tapes back and forth. And even after a while, we stopped that after about a year.

Q: Did you? Well, you never can really answer the tape you get, because by the time you get it everything is past.

RIDGWAY: All you keep doing is taking a scab off.

Q: Yeah, I think that would be . . .

RIDGWAY: So, we sent funny cards, and newspaper clippings, and letters. I would call occasionally and he would . . .I really had to be in the pits to give him a call because I knew it was going to be worse after I hung up.

Q: But you know, that's a heck of a way to start a marriage.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, but Ted had been married before and I had never planned to marry but I . . .if you'd meet him you'd see, he is just an unusual kind of a fellow. We both walked into it eyes open. We knew it was going to be this way, and one of the reasons that we had sort of dilly-dallyed over the years from '76, and never let it become anything except good friends and good colleagues, was, I knew I wasn't going to give up my career, and he wasn't going to give up his, and we were moving in opposite circles. And I think we both had mentally dealt with that over the years as we realized that this friendship . . .I certainly knew all along that this friendship had more to it if we ever let it happen, I think he did as well. So once we really started down the road to change the nature of this good friendship, why, that had all been sorted out.

Q: I see. Yeah.

RIDGWAY: We hardly ever discussed it except the time that we talked about marriage and decided not to marry for all of those reasons. And then threw out that list of reasons and got married.

Q: Decided to do it anyway.

RIDGWAY: Yeah.

Q: Well, we have all the same things, as much of as you wish to, to go over . . .

RIDGWAY: That's right. It will go faster. Believe me, I didn't struggle the same way. It's cathartic. [laughter]

Q: That's good. I know how you were nominated, you did get a call from the White House?

RIDGWAY: I did this time . . .

Q: And you said it was Ronald Reagan . . .

RIDGWAY: I did, and then Joan was headed to Malta, so it just happened that Joan Clark and I had our White House appointment at the same time . . .

Q: Oh, how nice.

RIDGWAY: . . . and it may have only been five minutes, but it did all of the things five minutes should do. It produced the friendly picture in front of the fireplace that allowed me to say, "When I saw the President he expressed his views on what the relationship should be." I had exactly the right send off.

Q: He's very good at that sort of thing.

RIDGWAY: Uh huh..

Q: Excellent. Now, the Senate hearing, that was another pro forma?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes, but this time, it was sort of, "We all know this little lady."

Q: Because they don't change as often as people do here.

RIDGWAY: They don't change.

Q: Who was on the committee? Can you recall?

RIDGWAY: I don't even know who was up there but it would have been Lugar and Pell; Pell was there of course.

Q: Oh yes, Lugar . . . how about Helms?

RIDGWAY: Mathias, Helms wasn't interested at the time.

Q: Swearing-in ceremony, you said each one gets.

RIDGWAY: It got smaller and smaller and by that time, I went down to Joan Clark's office and . . .

Q: Oh, really?

RIDGWAY: . . . and let's see who was there? Joan, Virginia was gone by this time, Genta Hawkins and Mary Lib Hoinkes

Q: How do you spell that?

RIDGWAY: It's Mary Elizabeth H-o-i-n-k-e-s. She was criticized by the Heritage Foundation as being a key Carter career carryover, been fired out of OES and was at that point in ACDA where she still is, as deputy general counsel, wonderful woman, very bright, a lawyer. She was there. Maryann, my secretary. Joan, and unbeknownst to me, by long distance phone, Ted.

Q: Oh, how nice.

RIDGWAY: So, that while I took the oath, Genta held the phone so that Ted could hear this and everybody sort of had their eyebrows raised. But they had it figured out by then, so that was also the occasion in which I said that we would be getting married.

Q: Oh, really, so you announced your engagement then.

RIDGWAY: He had been in touch with Joan by telephone and worked it all out with her as to what time I was supposed to be there and put the phone call through and everything.

Q: How nice. It adds a nice touch to the story.

RIDGWAY: Yeah.

Q: It's charming. And preparations for this assignment?

RIDGWAY: Yeah, pack up, rent the house . . .

Q: Same old hurry-hurry?

RIDGWAY: Same old stuff, yeah.

Q: Same old stuff, did you get to study German at all?

RIDGWAY: I did, I'm sorry, I was putzing around all of this time studying German and I loved it and I got in eleven weeks of German and I got my self a 3-3 plus.

Q: Good for you.

RIDGWAY: And loved meeting the German teachers over there. It helped fill in the time. Again, it wasn't cutting out time from a job. All I was doing was cutting out time from reading newspapers. And the assignment was hanging around from the spring, through the June phone call, through the October swearing-in, I was still with nothing to do, you know.

Q: Oh, yeah, from June to October. Why did it take so long? Oh, because the Senate didn't schedule it?

RIDGWAY: They didn't schedule it, it takes time to get the paperwork done and I don't know what all, but it was the better part of ten months between the notion and the fact.

Q: How about stopovers to this post, any courtesy calls?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: No stop overs.

RIDGWAY: No, I flew from Minnesota where Ted and I had split and went straight to East Berlin.

Q: Oh, straight to East Berlin. Now, had you been there before?

RIDGWAY: I had been there one evening in 1970 or '69 to an opera. David Anderson was a junior officer at the time and I'd been to the opera but I didn't know East Berlin.

Q: So you did know the opera house though?

RIDGWAY: At night, you know.

Q: Yeah, which I guess is the pride and joy of the city. I notice there is a picture of it in here. It has been rebuilt twice . . .

RIDGWAY: The Schauspiel House . . . Yeah, that's the one.

Q: So, how about the arrival at post this day . . . this time?

RIDGWAY: Well, I arrived on KLM I guess, at the East German Airport, Schoenfeld. Certainly not a rush of photographers, in fact, protocol was all very upset and breathless that they had to meet me at a lower level because Andrei Gromyko had just arrived at the other end of the airport on a special Aeroflot flight, so they were all off playing obeisance to Andrei Gromyko, and so a bus pulled up at plane-side and key members of the American staff got out with the deputy chief of protocol and I got on board the bus and rode to the VIP lounge, where there was coffee and the like and I was asked to say a few things. And the American staff was all there sort of bouncing around but when the luggage was announced as having been there, I left and the deputy chief of protocol begged off accompanying me. And I said, "That's fine, I certainly understand." And I rode from the airport with the DCM. Walter B. Smith.

Q: Now, had you chosen him?

RIDGWAY: No, I was replacing him.

Q: Oh, his name was Walter B. Smith?

RIDGWAY: B. Smith the second.

Q: The . . . how about the reaction of the host country to a woman envoy?

RIDGWAY: No problem. They knew I was a career officer, they knew I'd had senior positions. I had signed the first diplomatic agreement ever, between the United States and East Germany which was a fishing treaty in 1976- 77.

Q: Had you really?

RIDGWAY: So, I was vaguely a part of their history and was considered sort of a serious, seasoned professional and there was no . . . but they wouldn't comment anyhow, I mean there was just . . .it's a very austere and basically hostile setting.

Q: Yes, it must be. And that northern European weather too, is so gloomy, isn't it?

RIDGWAY: Yes, it can be gloomy.

Q: In the winter anyway. How about presenting your credentials?

RIDGWAY: That was done very shortly thereafter and the residence, which is a great barn of a place out in the northern part of East Berlin, was really too far from the city for the ceremony to start there, and so by mutual agreement with the Protocol office, I was picked up at the Embassy by the East German Government chief of protocol who then accompanied me and the entourage, the usual group that I've always insisted on, the larger

group. And we drove through the city, flags flying, to Karl Marx Square I guess, where the military troops were all lined up and I got out of the car and stood and the National Anthem was played and the commander of the guard of honor at that point goose-stepped towards me. That was really a shock, I knew they still used the goose-step, but that was the first time I'd seen it.

Q: Oh, really?

RIDGWAY: sort of goose-stepped toward me and did all the stuff with the sword and asked me if I wanted to review the troops. And I went with him to review the troops and on into this great hall of the Republic, and again, once again, upstairs and the like, to another large hall, accompanied again by this same entourage, and then lined up, and I presented the credentials and introduced the group. And then Erich Honecker and I went off to another private conversation for about an hour, an hour and five minutes, which was principally one way. Mostly his describing to me what their policies are, and what's wrong with US policies.

Q: I see.

RIDGWAY: And then out and to the office to have a drink of champagne there.

Q: Didn't get quite the lift out of that one, did you?

RIDGWAY: Well, I didn't but we had a good team. Jim Wilkinson, who has come back with me to become one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries there, was someone I picked as Deputy Chief of Mission for Berlin. I had been through his file when I sat on another one of those committee type things and he won the first James Clement Dunn award, so I was completely familiar with his file, and Joan Clark knew him and confirmed to me that he was what the file said, and so I had asked him to come from Bangkok to be the DCM.

Q: Uh huh.

RIDGWAY: And he arrived in July or so. The relationship between me and Walter B. Smith was not a good one,. I knew it wasn't going to be, and so I just sort of watched and listened and waited, and did all my calls and things for five or six months and then Smith left and Jim arrived and we began our mission. But by that point I had come to the conclusion that the United States had no policy toward the German Democratic Republic other than complaining about the wall. But we had decided to recognize the place in 1974 in the context of a lot of European agreements, and then we had never stopped to think about it and there were a host of problems to be solved and my instructions at the time were to go in and tell them that if they want an improved relationship with us that they had to do the following things. It elicited from the Prime Minister, Willi Stoph, after I'd paid a number of calls and sort of laid out this line, very unfriendly line as you can see,

Q: Yes sure.

RIDGWAY: . . . and they told us what was wrong with us. Willi Stoph said, "You know you always come in here with conditions. We have our list as well. Why can't we put them all on the table and see which can be solved and which cannot? And I rejected that, of course, because our interests were more important than theirs. But in fact, there was a germ of an idea there and the more I got to thinking about this tangle of problems that had gone unsolved, some of them for a long time, I could see how you could, if you put them all on the table, you could match them differently.

Q: Yeah.

RIDGWAY: And you would serve US interests by solving the problems, and you wouldn't give up U. S. principle as to whose got solved first, there wouldn't be any question.

Q: Right.

RIDGWAY: So I came back to the States in June of '83, and I saw Larry Eagleburger and went over this with him and said I really would like to try a different approach. I'd like to try a package approach. We're going to stand at this door and argue about who goes through first forever, and there are some problems of importance to the United States that aren't getting solved. Larry's response was, "It's fine with me and you have complete authority. I leave it to you to hear the sound of the saw on the limb behind you." So, I went back, and as I say, Jim Wilkinson arrived and he and I talked all of this over and came up with several parallel developments of US interests and GDR interests that if they kept pace with each other would get done what we wanted done and would get done what they wanted done. And that's really the current course as well. We were able to reduce the divided family list and we were able to get back from the GDR fifty paintings by Lionel Feininger that he had left behind when he fled Germany in 1935, which their courts had agreed belonged to the Feininger family, but their policy on not exporting national treasure was holding up.

Q: I'm sorry how do you spell Feininger?

RIDGWAY: F-e-i-n-i-n-g-e-r, Lionel Feininger. And so that got solved and the paintings were returned to the United States. And the human rights list got a little better and Rick Burt who was the Assistant Secretary at the time, came out for a day's worth of consultations which allowed them to point to the visit of the highest ranking official ever from the United States

Q: Getting more attention.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, a political dialogue opening up and Sam Gibbons, again an old friend from Counselor days, actually from fishery days, because he had a shrimp constituency down in Florida, he came out leading a delegation and we had a reception at the house

and the East Germans sent two Politburo members and that's the first time any Politburo members had been there. And then, you start talking about what you might do in educational exchange. Now, I wasn't around for the finish of that, but we do now have a Fulbright agreement with East Germany. And it's not easy to manage, they keep wanted to send us party hacks and we keep trying to get good people on it, and sometimes you have to take two and get one good one and one bad one.

Q: Yeah.

RIDGWAY: The small things, the Christian Scientists had been told in 1953 that they were an organization that endangered the state and they could not bring any of their materials in. I think our usual course of action, in fact it had been over the years, was to go in and bang on the table and this is this and this is that, but in a different kind of an atmosphere where they could see what they were getting, and a little bit of attention and the like, we were able to go in and just ask that they review it, and with assurances from the Christian Scientists that they were not challenging the authority of the State. And that turned out right, they now are able to send their instructional materials, in German, into their community. A new Mormon Temple has opened in East Germany.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: Uh huh. We didn't do that but I mean a more confident East Germany is willing to do more along those lines. We had some very tough problems with asylum seekers. I was in the States when the first of them came into the Embassy on a Friday night and would not leave, demanding that we send them to the West. I was paged when I was over here at National Airport by the Department, telling me what the problem was. I said, "There is nothing that I can do that I'm not already doing, which is trying to get on an airplane." And that became a problem throughout the spring of '84-'85. And it was particularly heavy, I think it was in '85, the dates get kind of fuzzy around that.

So, we worked on that and it got resolved. We did a lot of work on the commercial side there. American businesses do not know how to operate in Eastern Europe. I came back and saw Mac Baldridge [secretary of commerce] and got $25,000 from him to help get us back into, a presence at the Leipzig Fair. The first Leipzig Fair I went to in March of 1983 I was mortified at what we had. We didn't know whether we wanted to be there or not be there, and it was just an undone and embarrassing kind of a presentation. We re-designed that and put some new techniques in and . . . very happy with the way that got left. And I think it's helped American business.
So, those were sort of the major events. We did, again, I think it is a professional kind of approach, to look at the policy and see whether it was true or false and found out that there wasn't one! Got that working, spent a lot of time traveling back and forth working the issues through here to make sure that no one accused us of having gone soft on Communism.

Q: Yeah

RIDGWAY: Keep talking about how we could advance the US interests and we did a good job.

Q: Again, did you use the same approach of using all the different parts of your embassy to . . . it's a different society . . .

RIDGWAY: It's a different society.

Q: . . . you couldn't.

RIDGWAY: You couldn't, we all had the same conflicts.

Q: You couldn't use the USIA, for example, to that extent.

RIDGWAY: Well, we had a good USIA group, but you couldn't . . . we could show movies in the Embassy but the few people who were privileged to come could come. So you have a party for the newspaper people, they don't accept, or they do accept, you don't know, and if they come they just spout the line at you, you don't have . . . you just sit down and work problems with those East German Government party officials who are in charge of those problems.

Q: Who are in charge, the ones that have the clout.

RIDGWAY: I made some good friends, went to the opera, I mean, the opera cost two dollars and fifty cents, so I went to the opera a lot and met people in that circle. There were some East Germans who didn't care any longer and they knew us.

Q: Now, all of this time when you were coming back and forth, were you able to see your husband?

RIDGWAY: I generally tried to find enough time to go on across the country, stop in St. Paul to visit my mother, go on up to Alaska, spent some time with Ted, come back the same way. Unless it was a really short trip, and then I couldn't do it.

Q: Was he able to get over to

RIDGWAY: Not until toward the end, he came once . . .

Q: He came once.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, at the end.

Q: How did you run this mission?

RIDGWAY: Quite a bit more formally.

Q: Was it more formal?

RIDGWAY: Yes, but it was the kind of an embassy where floors are separated because East Germans are in one place and not in another . . .

Q: Oh, I see.

RIDGWAY: . . . and the staff was more dispersed. It was a lovely chancery. I was just feeling more formal.

Q: Yes, did you do much entertaining, were you able to, or again was . . .

RIDGWAY: Well, you could not do any of the kind of entertaining that had been done in Finland. People would not accept casual invitations. I tried once and East German Protocol complained. I decided to ignore them, I went directly to the person I wanted, to see if he could come to dinner and I got a message back from Protocol, don't do that because our people will still come to us, and unless you have a reason, a visiting dignitary, these invitations should not be extended. We do not accept casual invitations. That was that.

Q: So that was that, that put the lid on that. Did you have much contact with your colleagues, the British and the French and West Germans?

RIDGWAY: Not much, not as much, a lot with my West German colleague because of those months of handling those issues, and it was the time of the deployment of the missiles in West Germany, so I think . . . that they were good colleagues.

Q: Well, all together, any relationship with the Head of State and so forth would be very, very formal.

RIDGWAY: That's right, in fact I never . . . we saw each other at the Leipzig Fair, because when we put in a different kind of an investment there they really wanted us to sort of be up front on the evening news, that they had a balanced relationship with the Americans which was good with their own public. So I probably had more contact than some of my predecessors had, I had only three predecessors, but it was not extensive and nobody ever came for a review of general issues. They didn't care, I mean, they didn't want to hear them. We never were able to meet with senior party officials. Indeed, I never met so much of the top leadership as I did when it was announced that I was coming back to fill in this job.

Q: Oh, is that so?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes, then it really opened up.

Q: A different kettle of fish! Isn't that curious? The other locals, were you able to meet other locals, or were they sort of kept from American tainting?

RIDGWAY: There was no way I really could, my German wasn't that good. So, the few that I met from the church, from the cultural world, the orchestra leaders and things like that, that was fine, but these were people who were allowed to travel outside the country and the like because they had a cultural value. My current special assistant, I almost hate to give you his name because I'm not going to be able to spell it, but Walter Andrusyszyn, who is also here . . .

Q: Well, I can look him up.

RIDGWAY: Okay . . . was the kind of an officer in the right kind of position, at the right age and he could go out and do the movies and do the train rides and go to the church meetings with young people and circulate and that part of the embassy.

Q: Did you enjoy this tour very much?

RIDGWAY: I didn't enjoy it, but I was challenged by it. And I would have said the same as I did when I left Finland, I left with a sense of accomplishment, I left with a sense that there was something in place that would stay, in this case, not so broadly throughout the embassy because there was a different kind of a challenge. But certainly on the policy side, the policy framework has remained intact. Maybe that's inevitable since I'm here and I can decide whether it gets changed or not, but . . .

Q: That's very good though.

RIDGWAY: . . . that has gone well. But it was not easy and, but I didn't find it difficult to get through, it went on long enough and I was happy to leave. But I went back and forth very often in order to persuade this Washington bureaucracy to see East Berlin differently, or to get a Mac Baldridge to give me $25,000. A bureaucracy will turn you down but if you come in and you go see the Commerce Secretary you get it. And we had some other problems of a kind I can't really talk about . . .

Q: Of course.

RIDGWAY: . . . they required the same kind of travel, and better done in person. The time could hang heavy, but it didn't hang all that heavy. Then there was West Berlin . . . I stayed away from West Berlin, and I tried by example to encourage at least the substantive officers on the staff to stay away from West Berlin. We had so much administrative support from West Berlin that our administrative people had to have a lot of contact. And our staff and our staff families whose children were in West Berlin had West Berlin ties. And they could simply look out of their apartment window or over the wall and there was West Berlin and so they spent their time there and a lot of it in the

military community in West Berlin, in the sports activities for kids or the bowling leagues and things of that sort. But for the substantive officers, with a closed society much of what you do is sort of, what I've always thought a Chicago politician would do, or New York politician, you know your neighborhood and you know it through the soles of your feet, and you can sniff it and you feel it and it's in the air, and it's in the restaurants and it's in the shops and it's on the trains, and if you go over to West Berlin you rupture that.

Q: Ah, yes, of course.

RIDGWAY: And when you come back you have to go through that, even momentary though it might be, depression that hits every one going from West to East, and that jars your thinking and appreciation as well. So, I didn't spend a lot of time in West Berlin, but toward the end of my tour I made some very good friends in West Berlin: the manager and his wife at the Steigenberger Hotel. They stayed good friends and he hasn't visited us here, but she comes by quite often and has stayed with us. And they have access of course to the opera there, and so I started going also to the West Berlin opera, but every so often I'd have a Big Mac attack and I'd run to the McDonald's in West Berlin. But I didn't spend a lot of time there. I was ready to leave, but again I didn't mind the time that I had on my own hands.

Q: Yes, the problems were difficult but they were not totally frustrating, they were solvable, in increments.

RIDGWAY: They were solvable in increments, you could lay out a plan, you could work them, be frustrated, be annoyed, angered, offended by that regime, but you could deal with it.

Q: And you could see progress, too.

RIDGWAY: Well, not much, but I could see the framework. I was convinced then, as I'm convinced now, that it was the proper framework, and we did solve a few things.

Q: Now what about back here? Again the same question: did you have, you feel, enough policy guidance?

RIDGWAY: Oh yes, but I was writing my own. I came back here and wrote my policies and then went out there and implemented it.

Q: I'm told that's the best way to do it.

RIDGWAY: It sure is. [laughter]

Q: Very good. Where do children go to school there?

RIDGWAY: In West Berlin.

Q: Oh, they do? And they are permitted to go back and forth, with little passes, I suppose. I see. Did you have a good admin. section?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: You really have to have in a place like that.

RIDGWAY: Well, you do, and they have to be creative and imaginative, and in this case had to be able to get along with West Berlin.

Q: Right, because your support came from there?

RIDGWAY: Came from there, yeah.

Q: Food and . .

RIDGWAY: Well, we went across ourselves for food, but warehousing and things of that sort. I for one believe it's not fair to take it from the East Germans when we had access to . . .

Q: I see, it's that limited.

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: I see, I hadn't thought of that. It's not something where you help their economy by using their products. Did you get any people from the Hill coming over there?

RIDGWAY: Well, we had a couple of delegations. Congressman Gibbons lead a delegation, and Joe Biden was through, but again, not much. Tom Foley, actually I saw him last night, and we were talking about it, Tom Foley came through. But by and large, no. But we also tried to control it. We tried to dole it out as rewards to the East Germans, without telling them, but an improvement in the human rights list might bring a visit that they could give some publicity to that made them look good. And we sort of let them know that there was a relationship and we worked every resource that we could find.

Q: What about the local press? How did they treat you?

RIDGWAY: As if I weren't there, unless the government wanted me to be there.

Q: Well, yes, so that would depend on the government's attitude.

RIDGWAY: Yes, you know, there would be the government announcement, "There was a reception last evening on, so and so was there and was received by," but it was not, I mean it's a Communist press.

Q: Of course, when one isn't used to it, it's hard to think in those terms isn't it?

RIDGWAY: Yeah.

Q: Consular problems?

RIDGWAY: Many cases. People wanting out.

Q: Of course, I don't mean consular, I mean really American, did you have any distressed Americans around?

RIDGWAY: Occasionally you'd have somebody who would end up in an East German jail for having done something dumb.

Q: No drug problems though? No drug problems? You don't seem to have been on that . . .

RIDGWAY: No, no Well, I think East Berlin is, I think East Berlin is a transit point, but we were not able to convince the East Germans that it was, not that they would admit it. I know from my Lebanese colleague, a very fine man from Lebanon, that he at one point had the responsibility for visiting seventeen prisoners in jail in East Germany on drug charges, drug transit charges, possession charges. So they were, the East Germans were acting to pick people up but they were not telling us that they were responding to our request for cooperation. They rejected our request for cooperation.

Q: Interesting. But you didn't have problems with American citizens in those situations?

RIDGWAY: Well, after the experience in Moscow I'm reluctant to say what was going on there. I mean if I didn't know it, it doesn't mean it wasn't going on. As far as I know we didn't have drug problems. I've learned since we had some fraternization problems, but I sure missed it.

Q: You didn't know it. How about within the mission itself, any problems with people going crazy or shooting each other?

RIDGWAY: No, at one point though I got the regional psychiatrist to come to visit. He was regional for Eastern Europe, and he never came to East Berlin and I got him up there. And he said, "Well you know you're not in the East." And I said, "Look I happen to think we have an unusual problem here. In Prague you can circle the wagons and you have the high morale that comes from being inside those wagons. We don't circle the wagons because we have an opening at the rear which is the West and so we're surrounded on three sides " He stayed about a week and came to see me, and said he was very sorry he hadn't come there sooner and that he had not realized the erosion of the spirit that comes

from going back and forth. And from seeing, living next to something and seeing it, so that you never make an adjustment one way or another.

Q: I should think so.

RIDGWAY: So, I would hope that he's been visiting regularly since, but we didn't have major problems. We didn't send anybody home.

Q: You didn't have to evacuate, you had depressions but low level.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, we all had fits of depression.

Q: Yes, sure. Was morale pretty good, not too many intra-mission rivalries?

RIDGWAY: I wouldn't be the one to ask on that. I thought it was pretty good because people were doing things they were interested in. I think if you asked Jean, she would say I didn't have the faintest idea what was going on, and that morale was not good. She will often say, “Ambassador, you just don't understand," "or you don't really know."

Q: Well, yes, of course, people don't, there again there is that little tiny shelf you were up on there away from

RIDGWAY: Some of them I did, I just didn't want to know, so I officially didn't know.

Q: Well, that's a very good way too. What about Foreign Service inspectors?

RIDGWAY: They came through.

Q: How did they treat you?

RIDGWAY: Very well, but they came across some major issues that we differed with them on. We had some unholy fights and the issues had to be referred to the Department. But they were not foolish issues, they were serious, long term issues and I think I was probably in the mood to overlook them and they picked them up and demanded that they be reviewed. I said all right, but then they came out on one side and I came out on the other. Once the issue was put on the table, then we disagreed. We took it to the Department and the Department agreed with the embassy.

Q: Oh, did it?

RIDGWAY: Yeah, I was surprised. I thought we made a pretty good case. I don't know whether it was the right thing to do but once the inspectors demanded that the question be addressed, then we had a strong view on how it be done.

Q: Did you have any difficulty with entertaining at this post?

RIDGWAY: No, no. There wasn't all that much. There was a lot of embassies entertaining other embassies, which I simply didn't do. I tried to get a film and invite people from church circles or political groups. And you could invite 150 and you might get twenty. But we kept trying: try to have a theme of movies or of visiting American cultural events for which we had a lot of extra "paper" ourselves, and could fill up an audience and have a buffet afterwards. We had an annual program of famous American directors coming with their films, so we had Allen Pakula bring "Sophie's Choice," and that gave us entree into the whole film industry in East Germany once a year. And they were interesting people. I don't know if it affected policy but it gave us something interesting to do in the cultural sense. I did some entertaining of my own at the embassy around the embassy's regular film program. We'd bring in "Gone With The Wind" or something like that. And again you'd invite 200 people and get twenty. But at least you got twenty. And that was about all we could do except when visitors came through.

Q: Did you have a housekeeper there?

RIDGWAY: I had a strange situation there I inherited from my predecessor a French-speaking, native Urdu speaker Pakistani cook, a Portuguese washerwoman, and an East German butler. I got rid of the East German butler and got the Pakistani cook's brother in from Pakistan. And I got rid of the Portuguese-speaking maid because she was just skittering around the house like a cockroach all the time and nobody could talk to her. [laughter] And I'm trying to remember, who did the laundry after that? I swear I don't remember. There was a point at which I was doing the laundry.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: My own anyway, I wouldn't do it for the two men, I did my own. We got . . . oh, I know what happened toward the end, because the Wilkinsons had the same kind of problems. All of a sudden out of nowhere there was a little Filipino community in East Berlin.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: And I think it was being run by the Philippine Ambassador's wife who brought some Filipinos with her and they sent for cousins and the next thing you know we could all hire a Filipino washer-lady at that stage. So by the time I left I sort of had the household the way I wanted it. The Urdu-speaking cook and I, I mean that was just a joke. He was superb at French. He had been raised, started out as sort of a bearer at the French Embassy in Islamabad and also he was quite fluent. Came to Berlin with the French Ambassador and then got left behind when the French Ambassador went home.

Q: Oh, yes.

RIDGWAY: But he could not write. He had an Arabic script, he couldn't write Roman. And so he was trying to learn it, but I mean it was just impossible. I never could leave him notes because he couldn't read.

Q: No, because he couldn't read [English].

RIDGWAY: So we talked through a lot of things, and he had some recipes and we worked together on some. I know one summer we were making about four different kinds of cold soups, and so I would make it while he was standing there, and I would tell him what I was doing and he would write it in Arabic so he could have it

Q: Oh, I see.

RIDGWAY: but his English wasn't really all that good, so I was never quite sure whether he got it straight. It was not at all a smooth operation.

Q: No, and it is very wearing, isn't it, that sort of a thing.

RIDGWAY: Then we had, as I say, we had access to things in West Berlin so for awhile he did the shopping at the Commissary, and at the Military Commissary with a special letter, and in the West Berlin stores and some in East Berlin as well, but . . . rice and stuff like that. But I got a little nervous about his running around with hard currency and with a PX letter, so I took over the grocery shopping in dollars on the Military base. I just didn't want him over there.

Q: I don't blame you. He had been doing that before, had he?

RIDGWAY: Yeah, and I just . . . it made me nervous.

Q: I would think so too, because you never know about those things. But you had to really be in control of this whole shebang all the time. You had nobody you could delegate.

RIDGWAY: When I was in Finland the housekeeper helped do the accounts, but I did the accounts, the shopping lists that he and I worked on. He told me what he needed and then I would take off from the office and go do the shopping.

Q: Why weren't you able to have a special assistant?

RIDGWAY: Would you ask a career officer to do the grocery shopping for you?

Q: Well, bring somebody from the States the way Anne Cox Chambers did.

RIDGWAY: Who? Yeah, I know career people, I'd never ask Jean to do it, and I can't think of any young officer who would do it very happily.

Q: Some of the women hired wives of officers to do that sort of thing. Put them on the payroll.

RIDGWAY: Well, to do the grocery shopping?

Q: To do that sort of thing, yes.

RIDGWAY: I don't see it.

Q: You don't see it, yeah. It's funny the different ways people do . . because I understand now that if you don't have a spouse that you are then entitled to have a special assistant to help you with the running of the house, if you want one.

RIDGWAY: One? I didn't know that.

Q: Maybe it's very recent.

RIDGWAY: It may be very recent, yeah.

Q: And maybe you have to squeal to get it, I don't know.

RIDGWAY: I wasn't feeling helpless

Q: No, but that's an awful drain on your time.

RIDGWAY: It really was, yeah, yeah.

Q: Terrible drain on your time.

RIDGWAY: Uh huh. Not to mention my temper. I really don't like pushing four and five grocery carts around. You can imagine the volume I was buying.

Q: I can imagine the volume you were buying, and then to have to do your own laundry and that sort of thing.

RIDGWAY: Well, I only did that for a summer.

Q: Even so, that's eight weeks. An ambassador shouldn't have to do her own laundry.

RIDGWAY: I was not about to ask the two houseboys to do it, just didn't want to. It's already uncomfortable enough with the living with two of them in the house and nobody else.

Q: But that shouldn't be, it really shouldn't. Are you opposed to the idea of hiring of a wife, an American woman, if she wants to earn her living this way?

RIDGWAY: If she wants to, fine. If you've got the money, but you know we don't have the money certainly.

Q: Yeah, I know, you have to give up another slot.

RIDGWAY: If it's a position, I'm not going to take it away from the political section, or another part of the administrative section that's serving the whole community just to have somebody do the grocery shopping for me.

Q: I think perhaps that is how it's worked, I'm not sure. We've discussed morale a little bit, now what about the wives, did they have organizations there, things to keep them busy, or did many of them work?

RIDGWAY: They didn't want an embassy wives group there. I tried to organize one, they weren't interested. There was however, an international embassy women's group, and those who were interested joined that. Some of the wives were teaching in West Berlin. Lots of small children, there was a point when I . . . it was pretty clear to me how people were handling boredom . . . really turning out the . . .

Q: So many babies (laughter)

RIDGWAY: . . . so many babies. A very young community, which I took as meaning the people were comfortable there. That's why I think if Jean and I ever discussed it, we'd probably disagree. Some of our young couples had been married ten years and decided Berlin was where they wanted to start their families. Well, that suggests to me that they found an atmosphere that was congenial and . . .

Q: Could they use the doctors in West Germany?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes, yes. In West Berlin.

Q: In West Berlin, yes. So they would. You didn't have to have the school kerfuffle, though, or the commissary kerfuffle, did you, because they were all in West Germany.?

RIDGWAY: They were all in West Berlin.

Q: So you didn't have that to worry about, because those can be terrible bones of contention.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, they are, and we didn't have that at all.

Q: What about, were you able to continue your Thanksgiving celebrations?

RIDGWAY: Continued? I'm trying to think what we did for Thanksgiving. I wonder if we ever had anybody by? I think I ended up Thanksgiving, no, one year I came back to the States for a long leave that started with Thanksgiving, and another year I must have gone to the Wilkinsons. It was not a post that lent itself to that.

Q: No. Most people were married, were they?

RIDGWAY: Most were married, and the married communicators had already invited the Marines. I forget where Jean went, but it just didn't lend itself to it. People weren't . . . again if that other loop of the East had been closed, a full atmosphere would have set in, but lot of people went West, it was just different.

Q: It was different, a little fragmented, wasn't it?

RIDGWAY: It was.

Q: Not so much a total sense of community as you have said before

RIDGWAY: Not at all. We started a few things, we got a baseball team going and then we had, Embassy Berlin, US Mission West Berlin, Embassy Warsaw and Embassy Prague.

Q: Oh?

RIDGWAY: . . . and we rotated and visited each other's posts and most of them liked to come to West Berlin because of the shopping and that kind of thing. Our folks enjoyed going to Prague. We got one of those going. But bowling leagues were in the West. Most of the sports, the Marine's athletic activities were in the West.

Q: Were they? Did you . . again, were you able to include your staff personnel at the residence?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: You know I didn't ask you, at your other posts did you have your locals to the residence?

RIDGWAY: Yes, if they had worked a project, they came.

Q: And did you continue that in East Germany?

RIDGWAY: No, no.

Q: Oh, no, they wouldn't

RIDGWAY: On large receptions Fourth of July . . . sure I did include the East Germans, but most didn't come. They weren't permitted to. I mean, they were told whether they could come or not.

Q: What about Fourth of July, what did you do for that?

RIDGWAY: Fourth of July there was a little larger . . . it was a reception from about three until six, with much more elaborate food. And the Army band came over from West Berlin and set up and everything. It was an enormous house with a great, great long garden. I spent a lot of time redesigning the garden while I was there. We got some money for it. It looked like a cemetery.

Q: Oh, dear.

RIDGWAY: We got a West Berlin garden designer over and spent two years working that. But in the back was a large, round, cement circle. The West Berlin band, our Army band would come over and set up there and play Glenn Miller and it was a very popular reception and as many East Germans as could come, I think fought to come.

Q: Did they?

RIDGWAY: So that they could hear the music and eat the strawberries, and things of that sort.

Q: Did you travel around the country much?

RIDGWAY: Quite a bit, but it was so dreadful. I did Leipzig and Weimar, and Dresden, I traveled.

Q: When you say dreadful, in what way, what sense?

RIDGWAY: It's depressing.

Q: It's depressing, because they don't have much?

RIDGWAY: It's a police state, you can't avoid it, you just know that it's a police state. But I still traveled quite a bit, compared to others I traveled quite a bit. But I mean no speeches or anything,

Q: No, no.

RIDGWAY: . . . I tried to . . . and if you tried to go visit an industry or something, they just wouldn't answer you or they'd tell you it wasn't convenient for you to go look at a plant.

Q: Did you have to have permission to travel at all?

RIDGWAY: You didn't have to have permission to travel but if you wanted to go visit anything, you . . .

Q: You could just roam around, yeah. How about recreation and sports in that country?

RIDGWAY: I didn't do much there. I read a lot and I had a swim club membership right around the corner from the Embassy, there was swimming and a sauna. And I had a golf club membership in West Berlin, but I didn't play more than two or three times.

Q: Of course, apparently you traveled quite a bit, which would cut into your time.

RIDGWAY: Yes and I was back in the States or I was on the road, but I didn't . . . as I say, I read a great deal.

Q: Now, we can get to this: what was your husband's attitude toward your career?

RIDGWAY: Very supportive, as you can see.

Q: But of course you didn't have him there to be supportive.

RIDGWAY: No, but any man who would put up with being split like that is about as supportive as they can get.

Q: Exactly, in a different sense, quite. Did it make any difference in the way you handled your work and allocated your time?

RIDGWAY: No, no.

Q: To try to get more time to visit him?

RIDGWAY: No. no.

Q: How about private life there?

RIDGWAY: It was very private, me and all my books.

Q: Yes, very private. Do you still have a goldfish-bowl-- even more so in a police state, wouldn't you, because you must have been followed everywhere.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, but I wasn't doing anything that was . . .

Q: But did it bother you, that . . .

RIDGWAY: No, no.

Q: Your phone was tapped, of course.

RIDGWAY: Sure.

Q: Everything was bugged

RIDGWAY: Everything was bugged.

Q: But it didn't bother you? You made up your mind that this was the way it was?

RIDGWAY: Well, I didn't have, you know, we weren't seeing that many people. You get resentful of it but it didn't bother me that much. I mean, it sets in, it's a total depression, I don't mean that but it's not something that really gripes at your soul every day.

Q: I have lived in two police states, and I didn't realize how oppressive they were until I left, and that is why this going back and forth must be terribly

RIDGWAY: It's torture.
Q: It must be terrible. Absolutely awful, that's a good point that I had not thought of. People would think that would be better. It would be much worse.

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: Loneliness, I guess by this time you know how to handle that.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, I know how to handle it. I stopped drinking when I was there. I think, again, you really have to know where you're headed. I've been a teetotaler since Berlin.

Q: Have you really? No more Gallo wine?

RIDGWAY: No., no. Ted likes wine with a meal. But I just stopped. I don't need this, it's a dangerous time, and I had come off a dangerous time in Washington, and Ted was far, far away, and I could tell after the first couple of months there that that was just going to lead to trouble. So I stopped.

Q: Good for you.

RIDGWAY: I must say I haven't missed it. We've discovered a terrific apple cider the French make. Everybody makes the Virginia apple cider and it gives you the glass that looks the same way, and never . . . I'm glad I did, and I find now on the job that I'm on, if I were even . . . I just couldn't handle it.

Q: Well, I should think in the first place it makes you sleepy.

RIDGWAY: Well, or it can keep you going and you just get logy and try to get up in the morning and go to work and you are not at your best.

Q: That's very true. Did you have any health problems there?

RIDGWAY: Did I have any health problems there? No. no.

Q: Very good, maybe because you were drinking cider.

RIDGWAY: Well, there I wasn't even drinking cider, I was just drinking water or coca cola, but I didn't have any health problems there.

Q: What about personal dangers, were you . . .

RIDGWAY: No, totally safe, or totally unsafe, depending on the decision of the East German government. When I was there, I was totally safe.

Q: Sure. Now, we come down here to your post-AEP years, and we are coming to this one, the one you're in now. Okay, were you recalled for this job?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: You were recalled for this job.

RIDGWAY: The Secretary called me in February of '85 and said that he would like to nominate me for this position and I said how flattered I was, and indeed I was, and that I'd be happy to return to take up the job.

Q: Now you did have some difficulties . . .

RIDGWAY: And then the problems started. [laughter]

Q: In getting confirmed.

RIDGWAY: I was not confirmed until the 22nd of July, or July lath, and I was sworn in on the 22nd.

Q: For the record do you want to go over the synopsis of what happened?

RIDGWAY: Well, I don't know the point at which everything went wrong. It, just all of a sudden the nomination went up and sat, and sat, and sat, and I became part of what then became, you know, "Free the State Department twenty-nine." Rick Burt and I were paired together and Helms didn't like either one of us for somewhat different reasons, I guess. And I forget when my hearing was, but I flew back in, I guess it was in June of '85, finally

all the papers were done and they agreed to schedule the hearings. Ted was back here by that time. In fact, I should point out with respect to travel, Ted returned to Washington in July of '84. Gave up his command in July of '84. I flew to Alaska for that, and then he and I spent two weeks driving from Alaska to St. Paul, at which point he went on alone to Washington. And I stayed in St. Paul for one week with my mother and then I flew back to East Germany. Then he set up residence here, so that from '84 on when I'm coming back and forth, I was staying with Ted.

Q: Oh, good.

RIDGWAY: In any case he was here at that time and we went up to the Hill, and we had a perfectly normal hearing. Somebody appeared to oppose Rick but nobody appeared to oppose me and we heaved a sigh, you know, and Senator Pell made all the right noises and things again, and Nancy Kassebaum. And I answered questions on the economic questions and the trade questions. And there were some pros and cons, but no cons to me, just some very good questions on general European policy and the like. But it was generally set aside that I was a known commodity and an experienced officer and everybody was pleased to see me back and welcomed my taking up these issues. And we heaved a sigh of relief and we left.

And we got word about an hour later that of course Senator Helms had notified the committee that he would not permit the questioning to close and he wished to see us that evening. So, Ted and I and Rick and Gahl Burt went up that evening, not to the main Senate room, but to the, it's called S-116, it's the old Senate Foreign Relations room. Green baize, much smaller table, and who was in the chair that night? I guess Senator Pell. Helms was there. Mac Mathias made a point of coming to sit on the Republican side. John Kerry, Joe Biden made a point of coming. I had known him, he had visited East Berlin. and others may have come in and out, but those are the names I remember. Now we just got taken over the coals. I for throwing East Germans out of the Embassy and into the arms of East German jailers. A particular case was brought up in which we had put out a man and his wife and two children. The man and wife ended up in jail and the children were given to the grandparents. I kept asking the Senator if he didn't want me to explain that case. No, he did not, very rough questioning. "Had these people been put out of the Embassy?" "Yes, they had." "Is it true that" . . And no, he didn't want to hear any of this and so when he got all done, he said, "What do you want to say for yourself, having done all of these terrible things?" And I pointed out that the man had come into the Embassy, he was a doctor, with surgical scissors and poison and threatened to murder his children, and we considered him a security hazard, both for Embassy personnel and for his wife and children, and we had every right to put him out. However, we were not heartless, we had kept track of the case, and I was happy to report that the man, his wife and his children were in West Germany, and they had left East Germany. And that the Embassy and I believe that we had had enough influence on that case at appropriate levels in the East German government, that in fact it had produced freedom for them while providing security for the Embassy. A lot of questions on how career officers can serve political leaders. And it was not pleasant.

Q: He was the only one nasty, of the group?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes. The others were there, and occasionally when his five minutes were up, instead of the chairman saying, "There is no one else to hear, here is another five minutes," they were taking their time and they were really very supportive, just by their presence and the way they sort of tempered all of this. And then Rick testified, he had listened to me go through all of this and Gahl and Ted, Gahl had quit smoking, Gahl was already half-way through a pack of cigarettes. Ted was a wreck. I at least had been able to go first. and Rick was in hardly any shape, and he got taken over the coals. There they wanted him to testify on his recommendations to the Secretary of State on specific issues that were contentious, right vs. left politically. And Rick was very good, he and I are not close friends, but he was very, very good and handled it all well. And we went home. And, I'm trying to think of how it went. It sat. And I went back to post, and finally in the middle of July, around the 5th or so of July, I had a call from the Department insisting that I return. And by this time of course, the East Germans were opening up doors that had been closed. And I had a whole lot of things happening that were interesting. Well, now, the Secretary had a fit. Finally ordered me home, "Give up all this entertaining and all these diplomatic niceties, I need you back here." I flew back, only to find out that by this time a campaign on the right had started out calling me a liar. And it had infected the consideration of the issue up on the Hill. And so the weekend that I came home, I left on a Friday, I came into the office that Saturday, which was like July 15th or 16th, that kind of thing, to help the Department cull the files, finish culling the files for this case. That material was then made available in a rush on Monday morning to the senior committee leadership to read to decide for themselves, had I lied. And they were satisfied that I had not, so they brought the nomination onto the floor and it was, I was voted in something like eighty-nine to nine. The same nine, you know, the McClures, the Wallops, the Humphreys, you know, Helms, Garn, Hatch, Orrin Hatch, McClure. Nine people, and Rick got about the same vote. As I say, that was about the 19th and I was sworn in on Tuesday. That was their business day and I was sworn in on Friday, and that was the end of it. Of course, the campaign has continued.

Q: Has it?

RIDGWAY: Very clever campaign . . . it starts occasionally I will see the headlines, in "Human Events." And it's nicely done so that you can't sue. And it will say in small print above a large headline, "Senate report alleges that . . ."

Q: Oh, yeah, "alleges that . . ."

RIDGWAY: And then the big headline, "Ridgway lies." But I can't do anything about it. So I just keep working and keep doing my job.

Q: How did going through that sort of thing affect you?

RIDGWAY: Not at all, I was annoyed, I was mad. But at this stage of the game what can happen to me? I've got this wonderful husband that I don't get to see, I've got a career I can't go any farther in. You know, what's to cost me from just saying, "I don't have to worry about this kind of stuff . . . "

Q: Yes, yes. But still this continuing campaign . . .

RIDGWAY: It's dirty, it's ugly, it makes you angry, and you feel sullied by it, and you can't really defend yourself because they don't care if you defend yourself. That group isn't looking for the truth. The group that is, the eighty-nine that were satisfied, fine. But it does mean I think that in the future we all have to be, we are all going to be Melissa Wellses. It's getting worse, the way they've gotten to her.

Q: Yes. She's very philosophical about it at this point.

RIDGWAY: She's got, as I did, she has the Secretary's full support.
Q: You, of course, had the Secretary's full support.

RIDGWAY: Yes, there was never any doubt. And I could have come back earlier, but he also did not want me in this job in an acting capacity, building a record that could be criticized before I ever got the job.

Q: Right.

RIDGWAY: But by the time I did come back, then they sort of had a promise as to when the hearing and the vote would be, and I came . . . he wanted me back then in that setting. And it did unfold the right way.

Q: Well, now, if Jesse Helms is ever defeated, if the people in North Carolina wake up, and actually he almost lost, you know, it's a shame he didn't, but do you think this will put a stop to this or is it too large a group, it's nine people now. Do you think that conservative element is enough that it is going to continue to make everybody Melissa Wellses?

RIDGWAY: I think Jesse Helms and the people who staff him are the ones who are most willing to use all of the rules available under the system to prostitute the process. I don't know, it is a particular kind of personality. In his world on the right, he is a giant personality, and he enjoys it and he's willing to use it, and he has a constituency that seems to think it's a good thing, and so there he is. Whether somebody else would have that same sense, I don't know.

Q: You don't know, but as long as he's in, it's going to be this way.

RIDGWAY: As long as he's in. He loves doing it.

Q: Oh, I know he does. And he uses it as bargaining chips, doesn't he? I mean, he might not necessarily have been against you, but there might have been something that he wanted from the Administration.

RIDGWAY: He did, he wanted a job for Jim Malone.

Q: Well, there you are, there you are.

RIDGWAY: And Jim Malone finally got the job, and the twenty-nine were released.

Q: I wonder what he wants now?

RIDGWAY: I don't know.

Q: Gosh, it's too bad. I mean, it's enough difficulty just doing a good job, without having to put up with this. How have you liked this assignment?

RIDGWAY: Well, you can imagine, it's a job that takes a terrible price. I've enjoyed being able to have as much influence as I have. I don't have time to feel satisfied about it, I just barely manage to keep moving one foot in front of the other. It's the top of the career, nobody else has done it before, no woman has done it before.

Q: Never, no.

RIDGWAY: And I think I'm doing it well, but I don't have time to assess it.

Q: Doesn't this job bring you a lot of social engagements though?

RIDGWAY: I turn them down.

Q: You do?

RIDGWAY: I know what it sounds like, but I do no National Days. The Deputies do the National Days, and I don't go to anything that isn't for a Foreign Minister or a Prime Minister, or a Head of State.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: That's all I accept. I try once in awhile to do something that interests me. I had an invitation from a group of Georgetown students, about eight of them, to come to their seminar one evening. I thought, gee, I'd like to do that, so I went, was worn out the next day, but I . . . and I get stuff on the calendar that I just do to break the routine, and then when it comes up to it, Jean says, "I bet you're sorry you put that on the calendar.".

Q: It looks good a month or two ahead.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Well, how is your husband handling this? Or I shouldn't say handling it, obviously he's handling it, but how does he like the situation?

RIDGWAY: I don't know. I don't think I want to ask him.

Q: No. [chuckle]

RIDGWAY: He's got his own exciting job.

Q: What is his job now?

RIDGWAY: He's commanding officer, has been since '84, commanding officer of what's called the Coast Guard Intelligence Coordinating Center. He was brought back from Alaska to establish it. He's the first commanding officer.

Q: Oh, really, Intelligence--

RIDGWAY: Coordinating Center.

Q: Where is his office?

RIDGWAY: Here, Buzzard's Point, Coast Guard Headquarters. And he's active in the Arlington County Youth Sports Program. He umpires baseball and referees basketball. We are in a new townhouse development, he was the first president of the Homeowners Association. He's a community activist to the extent that he can, and anyhow, why not, I'm not around.

Q: Yes, that's right. Do you enjoy that kind of thing?

RIDGWAY: I hate . . . I don't . . .

Q: You're not a joiner. Are there any stepchildren from his first marriage?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: So in a sense, until this job ends you are leading separate lives.

RIDGWAY: Pretty much, except we went up to Minnesota over the weekend. We had three marvelous days. Sure, we were with my mother, but we really are as you can see, very private people, and when we have a moment, we don't go anywhere. I can't plan it anyhow because I never know. When I came back Jean and I got tickets to the Kennedy Center Ballet Center, Ballet Series, and I never made a one, because I couldn't plan. So

that will all wait, and Ted and I have membership in the Army-Navy Country Club and we've never been. But, you know we're both happy in our way, but it has to be, it's been tough on both of us.

Q: Well, of course it has.

RIDGWAY: I wouldn't ask him what he thinks of it.

Q: Yeah, I'm sure he's very proud of you.

RIDGWAY: Oh, he is that, in fact, I'm really being unfair in saying I don't know, because he's made sure I know. I come in at crazy hours with the secretary and Ted doesn't like to have me take a taxi from here to home, and of course, the Department rules don't permit you to be taken home. And it's gotten to be almost a joke--he hates dirty tennis shoes and he wears these bright, white tennis shoes--it's almost gotten to be a joke or sort of a family tradition on board the Secretary's plane, no matter what time we arrive, if you look closely enough you will see this white pair of tennis shoes start to emerge from the shadows out at Andrews. And Ted is out there, and it's driving rain, or it's two a.m. and he's there.

Q: To pick you up., yes. May I ask why the department no longer permits you to be taken home from here?

RIDGWAY: William Proxmire [Senator, WI], I guess.

Q: The last time we left off you were telling me that your husband meets your flights when you come into Andrews . . .

RIDGWAY: Yes. yes.

Q: And you always know because you see his white tennis shoes. Well, this is as good a time as any to ask you a question that I am trying to get a fix on. You are a career woman and I have sixteen others who are career. Now, one of them told me, your friend Virginia Schafer, that she never wanted to be married, it never interested her. And another one told me she made a firm decision not be . . . Now, where do you stand on that?

RIDGWAY: [Laughter] If you come across . . . never thought about it, I never made a decision not to marry.

Q: You didn't?

RIDGWAY: No, I could, well, maybe once or twice with respect to one or two folks that I met along the line. But it was always there. It's something that some people did and some people didn't do. I think that of the two men I met that might have made me change my mind, I said to one at the time, because I was a DCM, that I simply wasn't prepared to

be a wife. I had to answer the question, could I make ambassador? and I wasn't prepared to quit. And that I would make a miserable wife because on the days that things went wrong in his job, I would be saying, "Gee, I wonder if I couldn't have done better on my own." And I just . . . he was gorgeous, but it wasn't going to work. And somebody else along the line simply wasn't available. But there were always . . . it was just always there.

And certainly the time came when it was quite apparent I wasn't going to be having children if I married, and I think along with other women found that there are men who feel threatened, and men who don't and you generally run into the men who feel threatened or you run into the men who see you as sort of an imperious woman, that well, they'd like to sort of add you as a feather to their cap. You just walk away from things of that sort. But I never made the decision one way or the other, I just let my life flow and usually had somebody in it and then when . . .

I think what changed was simply that when Ted came along, it started as a professional relationship of two colleagues working some tough issues, great respect for each other, into friends, into close friends, and then, a large part, and I don't know how the other women faced it, the Service failed me. And when I looked up in '81, as I mentioned to you once before, and realized that I had made the fatal mistake of really marrying the Foreign Service, and having been divorced without even knowing I was married, I thought this is crazy. It isn't that Ted was there and available because if he'd been the wrong man I wouldn't have married him. But, I suddenly had a lot of things drop from my eyes and say this is a wonderful man, and I'm in love with him and I'm not going to walk away from this in pursuit of something that isn't real anyway. I didn't have to undo a decision never to marry. I just found the right person, it's coincidence in large part that the right person was there at a time when I was saying that it is worth the sacrifices. And there are sacrifices. You begin to tailor your thinking and you make adjustments and you . . .and I've probably made fewer than most because I was married later. I married a man who knew what I was doing at the time, and who was prepared himself to make major sacrifices.

Q: Yes, yes.

RIDGWAY: I didn't have a lot of adjustments. The question that flows from that, that so many ask is, would you have made Ambassador if you had been married? And there I think the answer is no.

Q: You really think you would not have?

RIDGWAY: I don't think you can.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: I don't think you can. The next generation of women, maybe some of the ones who are working here with me at this time will be able to. But I find even now on

this job, there are nights that I go home earlier than I should because I'm thinking about my marriage obligations and the fact that I want my marriage to work, and I will close up the office a couple of hours before I should. A couple of hours before I would have in the past.

Q: In other words you can't give one hundred percent to the job, which is what you give.

RIDGWAY: Well, I give one hundred fifty percent and there are nights that I only want to give one hundred percent.

Q: Yeah, I see what you mean. And when you were just finishing college and starting out on a career, which is the time most young women decide to get married, there just wasn't anybody you wanted, I suppose.

RIDGWAY: No, they were all creeps.

Q: They were all creeps (laughter)

RIDGWAY: God knows where they come from, some of them, I tell you, but there wasn't anybody there at that time.

Q: I know what you mean. Well, it has occurred to me that if a bright woman, and the women who manage to make it into the Foreign Service are by definition bright, they don't have a very big pool to pick from here anyway, and then when they go overseas, that cuts the pool way down, doesn't it?

RIDGWAY: No, it doesn't, I don't think so. I think there are a lot of men to date in Washington, there are even more men to date overseas.

Q: Well, that's if you want to marry a foreigner.

RIDGWAY: Well, if you just want to date, there are lots of American businessmen overseas.

Q: But aren't they mostly married?

RIDGWAY: No, not all of them. But I think that you work so hard on your career that it is a little hard to be in charm school at the same time.

Q: I'm sure it is.

RIDGWAY: So I think sometimes the opportunities go by because you just turn down the dinner date, or the theater group or somebody says, "Let's all get dressed up and go to the Halloween party at such and such," and you say, "Oh, God who wants to do that?" and you just don't.

Q: Yeah. Well, I know how you prize your free evenings when you are overseas.

RIDGWAY: Yeah. But I'm very sympathetic when I read in the paper, for example, young couples who marry and then they go off together to New York, and he works for some big law company or something, some big law firm. And he starts off with twenty hours a day, and as I read it in the magazines, she asks, "Why doesn't he come home from work, where is he, I'm left all alone." And he seems driven by the job and she feels abandoned. I think if you turn that around for young women who are required also to put in twenty hours a day on those beginning jobs, or in the Foreign Service where it's almost a total life, if you are married at the beginning, my guess would be the first marriage will fail.

Q: Yes, yes.

RIDGWAY: And the second marriage where you bring all of that experience and all of the understanding, and you've both been competitive so you understand the telephone call that says, "I can't come home this evening," or "Please start dinner without me." You understand those because you have done them yourself, it's easier to do.

Q: Yes. Well, the last time we were talking in great detail about your tour in East Germany and the various things that went on, especially . . . I was particularly taken by your description of the feeling people had of being hemmed in only on three sides, but the escape hatch . . . that had never occurred to me. Psychologically that must be extremely difficult.

RIDGWAY: It was extremely difficult, according to the psychiatrist with whom I spoke as I learned more about this, there is a sense of guilt as you go back and forth between the two worlds. Guilt and responsibility for those you leave behind who can't go through. There is also imposed on yourself each time you come back, the renewal of the contrast between leaving your world and going into this awful world, so that you never complete the adjustment and you keep yourself in an adjustment stage with all of the problems that most people have in the adjustment stage, including unhappiness. And I found we certainly weren't able to do much about it with the families who had kids in school in West Berlin, they went back and forth all of the time. But we tried for those whose job it was to analyze East Germany to encourage them to live their lives in East Berlin and in East Germany, so as not to disrupt the growth of a deeper appreciation of what it was all about. And you did disrupt it, every time you went to West Berlin and came back it was disrupted.

Q: Sure, sure. Very, very interesting thought which I had never . . .

RIDGWAY: Well, I wasn't able to give it a name or anything until this psychiatrist came. He is Elmore Rigamer who now is in Vienna. He is the psychiatrist for Eastern European posts, but he had never come to East Berlin, so we called him up one day and said,

"You're the psychiatrist for the region, why haven't you come to East Berlin?" And his answer was the obvious one, "But you have West Berlin, you can't possibly have the problems". So he came to East Berlin and then we talked afterwards and he was fascinated by what he, himself then learned in that setting. What I'm repeating isn't my own insight, it's guided insight from someone as sensitive as he is to these kinds of things.

Q: Did he give it a name?

RIDGWAY: He just said it was guilt. That, and this failure to . . . you didn't have to adjust, and then you also had within the community no firm, and this is a terrible word but it's the current one, no firm bonding that you would have if you had completed the circle. But by the circle not being complete, having the West Berlin, then we lost the bonding process that helps so much at all the hardship posts around the world.

Q: Now, when you are talking about the circle not coming?

RIDGWAY: The physical circle. Well, our own. I mean, we could get out.

Q: You could get out.

RIDGWAY: Yeah, it was that third circle . . . the fourth part of the circle that we had.

Q: I suppose East Berlin is always an unhappy post.

RIDGWAY: I don't think it was an unhappy post when I was there, people had lots, and lots of, not just because of my stewardship, but we had lots and lots of problems but it was a post where almost all of our young couples decided to have babies. Now, to me that suggests something calming is in the air.

Q: Sure, uh huh.

RIDGWAY: And we had three, or four, five babies born while I was there, started and born while I was there. People must have felt some kind of comfortable.

Q: And were they delivered in West Berlin?

RIDGWAY: West Berlin, uh huh.

Q: West Berlin, yes. How did you feel you accomplished what you set out to do in East Berlin?

RIDGWAY: How do you mean, how did I feel?

Q: When you finished your tour, did you feel you had accomplished the goals that you had when you went there?

RIDGWAY: Yes, I did. I did. And I see it today, that I'm in a position now to make sure that what I set out to do is what we're continuing to do.

Q: That's very true.

RIDGWAY: Now, whether it would have stayed in place had I not occupied this position, I don't know. But I feel very comfortable with what I did in East Germany and I have picked that experience up, moved it to the rest of Eastern Europe, and if you take a look at the reordering of the relationship with Poland at present, on the basis of what we call the step-by-step process, it's the same. It's the East German technique, and I like to think that along the way I have persuaded the Secretary, which is probably one of the reasons that he asked me to come back, that it was a good way to move forward, a careful way to move forward, across a range of relationships, and so what worked in East Germany, tailored and revised and otherwise changed to suit the atmosphere, is working elsewhere in Eastern Europe. I'm very pleased about it.

Q: Very good. So you have had then, a really definite, concrete input into American Foreign Service.

RIDGWAY: I think so, I think both in Finland and in East Germany. I feel very good about both posts.

Q: Because many of the other women, as you know, really are on the fringes of the important problems.

RIDGWAY: Well, I wasn't in the center, but certainly with respect . . .

Q: But with all of East Europe . . .

RIDGWAY: But there is also the question of, maybe my experience was different, or my approach is different, or my background was different as I came to these embassies, but I simply did ask myself, "What can I contribute in a long string of history in which as an individual, I'm not going to have much role to play?" I mean, these are small posts, and they're not at the center of foreign policy, but what can I do? And in Finland, as I mentioned, it was to change the nature of the dialogue, to make it professional, to deepen it, and yet to keep the visibility of the embassy high as my predecessor, who is not a professional, had done. And in East Germany there was no basis for policy, there was no policy. And after a while you . . . I mean by the time I got these embassies, I had been in for a long time, I'd had the rank, I mean what more could the Service do for me, so I could also take some chances. And sort of delight, in fact, in a couple of high wire acts along the way, because I . . . they were such small posts, and so much at the margin of policy that if I just took what I was handed, I would have gone crazy.

Q: Very true. When you finished in the East, the Secretary had asked you to come back and have this job. Now, would you go over the steps that happened in the United States at the Senate before you got this job?

RIDGWAY: Sure.

Q: By the way, did you see Geyelin's article about Melissa Wells [ambassador whose appointment to Mozambique was held up by Sen.Helms]?

RIDGWAY: Uh huh..

Q: I thought it was well done.

RIDGWAY: Yes, well done, but they still can't get that nomination onto the floor.

Q: I know it.

RIDGWAY: I think the Secretary called me in February of '85. He called in February of '85, then all of the forms were sent out. [phone interruption]

Q: They sent the forms.

RIDGWAY: They sent the forms, and I filled them all out, but I had done that before, so that wasn't a problem, and conflict of interest and those things were all up to date, so we just made copies of them and I sent them in, and then I waited. Let's see, this is not a job for which you get a call from the President, so I didn't get one of those. The announcement was made, and the name went up to the Hill and I joined the so-called, the "State Department twenty-nine." And Rick Burt and I were sort of associated with each other.

Q: Rick Burt?

RIDGWAY: Yes, my predecessor on this job. Richard Burt. He was quite embarrassed by it. I think Rick was of several minds, I was not his notion of a replacement, and I think he thought my reputation was going to hurt his. I must say, I thought his was going to hurt mine, so I don't think either of us was happy to be in the same boat, but there we were. And I'm trying to think then, Ann, where most of this started, but I came back in June . . was it in June, I guess so? In June of '85 for my hearing, and I testified during the day and it went quite well, I mean, they've known me over the years. And [Senator] Mrs. Kassebaum and people like that asked some interesting questions, but none of them difficult and I thought things had gone . . .

Q: Was Helms there that day?

RIDGWAY: No, he was not there.

Q: That's just what he did to Melissa.

RIDGWAY: It's the same thing, except it differs in that as we left and sort of breathed a sigh of relief, the word reached us about two in the afternoon that Helms, who had had to be absent to be at an agriculture meeting, had requested that the committee proceedings remain open. And that he wanted me and Rick Burt to return that evening for further testimony before him at five-thirty. So, Gahl Burt and Ted Deming, accompanying me and Rick, we went up to the Senate, and not to the main big hearing rooms in one of the office buildings, but to the Senate side of the Capitol to that famous room S-116, which is the old, old, Senate Foreign Relations building, or Senate Foreign Relations office. And there was Helms and his staff, and then a number of other people turned up. Charles Mathias turned up and Ted Kennedy was there, John Kerry, Claiborne Pell, Joe Biden, and I had a lot of help. I mean, they, I don't know whether this is routine or not when Helms requests one of these sort of special sessions, others come, or they were just determined to be there, but in any case there were in the course of the evening, some seven or eight other senators who turned up and who participated. And I went first, and Helms started in, how can career officers serve? How could I serve for Carter and now for Reagan? And then brought out a case that he was sure was going to finish things, and that related to the asylum policy and he wanted to know was it true that under my instructions a German family had been thrown out of the embassy and into the arms of the East German police? And I said, "Yes." And he then started to ask questions, "Did they go here, and did they take the family and . . . ? And I kept saying, "You know Senator, I'd like to tell you how that story turned out, because I can tell from the line of your questioning that perhaps you don't know the ending of it." Well, he brooked no interruption whatsoever, I tried to stop him to tell him, and so finally then, he ended with sort of a great rhetorical flourish and asked, "And where are they today, Ambassador Ridgway?" And I said, "In West Germany, Senator."

Q: [laughter]

RIDGWAY: And of course the other senators who were there, laughed. I got a note afterwards from Joe Biden, saying, "You really stuck it to him." I hadn't intended to, I had tried to stop him.

Q: It was his own arrogance.

RIDGWAY: They are in West Germany, they did get out, and it was through my efforts, the embassy's efforts, the Secretary's efforts that he got out, and the family did. As to why he was thrown out then, that sort of annoyed Helms, I think, who was reading State Department "No-Dis" cables, of which he had copies. The first time I'd ever been aware . . .

Q: What did you call them . . .oh, "no distribution."

RIDGWAY: "No distribution" cables that talked about this case. This was a very tragic case of a doctor who in great frustration did come into the embassy with his wife and children and threatened to kill them if we wouldn't let them in. And he had surgical scissors and poisons and stuff like that, so we put him outside as a security threat. We had his name, we talked with the West Germans and the rest. That was the end of it, I thought. Helms, at some point, and I don't know at what point, decided to accuse me of lying. That I had had no role in getting these people out, that they had been bought out by the West Germans. For all I know that's true. But I certainly do not know how they got from jail to West Germany. In my view, my own interventions and those of the Secretary and those of other people certainly had their influence. But if the West Germans bought them out, to me it doesn't change the end of the story which is, that they're out.

The result was that the twenty-nine were still held and Rick and I were still part of the twenty-nine, and then they started acting on the group. About this time the Secretary was also looking at the US-Soviet relationship and how it might unfold in the Fall of '85 and he was determined that I come back from East Germany and get started. So a number of things came together at once. There seems to have been a commitment to the Department, and I don't know this officially, but let me tell you what I think the deal was. That Helms would get his nomination of James Malone to Belize in return for freeing up the twenty-nine. So that the Secretary was able to see a date when the Senate would act on those other twenty-nine . . . on those twenty-nine.

He saw a schedule in front of him to a prospective autumn or early winter Soviet Summit that indicated to him at what point he wanted me back here, although he had never wanted me back here in an acting capacity. A very strong point of view that he did not want people in jobs in an acting capacity, so that the decisions they made in that acting capacity were held against them and they never got the job. He didn't want that to happen. So I got a telephone call from Mike Armacost [under secretary for political affairs] telling me that I should return immediately. I said, "I can't." The East German government has full awareness of the job to which I'm returning, and the result is that doors are opening here that have never opened to this embassy, and I'm seeing the Honeckers [Eric Honecker, chairman of Council of State] and the Foreign Minister is having a major luncheon for me and so on and so on, and I'm hosting another lunch for the Foreign Minister and nobody has ever been able to have a lunch for the Foreign Minister. He relayed that to the Secretary who was out in Asia, as he is once a year, and the answer came back saying, "None of that is any good, I want her back by . . ." and I think I came back as a result . . .I think it was the twelfth, it wasn't the twelfth, it was like the fifteenth of July. And I called the Foreign Minister and explained why I was canceling the lunch in his honor and all that kind of thing. I came back on a Friday, or Saturday, again I forget which, I think it was a Saturday, and had a telephone call.

Ted was already back from Alaska, and I had a telephone call at the apartment telling me that the vote was to be on Tuesday, but that Helms' story that I had lied about this famous case of this family had a great deal of currency on the Hill, and could I come in and help

the Department go through the files that would show that I had not lied. And I said, "Sure." So I came in on Sunday and working with John Kornblum who is now our Minister in Berlin. We pulled the files and put together a highly confidential set of cables, which on Monday were made available to Lugar and to Pell, as Majority and Minority. They in turn notified other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff that they were available. They went and read them through the day to satisfy themselves that this charge was not true, and the vote came up on Tuesday. It was like the nineteenth of July, and I think the vote was eighty-nine to nine, and the nine were the predictable . . . the Helms, and his [supporters], and McClure, Hatch and Garn and Denton, the far right all voted against me and Helms did put the story of my being a liar on the Senate floor, but the others stood up and said they had seen the file and this was not true, and I was voted in. And I was sworn in then, on the twenty-second, and then the next week we left for Helsinki. And the Tenth Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the Secretary's first meeting with the new Soviet foreign minister, Shevardnadze.

Q: Oh, yes.

RIDGWAY: So I was in on the ground floor then with the development of that.

Q: And that's why he wanted you home.

RIDGWAY: That's why he wanted me back. And then we had, you may recall, the Summit in November, and I think he had a fine sense of timing because he and I had some very rocky moments in the first months of my taking over. There were misunderstandings, there were times I disappointed him, there were times he disappointed me, and we got that all straightened out, so that as we were into that last two or three weeks of the Summit preparations we had a solid working relationship. And the night, the famous night of negotiating the joint statement, when I was staring at an unacceptable Soviet position, and I asked for a break and I went and called the Secretary and said, "I would walk away from this," he said, "It's your call." And it had taken that kind of . . . and I went back and I said, "You can have your agreement, we will not proceed on the basis that you have outlined," and I was prepared to leave the table. It had taken that, I would say he was right to the day, as to the smallest amount of time that was possible. I think if I had even come back the next weekend in July, or had missed the Helsinki meeting we would have been not quite at the point where he could have said, "It's your call."

Q: In other words he knew there was a certain amount of settling-in that had to be done before . . .

RIDGWAY: Yes, settling-in and the development of a relationship between the two of us. I think some of it has to have been instinct. He could not have known how active that period would be or on how many occasions he and I would meet or how hard we would have to work on what a variety of subjects. His instinct that there was a period of time that was going to be required for making a team out of us was the correct one. I've often marveled at that because as late as, you may recall the Summit was something like

November 16, 17, and 18th, and as late as October 24th and 25th, he and I were still having problems.

Q: About the way you looked at things, the way you approached things?

RIDGWAY: Oh, no. I was having problems with the way the Department was organized and getting ideas to him. He was having problems at my inability to get ideas to him, he thought, in a timely fashion. We had a big blow-up in New York. At one point I had been criticized once too often about something not being on time when it had left me on time and it had gotten all chewed up in the bureaucracy en route, and I was very upset about it and so I asked to see him. In this case I didn't ask to see him alone. Charlie Hill [executive secretary] was sitting there, and I started in and we were in his private office up in New York, and then the phone call came, and the phone call came just as I was getting to the point where I was going to start using four letter words. And when he put the phone down he said, "You were saying . . . " And I said, "I think I've decided not to put it quite that way." And we went on and that was when he, I think, understood that I had been laboring under some, real impediments that he wasn't aware had been there, and gave me carte blanche.

Q: Were these impediments just the usual ones of the bureaucracy here, or do you think there was a particular . . .

RIDGWAY: I think there were two things going, one was the bureaucracy here, which was not responding to the uniqueness of the times. Here after six years, or in this case it was four, two years ago, we had a break-through in US-Soviet dialogue, which the Secretary wanted to pursue, which the President wanted to pursue, and was turning to me and my staff to support, put ideas forward for talking points, notions, agenda, and they were imposing upon this the standard Departmental machinery. Eighty-five clearances, this kind of a format, and that kind of thing. And I couldn't reach him in a timely fashion. Well, I'm not one of the sort of errant types in the bureaucracy, and I prefer to play by the rules, and I was following the rules. So I was doing my job and I was going by the rules, and as a result wasn't being responsive to what the Secretary wanted. Yet, it really, whenever I tried to break the rules, people in this system, they were defending their prerogatives rather than the interests of the Secretary. I don't even think they were aware of it. That was one thing that was happening. The second was that the moment that something sets in, the moment the word first gets out that the Secretary was annoyed because Roz didn't deliver on time, there is an institutional thing, it's not very attractive, it becomes more fun for the institution to watch you fail than to watch you succeed.

Q: I know.

RIDGWAY: It's better gossip if you fail, and I was well aware of this, and the NSC got caught up in it, so when I talked to the secretary in New York in October, I just laid it all out, describing some of these things that were happening and he said, "You are entitled to reach me directly. We have a major event in front of us and while I like to play within the

rules myself, I expect you to exercise the judgment that's required to reach me in a timely fashion." And he said it in front of his staff, namely, Charlie Hill, and that took care of it.

Thereafter, if I had to get something to him I walked it upstairs, I ran it through the back door or the front door or dropped it down the chimney. I cleared it or I didn't clear it. I did whatever was necessary to get the ideas to him. Then he could see how responsive we were. Then the system saw that it was succeeding and they flipped over and they wanted to be associated with success rather than failure. But if you don't see it happening, or don't know when the moment has come to just throw it all on the table and say, "It cannot go on this way."

That was one, the other relates to the marriage thing we were talking about earlier. There were occasions when it's fourteen hours into the day, and I'd rather be home having dinner with Ted, I'm at a stage in my life where I've got a loving husband at home, and a new home that we're trying to decorate and I still have briefing books to read and it's nine o'clock at night. And I was signing briefing papers to the Secretary that I hadn't read.

And on at least two occasions; the first, the Secretary was amused. He turned to the inside of the paper that he had read, and he said, "Roz what does this mean?" Well, I hadn't read it, I had chosen to go home that night after fourteen hours. And I said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Secretary, I don't know." "Fine, don't you think you should?" "Yes, sir, I should." The next time it happened, it was five forty-five a.m. in New York in the morning and the paper . . . we had just gone up to New York and the papers had all been signed out, and I had seen Ted off, anyhow there was a set of papers that I hadn't seen, the Secretary was up early. We were meeting with Shevardnadze that morning and we all knew he would be up early, so I was up at five and showered and waiting. Sure enough the phone rang at five forty-five a.m., "Would you come upstairs the Secretary would like to go over some papers with you." So I went upstairs, and in the hotel it was just up one flight, walked in to see him and he said, "Roz, there is a reference in here to UN Conference on Terrorism in Milan and to the resolution and it suggests that we urge the Soviets to follow that resolution." He said, "I have forgotten, what were the main ideas?" And I said, "Mr. Secretary, I don't know." Because I hadn't read the paper; I had chosen again to go home. That time wasn't so funny. You know, he may be a man that people think of as round, but he is not. And his jaw straightened, and his eyes flashed and he said, "Roz, this will not do."

I talked to Ted, I said, "Ted, I can't short my job, this had happened to me and I can't have that happen." Ted understood, and so it doesn't happen now. The Secretary gets nothing that I haven't read, which means if it is eleven o'clock at night I'm still here, with somebody who understands. Back to the different kind of a marriage. But I left that meeting, I walked out, I called the staff down who was in New York with me, each one of whom had cleared the paper, and not one of them knew.

Q: Oh, no!

RIDGWAY: I said, “It’s instructive for you, isn't it?" Yes it was. We called Washington. The people who here had written the paper had borrowed the lines from Bob Oakley [coordinator for counter-terrorism], because it was a terrorism thing. We got Bob Oakley at home, all of this in five minutes because the Secretary was so damned annoyed, and nobody knew.

I suppose one of the reasons I still put in the hours is George Shultz, because I then saw him, this was a breakfast meeting we were having with Shevardnadze over at the UN mission. So I met George Shultz at seven o'clock in the morning at the elevator to go down. He had finished up his book, he had asked the questions. I said, "Mr. Secretary I have been unable to obtain the answer for you on that. We are hoping that Oakley has a cellular phone or something in his car, but I'm sorry we can't find you the answer." He said, "Roz, I've thought and thought and I believe that that is the resolution that said the terrorists will have no place to run, no place to hide, so I'm fairly comfortable with that." No animosity. But you know, thirty-eight floors down and he said, "By the way, what's the weather outside, is it clear?" And I said, "Yes." Don't ask my why I said yes, I was so tired of saying no, I think, I said yes. Ann, I had no way of knowing what the weather was outside, and I thought God, if it is raining, I'm finished.

Q: You're finished, yeah!

RIDGWAY: But we opened the elevator doors and the sun was streaming through the lobby and I said, "Thank you Lord, and here we go." And he's not a man who carries a grudge and for all I know, he knows perfectly well I didn't know what the weather was outside. And we went on from there. But now the hours, I can't, I have to. And the day I can't I guess is the day I'll have to quit. But it really means Ted pays the price and I pay a price.

Q: Yes, you pay it too.

RIDGWAY: So, he had it timed just right. He had to allow for all of that and now we are just very close collaborators.

Q: Have you any idea why he particularly, specifically wanted you for this job? I mean, there are a lot of people that . . .

RIDGWAY: There are a lot of people . . . I think we are very much the same kind of person in our approach to problems. I see that now; I didn't know it at the time. And I had come back on two occasions to present to him and to others in the Department my view of how East German policy ought to be changed, including a report on the risks I had been taking, knowing well enough that I might be disavowed and out of a job. And I think he saw that they were carefully taken risks, and the analysis was sound, and it was putting American interests first.

One of the great mistakes my colleagues have made over the years is to keep talking about improved relations being an objective of US foreign policy. It is not, and I've never thought it was, and I've never fallen into the habit of suggesting that getting along is a good thing. If it's one of the benefits of something, fine, but it's not the major objective. And I know now from these two years of dealing with him so closely, that's also how he takes the problems apart and assembles them.

I think it doesn't hurt that I'm polite and respectful, because this building is full, and certainly the first years of this administration was full, of brash and impolite young men. I don't know, there may have been some brash and impolite young women around, I don't know, but the brash and impolite and the grand design and all of the fireworks that go with it. The Secretary is not a fireworks type. So that was one; he knew me. The second, I'm quite confident that I was the nominee of the George Vests and the Ron Spierses and people who were already in the building at the time he was asking, "Who do we get to replace Rick Burt?"

Q: Yes. The fireworks, they were under Haig?

RIDGWAY: Haig, but Shultz had some of these people around as well. When he took over they were still here. He's not a fireworks person, he takes problems apart, he looks at them, he re-assembles them, he asks the tough questions, but is very, very quiet, very measured. And I think in many respects we are not at all alike, he is much more academic than I. I've never wanted to go back to school, and he has all of the degrees and things of that sort. But we're comfortable together. At the moment, I think, friends, and very fond of each other. He and Mrs. Shultz keep saying to me and Ted, "But you must call us George and Obie," and we both laugh and I say, "Mr. Secretary, you'll have to wait until you retire, I couldn't possibly do that." But we've put a lot of miles on together.

Q: Yes, you certainly have. Of course everybody read about the Summit, when you did get out that

RIDGWAY: Our joint statement, yes.

Q: Your joint statement, yes, and enough notice wasn't taken of the fact that you were the first woman really to do this.

RIDGWAY: Only the Manchester Guardian.

Q: Oh, really, only the Manchester Guardian?

RIDGWAY: The Manchester Guardian did a story on the first woman ever at a Summit business table.

Q: Because it was overtaken by the business of throw-weights . . .

RIDGWAY: And Afghanistan.

Q: . . . the very tactless remarks of Regan [White House chief of staff].

RIDGWAY: Don Regan.

Q: Yes. Do you have any other thoughts about that Summit that you'd like to . . .

RIDGWAY: No, that was pretty much it. I certainly was not unaware of the fact that there had not previously been a woman at a Summit table, and that continues to cross my mind as we go from one Summit to another. From that one to Reykjavik, and if there is another here in Washington it will be the same thing. But it's gone through my mind I'm qualified to be there.

Q: Yes. Of course.

RIDGWAY: And if some of the work that I do is the drudge work, late through the night, my counterparts on the other side of the table are senior deputy foreign ministers and all those things for the Soviet Union and they are doing that kind of work as well, so . . . It's a thrill to be there.

Q: Yes. Did you not tell me that the next time you met with the Soviets, they had a woman?

RIDGWAY: They were going to try but they never did.

Q: They couldn't get one, fascinating.

RIDGWAY: I think it was after Geneva and before Reykjavik or else it was after Reykjavik, Gorbachev said, "We must try to get a woman on our side of the table." But there is no one. I've certainly seen no one in the world of issues that I deal with the Soviet Union, I'm not aware of a woman player.

Q: They have them in the lower echelons, but not many.

RIDGWAY: Yes, in the cultural, or . . . I don't think there are many women ambassadors. They had the famous [Ambassador] Madam Kollontay in the '30s and '40s in Stockholm, but I'm not sure, for a while have I seen . . .

Q: Yes, they did, didn't they? They were even before us.

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes, that wonderful book, called <u>The Bolshevik Feminist</u>.

Q: <u>The Bolshevik Feminist.</u>

RIDGWAY: I forget who the American author is, it is an excellent biography, it came out in the late seventies.

Q: Because she was in at post when Daisy Harriman [ambassador to Norway]. . .

RIDGWAY: That's right, the same time, the late '30s.
Q: And they did not like each other.

RIDGWAY: No. But it was through her, when she was in Stockholm, that the Finns negotiated with the Russians for the end of the Winter War. So, she had quite a role.

Q: She did, didn't she? I don't know what goes on day to day, all I know is what I pick up in the papers, and it doesn't always mention your part in things. Would you want to go over the other important, or dramatic or whatever things that have been happening that you can talk about, of course.

RIDGWAY: You mean generally, in this job.

Q: In this job, yeah.

RIDGWAY: I think I couldn't . . . if I started listing, I couldn't stop. We have the US-Soviet Summits, but we also have the annual U. S.-Canadian Summits. We have the Tokyo and Venice Economic Summits. The Soviet relationship is not just Soviet, but it's just also arms control. We have been trying strictly within the State Department, although working in the inter-agency community, to negotiate base agreements with Turkey. We have a major negotiation coming up with Greece at some point that's going to have to get started. We have major negotiations going on with Spain. Every so often Mrs. Thatcher [British PM] flies into town and gives me a wonderful view on her world, that I really enjoy. I enjoy sitting in on those. I have enjoyed being a part of, on a routine basis, the circle at the President's breakfasts when we are on the road, or the President's lunches when we are on the road, briefing him. And gradually have learned to speak up, gradually have had something to say and to speak up and say it. So I've just done a lot of thrilling things. And we've had major cases in the Shultz-Shevardnadze meetings. The night-long negotiation on Daniloff [American journalist arrested as a spy by Soviets]. Getting Nick Daniloff out of jail, in a way that had his journalist credentials intact and impeccable. We took a lot of heat on that, but in fact it was a victory. And we did a lot of good things and a lot of people were released that appeared to be unrelated, but in fact were, starting with Yuri Orlov, yes, but later in the course of the year, others came out. Nick Daniloff and U.S. News and World Report are very satisfied with the terms of his release, and that's what really counts.

Q: Yes.

RIDGWAY: We had the unfortunate case of Medvid in New Orleans jumping off ship and being returned.

Q: Oh, yes.

RIDGWAY: And the case being completely mishandled by Immigration and Naturalization Service. We took that over, and I think that came out . . . it just could not have come out better, except that the young man really became a victim of the East-West business, in that he decided to go home. A lot of testimony in public on that. I get a lot of correspondence here even now, that I'm a terrible lady for sending him back. I'm not. Was he threatened and abused and scared? Yes, he was. And I have no doubt that they told him they would kill his parents. And in that setting he decided to go back, and as I testified before the Hill, who are we to play God with the fate of his parents? He decided he had to go home for his parent's sake, that was his decision. If he was beaten up to reach it, or threatened to reach it, probably so. But it's a very human decision, and it wasn't up to us to change it and take the responsibility of the fate of his parents.

Q: Of course.

RIDGWAY: So, those things all along the line, as you say, summits, and ministerials and things that some people only do one of in a career, I do most every week around here.

Q: Indeed, yes. You were talking about the summit in Reykjavik. Did you feel very discouraged after that summit?

RIDGWAY: No, I didn't. I think what one becomes discouraged about is the difference between what you know happened and what the press says happened. And when push comes to shove, it's what the press says that is determining. And that's what you have to learn to deal with. There were mistakes made at Reykjavik that maybe could not have been avoided. In a Shakespearean sense, sort of a fatal flaw.

Q: Yes.

RIDGWAY: And I think that if we had to do it over again, I have no doubt we would do it the same way, which suggests then there is this fatal flaw. But since Reykjavik we've learned a lot of lessons on alliance consultation, and I think the Europeans have decided that for their part, they have grown up enough now, forty years after, that if they want to have a larger say in how the United States and the Soviet Union shape the world, then they had better start paying their way. I think we will see some long-term historic changes come out of Reykjavik, greater than Geneva. Geneva simply reopened the US-Soviet dialogue. That's really all it was, and it did that very effectively. Reykjavik had an impact on the US-Soviet dialogue, and as an adjunct which is growing up in the equal partnership, in my mind, the awakening in Europe of a sense that Europe had to do something. Now, I don't know if they are going to be able to do it, I don't know whether Western Europeans will be able to organize and become a voice that demands to be heard when the United States and the Soviet Union sit down, but they are going to try and they

are going to try as a result of Reykjavik. So those kinds of considerations are always around.

Q: Well, the press made a great deal of the fact that the President did not seem prepared. Now is that a true perception?

RIDGWAY: No, it's absolutely wrong. It is true that we anticipated as a result of messages from the Soviets delivered either privately or in public a summit that would take a look at so-called INF Forces, possibly nuclear testing. And we said fine, and that's what we briefed and what we gave the same emphasis to . . . To give emphasis to something does not mean that you are not prepared on the other topics and when Gorbachev arrived and at the first session, where he spoke first because he was the guest--it's a tradition that must go back to 1933 as to who is the host and who is not, and who rotates, and in Geneva, Gorbachev had been the host at the last session, so in Reykjavik Reagan was the host at the first session--that gave Gorbachev the right to speak first. And he tabled instead of proposals on INF and nuclear testing, he tabled a comprehensive approach on arms control covering all categories of weapons. The President and the Secretary brought that package to the lunch table, briefed us all on it, but we all had the same package. We had something ourselves that we called basic elements of a comprehensive package, and so in the afternoon, we simply tabled our own. And we were quite prepared for it, we had it in a black notebook; we had been looking at it for a long time, and that became the new approach rather than the one that we had been anticipating. But we were as prepared for it as we were for the one we thought we were getting.

Q: Why does this sort of thing gain currency in the press? Who started it?

RIDGWAY: It's a better story. And I have noticed of late, for example, in spite what the White House says about the President's position, the press has already decided that the President is without leadership, he's weak, and no longer effective. They've decided that, they decided that before we ever got to Venice. And we'll all fight to have that not be the case because the United States must have leadership, but the press has announced, and that's it, and I don't think they're going to be able to turn it around. That's because it's a better story.

Q: And is this a great disservice when you are at these summits, that this is the public opinion in the U.S.?

RIDGWAY: Not within the summits itself.

Q: It is not?

RIDGWAY: No, no, the other leaders feel that they're still dealing with something called "The United States."

Q: They don't believe the U.S. press anyway, probably.

RIDGWAY: Well, even if they do, their interests aren't in having a weak president, so they don't treat him like a weak president. But the press sees none of that. It is far better to get on and use the Venice Summit, where about four weeks before the Venice Summit I went to . . . to prepare to put the last touches on the political agenda, East-West, Iran-Iraq, terrorism., and on that occasion I tabled the piece of paper which represented what the United States wanted on the Iran-Iraq war, the Persian Gulf, from the Summit when it took place. That is the piece of paper, that a month later at the Venice Summit was approved by everybody. Now that's a success. You told them a month before what you thought you needed, and this is what you get. The press went crazy: "Failure, Allies this, Allies that, reject, disagree, drivel. What the Allies didn't deal with was the press agenda, but they certainly did deal with the document that we'd given them a month before.

Q: I see.

RIDGWAY: So, the press wanted something different. We were trying to line up political support both for the principal of freedom of navigation and for support in the UN. We didn't want any more out of the Venice Summit. That wasn't the place to try to get any more. But the press had the congressional agenda, more ships, more money, whatever.

Q: Yeah, whatever. Well, the Persian Gulf, they thought, should be on.

RIDGWAY: When that didn't come . . . So it's been interesting to watch. I think in part it's manageable, but it's not manageable when you're in the position I'm located in. I may have enough influence in this building but I can't control the White House spokesman and the USIA spokesman, and I can't control even those political appointees in this building who have no loyalty whatsoever. They go out and say anything they want, classified, unclassified, for the public domain, not for the public domain.

Q: And this is where the press is getting all of this stuff?

RIDGWAY: Sure it is.

Q: Well you have said it doesn't weaken the U.S. in the eyes of other countries.

RIDGWAY: It does weaken the U.S., but they won't behave as if we are weaker.

Q: I see what you mean.

RIDGWAY: I make a distinction, they certainly see us as weaker when you have the press snapping at your heels, and that kind of thing.

Q: How much damage do you think all this business that's going on now on the Hill, the investigation into the Iran Contra or whatever they choose to call it, is doing?

RIDGWAY: I don't think the investigation is doing the damage, I think what has done the damage, and we all are well aware of it, was the knowledge that the United States had sold weapons to Iran. And that we were prepared to negotiate for hostages. That just undercut the whole policy. We've been trying to rebuild it ever since. But you don't stand there with the same moral authority you had before.

Q: No. Do you think that is more damaging than the arms for the Contras?

RIDGWAY: Yes, oh yes. Nobody understands why we're tearing ourselves apart over that. The thing that has hurt us was Iran and the hostages.

Q: Sure, sure. Well that leads us to the NSC. Now, what is your opinion of the position of the State Department when all of this has been going on and the State Department knew nothing about it? Well, presumably the Secretary knew some of it.

RIDGWAY: He may have known some of it. Presumably the President didn't know an awful lot about it.

Q: Well, who is running foreign policy?

RIDGWAY: I'm not going to draw lessons about the role of the State Department from that particular instance because I think it was such an aberration that it's not the best example to point to. That's a better example of people being attracted by personalities, such as Ollie North, and "can-doism." And there is in the American military the tradition of "can do." And when it's placed against the State Department's instinct of "let's think about it," everybody gets annoyed with the State Department. Thinking about it takes longer and so you go with can do and every so often, every president seems to repeat the mistake of thinking how nice it is to go with these people who are going to get the job done. They forget State will get you the job done, but probably won't get you close to war or this kind of thing while they're doing it.

Q: That's right.

RIDGWAY: I think the role of the State Department, which I find diminishing, is under greater challenge from what others who are writing about it state more articulately than I, is the proliferation of subjects that are now international in their impact, or have an international feature, and so domestic agencies believe that they now have become legitimate international players.

Q: Such as Commerce?

RIDGWAY: Well, you name them, Commerce, Agriculture, Energy, Health and Human Services, Justice. Those alone, plus USTR, Treasury, Defense. You've got at least eight that I can name right off the bat. Each of those believes that it is a legitimate international player on its own. And with the Justice I would give you, or with the Treasury I would

give you Customs, and with the Justice I would give you FBI, so that's eight plus two others. Within the Pentagon you have not only the office of the Secretary of Defense, but you have the three services, and each of them or their civilian secretaries believes it too is entitled to act. So you get another sort of subset of three. The NSC, for all of the lessons it ought to draw from the Iran-Contra affair, continues to be very operational in its look, carries on it's own contacts with foreign embassies and things here, so it's another player.

Q: Is that a recent thing that has happened, that they are doing that, or didn't this commence back with [Henry] Kissinger [White House chief of staff]?

RIDGWAY: It began with Kissinger.

Q: He gave it a certain . . .

RIDGWAY: He wanted to do all of it himself.

Q: He wanted to do it all.

RIDGWAY: Wherever he was located, he wanted to be the operator, so that changed that.

Q: And it's never recovered from that.

RIDGWAY: You have also, I think from . . .I would say in my experience from Don Regan's time and how he chopped up McFarlane, you have a precedent also for the White House Chief of Staff to consider himself a foreign policy player. So you have this new world of people, then you've got the CIA and the USIA, you got the DIA people, you name them, and they're all out there. I would say that I have watched Secretaries of State perhaps for the last twelve years decide it wasn't worth their while to take this issue on as to who was, sort of a self-anointed fashion out there, acting as if they were legitimate issues not to be coordinated with the State Department but to be run separately. Or as Congress has also passed laws taking functions away. And you get through year after year of deciding that the issue is too small, it's the" for want of a nail."

Within the State Department my greatest frustration is demonstrated in the current phone book where there is an organization chart, and there is the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary in one neat little box, and there are the under secretaries, then there are twenty-two assistant secretaries, of so-called functional bureaus, and then finally on the very lowest bottom level, are the five regional assistant secretaries and the Assistant Secretary for IO. The organization chart doesn't suggest that we take orders from all of those twenty-two other assistant secretaries, but what it makes clear is that those twenty-two little fiefdoms that are out there each sits in a way that there is no formal requirement to coordinate what they are doing through the appropriate regional bureau. It depends on each of us to take on the fight.

I have them every day of the week, and I'm usually in trouble on the seventh floor because people think that I'm grabby or territorial or whatever, but I have thirty-five countries, more posts than that, probably seventy some posts all together, and a budget of about $240,000,000 and God knows how many people out there, five or six thousand people, and policies that range all of the way from fats and oils in the European community through arms control and the Anglo Irish fund, Italian pasta to Greek bases, and things of that sort. And whenever I hear that a colleague of mine in one of those funny little functional places has picked up the phone and instructed one of the ambassadors in EUR directly without even coming through this bureau, I go crazy.

And I think you cannot afford to let the nail be lost, so in this respect I differ completely from the Secretary. He's a much busier man than I. I know how draining it is for me to cover Europe and Canada, and arms control and economic policy and tech transfer and things of that sort. His world is global. So, yes he's got a large staff, but nevertheless, he intellectually has to command a great deal, and there has to come a time when you say, I can't do any more." But I think he's wrong, and I think his predecessors have been wrong to ignore both what's happening inside the State Department that prohibits very close control over what's happening in each country, and outside the Department, that lets go by default the conduct of foreign policy to a host of other agencies who should at least have the requirement to instruct our embassies through the State Department. You know, the 22 U.S. Code says that ambassadors are in charge, and the Secretary's and President's letters to new ambassadors tell then from whom they take orders, and yet they are taking orders from everybody in town.

Q: From everybody.

RIDGWAY: . . . and nobody has cracked the whip.

Q: Yes. Why do you think this has happened?

RIDGWAY: Oh, because it's just . . . the first time was an annoyance and, "Oh, well, you know, so and so."

Q: It becomes progressively worse.

RIDGWAY: It becomes progressive. It will take a major battle now, to get it back in. I would still make the battle, If I were Secretary of State, I would still make the battle. I'm still making it down here, and some days I win and some days I lose.

Q: Well, if it continues the way it's going, isn't there a possibility State will end up being just the bag carriers?

RIDGWAY: Oh, sure. Very close to that, in any case.

Q: What did you think about the commercial attachés being taken away from State and given to Commerce?

RIDGWAY: I think we asked for it, not because we weren't doing the job, but because of the way we testified. Whenever we're challenged we go up on the Hill and we say, "Oh my goodness, you're right, we didn't do that well, just give us another chance." We should have gone up on the Hill and said, "Now listen, damn it, major American industries who give you the big numbers on export, do their own export promotion, IBM is not coming to the commercial attaché in Rinky Dinksville to be asked how to market. IBM London or IBM Hong Kong or Tokyo is supporting that person. It's a very elaborate piece of machinery. A Commercial Attaché assists those businessmen who need the help because their corporations, companies, generally are so small that they don't carry the large international infrastructure. Commercial attachés also can identify business opportunity, government contracts, things of that sort, and get them into the notice machinery back in the States. We were doing a very good job of that. We are not responsible for the trade deficit. But instead we went up there on the Hill and we oh, flagellation . . . You know, "Terrible this and terrible that." And so they took it away. You talk to American businessmen now, they want to get rid of the Foreign Commercial Service, they think it's not doing any good. We also told them that.

Q: I've heard that, yes.

RIDGWAY: It should come back to the State Department And I was reading in a book . . .

Q: Funny Commerce isn't too happy with it.

RIDGWAY: Commerce doesn't know what to do with it

Q: They never have.

RIDGWAY: . . . it doesn't fit with what they are doing. The career ladder is crazy. Our people who didn't feel competitive here thought they could do better there, were attracted by double promotions in some cases, they went over there. There has been a flow-through of that group, but who wants to go now? But the deficit trade figures remain, so clearly it wasn't the State Department.

Q: No.

RIDGWAY: But did we go up and fight that way, oh, no, "Kick us in the rear end again folks, because we're happiest that way."

Q: Why is this?

RIDGWAY: Don't ask me. I wish I was in charge of this whole place, because people go up there, I hear about it afterwards, and I say, how could you testify that way?

Q: I know, so humble, and hand-wringing.

RIDGWAY: We ran into problems when they started closing posts, we had a fight between this bureau and the office of management. The letters going to Congress said, "We have your letter of such and such and we note your concern about the closing of Seville. As you know we are under severe, "what State always has to say," as you know we are under severe budget pressures and as a result of the need to make economies and the rest of the budget, we are closing Seville. We believe, however, that through the efficiencies and so on we will carry on the same mission." I wouldn't clear them. The letters that went out said, "We don't have any money. We're going to close Seville. We are going to lose our capacity to address US interests. We are not going to be able to help Americans, and this is a loss."

Q: Of course, it can't all be . . .

RIDGWAY: It is not a victory for efficiency, there is a loss of something.

Q: Of course it is.

RIDGWAY: But they were all sending out these, "Ah, goodness we are going to be more efficient, and all these economies and savings." That isn't what we are doing at all, Congress didn't give us any money, we're having to cut functions.

Q: Is this in your opinion, something, this attitude, getting worse as time goes by?

RIDGWAY: Yes, it is getting worse, and maybe it's because I see more, and I think it is the kind of thing you can teach people about. Young people come into the Foreign Service. They arrive over at the A-100 course, and I don't think they've changed from my day at all from what I can tell, listening to them on occasion, the kids. And they go over there with a picture of a diplomat. They think the sentences have to be long, passive.

Q: Passive?

RIDGWAY: Yes. Conditional, don't want to be caught out with an idea. "It might be thought", instead of "I think." Even a funny little word that sneaks around that I cross out and make people redo: "We feel", "it is felt." I said, no, "I believe," "I think," "it is," "it isn't."

Q: You don't "feel."

RIDGWAY: You don't "feel" unless you're sitting around touching some Foreign Minister or something, but that's just not what the word ought to be. The notion that we

are not confrontational, well, by God we are, we ought to be. Things that we happen to know ourselves. But they arrive over there and they go out and buy that first darn pinstriped gray suit and talk to each other in the corridors and they get

Q: And they go in the corridors and they get briefed.

RIDGWAY: It becomes self-reinforcing. They train each other through all of this uninformed advice-giving in the first month. Then people will go out and have good and bad assignments, in terms of good and bad supervisors. I seldom see here, this is a bureau that staffs itself very much, I seldom see here the worst product of that. I see the people who came through it or never were like that and who know how to fight. But we are obnoxious, the Secretary has said we are obnoxious. I have said, "No, I didn't think we are obnoxious, I thought we are very arrogant." And I also happen to think that we've earned it. But we are people who know how to speak, we know how to write, and we flex our muscles. And we generally know somebody else's business better than they do. And even talking in this way, you can see how it is that people just love to sort of see us get our comeuppance. [laughter] But when we lose, with a whole lot of people happy that we lost, we nevertheless have made a good fight out of it. But I read things coming from other places that again maybe it's because they're not EUR and so I'm being equally arrogant with respect to them, but as you move down the quality line in the Service, then you start seeing these softer, mushier, non-combative, less intellectually sharp characteristics come out.

Q: Yeah.

RIDGWAY: The time server, and you pay a price for that. I'm not suggesting that is what has happened at the top at all . . .

Q: No.

RIDGWAY: As I say, I think the Secretary believes he has enough battles to fight, hasn't taken this one on. I think this is one he should have taken on.

Q: I think so, too. Do you think part of it is because the State Department doesn't have any constituency up there?

RIDGWAY: No, I've heard that before. We have plenty of constituents.

Q: We do?

RIDGWAY: In fact you could go out and announce, "That's right and we're proud of it." We aren't supposed to have . . . we have a constituency, called "the President." And our role for the President is to take all of the international activities of all of these other people. So many people think that State's job is to go out and have good relations with all of these countries in the world. That's one of the problems. It is not, it is to take all of

these interests represented all over the city, they are legitimate interests. They today have an international projection, and when you project them internationally, they tend to collide. State's job is to prevent the collisions, to bring to order, to find the balance among equally legitimate interests. We do that for the President. That's our constituency. Again, I would not get up there and say, Oh, my God we don't have a constituency." I would get up and I would make the speech. "We have a constituency. We have a constituency of one, and it is the most important constituency out there, and on his behalf our job is to make all of these things that flow across the whole of our country come out even when they go overseas in the name of the United States." They do not go overseas in the name of THE Treasury Department, THE Trade Ministry or anything else. They go across as THE United States and that 's what we should be doing. So we ought to put it that way.

Q: Yes. Well, do you think the President himself is partially the problem?

RIDGWAY: Sure. As an institution, not necessarily this particular President or any other, I mean they've all had the same type of frustrations.

Q: That's what I mean, the presidency.

RIDGWAY: And also foreign policy is fun, and they all like to be their own Secretary of State and all the rest, and when the frustrations come along they like to blame the State Department, but when the end of the day comes they usually have a fairly comfortable relationship with State.

Q: Yes. Well, the old State Department, it seems to me, is a thing . . . that is, the State Department as it was thirty years ago at the time of the Bohlens and the Kennans and so forth, is gone, isn't it?

RIDGWAY: Well, there are two things; one is that generation of men and leadership as in the new book, on The Wise Men, sure they're gone. But that is going to happen genealogically to successive generations. There is a new set of challenges coming up, and I think we have equally talented people but we have become a different kind of a country and so they're not going to play in the same way.

Q: So the institution is different.

RIDGWAY: The institution is different. For me, thank God. I wouldn't be in it if it hadn't changed. And I think it has changed in a good way, and I don't know that, I mean, history gave them an opportunity.

Q: Yeah.

RIDGWAY: If history gave us the same opportunity and many of the same dimensions, maybe we would have to handle it in a different way. Maybe we would miss some of the opportunities. We'd probably do the damn thing by inter-agency committee, or through an

NSC-State Department competition with the Defense Department. I don't know who would be the major players, but it is not to be excluded in my mind that we could be equally imaginative. I think we could, but we would do it differently. Different kinds of people would be there and we would not have gone to the same schools together.

Q: No, when you say the country has changed for the better, in what way?

RIDGWAY: The Service has changed.

Q: The Service has changed.

RIDGWAY: These were men who were product of the universities in the 1930s.

Q: Oh, you're talking about the fact that they all came from the Ivy Leagues, and that sort of thing.

RIDGWAY: Sure.

Q: I'm sorry, I didn't . . .

RIDGWAY: I mean, who went to university in the 1930s? My vision of a standard . . . to me the world changed with the GI Bill. It wasn't my world, but the world I lived in changed with the GI Bill. It was the greatest soil- breaker, cultivator that we could have had in this society.

Q: Well, then also following on, probably a thing that came out of it is this Civil Rights movement and all those things.

RIDGWAY: Yes. You had the women who went to work during World War II, and you had the men who came home, and instead of sort of being Andy Hardy and Jimmy Lyddon working in the soda stores for the rest of their lives bringing home twenty-five dollars a week, because that's where they were in society when they went to the war, they came home and went off to the major universities and all of that. There was just this tremendous change. Civil rights, yes, but I would say with respect to mobility in our society and keeping it flexible and giving the final proof to the fact that we are not going to have classes, that was it.

Q: And that of course has been reflected in the Foreign Service. And the old timers put up their noses, and the British put up their noses and all.

RIDGWAY: The British don't put up their noses as much any more.
Q: They don't?

RIDGWAY: But they do on the ambassadorial business.

Q: You mean, it's got to be from the top echelons of the society?

RIDGWAY: No, I don't mean that. The British simply don't understand why we have as many political ambassadors as we have.

Q: Oh, I see.

RIDGWAY: If the British sniff at anything about the Foreign Service it's that we've not been able somehow to succeed in holding our own institution together. But the British system has changed as well.

Q: That's what I was about to say.

RIDGWAY: More and more women in it.

Q: It has definitely changed.

RIDGWAY: Yes, it has changed.

Q: Well, how can it help it?

RIDGWAY: You can't, not if you're going to keep going.

Q: Because the whole world has changed.

RIDGWAY: The world has changed and the agenda has changed and if those people want to write great long treatises on U. S.-Soviet relations, go right ahead, but somebody had better be around who knows how world grain prices are established. It could be the same person, but it is a different background, different way of doing things.

Q: Yes, well, the other group, the group that was so important in the '30s and the '40s and even into the '50s, were from the Eastern seaboard, a very small group of people, who kept selecting each other.

RIDGWAY: Marrying each other's sisters, and all that kind of stuff.

Q: And they felt it was their, if you will, inheritance to run things.

RIDGWAY: Yeah.

Q: But there are a lot more people now, too which is something we have to remember. And of course, the GI Bill has certainly made a tremendous impact on the Foreign Service on everything, really. But it has given women a chance.

RIDGWAY: Sure it has.

Q: All that, they didn't want to go back to the factory.

RIDGWAY: And the civil rights and the consumer movement gave women a chance too. They were able to go into the positions of law and social service public advocacy that the men weren't interested in. And I think using those, women have now gone back into the mainstream, other kinds of issues in the big major law firms and stuff, but the start I think was public service, social welfare type of law.

Q: Sure, yes, social welfare. Have you given any thoughts to retiring?

RIDGWAY: You know, I have, but I don't know what I want to do. I don't know whether I just want to retire or whether I want to go out and make some money. I don't have anybody pounding on the doors to offer me anything. I don't think I want to leave Washington. On the other hand, we could always close the house up and go somewhere else. I don't know about a next embassy, I'm not terribly interested in another small post. On the other hand, I think Ted might be more comfortable in a small embassy.

Q: Well, why shouldn't you have a big one, after you've done this?

RIDGWAY: I think the big ones have all gone political.

Q: Do you think they will remain political?

RIDGWAY: Oh sure, I think there'll be even more of them. I doubt we will have five or ten non political posts when we get all done.

Q: Do you think that's good or bad?

RIDGWAY: I think it's bad. No, I mean I am describing to you the disappearance of "the Foreign Service," probably to be re-invented and all the rest some time in the next century. But I think there is going to be a period in which the United States totally disqualifies itself from leadership. Our disappearance isn't going to be the cause of that but it will be one of the fevered results.

Q: Disqualifies itself because of the way . . .

RIDGWAY: We haven't fought for our place. We have said, well, gee whiz, it's the nail business again.
Q: The U.S. you are talking about now, not State?

RIDGWAY: No, no, the U.S. You get too many players out there acting in an uncoordinated way, changing each other's decisions. We've had a springtime full of things of that sort that at present are too classified to be gone into, but there are obligations that have been changed, contracts that have been broken, undertakings not met, commitments

not met. You can only do so much of that and then people say, "Well you're still big, and I really want to stay close because if you fall over you might fall on me. So I want to be close enough to know where you're going to fall or where you're going to step next, but in the meantime I want to check around and see what other new relationships I might build that will protect me from the day when you fall."

Q: Well, sure.

RIDGWAY: And I think a lot of that's going to happen. I'm very discouraged about both the direction of American leadership in foreign policy and then the institutions, and I think we are headed for a tumble, a major tumble.

Q: I think we are too, there doesn't seem to be any direction. It's all sort of floating amorphously, and the organizations . . .

RIDGWAY: You could argue that some of it's the frustration of the deficit, some of it's the frustration of the trade imbalance, but I would say, history might say, that Americans simply are not able to stay the course. And we have forty years of peace in Europe, and we are feeling sorry for ourselves. "Why are we carrying the burden alone.?" We aren't, but, "Why are we carrying the burden alone? let's go home. Let's take our toys and go home, I'm tired of being the daddy in this family", kind of thing. Fine, then you go back to American isolationism and a view of the world that isn't there, and you yield it to somebody else.

Q: Sure.

RIDGWAY: I don't think there's anyone around to take our place, so I think you will see a confused international scene. I don't think the Soviet Union is seen by anyone as qualified to take our place. But it will be a not terribly interesting period of time until somebody else comes along. I don't know whether it is going to be China or India or who.

Q: But how can the United States have a real leadership role, when it owes everybody? It's the biggest debtor nation.

RIDGWAY: That's not a problem. That will turn around very soon. We have been a debtor nation, we were a debtor nation at the time of World War I.

Q: Well, that is true, but not to this extent.

RIDGWAY: No, but we weren't this rich. What people don't take a look at is, we have a four trillion dollar economy, soon going to be a five trillion dollar economy. Let's say we are a family and we are earning five trillion dollars a year and carrying a debt of two hundred and some billion. You do the percentages. There is not a family in America that has such a small debt. Their car loan comes to probably more than that.

Q: But what about all of these . . .

RIDGWAY: So, when the time comes we'll get it paid off and we will go on to somebody else. And I think the trade picture will turn around.

Q: You think that will turn around?

RIDGWAY: Well, it may turn around through a recession, but it will turn around.

Q: Will there be an inflation, and so therefore it is not as much of a debt.

RIDGWAY: No, I don't think so, I think inflation is pretty well under control.

Q: And will stay that way?

RIDGWAY: Yeah, I think so.

Q: Well, what about all these businesses that have been bought up by people from other countries; how do we get those back?

RIDGWAY: Well, at some point if we wanted them back we could get them back, but we don't want to put money into those businesses. I mean, Wall Street is buying businesses every day. We are buying their businesses overseas every day. Money is international now. Our budget isn't the big financial picture. The big financial picture is Zurich, London, New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong, girdling the earth with hundred of billions of dollars changing hands every day. Who knows who owns what? I don't worry about foreigners coming in and owning this or owning that. I think we are all more comfortable if . . . it isn't the debt, it's what causes the debt, that is the problem, the trade deficit, the budget deficit. There are ways to handle the budget deficit, this President isn't interested. Ted and I know perfectly well, we do not pay a fair amount of taxes.

Q: That's the point. People in the United States don't, are not heavily taxed at all.

RIDGWAY: We do not pay a fair amount of taxes, not for the services that we expect. There's the problem, the President won't go in that direction. It's his decision I don't know where the next president will come out. On trade, we've done the right things. The dollar value has changed and I think there is going to be a very dramatic . . . this is not original with me . . . this is sitting in on meetings with other world leaders. I think as prices of American goods drop, our export figures are way up, there are some quality foreign items that people will insist on having, so that figure is a little more resistant, but I think you are going to see a turn around in trade very quickly.

Q: In other words, the myths about US products being poor is just not true?

RIDGWAY: Poor for the prices they were going out at, but the prices are being adjusted, quality is picking up. We're learning. But we are very spoiled. Our companies have the American market, and after they sell two hundred and fifty million people a year, then maybe or maybe not they won't go overseas. Everybody else is export oriented. Finland, forty percent or more actually, of its industrial product is exported. It has to know how to sell, and has to have a quality product priced right. The Japanese have to export, we don't. On the other hand, our people love to import, so that account gets all kind of out of whack.

Q: Well, it does. Of course, it's creating sort of two classes in the United States now, the haves and the have-nots, which is certainly cruel, I think. It's polarizing.

RIDGWAY: Yes, it's very dangerous.

Q: But there again, taxation would take care of a lot of that too.

RIDGWAY: Sure it would.

Q: Correct some of the social programs. Of course, nothing ever stands still, but it's interesting the way institutionists have got to change to reflect the society, and the society is certainly changing. And the State Department, when you are in it, seems to be the most important thing there is, but when you stand back and take a look you realize it's [laughter] just one more card.

RIDGWAY: When you get to Kansas City, it doesn't count for much.

Q: Not much, does it? No. What sort of thing would you like to do when you retire?

RIDGWAY: Well, that's the problem. I haven't decided. There was a time when I would like to have taken what I consider broad management experience, good judgment, quick study, into a collection of board directorships. But, I don't have the contacts. I've always been a behind-the-scene person. I'm not widely known. I'm not going to be overwhelmed by that. And the more I read about liabilities and things of that sort, I don't care about carrying two hundred thousand liability insurance against board decisions. Joe Sisco told me one time, "You put together seven or eight board memberships and then that gives you time to do things you'd like to do."
Q: Yes.

RIDGWAY: Now, I'd like be a champion golfer and a good gardener. I'm not worried about my leisure time. But I just don't know. A number of people think I ought to go off and be a university president. But I keep telling them, they simply don't know me, and these are the same people that really think, you know, "Here's that little girl that's such a good student. There she is still, she's not so little and she's not a girl, but goodness, wouldn't she be nice at a university?" No I wouldn't, I don't want any part of it. Consultancies, sure, if I could sit around and get paid for all my experience and talk the

way you and I are talking. Some people do that, they get hundreds of thousands of dollars per year for not knowing half of what I know. Again, you somehow have to promote yourself, and I've never been very good at self-promotion. Most of the women I know are not good at self-promotion. You have to know how to set a stage for yourself and be seen on it. You have to be like my predecessor, Rick Burt, who's a champion at it.

Q: He sure is.

RIDGWAY: All of the people all the times he stands on the gate in Berlin and welcomes those people back. We got those people back, he didn't do any of it. But he manages to be right up front. He'll get a big job.

Q: Well, Jeane Kirkpatrick is good at this.

RIDGWAY: She wasn't so visible though when she came into the administration. The administration put her in a place where she was visible at the UN and she became with her views the darling of the right, and they've kept her up front, so she's done quite well.

Q: What about lecturing? A lot of money in that.

RIDGWAY: I've thought of it [Ambassador] Phil Habib has talked to me about it and offered to help and I suppose that's at the moment what I would do. I would probably, only for two or three years, for as long as a lecture on manners at the summit, or behind the scenes of a summit. As long as Gorbachev is in place and I have a particular view of Gorbachev, or the U.S.-Soviet dialogue needs to be explained, or arms control needs to be explained, but where you can add the grace notes about white wines, and greetings neckties and how people were dressed and stuff like that. Phil has helped me with that and so far that's the one I'm looking at.

Q: That's the one I see you as doing.

RIDGWAY: And the money is good.

Q: Very good.

RIDGWAY: There are at present, I think, there's only one woman out on the circuit at the moment and that's Jeane Kirkpatrick. I wouldn't pull down her money. In any case, there's an opening there. And it would allow me then to organize my private life the way I would like it.

Q: Oh, absolutely, you could pick your dates. And you could speak in foreign countries too.

RIDGWAY: Meaningful programs for the women, well, I could be offended by it except it's going to put a bundle of money somewhere. You can talk about women at the summit.

Q: Sure.

RIDGWAY: You can do all kinds of things. Take the same speech and switch it around.

Q: Sure you can. But [Ambassador] Jim [Akins] just has a couple of companies for whom he is a consultant on a permanent basis, and these speeches and I mean he's raking it in.

RIDGWAY: So's Phil.

Q: Oh yes, I know Phil is but Phil had much more visibility than Jim did, you know. And then, McNeil-Lehrer and all that sort of thing, which gives you more exposure. The thing feeds on itself, of course. Would you get yourself an agent I suppose?

RIDGWAY: Yes, I'd do exactly at the moment what I've got an invitation to do, which is to call Phil and use Phil's agent. I think he uses Walker, which is the big one, and use that to get started. I'll try to do it the right way.

Q: Oh, sure, absolutely. If you could have your choice, which post would you like to have?

RIDGWAY: Italy.

Q: Italy? Ah. Now, would you mind telling why?

RIDGWAY: Well, I have the language and I'm much more comfortable there. I think Ted would be happier there. I'm not comfortable in France, never have been, don't have French. And Bonn, I just don't care to be following Rick Burt around. London is beyond anybody's means except for wealthy Americans.

Q: Exactly. Spain?

RIDGWAY: Well, Spain not so much, no. no.

Q: It's sort of out of things.

RIDGWAY: It's not as liberated as Italy is. Yeah, Mexico City, I'd be happy in Mexico City. A class one embassy.

Q: Yes, well, you should have a class one embassy.

RIDGWAY: I won't get one, you watch, you watch and see what happens.

Q: I suppose not, under this administration, certainly.

RIDGWAY: Well, even the next one. It'll work out the same way.

Q: You think so? They have to reward their friends. Don't you think there is something very wrong with the way we elect presidents? We don't get the best people, I don't think.

RIDGWAY: Well, of the ones who offer themselves, I guess we do. I think there is something wrong with the way we run our politics, but I can't find the formula that makes me comfortable.

Q: It costs too much money.

RIDGWAY: It does now cost too much money. I'd feel much happier with federally funded campaigns that gave everybody the same amount.

Q: And I think that will come eventually, don't you?

RIDGWAY: I hope so. They're fighting it on the Hill right now.

Q: Oh, of course they are. Any changes you'd recommend in the FSI or, the way things work in the State Department?

RIDGWAY: Well, that's a broad . . .

Q: It is terribly broad.

RIDGWAY: That's very broad. I haven't looked at FSI in a long time. They always come over here and ask my views on some of what they're doing. I always look at FSI as starting with a course, that of responsibilities around language. I just think it's one of the best institutions in the world today. I'm so fond of the people who work over there.
Q: Yes.

RIDGWAY: Sort of take up their cause for their professionalism because they so often are not treated like professionals but rather like parrots, and they bring much more to their language teaching than that parroting of things. As FSI has expanded, I mean we have declining resources and FSI is now taking an increasing chunk out of that resource bag and has become an academic institution. I don't think we can afford it. I've heard the arguments, "It's to be our university, it lends professionalism to what we do." I'm not convinced. I'd get rid of the threshold in the Foreign Service, I think it's just murdering people, but at the same time I would be tougher on selection out. Since I know from experience we will not be tougher on selection out, I guess I come back to the threshold.

Q: They were pretty tough this year, though.

RIDGWAY: Not on selection out.

Q: Oh, no, no, that's right

RIDGWAY: On time in class.

Q: Time in class, that's what it was all about. I was thinking that they had to leave, but that isn't selection out. Well, what can be done now, this is a pretty basic thing in the Foreign Service, what can be done about efficiency reports to make them honestly reflect what goes on?

RIDGWAY: Not a thing. Not as long as you've got a union and an EEO and a grievance panel, forget it. I'm told by people who sit on the board that you can still find the very top and the very bottom, what you have trouble with is the middle.

Q: They have trouble with the middle, yes, that's always been said, right along.

RIDGWAY: And I think that may well have been true under the old reports as well. I don't think you can make it easy. And as the numbers for promotions decline, even when you can identify the very top, it may be that we can't accommodate all of the very top on a promotion list.

Q: That's true.

RIDGWAY: How you make distinctions there, I don't know. I mean that is just simply arbitrary, but it's arbitrary every place in the world.

Q: I was thinking specifically of the way so many of these reports are overblown, so that if somebody writes honestly about a person it's the kiss of death, unless the person doing it is well known.

RIDGWAY: It's very hard to do an overblown report that's full of examples. You can do an overblown report that's just "Oh, he's terrific and warm and kind, hit the ground running, and shoulders a full burden"--that sort of thing, but it doesn't say how, when and doing what. Then that gets cast aside. But the report that says, "Turned in a performance full of insight and judgment in writing a speech for the President." The simple task of being the motorcade officer somewhere you can know a lot about somebody being a motorcade officer. Get that stuff in there. Then you have enough to work with, you can visualize the person. As long as the report helps you visualize the person then I think it's competitive and I don't worry too much about it. Sure some of the wrong people get promoted, but they get promoted in business.

Q: Well, yes, that's true, you can't do anything about that. That's human nature. The future role of women in the Service, do you see it as just continuing year by year to become a larger part in the Service?

RIDGWAY: I do, and expanding into the traditional areas men have had. I see it here already. Our papers on INF are being written by a brilliant, and very pretty I must say, young woman across the hall. French, Italian desk officers are women. We have three women downstairs handling France, Italy, Malta, the Vatican; superb desk officers. Our new Country Director for Western Europe will be a woman, Avis Bohlen, headed after one year, we already know where she's headed, she will take over the office of NATO Political-Military Affairs. It will be a first for a woman in a key, key, position in American diplomacy. It has produced the George Vests and the Ron Spierses and the David Poppers and all of these people who have had that job.

Q: She will take over the NATO?

RIDGWAY: She will take over the NATO job here as the NATO office director in the summer of '89. She will come back in the summer of '88, or this summer rather, to be the office director for Western Europe, but we know where we want her in the summer of '88. The European political cooperation that is growing up around European communities, the officer in charge of that, Lynn Lambert. The Secretary's remarks on the occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Marshall Plan, he couldn't get over how terrific they were. A woman named Marshall Carter Tripp . . . now she's going to be a success because she has the right kind of a name for the Foreign Service. At last a woman has come up with a good Foreign Service name, now we have all of these.

Q: Marshall Carter Tripp, that's a lovely name!

RIDGWAY: Marshall Carter Tripp! It was just a terrific speech, and about two days later he was asked to give another version of that speech and I was standing there when he said, "I want that same person." I said, "You've got that same person." And she came in Saturday morning, seven o'clock, and re-wrote that speech to have it adapted for the next occasion. We all know what the hours are when the spotlight shines. So she's there. We have, as I say, arms control, Soviet affairs, on the Turkish desk, again non-traditional. Think of the others.

Q: You have somebody on the Turkish desk now? Well, I knew they were moving into the Middle East.

RIDGWAY: Western Europe. Sure, you've got April Glaspie going off to Iraq; Soviet affairs; we have people political, economics . . . we're all there. It's just becoming ordinary. Then I think there's no special role. That's a speech I always make in which I'm in the opposition. I do not think there is a special role for women. There is a need for everybody's brains, which suggests that, since the men don't have a monopoly on brains in this country, that we need women's brains and men's brains to make sure that we are choosing the very best.

Q: Yes, April Glaspie is going to Iraq as Ambassador?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: When?

RIDGWAY: Soon. The nomination just cleared the White House.

Q: Good. I have interviewed April and she is certainly competent. We were speculating on her chances and she didn't . . . she wondered if she wouldn't and I said I bet you do because I've heard that from so many people. But you can tell, can't you?

RIDGWAY: Sure, sure. April has been everybody's candidate for quite a few years. And Melissa the same way.

Q: Melissa the same way, still not on the floor though. She can't get through. Well, now this is a very bad question. I don't think it's a poor question, but I think it's a bad question, but I want to ask it anyway. The fact that women are spreading through the Service, as women have moved into fields such as medicine, they have been particularly interested in a couple of fields such as pediatrics and gynecology. Those are now perceived as being not the fields to go into and they get less pay in those fields than surgeons do, for example, and other things like that. The fact that women are proliferating in the Foreign Service, does this mean that the State Department is losing more and more of its clout in the world?

RIDGWAY: I hadn't thought of that, but we certainly mustn't become seen as a woman's institution.

Q: No.

RIDGWAY: We already are seen as feminist, or feminine in our approach to foreign policy. As we're problem solvers, as a result we get the reputation for not liking confrontation, leads to a reputation for avoiding confrontation, which leads then to the assumption that the patterns of behavior that I have described to you of those who use the long pacifying sentences and the passive structures are, tend to be seen as feminine, not masculine.

Q: Yes.

RIDGWAY: We have problems enough.

Q: Yes.

RIDGWAY: And we shouldn't allow ourselves to become seen as a female organization. I don't worry about that, I doubt that we'll get past fifty percent, if that.

Q: If that.

RIDGWAY: There are some tragic self-correcting mechanisms here, not the least of which is that this new group of women expects to marry. It's not a group of women who either don't think about it or decide not to.

Q: Oh, this group expects to?

RIDGWAY: This groups expects to marry.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes, they expect to marry, they expect to have children. Many of them will succeed in having full careers on up through ambassador. Many of them will have to drop out. The young men will have the same kind of corrections, but when we see them leave we won't know if their wives gave up careers on the outside. But there will be a number of men who will leave as there will be a number of women who will leave.

Q: There will be a number of women who will leave, yeah. There are a lot of divorces.

RIDGWAY: Yes, but I think we are no different in some respects than the military. I mean people won't take any great comfort if suddenly the military's all female. I wouldn't expect it to be that visible. We seldom meet as the Department of State where you'd take a look at the class picture and say, "My God, look at all those women." There would be stories yes, the day that the figure flips over into fifty percent plus one. I don't know what the international issues of the day will be. I don't know the extent to which Peace Corps, you might even see more of them, never approach fifty percent level.

Q: I don't believe it did either.

RIDGWAY: There was a greater potential for it there.

Q: Because there were so many teachers in the Peace Corps. But I was thinking if the NSC and all of these other agencies are picking away, taking bites out of what State used to do, is State going to come to be perceived as a weak organization, and therefore fit for women? We certainly don't want that.

RIDGWAY: Even if it did, I don't know that that would play out into anything meaningful.

Q: You don't?

RIDGWAY: I mean they can reach that conclusion if they want but that isn't going to affect the way people have been, have recruited themselves. Our membership recruits itself from across the country. Myriad individual decisions over which we have no control.

Q: That's true . . . and I understand the numbers are still very, very high of people wanting to enter the Service.

RIDGWAY: I don't quite see the relationship there between the decline of State's influence and therefore fit for women. I thought you were going to go in a different direction from the medical example. Many young women self-selected into pediatrics and gynecology. I'm surprised how many women I know will not go to a woman gynecologist, by the way.

Q: Really?

RIDGWAY: Really. It's incredible. I can't believe it.

Q: Is that so?

RIDGWAY: They don't like women doctors, but that's my age group. You know, the authority, father-type figures. I don't know what it is, and I suppose it doesn't bear too close a look. Many women self-selected into pediatrics and gynecology. But take a look at the figures in ten or twelve year: you will find women who self-selected into neuro-surgery and orthopedics. What I hear on the diplomatic side I find equally troubling, I don't think pediatrics is for women because children are for women. Children are for men and women. Gynecology, urology, I don't make an awful lot of difference, there, you know, I just want the best brain available who's interested. So, often when I'm out speaking to women's groups or read articles, I hear the phrase, "The new international agenda has topics that provide special opportunities for women, population, poverty, development, social services." It is drivel. We will again self-select ourselves into pediatrics and gynecology. And we ought to say, those are as interesting as, let's line them up against weather, oceans, environment, science, military assistance, security assistance, NATO, political--they just become another of a group. They aren't any more male or female than the ones that were already there. Going to war is not man's business, it's humankind's business. And keeping the environment clean is not women's business. And when I hear women imposing that one on themselves, I get so annoyed. I hear it all the time.

Q: Yes.

RIDGWAY: And I'm often asked, "Don't you agree that because the international agenda has changed there should be more women in it?" My answer is, "No I don't." Because there is an international agenda, I think there should be as many women and men who are pursuing it.

Q: And who are qualified, is the thing. The trouble is that in medicine as in the State Department, certain fields are ruled by certain types of men who don't want women in them. Surgery for example, that's a very macho thing. It's interesting, different men go

into different specialties in medicine, you know, and they sort of keep it out, and I think that may have been true in the State Department. You're about the only one, let's face it, who

RIDGWAY: In my generation, but the next generation, no.

Q: No, no.

RIDGWAY: The men are different now. The men are married to different kinds of women. It's all changed.

Q: It's all changed, and also as there becomes what they love to call the "critical mass, it makes it easier for everybody.

RIDGWAY: Then they stop counting. No more "lasts" and "firsts" and "seconds."

Q: Well, we both agree that what you want are the first class minds. Do you think there are any specific qualities women have?

RIDGWAY: Sure. I think we're more clear-minded and more practical than the men.

Q: More clear-minded and practical, well, that's certainly . . .

RIDGWAY: I happen to think we're tougher.

Q: You do?

RIDGWAY: In a different way.

Q: In what way?

RIDGWAY: I think we have more self-discipline.

Q: I wonder too, if our extra chromosome makes us healthier, able to take tension more?

RIDGWAY: We don't know yet.

Q: We don't know?

RIDGWAY: I don't think we know. I've had some rough days myself this year and realized that I can't just . . . first of all, I've been so busy since before I turned fifty, that I didn't . . . I was planning to have a big birthday party for my fiftieth and I was on the road or somewhere, anyhow I never got to celebrate my fiftieth birthday, so I don't know how old I am, I've lost track. Older I know, I'm not trying to make myself thirty, I don't mean it that way. I've just simply lost track of some things that other people find very much a part

of their lives. I registered to vote on Saturday, and I couldn't remember how old I was, I sort of looked at Ted, and he didn't help and I had to figure it out. [laughter] When I haven't been feeling well and I was putting on the weight and working too long, I said to myself, wait a minute, we don't know the figures for coronaries of women in their fifties, overweight, and working the hours. It is the men who have been the classic case; those figures aren't in yet on what stress is doing to women. I decided I don't want to be the pilot model. That's when I had to start cutting back a little bit on a few things, not the hours, or anything, but we don't have the medicine done.

Q: That's true we don't. There haven't been enough . . .

RIDGWAY: So I don't know what we've got here. Of the joggers leaving the Department at any noontime, I think they're about fifty -fifty.

Q: Is it?

RIDGWAY: If you want to have the most healthy group of women in the building, I don't know that this is true, but I bet I could prove it in a hurry, it would be the women security agents, the Secretary's Security detail. I don't know that they are any more or less healthy than the men. Those men are very healthy in that group too.

Q: Yes, of course they are. These generalizations are always very, very. strange. What, if any, advice would you give to young women specifically, coming into the Service?

RIDGWAY: Relax, if it's what you want to do, join up. Don't fight battles that aren't there to be fought. I still hear, when I speak on campuses, of a concern among young women of am I aggressive enough, and am I assertive enough. I don't think you can go out and buy assertive or buy aggressive, or take three courses in aggression and learn how to be effective.

Q: [laughter]

RIDGWAY: To the extent that men and boys are aggressive, I see them the way they're raised. My husband, Ted is an umpire in summer baseball. He loves kids' sports, and in the summer he does baseball, and he does ten to twelve, I guess, Little League, and age thirteen, the Babe Ruth League. I haven't been able to go see any games this summer, but normally I go over and I listen to the games. There's a big complex over in Arlington. Usually there are games for the girls at the same times there are games for the boys. I've watched the boys play, and these kids are ten, and they get two strikes on them and people are yelling from the side, “Hang in there". Or they get hit, and somebody says, "Dust it off, get back in there, or strike out," "That's okay, there's going to be another chance, you've got to work on that swing." There is language, a set of principles and behavior that I see being imparted on that baseball field. And I see it among the men wherever I go. I go to the girls field, some of that is beginning, but it is just beginning.

Q: Just beginning.

RIDGWAY: Just beginning. I would call it genderless behavior but it has not been considered genderless behavior. It's been boys' behavior and girls' behavior. You have to be, I think, if you're a woman you have to be comfortable with being a woman and if you're a man you have to be comfortable with being a man. But I can tell you, that the people I consider successful, and I consider myself successful, who go through this building, we do not spend a hell of a lot of time during the day, saying, "No, I'm a woman in a bureaucratic setting and I'm meeting a man in this bureaucracy and I need to assert myself."

Q: You don't even think about it.

RIDGWAY: You don't think about it, you just go get things done. So when I still hear, and I'm the generation that was considered patsies, when I still hear out on the college campuses women worrying about whether they're going to be aggressive enough, assertive enough, I worry about it. So that when I then hear they want to come into the Foreign Service, the thought that we're going to have all of these young women coming in thinking they have to do battle, that they have to fight for territory, that there is an extra dimension of normal, sturdy behavior in a bureaucracy, it worries me. It worries me for them as well, because they're going to fail.

Q: Of course they are.

RIDGWAY: Nobody likes any aggression, I know the men don't like it among men, nobody likes that disruptive behavior. People don't like in large meetings to be faced either by men who shout, or women who then shout. I think the women, because our numbers are different, and we're still early in on this, get blamed for more of that, but nobody likes it on either side. I just would like to see the young women more interested. As I say, relax, they've got to be as tough here as they are out on the streets, shopping, making friends, conducting their daily business, choosing among doctors, choosing among insurance policies. You make very careful decisions, you read, you know what you are doing, and you decide. That's how you get ahead. Maybe some will get ahead on the lawsuit route, I don't know, but I don't think so.

Q: Well, I don't think so either, because nobody wants them afterwards.

RIDGWAY: There is something, there is one other thing though that's different, and that is that we have to find a way, some natural way, evolutionary, I guess, to allow women then to easily be seen as experts and have that same public exposure. I don't know, it's beyond me to package myself. They call me up and ask me to appear on "Meet The Press" and I say something like, "Well, I'll be happy to, but really, don't you think you want so-and-so, who knows more than I do?" I've got men colleagues who'd, by golly, be home brushing their teeth, wetting down their hair, getting all ready to appear.

I probably should have done some of that myself, because I do see men leaving this business at my stage, or my age, who are leaving to jobs that were offered to them while they were on the job, and I say, I'm not. People are often surprised, but I'm not holding off job offers. I haven't had a one, really, since I've been here. And I know there are jobs out there at the head of major American . . . like Nick Veliotes at the head of the American Publishers Association. Bill Luers, up at the Metropolitan Museum or the Museum of Modern Art, I forget which. I don't know how they work those deals, I'm sure people came to them and asked.

Q: Well, do you think that this something that you have just got to get over? To stop trying to think of who would be the best person and just say, "Well, I probably know as much as ninety-nine percent of the people."

RIDGWAY: Yes, you do, but it's not natural to me.

Q: But it's not natural with you.

RIDGWAY: I'm hoping as the years go by . . .

Q: Well, I think you've put your finger on it. It's partly the socialization of little girls, which starts very early.

RIDGWAY: Oh, I think it's very much that. That baseball experience--I sat there the first time I became aware of it.

Q: What happens when the girls strike out?

RIDGWAY: Well, there is a little more pouting.

Q: Oh, dear.

RIDGWAY: With boys, it is embarrassment, but then everybody says, "We've got to go get 'em again." Most of them are full of excuses, oh! But they've got coaches there to tell them, "No, you were sucker for a high pitch again, or "You chased an outside ball." The girls tend to sashay around a little bit and be embarrassed.

Q: And what do the people on the side lines say to them?

RIDGWAY: You don't have that much cheering on the girls' sides.

Q: No, no, and the you know that girls' basketball teams never have the following that boys basketball teams do. They often come on as the preliminary..

RIDGWAY: The lady Vikings or the lady Mustangs

Q: Or whatever, yeah.

RIDGWAY: I heard a funny story the other night. I went swimming at the pool next to the house, and as I was leaving there is a steep rise, and there was a young man walking with his daughter, five, six, not much more than that in age. And I'd gotten myself in gear and I really wanted to go around them, and she knew that. She was walking backwards talking to her daddy, and she said, "Daddy move over and let the lady pass." So, I went around and said, "Thank you," and I heard him say, "That's an old fashioned word, Mary, that's a woman, not a lady."

Q: [laughter] That's kind of cute.

RIDGWAY: I really turned around to say something, like "Look, I'll be one at this time, but I'm happy to be a lady also." That's interesting. I don't know where he was going to take this.

Q: But maybe he has a wife who doesn't like to be called a lady, she's a woman. Sounds as though he's been zinged on that one at some point. Now the last question I would like to ask you is, what do you consider to be the most significant achievements in your life?

RIDGWAY: Oh, God, that I've survived. In what respect, I mean, they all go in . . .

Q: It can be whatever you think of as significant.

RIDGWAY: I think it's significant I had a modicum of success and I think I'm still a decent person. I think I am still a decent person. Anybody who wants to be a friend of mine better say I'm a decent person.

Q: I'm sure you are.

RIDGWAY: Kept my family ties, and that sort of thing. The others I don't . . . there's this and that. There's this occasion and that document, the professional things we have already spoken of, but I mean, me, personally I just keep on growing. That's probably a continuing achievement and one I still enjoy having as a continuing achievement.

Q: You're happy with yourself and you haven't had to betray yourself to do what you wanted.

RIDGWAY: No. We all have to shave the corners a little bit, but not in any major ways.

Q: Nothing that really upset you.

RIDGWAY: Besides, I think I'm honest, I have a reputation for being honest.

Q: Yes, you do, you have an excellent reputation. Corridor and otherwise, I'm sure.

RIDGWAY: But there are some things that matter, I guess those are my family, my mother, my husband, my honor. And I think that if you can come to . . . however old I am, I think I will be fifty two in July, August.

Q: You don't even know what month you were born! [laughter]

RIDGWAY: No, I really don't even know what month I was born. [laughter] That isn't bad, and there are still lots and lots of things to do.

Q: Oh absolutely. Why, you're a young woman now, because women live to be eighty-nine.

RIDGWAY: Who knows what I'll do. I have thirty years to make up for. I think it's all in that personal category that I'm the happiest.
Q: That you're happiest, yes. It's a very interesting question because it elicits some very interesting responses, and no two people ever answer it the same way. So it's very interesting. I thank you ever so much.

RIDGWAY: Well, thank you. I was telling Jean I enjoyed it-- psychotherapy

Q: Well, good, good!

End of interview