

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD A. MELANSON

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

DECEMBER 8, 2017

TRANSCRIPT BY

FANTASTIC TRANSCRIPTS

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Dr. Richard A. Melanson on December 8, 2017, in Durham, North Carolina, with Shaun Illingworth. Thank you very much for coming in today. I appreciate it.

Richard Melanson: You're welcome.

SI: For the record, I also want to thank the Rutgers University Alumni Association for providing a grant for this trip. To begin, can you tell me where and when you were born?

RM: I was born on November 4, 1944, in Perth Amboy. My father was stationed at the Harlingen Army Air Force Base in Texas and my mother decided to come back to Perth Amboy to give birth. He stayed in Texas. He was the athletic director at the Harlingen Army Air Force Base.

He was in the 29th Division and, as you may know, that was the division that hit Omaha Beach. Right before he was supposed to ship out to England, he was informed that he had been accepted for Officer Candidate School. So, he went to Officer Candidate School, never had to go overseas, never saw combat and, as I said, wound up as the athletic director at Harlingen, right down on the Mexican border. My parents were married in April of 1943 and, after my mother became pregnant, after several months, as I said, she came back to Perth Amboy to give birth.

SI: What were their names?

RM: Melvin J. Melanson and Helen Hurley Melanson. My father has, had, a business degree from Rider. Then, he went into teaching in Westfield; first in Hillside, then, Westfield. He got a master's degree in history from Rutgers and a master's degree in education.

SI: Starting with your father's side of the family, can you tell me a little bit about the family background?

RM: Very working-class. My grandfather, my father's father, came from Nova Scotia. He was born in Nova Scotia, came to the United States as a teenager, maybe even before a teenager. I don't think he went past the eighth grade. He worked in the Perth Amboy dry-docks and he was married to a woman named Ellen McCabe. They lived on Elm Street in Perth Amboy. My father was the oldest of four. There was Andrew and Gus, Augustus, were his brothers and Bernadine was his sister. Andrew also went to Rutgers. I believe he was Class of 1933, it was undergraduate, and did very, very well academically at New Brunswick. Let's see ...

SI: Had your father gone for his degree at Rider before going into the service or after?

RM: Much before. I believe my father--my father was born in 1909--and he graduated from Rider, I think it was just a two-year program, in 1928, 1929, something like that. He wanted to go into business. The Depression hit, and so, he became a teacher almost by default and taught at Hillside High School for a number of years, and then, went to Westfield. He was drafted into the Army. He wanted to enlist, but Westfield said, "If you enlist, you'll be fired." It's just

absolutely insane. So, he had to wait around to be drafted, by which time he was almost thirty-two, and he was not released from the Army until early 1946. Then, he went back to Westfield.

He tried to organize the teachers into a union and he was severely punished for that by the very conservative Westfield Board of Education. He was demoted from high school to the junior high school, Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School in Westfield. He had been a history teacher before, although he could also teach typing. He was then deprived of being a history teacher and was forced, really, to just teach typing after that.

In 1951, he opened a drive-in restaurant on Amboy Avenue in Woodbridge called the Ranch House. It opened on Memorial Day and he and a partner of his, Art Lapore, who was a math teacher in East Orange, were business partners. They opened this, just in the summers, and it went from 1951 until 1962. I started working there when I was around fourteen and, by the time I graduated from high school in 1962, I had moved up to carhop. [laughter]

SI: Tell me about your mother's side of the family.

RM: We were closer to my mother's side of the family, although I know a little bit less about the history. My grandmother, whose name was Lillian Veronica Joseph Hurley, was born in Upstate New York, in the Hudson Valley around High Falls. She came to New Jersey and she married Franklin Hurley, who worked for the gas company in Perth Amboy. I think they were married in Newark, and then, they moved to Perth Amboy. I don't know what the circumstances were.

My mother was the second of three. There was a brother, Joseph, then, my mother, who was Helen, and then, her sister, who was two years younger, Dorothy. They all went to St. Mary's High School in Perth Amboy. In fact, my Aunt Dorothy skipped ahead two years to be in my mother's class, because she was so lonely, and so, she graduated from high school when she was fifteen. They both went to Jersey City State Teacher's College, as it was called back then, and then, they both went into elementary school teaching. I should also mention that my mother and father were the first in their families to go to college.

SI: Did they meet at the school or through the educational community there?

RM: They met in Perth Amboy. They were both from Perth Amboy. My mother lived on--trying to think, it was not Brighton--Madison Avenue and my father lived on Elm Street. My mother went to St. Mary's, my father went to Perth Amboy High School. Somehow, through a mutual friend, they met and they courted for a long time. The story goes that my mother finally got so frustrated with my father that she finally said, "When are you going to propose to me?" and then, he finally did and this was during the war.

SI: Did he ever share any stories about his time in the service?

RM: Yes, he did. First of all, as I mentioned, he was very, very fortunate not to have to serve in combat in the 29th Division. When he became the athletic director in Harlingen--a couple of stories--he remembers a pitcher for the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, Johnny Sain, who, along with Warren Spahn, were the backbone of the Boston Braves. It was, the Boston Braves

fans said, "Spahn and Sain and pray for rain," because they only had two starting pitchers who were any good. In fact, in 1948, they won the National League Pennant for, I think, maybe, the second time in their history. They became the Milwaukee Braves, and then, eventually, the Atlanta Braves. So, my father told me about that and how they dreaded having to face Johnny Sain, because they would lose to them every time he pitched.

The other story was less humorous. He remembers having lunch with a colleague of his right before the colleague was to go up on a training flight. He did and the plane developed engine trouble, crashed and the colleague was killed. He mentioned one other story that I remember. It had to do with a trampoline and, apparently, they were used a lot back then. He remembers that one of the fellows who was serving under him got on a trampoline one day, went up, did a twist, came back, broke his neck and became a quadriplegic.

SI: Wow.

RM: Yes, but, other than that, I don't really--my father resented the fact that the Army kept him in for so long. He wasn't discharged until the Spring of 1946 and, by then, we had almost completely demobilized. So, he was born in 1909, he wasn't let out, discharged, until '46--he was thirty-six, going on thirty-seven by the time he got back to Westfield High School--and he was rather resentful about that.

SI: The two master's, did he get those after the service with the GI Bill?

RM: Yes, yes, he did. In fact, I remember one of them and I don't remember whether it was the history or the education. By the way, he thought the one in education was a total waste of time, but he really enjoyed the one in history. I remember going to the one in 1950, so, I was probably five going on six. Afterwards, somehow, I remember that we got on a yacht in the Raritan and went out, I guess with some of his classmates, and my mother and me and maybe some other kids, for a lunch on the Raritan. I have the vaguest memory of that, but I remember thinking, "Wow, this is really fun."

SI: Wow. Did he have any memories--I am interested particularly in the history degree--of any of the history professors that he may have known that you may have known later?

RM: No, he really didn't mention that. I remember him just complaining that he thought it was a complete waste of time to have to get a master's degree in education. I remember him using an example of having to memorize the standard height that a water fountain would have to be at for a particular grade level. He thought it was just--he thought that he knew how to teach and he really didn't need a master's degree in education, but Westfield was demanding that. In order for him to continue, he would have to have this degree. So, he complied.

SI: Your mother was teaching through the war.

RM: No. She taught before the war, briefly. Then, she became a "Rosie [the] Riveter" during the war, yes, worked in a munitions factory in Perth Amboy along with Dot, as we called her, Dorothy, my [aunt], her sister, my aunt. They worked together there, and then, after the war, my

mother gave up teaching until I entered first grade. Then, she went back to teaching and I would accompany her every day to Avenel, where she taught third grade. So, I was "Mrs. Melanson's little boy" and I would get in the car with three other teachers every morning and we would drive to Avenel, which, of course, as you know, is in Woodbridge Township, and then, return in the afternoons. So, I always felt a little uncomfortable because I was "Mrs. Melanson's little boy," I just wasn't one of the guys.

When I got to the fifth grade, I became a latch-key kid and I went to Number 1 School on School Street in Woodbridge, where I met a number of people, some of whom I'm still in touch with. I was put into, I guess you would say, a fast-track and I had a teacher named Mrs. Weinberg in fifth grade and a Miss Artym in sixth grade. I remember, in sixth grade, she took the entire class to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and I thought that was really, really fun. As we were leaving, the President of the Philippines, with a white suit, was coming up the stairs and maybe that was one of the first things that stimulated my interest in international politics. I'm not sure about that, but I have a very, very clear recollection of that.

SI: Tell me a little bit about your earliest memories, growing up in Perth Amboy.

RM: Well, we moved to Woodbridge when I was eighteen months old.

SI: Okay.

RM: My grandfather had bought a house on Green Street in Woodbridge in 1937, bought it for a song. The house was constructed in such a way that it had two independent entrances, but the house was joined together, but you could not get from one side of the house to the other. So, my grandmother and grandfather lived in the larger side of the house and my mother and father and I lived in the smaller side of the house and that was at 97 Green Street. As I said, I was eighteen months old when we moved there and we lived there from 1946 until 1957. Then, we moved around the corner to Linden Avenue, when my father finally got enough money together to buy a house, and that was the only other house that I lived in in Woodbridge.

SI: Tell me a little bit about your early education in Woodbridge.

RM: Right. First of all, I should say that I'm an only child and I felt that I was doted over. Both parents being teachers, education was paramount in my upbringing. One of the things that I remember is getting *The World Book Encyclopedia* when I was probably around nine or ten. I remember feigning illness on occasion, so [that] I could stay home and read the encyclopedia rather than go to school. This would've been fifth or sixth grade and I remember being particularly fascinated by World War I. So, as soon as my mother and father left for school, I would plunge into *The World Book* [laughter] and would spend the day reading the encyclopedia. I only did that two or three times, but it was fun. So, I was an avid reader.

I remember, I read my first Hardy Boys book when I was eight years old, *While the Clock Ticked*, and it was a novel. It was probably two hundred pages or so, and I remember plowing through that. It took me a couple of weeks to do it, but, since it was geared to teenagers and I

was only eight years old, I thought, "Hey, that's pretty good. I can read a book that's well above my level." So, I was a very precocious kid.

I went to nursery school at the White Church in Woodbridge, which was an Episcopal church. Then, I went to St. James, a Catholic school, for kindergarten, because my age was such, my birthdate was such, that I couldn't quite qualify for public school. So, I spent one pretty miserable year in a very large class under the iron-fisted rule of Sister Josephus in kindergarten. Then, as I mentioned, starting in first grade, I went to Avenel School, first, second, third and fourth grade, and then, came back to Number 1 School in Woodbridge.

Then, I went to what was then called the Barron Avenue School for seventh grade, which had been the old high school. The Woodbridge High School, the brand-new one, had opened in 1956 and the old high school was turned into a school for seventh graders only. Then, the next year, they decided it would be seventh and eighth grade. So, I spent two years at Barron Avenue School before going to Woodbridge High School.

I would've entered Woodbridge High School in 1958. At the time, it was the largest high school in the state. I believe we had something like thirty-five hundred students. It was split session. Freshmen and sophomores went in the afternoon, juniors and seniors went in the morning. There were busses that came in from all over the Township, because, back then, Woodbridge had only one high school, but it was growing by leaps and bounds and it simply didn't have the capacity to absorb all of these students. So, it was really not a wonderful situation.

I was fortunate again, however, because, when I was a junior in high school, I was put into the fast-track. Once again, they had two college prep levels, one and two, and I got into the fast-track. So, I had a series of very, very good teachers, particularly in history and English. I thought I got, given the circumstances of the school, I thought I got a pretty good education.

SI: It is interesting that you said that, because, looking at your generation, all of the educational systems around New Jersey were straining under this Baby Boom.

RM: Yes, and the other thing that was happening is that an awful lot of families were moving from North Jersey and from New York down to Central New Jersey, because, back in, what? the 1950s, Woodbridge seemed like farmland compared to places like Union City and North Bergen and places like that. So, we were getting an awful lot of people from that part of the state, including Jack Jacobs, as a matter-of-fact, who came down from North Jersey. [Editor's Note: Colonel Jack Jacobs graduated in the same class as Dr. Melanson at Rutgers and went on to earn a Medal of Honor while serving in the US Army in Vietnam.] I knew a number of others who came down from North Jersey. It's funny, such a small state, but we have North Jersey, Central Jersey, South Jersey. [laughter]

SI: It is very stratified.

RM: Yes.

SI: Describe your neighborhood and how that was changing as well. It seems like you were sort of in the same neighborhood, even though you moved.

RM: Yes. I moved around the corner. I had a number of good friends growing up. Even though I was raised as a Catholic, I wound up in a Jewish Cub Scout pack, Pack 136, and I was in Den Number 2 and Mrs. Deutch was our den mother. So, all of my friends--not all of my friends, but many of my friends--starting around the age of eight or so, were Jewish, including a fellow named Kenny Oettle, who became very good friends with me. We're still in touch with one another. I'll talk more about him later.

I also had a friend named Billy Dettmer, who was also Rutgers Class of 1966, who lived on Barron Avenue. He and I used to play on the lawn, when we were about, oh, I would say eleven or twelve, maybe ten or eleven, when it was Woodbridge High School. He lived right next to what was then Woodbridge High School, which then became Barron Avenue School. He and I used to play football on the lawn and there was a biology teacher named Mr. Noe, N-O-E, who used to open the window and yell out, "Will you guys shut up? I'm trying to teach a class." Meanwhile, we're kicking the football back and forth on the high school lawn. So, I remember that very, very clearly.

So, I was really not for a loss of friends, although I must say, I dearly wanted to have a brother. Being an only child, I probably spent a little more time reading and watching television than the average kid, but, really, I always had some friends.

SI: You mentioned that you started working at your father's place.

RM: Yes, the drive-in restaurant.

SI: At fourteen?

RM: I was about fourteen. I started on the lowest rung possible--I was a potato peeler. This would've been the Summer of '59. It was un-air-conditioned building that was separate from the main building of the Ranch House. So, I spent 1959 peeling potatoes. Yes, I guess I was fourteen then, going on fifteen. The next year, I was in charge of making hamburgers in the back and we had square hamburgers and I'd have to grind the meat by hand, put them into these metal, square metal templates, really, and then, cover them with wax paper, and then, we would put them into a freezer.

The third year I was there, I worked the front. I was the soda jerk, soda fountain guy. So, I made malted milks and ice cream sundaes, drew root beers from this big barrel that we had, this big root beer barrel that would occasionally freeze, particularly when it got very hot out--I don't exactly understand how that worked, but it would drive my father crazy. Then, finally, in the fourth year, before I entered Rutgers, I became a carhop and that was the *crème de la crème*, because I was able to make some tip money in addition to getting a little bit of a salary.

So, that was enjoyable, but my father worked his butt off. They would, he and his partner, would go to a fresh produce market in Newark on Sunday evenings. They would get there probably

around midnight or so to get the freshest produce possible to bring back to the Ranch House. My father was an absolute stickler for quality and he had the temerity to put the Ranch House up right next to a Stewart's Root Beer, thinking that, initially, we would draw the overflow crowd from Stewart's. Then, when the word got around that our product was superior to theirs, we would get our own clientele as well. I don't think we ever did quite as well as Stewart's, but we did well. I know my father worried a lot about how the weather would be, being a drive-in restaurant. If it rained, eh, you were pretty much out of luck, but he put his heart and soul into that.

He wanted, in fact, to expand, but his partner had tired of the business by 1962 and my father, most reluctantly, had to sell the Ranch House in 1962. It really, really hurt him, hurt him emotionally. He was just really quite devastated by it and had a falling out with his partner as a result of it, thought that his partner really had almost betrayed him. Yes, so, I just felt my father was probably never quite the same after that. After he sold the Ranch House, in 1962, he would spend his summers teaching summer school in Westfield, teaching more typing, which he absolutely abhorred, but he did it anyway.

Unfortunately, in June of 1968, he was diagnosed with colon cancer and he died on October the 3rd of 1968, when I was just beginning my second year in graduate school, which we'll get to later. Being an only child, that was particularly hard on me. It was exceptionally hard on my mother. My mother never really recovered from that blow and it really threw the family into disarray.

SI: I am curious about the Ranch House.

RM: Yes.

SI: It kind of calls to mind images of *American Graffiti* and all that.

RM: Exactly.

SI: Was it a social hub for at least some people in the town?

RM: I don't remember it that way, really. I remember, my father had difficulty hiring and keeping people because he had very high standards. There were some other teachers who worked at the Ranch House. There was one teacher who came down from Mountain Lakes, New Jersey, he and his daughter. I remember his daughter's name was Cindy, because I was sort of sweet on her. She eventually went to Elon College in North Carolina. She was a little older than I was. I don't remember what his name was, but Paul, that's right--I don't remember his last name.

There were a couple of other teachers as well, but he mostly hired college kids, but he put them through a very rigorous interview process before hiring them. There was one fellow named Jimmy Caniff, who I think also went to Rutgers, and then, later, became a professor at the University of San Diego, was a couple of years older than I was, but, no, it was a very serious,

very intense environment. My father was the cook, and so, he did all of the broiling, the frying, what-have-you, and I remember him coming home absolutely exhausted.

A couple of other things, I was in the Woodbridge Little League in the Summer of 1954. I was probably the smallest kid on the team. We won the township championship that year, played for the Reo Diner Tigers. We had a star pitcher named Eddie Ballo who just blew everybody away, struck out just about everybody he faced. I would be put into right field late in the game if we had a 10-0 lead. I just played one year. My mother insisted that we go to Belmar the next two summers, which would've been 1955 and 1956, because my mother was very bored. She had originally worked at the Ranch House, then, stopped doing that. She had nothing to do during the summer. I wanted to play in the Little League, my mother wanted to go to Belmar--so, she dragged me along to Belmar.

Why did we go to Belmar? Because one of her cousins owned a very nice house about two blocks from the ocean on Fifth Street or Fifth Avenue, I don't remember which it was, 207 Fifth in Belmar. It was a big Victorian-style house with a wraparound porch. I learned how to play cards there. I learned how to play canasta and a game called 500, which was a sort of dumbed-down version of bridge. I was the only kid. There were all of these grown-ups, many, many years older than I was, and this eleven and twelve-year-old kid playing cards. One of my memories of this was playing with my [family], playing cards in a foursome, with the two cousins of my mother, the in-law cousin, whose name was Charlie Bathman. He worked in New York and he smoked cigar after cigar and all of the cards that we played with were imbued with cigar smoke.

I didn't like being in Belmar. I was very lonely and one of the things that I did was go to the Belmar Library on a regular basis and took out a series of nonfiction books in the Signature Series and Landmark Series. I remember reading a biography of Mad Anthony Wayne, for example, who was a general in one of the Indian Wars back in the 1830s [1790s] or so. So, I was always interested in history. My father was, too, and my father encouraged it. I wasn't so happy being by myself in Belmar, but the reading was something that I enjoyed doing.

I also remember listening on the radio to the 1956 Democratic Convention and I think that really piqued my interest in politics. That same year, for the 1956 Election, *The New York Times* ran a series in which they had a photo and a paragraph about all of the Presidents. I noticed that they had mistakenly mixed up William Henry Harrison and Benjamin Harrison. So, I wrote a letter to *The New York Times* informing them of their mistake and one of the editors of *The Times*--now, I'm twelve years old--and one of the editors of *The Times* wrote me back this long letter apologizing, and I think maybe even gave me a subscription to *The Times* for a year or so, because of [that]. This was really [great], it was really fun. [laughter]

SI: You described earlier how the town, it sounds like, was religiously mixed.

RM: Very middle-class, ethnically mixed. When we moved around to Linden Avenue, a woman who lived on the street--I can't remember the street now that was just on the side--but she was Hungarian and spoke very, very little English. There was a family down the street who was second-generation from Russia. It was largely white-collar, but not exclusively so.

My father belonged to the Kiwanis Club. He was the only teacher. It was basically a business group and my father was the secretary of the Kiwanis Club. Every month, we would host--we, my father--would host a cocktail party of about twelve of his fellow Kiwanians. My mother would make something called rolled sandwiches, which nobody probably knows about now, but they were all the rage in the 1950s. I remember my parents and my father's fellow Kiwanians sitting around eating rolled sandwiches and drinking Manhattans before they went to the monthly meeting of the Kiwanis Club, which was held at a place called the Log Cabin, which was just past the high school on Amboy Avenue.

SI: Were there any divisions in the town or did most people get along, along those lines?

RM: There were economic divisions in the town. Woodbridge proper was reasonably prosperous, as was Colonia, but places like Port Reading and Keasbey, Fords and Hopelawn were, I would say, fairly economically depressed. They were largely blue-collar, very, very small homes. Keasbey in particular was a terrible place. Port Reading wasn't much better. It was near Carteret and it was heavily polluted. As you may or may not know, the rivers around then, the Kill Van Kull and the Raritan as it flowed into the Raritan Bay, were terribly polluted. There was a big factory near South Amboy called Titanium and it threw all of this garbage into the rivers and it was really a cesspool. Port Reading and Keasbey were really in the middle of that and I believe that there was a big garbage dump as well in Keasbey. So, yes, there were economic divisions.

There were very few blacks who lived in Woodbridge at that time. I remember, in high school, I can only remember one black, George Fair, who was the captain of the football team. He was president of our class, he went to Syracuse and he was widely admired, but he was clearly a token. There were a fairly large number of Jewish kids, many of whom I was friendly with because I was in this top tier of college prep. A lot of the Jewish kids were very, very smart, and so, we hung around together.

My parents were not all that thrilled, honestly, that I had all of these Jewish friends. My father was--both my parents were Catholic, but they were not avidly so. I remember my father being quite critical of many of the sermons that he would hear when we would go to church together. My mother used to want to go to the latest possible Mass. So, that would have meant twelve o'clock Mass. So, rather than go to St. James of Woodbridge, we would go to a church sometimes in Avenel or even sometimes Rahway, depending on which church had a twelve o'clock Mass. So, I had become fairly disaffected by the whole Catholic scene, I think, by the time I graduated from high school and, by the time I entered Rutgers, I had pretty much become disillusioned, but I remember Woodbridge, at that time, was a very pleasant place to live.

You could go out for Halloween trick-or-treating without worrying that you were going to get razor blades in your trick-or-treat [candy] or get mugged on the street. I remember riding my bicycle from Woodbridge all the way out to Bonhamtown, which is in Edison Township, and back one day. I remember riding my bike from Woodbridge to Linden one day and back and not thinking anything about it. This would've been probably when I was twelve, thirteen, whatever. I had a J.C. Higgins three-gear bike, which I thought was really cool and I really enjoyed. I also

had a paper route. I delivered *The Independent Leader*, which was a Woodbridge newspaper that came out once a week on Thursday, and I would go around and deliver that. I think I was around thirteen or so when I did that and that was enjoyable.

So, it was a very pleasant, I would say almost sort of "*Leave It to Beaver*" environment that I grew up in, and it stayed that way, as I said, until my father died. Then, when my father died, everything sort of disintegrated.

SI: Tell me a little bit more about your high school years. In particular, you were obviously being pushed towards college pretty firmly.

RM: Yes, yes, I was, and I did not get off to a good start at all in high school. I was in afternoon session, as I mentioned. I lived nearby. I was only a couple of blocks away. So, I didn't have to take a bus, I could just walk, walk to high school, which made it much easier, but I had an algebra teacher who I thought was terrible and she thought I was terrible. I remember getting a "D" in algebra in the first marking period and my parents came to talk to her--I guess I can mention her name--Linda Pinda. She told my father that she didn't think that I was college material and he just about blew his stack. He blew his stack at me for doing so poorly, but he also blew his stack at the teacher for underestimating my abilities, but I was never especially strong in math and science. I, eh, "Bs" and "Cs," mostly, but straight "As" in English and history. Those were always my strong suits.

I didn't like high school at all my first couple of years, when I was in the afternoon session. By the time I got to be a junior, however, I began to like it a lot more. I became a member of the debating team and, oh, let me just back up a minute. Freshman year, somehow, I was chosen, along with one other student, to debate two students from the sophomore class in front of the entire afternoon session, fifteen hundred students packed into the auditorium. My partner's name was Sharon Ofsonka and she and I debated the sophomore team. I remember, one girl's name was Connie Rudolph, I don't remember--I was the only guy. There were three girls and me and we were up on the stage in front of fifteen hundred students debating and I didn't think anything about it. I was very comfortable. We wound up losing the debate by one point. I suspect that it was probably obligatory to allow the sophomores to beat the freshmen.

In any case, I remember going over to a teacher's home--actually, it was in an apartment near Woodbridge Park--before the debate for weeks before the debate and she would prep us on how to debate. I honestly don't remember how I got involved in this and why I was chosen to be a member of this two-person debating team, but, by the time I became a junior, I was full-bore debating team. In my senior year, I was made a partner again of this girl Sharon Ofsonka and the debating topic of that year was called, "Resolved that the United Nations Should Be Significantly Strengthened," and we were on the negative side.

We went all around the state debating. We went to Camden, we went to North Jersey, we debated schools from Philadelphia, debated schools from New York. We won the Middlesex County Championship that year, which I believe was held in Highland Park. So, I was a pretty proficient debater by the time I graduated from high school.

I was also sports editor of *The All-High News* and it won a Columbia, my particular page, won a Columbia Journalism Award for the column that I wrote, which was called "Barron Briefs." We were the Woodbridge Barrons, B-A-R-R-O-N-S, because we were on Barron Avenue. I had a little drawing of briefs, [laughter] underwear, and I put it up on the masthead of my column. I didn't think that I'd be able to get away with it. I thought some teacher would say, "Hey, you can't do that," but I got away with it. My column, which I wrote every month, was called "Barron Briefs" and I would write a little story. I remember interviewing Lou Bartha, who was, I think he was the football coach at that time, and also taught driver education, a really tough guy. I did a number of these interviews and I guess Columbia liked it, because I got this Columbia Journalism Award. I was also on the editorial board of the literary magazine and had two or three essays that I wrote published in that.

I was on the golf team when I was a senior and I lettered in golf. I was mightily proud of that big, red "W" with a crossed golf clubs on my varsity sweater. [laughter] So, I did an awful lot of extracurricular things in my junior and senior year, but I would say that *The All-High News*, debating, golf and the literary magazine, those really stand out as things that I enjoyed doing. My grades were okay. I think there were 650 in our class and I think I graduated thirty-fourth in my class.

One of my father's great disappointments was that I was not elected to the National Honor Society until my senior year. There were only a small number that made it as juniors, I made it as a senior, and I remember really being in the doghouse after I failed to make it in my junior year. So, my father really did put quite a bit of pressure on me to do well in school. My mother put less pressure on me and my father, I think, had pretty much by then determined that I should be a lawyer.

SI: Around this time, 1958 to 1962, were you following national or international events?

RM: I was, yes.

SI: You were reading the newspapers.

RM: Yes, I was. I remember being particularly concerned about the series of crises in Berlin. We came--I thought, anyway--came fairly close to nuclear war in, oh, I guess it was the summer; it was right after the Berlin [Wall went up]. The Berlin Wall was built, started August 14, 1961. When we got back to school in September, which would've been my senior year, September of '61, our principal, Dr. John Lozo, got the entire junior and senior classes--remember, we were split session--so, he got the juniors and the seniors together, basically, gave a talk to us saying, "Don't worry, this will pass. I don't want you to be too upset about this crisis," because, back then, we were having routine drills for nuclear attacks. We would go under our desks.

Once a month or so, we would have these tests--like they would do a lot of good, going under a desk when a nuclear device was being exploded in Downtown Manhattan. It was ridiculous, but we were doing that. I remember being very concerned that we were, in fact, on the brink of nuclear war and I was following--I was a regular reader of *The New York Times* by then. I thought I was, for a seventeen-year-old, I was well-informed and I was very concerned that this

effort on the part of the Soviet Union to essentially block off West Berlin [would lead to war] and Khrushchev was making threats that he would not allow any road access to West Berlin. Then, I started learning about the Berlin Airlift of 1948-'49 and I just--yes, I was very concerned about living eighteen miles from the Empire State Building as the crow flies.

I'll talk more about the Cuban Missile Crisis in a minute, because that occurred when I was a freshman at Rutgers, but, yes, during this period, '58 to '62, particularly after Kennedy became President, the Cold War started to heat up again. Khrushchev thought that Kennedy was naïve, was young, could be taken advantage of and he was putting the screws on Berlin episodically in '61 and '62 and I was worried about it.

[Editor's Note: In June 1961, at the Vienna Summit with President John F. Kennedy, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev demanded that the Western powers pull their forces out of West Berlin by the end of 1961, leading to months of increased tensions. That July, Kennedy asked Congress for billions in new military spending and an expansion of the active military. On August 13, 1961, East Germany sealed the border with West Berlin and began erecting the Berlin Wall. On August 30th, President Kennedy ordered 148,000 National Guard and Reserve members to active duty in response.]

SI: What did your family think of Kennedy?

RM: They loved him, they loved him, being Catholic and being an Irish Catholic. My mother was Irish Catholic, my father was not. My father was more French, French-Canadian, but my mother was Irish Catholic. When Kennedy was assassinated, she spent the whole night in tears and I remember my father finally losing his temper and telling her to stop it, because it was just driving him crazy. We can talk about that in a minute, too. That didn't happen until I was a sophomore at Rutgers, but they were absolutely thrilled and I was absolutely thrilled. [Editor's Note: President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Friday, November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas.]

I remember staying up late that night, of election night, because, as you may know, it was an extraordinarily close election. If Mayor [Richard] Daley hadn't turned out some of those people who had already died in Chicago, Nixon probably would've been the President. I believe that it was Minnesota that finally came in for Kennedy early the next morning.

I remember going to school the next day and, as we were standing up to do our Pledge of Allegiance, there was a fellow named Alan McElhenny, who was a Republican. Of course, I couldn't contain myself. I was just so thrilled and he said, "Well, you know it's the Democrats who get us into wars," and I thought, "Oh, come on, this is [ridiculous], stop it," but it stuck with me, because, many years later, in 1976, when Bob Dole was running for Vice President, in the Vice Presidential debate against Walter Mondale, he referred to these as "Democrat wars."

He was heavily, heavily criticized for that, but there were a lot of Republicans who thought that, "Well, Wilson had gotten us into World War I, FDR had gotten us into World War II, Harry Truman had gotten us into Korea," and Vietnam had not yet come along yet, but, ultimately, the responsibility for Vietnam rested upon Truman as well--but I didn't know what Alan McElhenny

was talking about when he said that Democrats started wars. I was just thrilled to pieces that Kennedy had won the election and I was just absolutely just taken with him the entire time that he was President. I remember watching the press conferences that he held on television and he was so debonair and so articulate, so handsome, so different from Eisenhower, who was just so bland and forgettable. Kennedy was just incredibly charismatic and I just thought the world of him.

SI: Before we get into Rutgers, is there anything else you would like to share about your pre-Rutgers life, anything that I perhaps missed?

RM: No, I don't think so.

SI: We can always come back.

RM: Yes, I don't think so. I just remember, high school, there were just too many people around. It was just a mob and I really was very, very fortunate that I got into this--we called ourselves "the top twenty group"--because I was able to make some friends that I shared interests with and I pretty much excluded myself from most of the 650 students that were in my class, concentrating on a couple of dozen friends or so. So, I think I was fortunate in that way, because there were many students, particularly in the general studies at Woodbridge High School, that were just ignored; anyway.

SI: Was Rutgers always your choice? Did you look at other schools?

RM: I did. My father was rather disappointed that I decided to go to Rutgers. I applied to Franklin and Marshall and I applied to Dickinson College. I was accepted at Dickinson. I was not accepted at Franklin and Marshall, because I refused to go for an interview. My grades were certainly good enough to be accepted, but I really didn't want to go very far away from home at that time. I think I was a bit of a mama's boy and I wanted to stay close to home. I didn't want to commute, I wanted to live on campus, but I think that my father was disappointed that I chose Rutgers. He wanted something a bit, perhaps, more, quote, "exotic."

There were--oh, I would say, I'm guessing now--but I would say that there were probably two dozen or so from my class at Woodbridge High School who enrolled at Rutgers-New Brunswick in the Fall of 1962. Maybe that's a little on the high side, but fifteen to twenty anyway. So, I remember, in one of my classes, it might've been an English class or a math class, the teacher wanted everyone to say where they were going to college. Oliver Cooperman was going to Dartmouth and Keith Deutch, who I'd known since Cub Scouts, was going to Penn and Ken Oettle, who I'd known since Cub Scouts, was going to Cornell and Marilyn Ting, who was Chinese-American, graduated second in the class--Ken Oettle was the valedictorian--was going to Boston University on a full scholarship. There were a number of students going far away, but, then, there were a group of us, like Jack Jacobs and Billy Dettmer, who were going to Rutgers.

I remember spending my summer between graduating and going to Rutgers, I remember getting the catalog from Rutgers, getting the academic catalog, which had all the courses in it, and I thought, "Wow, this is great. Look at all of these courses that are offered. This is going to be

really interesting." I also remember having to read two books as requirements before going, before enrolling in the fall. One was called *The Fire Next Time* (1963) by James Baldwin and the other was called *The Future of American Politics* (1952) by Samuel Lubell, L-U-B-E-L-L, and I remember being absolutely fascinated by both of them, particularly the Lubell book, but the Baldwin book was very, very moving. As you may know, he was a poet, a writer, a Civil Rights advocate, an extraordinarily articulate African-American who was a very controversial figure at the time, probably still is. Sam Lubell was a political analyst and I believe that the focus of his book was on the 1948 Election, but, in any case, I loved both of the books. So, when I set off for Rutgers, I was ready to knuckle under and really apply myself.

SI: What do you remember about your first few days and weeks on campus?

RM: They were terrible. First of all, all the freshmen had to wear dinks and these were little black beanies with red stripes on the side and a little red button on top and we had to wear these our entire freshman year. I remember very [clearly], must've been the first or second day I was there, the Dean of Students, Cornelius Boocock, "Corny Boo," we called him, got us all together, the freshman class. He got us all together in one of the old buildings, Voorhees or Old Queens, one of the old buildings, and he said, "Look to the right of you, look to the left of you. Two of you won't be here next semester," and I thought, "Oh, my God, really? Is it going to be like that?"

So, I remember calling home and I said, "This is awful. I'm going to flunk out." Well, it so happens that a distant cousin of mine named Alan Karcher, who was the editor of *Targum* and, later, became the Speaker of the New Jersey State Assembly [from 1982 to 1985], was at Rutgers. He was a senior and my mother, somehow, arranged for him to come to my dorm room in Demarest Hall. He came in and he wanted to settle me down. He said, "What were your SAT scores?" I told him and he said, "Where did you graduate in your class?" and I told him. He said, "You're not going to have any trouble here. Just relax. Just apply yourself and you'll be fine." So, that lifted a bit of worry, but it wasn't until I took my first round of hourly tests that I started to think, "Hey, I'm going to do all right here."

I was taking a course in physical geography in order to fulfill one of my science requirements. It was a large class taught by a man named Stephen Marcus and, in our first hourly test, I got the highest grade of the two hundred or 250 students or so in the class. There were mostly upperclassmen taking it, there were very few freshmen. I remember that he called me into his office after the test and congratulated me on doing so well and asked me if I would consider becoming a geography major when it was time to declare a major. So, once I got those first hourly tests under my belt, I thought, "I'm going to be okay," but the first month or so, I was mightily worried.

So, I studied very, very hard. I went to the library every night. I was in a "suite"--that's a euphemism. I had two roommates, Richard Hyrinya, who was from Passaic or Clifton, and Seth Goldberg, who was from Linden, and we were crammed in to a corner room in Demarest Hall. I had a metal desk and a metal bed. It was pretty Spartan and I realized I wasn't going to be able to get much studying done in my room. So, I hauled myself off to the library whenever possible.

Every night, after I ate at the Commons, I would go directly to the library and I would probably stay there until it closed at midnight.

SI: Do any other professors stand out from this early period, the first couple of years?

RM: Yes. There's a fellow named Eugene Meehan, Gene Meehan, M-E-E-H-A-N, who I had for Political Science 101 and he was a real character. He was a real iconoclast and I was quite taken with him. He was probably my favorite professor at that time. He later left for Brandeis, in my senior year. I'll talk about what some of the repercussions of that were in a little while, but, yes, Gene Meehan definitely stood out.

My English teachers stood out as well. I don't remember--I remember the one that I had my second term was a fellow named Fitzpatrick and he was so taken with my writing that he invited me to write for what was called *The Intercollegiate Review*, which was a national publication. Well, I did a little research on *The Intercollegiate Review* and I found out that it was a right-wing rag and I told him that, "I really--I thank you very much, I appreciate the invitation--but I would not feel comfortable writing for a journal that was skewed so much to the right." I clearly was a political liberal.

My father was a New Deal [Democrat]. I left this out, but my father was a New Deal Democrat and, in the 1930s, in fact, had been the campaign manager for someone who was running for Congress from the Woodbridge/Perth Amboy area. I don't think he won, but, in any case, I was raised in a New Deal Democratic household, particularly my father. So, when I got to Rutgers, I was politically liberal, I loved Kennedy and *The Intercollegiate Review* was something that I just didn't want to have anything to do with.

SI: I am curious, going back to your father, did he have any involvement with the Wilentz group?

RM: Not that I'm aware of, no. I remember that he voted a straight Democratic ticket, except for 1956, when he voted for Eisenhower and there was a fellow in the Kiwanis Club who was a Republican named Freddy Adams, who was running for mayor. The Mayor of Woodbridge, at that time, was a fellow named Quigley and he lived on Tisdale Place, which was right around the corner from me on Green Street. I think he must've retired and Freddy Adams ran for Mayor. [Editor's Note: Hugh B. Quigley served as Mayor of Woodbridge from 1952 to 1959, followed by Frederick Adams from 1960 to 1961.]

Usually, if you were a Republican, you didn't get elected Mayor of Woodbridge, but my father liked Freddy Adams and supported him and he, in fact, did become the Mayor of Woodbridge for a period of time and that surprised me. I don't really remember Freddy well at all, just the name, but, with those two exceptions, I think my father voted a straight Democratic ticket all the time. My mother said, oh, she voted for the man, not the party, but, in fact, she voted for whoever my father told her to vote for. [laughter]

SI: You talked about Professor Meehan. Were there any other professors that stood out?

RM: Yes. There was a fellow named Frank Gorman, who did not have a PhD. He had a master's degree. He had gone to Princeton as an undergraduate, had a master's degree from Rutgers. I had him for French 101 and he was extraordinary. I was in the Language Lab every day trying to master French. Learning foreign languages was not one of my strong suits, but I worked very, very hard at it. He was very encouraging, but he was also very, very demanding and I remember learning an awful lot from him.

I remember, this would've been right before the annual Rutgers-Princeton football game--back then, Rutgers' first game was always at Princeton--and I remember the kids in the class said, "Mr. Gorman, who are you going to root for?" He said, "Well, of course, I'm going to root for Princeton, because that's where I went as an undergraduate," and we couldn't understand that, because he was teaching at Rutgers. Why would he be rooting for Princeton?

I remember going to the Princeton-Rutgers game. Rutgers had been undefeated in 1961, the first undefeated season they had had in, I don't know, decades. In 1962, they went to Princeton, opening game, but they lost, 15-7, and I remember, it was a hot, sunny day. We had to sit on the sunny side of the stadium, Palmer Stadium, because we were the visiting team. So, the sun was in our eyes the whole time. It was a requirement that we attend the Princeton-Rutgers game. So, we took off in buses and went down and filed into Palmer Stadium to watch the Scarlet Knights get clobbered, and then, went back to New Brunswick. So, I remember that very well.

So, Frank Gorman, Steve Marcus, Gene Meehan, this English professor, Fitzpatrick, who I had in the second semester; the first semester English professor was very, very good, I just can't remember his name, but I remember reading this long, long poem by Byron called *Don Juan*. Why was it called *Don Juan* and not Don Juan? Because, at one point, Byron has "ruin" rhyme with "Juan." [laughter]

SI: At that time, had ROTC been removed from mandatory status or did you have to take ROTC?

RM: I had to take ROTC. I signed up for Army ROTC. I absolutely hated it. It turned out that one of my legs was considerably shorter than the other and, when I marched around the field, I got acute pains in my back. I went to see a doctor and he wrote a letter to the head of the ROTC saying, "I don't think this guy should be in ROTC." So, after about, I don't know, a month or so, I was excused from it, which was great, because I absolutely hated it, having to spit polish the shoes and wear this heavy uniform. I hated it.

The other thing that I remember, and I don't know why this comes up, but we had mandatory phys. ed. We assembled around the swimming pool down in the old gym, down on College Avenue, and we couldn't wear bathing suits. We had to be naked for this entire swim class, which I thought was very weird, and I don't know how long this went on for, maybe a month or so, but we had to pass some sort of a swimming test. I guess I eventually did that, but I remember feeling kind of exposed [laughter] without having the benefit of a bathing suit. I mean, it was so different back then. There was so much more discipline, there was so much more--there were so many more rules and regulations that had to be followed.

I mentioned that everybody had to wear a dink. If you encountered a sophomore, you would have to take your dink off, and then, put it back on again. You didn't have to wear the dink the entire freshman year. You only had to wear it the first semester. Then, there was a competition between the sophomores and the freshmen with a huge ball. I forget what it was called. If the freshmen won, which they always did, because no sophomores would ever show up, if the freshmen won, then, they could take their dinks off.

So, it must've been around January or February, we had this big competition. It was up on the Heights [now the Busch Campus], as we called that part of the campus then, and it was a muddy day. I remember going up there and watching. Of course, the freshmen won and, "Yay," we could take our dinks off. [laughter]

SI: Did you get involved in any activities?

RM: No. Interestingly enough, as you know, I was very active in extracurricular activities at Woodbridge High School, but, when I got to Rutgers, I decided that I was no longer going to disappoint my father academically. I was just going to put my nose to the grindstone and I was going to study. I was going to do as absolutely well as I possibly could.

The only extracurricular activity that I got involved with was a fraternity that I pledged in my sophomore year, Phi Sigma Kappa, and it was a fraternity for those who didn't like fraternities. We had a really, really diverse group of guys in the fraternity. We had--again, there were so few African-Americans at that time at Rutgers--and we had an African-American named Chet Ward in the fraternity, who was a star on the football team. We called him "Chet the Jet." We had quite a few Jewish members. I made friends with a fellow named Keith McDermott, who I'm still in occasional contact with, who has lived in England probably since the 1970s. He became an executive with Goldman Sachs and became a very, very wealthy investment banker.

I made the dean's list every time, every semester that I was at Rutgers, and making the dean's list became more important to me than extracurricular activities. So, I really didn't. I mean, I just studied. It sounds boring, but I studied and I did extremely well. As you may or may not know, I graduated second in my class. I was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in my junior year. In some ways, it made up for not making National Honor Society in my junior year in high school. I still have the little certificate and I have it hanging in my study at home, May 10, 1965, the Alpha Chapter of New Jersey, Phi Beta Kappa. I think there are only nine or ten of us who were elected in our junior year and my father was doing somersaults because he was so proud of me.

SI: Did you do a Henry Rutgers thesis?

RM: I did, and I brought it with me.

SI: Okay.

RM: Yes. When I was a junior, I took a course from a professor named Josef Silverstein, J-O-S-E-F Silverstein, who had just arrived from Cornell and he was a Southeast Asian expert. I took a year-long course in International Relations with him. I remember reading a book about the

Cuban Missile Crisis, we read a book by E. H. Carr called *The Twenty Years' Crisis* [(1939)], which was about the interwar period. I was really taken with the class, but I was also taking a class, another class from Gene Meehan, called "American Political Thought" as a junior.

I was set to do my Henry Rutgers with Gene Meehan, but he left for Brandeis. So, I wanted to do the Henry Rutgers, so, I asked Josef Silverstein if he would be my sponsor. He was more than happy to do that, but he wanted to direct me towards a Southeast Asian topic. As a result, I did a 178-page Henry Rutgers Thesis called "An Analysis of Singapore's Withdrawal from the Federation of Malaysia," in May 1966 and I've had it ever since. It still sounds pretty good, given the fact that I was only twenty or twenty-one when I wrote it. [laughter]

I remember going to the library and getting microfilms sent interlibrary loan from *The Singapore Straits Times*. It was an English-language newspaper and I would go through the microfilm, day after day after day, taking notes from this newspaper, which really became the backbone of this thesis, worked very, very hard on it. Joe Silverstein was a very, very caring, hands-on sponsor. I remember meeting with him maybe every week or every two weeks for a progress session. He wanted to make sure that I got the thing finished in time, which I did. It turned out to be much longer than I thought, although my PhD thesis turned out to be six hundred pages, so, I suppose 178 isn't too bad. [laughter]

SI: If you do not mind, what were your findings or what did you focus on?

RM: Well, it's quite ironic. I was all set to argue ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

RM: All right, let's turn it back on.

SI: Sure.

RM: The original idea was to explain why there was a very good chance that Singapore would remain part of this new Federation of Malaysia that had been created in 1963 with the merging of Singapore, a little island state, and Malaya. Let me just read to you from the introductory note, because, on August 9, 1965, Singapore withdrew from Malaysia. I remember thinking, "Oh, my God, it destroys my entire thesis." Here I am, going to argue for all the reasons why Singapore is going to be part of the Federation. Now, Lee Kuan Yew, who was the leader of Singapore, decides to leave the Federation. So, I met with Joe Silverstein and I said, "What am I going to do?" and he said, "Well, it's very easy. Just write a thesis explaining why Singapore withdrew from the Federation."

So, here's, let me just read you the introductory paragraph from the thesis, "The ultimate aim of this thesis is to discover reasons for Singapore's separation from the Federation of Malaysia. It is impossible to accomplish this task by merely analyzing the period between the formation of Malaysia in 1963 and the withdrawal of Singapore two years later. In order to understand the breakup of Malaysia, it is necessary to appreciate the economic, cultural, political and racial uniqueness of both Malaya and Singapore. With these guidelines in mind, this essay will trace

the divergent development of Malaya and Singapore's since World War II in an effort to demonstrate the breadth of the political, economic, racial and social gaps which, by 1963, distinguished Singapore from Malaysia. Thus, Singapore's withdrawal should not be regarded with surprise, but should be looked upon as a logical outcome to decades of vastly dissimilar growth." [laughter]

SI: Wow. You had to think on your feet.

RM: Yes. So, it was a real challenge to write it by [May], but I think it was the experience of writing this thesis that really got me started on the road to a scholarly life. I really do. I think this was an extraordinarily important thing for me to do. Despite the fact that, as we'll see in a moment, despite the fact that I spent a year in law school, writing this thesis was important and really laid the basis, as I said, for my life as a scholar.

SI: You were at Rutgers at a very interesting time in its history.

RM: Yes.

SI: The one event that stands out, perhaps above all others, is the teach-in where Genovese ...

RM: Yes, I have a nice story to tell you about that.

SI: Yes, please.

RM: Yes. I never had Eugene Genovese as a professor. I did go to a couple of his teach-ins. It so happened that there was a Republican running for Governor in 1965 named Wayne Dumont. Wayne Dumont said that New Jersey taxpayer money should not be used in order to, in effect, sponsor anti-American demonstrations on state-owned property. Well, I thought this was just absolutely ridiculous and I thought that Dumont was just a manipulative McCarthyite.

Well, it so happens that my father invited--it just so happens that the Kiwanis Club of Woodbridge invited--Wayne Dumont to come to one of its monthly meetings. My father, breaking precedent, decided to invite me to come to the meeting. Well, Wayne Dumont gets up and speaks and lays his case out for why New Jersey taxpayers should not be paying for Eugene Genovese's teach-ins, which, of course, they were in only the most indirect way, but he was, again, he was a firebrand.

I remember, after Dumont got finished with his remarks, I remember lacing into him and just excoriating his arguments and telling him, basically, that he was completely wrong and he was an embarrassment to the State of New Jersey and he should be ashamed of himself, at which point, other members of the Kiwanis Club, almost all of whom were Republicans, looked at my father and said that they were appalled that, here, this pipsqueak, this undergraduate at Rutgers, would have the temerity to challenge the gubernatorial candidate, Wayne Dumont, in public.

I don't remember what my father's reaction was. I don't know whether my father was proud that I was so outspoken or whether he was appalled that I was out of line. I don't remember, but I

know that just about everybody else who was there, all of the Kiwanians, most of them were in business. As I said before, my father was the only teacher in the group, and there must've been forty or fifty of them there. They were just absolutely horrified and they were angry for my challenging Dumont. So, anyway, that's what really stands out.

[Editor's Note: On April 23, 1965, at a teach-in at Rutgers University's Scott Hall, professor of history Eugene D. Genovese declared, "...I do not fear or regret the impending Viet Cong victory in Vietnam. I welcome it." A firestorm of controversy ensued and became a focal point in the 1965 New Jersey gubernatorial race, but Rutgers University President Mason W. Gross, with the support of the faculty, resisted public pressure to dismiss Genovese, on the principle of academic freedom.]

SI: How did Dumont react to you?

RM: I think that he was really angry. He didn't want to be challenged, particularly by this upstart Rutgers undergraduate. As it turned out, he was slaughtered in the election. I mean, he wasn't even close. Who was he running against, Hughes, I think?

SI: Yes, I think Hughes.

RM: Yes. [laughter] [Editor's Note: Governor Richard J. Hughes served as Governor of New Jersey from 1962 to 1970.]

SI: Wow. What did you think of Mason Gross--in general, but, also, his reaction to the Genovese case?

RM: I don't remember what Gross' reaction was. I remember, the first encounter that I had with Mason Gross was via the television set, because he was on some sort of a quiz show on TV, I think on Sunday evenings. It was some sort of a show in which Gross was the grammatical expert, the grammarian. They would ask for his advice somehow and he would come in and would make remarks to the contestants about whether what they had said was grammatically correct or not. That's all I can remember. I remember, he had a very deep voice and he was a very charismatic figure, but I don't remember ever meeting him. The only time I ever saw him was at graduation. I honestly don't remember what his reaction to the Genovese teach-ins were. So, I can't [recall], yes. [Editor's Note: Mason Gross, a Professor of Philosophy, became President of Rutgers University in 1959. He appeared on the television game shows *Think Fast* and *Two for the Money* in the late 1940s and early 1950s as an expert and/or judge.]

SI: What about awareness of or actually seeing any actions regarding Civil Rights while you are on campus? Does anything stand out in that arena?

RM: No, not really. As you know, Rutgers, at that time, was all-men and we were almost all white men. For a state university, it was really quite remarkable that we had a student body that was so overwhelmingly white.

I do remember that the Vietnam Conflict, apart from Genovese, the Vietnam Conflict became more prominent. Joe Silverstein was very, very critical of the escalation. Johnson escalated our involvement in July of 1965 when, at a noontime press conference, he announced that he would be introducing 150,000 combat troops into Vietnam. This had been a very surreptitious escalation before that point. This was the first time that he really came out and said, "Look, we're in it now in a big way." This would have been right before my senior year in college. Silverstein was very outspoken in his opposition to our escalation in Vietnam and the fact that he was a Southeast Asian expert, I took him seriously.

When we were ready to graduate, back then, the Rutgers tradition was that, at graduation, the President spoke, the President of Rutgers spoke. There was no guest speaker. So, we organized, the senior class organized, an alternative graduation down at the foot of "Willie the Silent." We invited John Kenneth Galbraith to come and address the senior class. Galbraith, as you may know, was a leading economist. He had been Kennedy's Ambassador to India. I remember reading a book of his when I took economics in my sophomore year called *American Capitalism*, and he had also become an outspoken critic of the war in Vietnam.

This didn't go over all that well with the administration and it was a very sort of catch-as-catch-can kind of thing. I just have a vague recollection of standing near Willie the Silent with several hundred of my classmates listening to Galbraith criticize Johnson's policies in Vietnam. This would've been on June 1, 1966, which was graduation day, but it would've been before we all went off to the stadium for graduation.

SI: You also mentioned earlier that the Cuban Missile Crisis was a big event in your Rutgers career.

RM: Yes, it was. It was right before the first set of hourly exams. It was extremely difficult to concentrate on studying for the exams after Kennedy went on nationwide TV on Monday evening, October 22, 1962, and announced a naval quarantine of Cuba because the Soviets had put missiles into, or were in the process of putting missiles into, Cuba. That entire week, from October 22nd until the Crisis broke that Sunday morning, October 28th, I was living on pins and needles. I remember walking around the Rutgers Campus, imagining what it would look like after a nuclear attack had occurred. I was consumed with fear and worry. I found it extremely difficult to do anything except worry.

That's why I was so surprised when I did so well on these exams, but maybe everybody else was worried about it, too, and nobody studied. [laughter] In any case, it was a terrible, terrible moment and I remember, I went home that weekend. Saturday was the worst day of the Crisis, because a U-2 had been shot down over Cuba on Saturday and it was unclear how long Kennedy was going to allow the so-called quarantine to be in effect before we unleashed an invasion of Cuba. Then, I woke up on Sunday morning and Khrushchev had caved. He had agreed to remove the missiles in exchange for Kennedy's promise not to invade Cuba. I remember just breathing a deep, deep sigh of relief and gratitude that this thing was over.

[Editor's Note: In October 1962, the United States demanded that the Soviet Union remove its nuclear missiles from Cuba. The United States placed a naval blockade around the island nation,

creating a tense standoff between the superpowers that many feared would lead to nuclear war. The crisis was averted when the Soviet Union agreed to remove their nuclear missiles from Cuba in exchange for the United States removing its nuclear missiles from Turkey and a promise not to invade Cuba.]

In the aftermath of all of this, the Cuban Missile Crisis has become one of my areas of interest and research interest. I've given a number of talks on the Cuban Missile Crisis in a number of venues around the country. When I later taught at Brown University, in the early 1990s, Bob McNamara was there. He was undertaking visits to Cuba at that time, talking to the Cuban leadership, and he uncovered evidence that we had no idea what was true at that time. [Editor's Note: Robert McNamara served as Secretary of Defense from 1961 to 1968.]

For example, Soviet soldiers in Cuba, on the island, were equipped with tactical nuclear weapons and, apparently, were given authorization to use them in case the Americans invaded Cuba during the Missile Crisis. We had no idea that this was true at the time. McNamara found this out around 1990 or '91, something like that. I remember being in a very small seminar at Brown when McNamara came back with these findings. So, yes, this, it affected me early, and then, it has piqued my interest ever since.

SI: Of course, Kennedy's assassination was another major event.

RM: I remember exactly where I was. Yes, my father and I, I was going home for another weekend, it was around three o'clock on a Friday afternoon. He and I were in Perth Amboy picking up dry cleaning and it came in over the radio that Kennedy had been shot. It took an hour or two before it was confirmed that he was dead. By that time, we had gotten home and, of course, I was absolutely distraught, devastated. I mentioned earlier that my mother was in tears all night. She just could not stop crying and my father finally lost his temper and told her that she had to stop, because it had become intolerable. I remember that whole weekend just so well. I happened to be watching television when Lee Harvey Oswald entered the courthouse and Jack Ruby came out and shot him in the stomach.

I just finished reading a book about James Jesus Angleton, who was the Head of Counterintelligence at the CIA for many years [from 1954 to 1975], and there's some evidence that the CIA may perhaps have been involved in the assassination of Kennedy. I never believed that. I always thought it was Lee Harvey Oswald acting alone. Now, I'm not so sure. I don't know. It wouldn't surprise me if the CIA didn't play some role in the assassination, but it never occurred to me at the time. I was gullible enough to swallow the Warren Commission Report, hook, line and sinker, and I just really was suspicious of those who spoke of conspiracies.

At the very beginning, I was very optimistic that Lyndon Johnson would make a wonderful President. I remember putting a sticker on my dorm room--this would have been in, let's see, 1964, the Fall of '64--I would've been, what? a junior by then. Tinsley Hall, is there a Tinsley Hall?

SI: Yes.

RM: Okay, that's where I was, and there was, like, a ten-gallon hat and it was Johnson's logo, being from Texas, and it was, "All the way with LBJ." I remember putting that on my [door], outside of my dorm room door, because I thought that he was going to be great. He said all the right things about Civil Rights and voting rights. I did not start to turn against Johnson until the Spring of 1965, when the Marines first arrived at Da Nang and this would've been--no, actually, it was February of '65.

I remember it really, really clearly. New Brunswick was experiencing a snowstorm, a blizzard, and McNamara had just announced the initiation of Operation: ROLLING THUNDER, where we began our bombing of North Vietnam. This was in retaliation for some attacks that had occurred at Pleiku in the South--and so it began. I remember then, in the aftermath, waking up in my dorm room, every morning, listening to the radio saying that so many sorties had been carried out that morning against targets in North Vietnam.

It was some time during the Spring of 1965 that I began to have some serious doubts about what we were doing there and this was being supported and underlined by the course in International Relations that I was taking at the time with Joe Silverstein. This would've been my junior year, so, it would've been the Spring of '65. So, yes, Vietnam, and, of course, like many of us, we were worried that we were going to be drafted.

They kept changing the rules. I remember taking a test at Rutgers, shortly after I graduated, and I don't remember the details of it, but the test, apparently, was designed to see who would be eligible, susceptible to being drafted and who would be given student deferment status. That was the only time that the test was given. I took it in Scott Hall, which, at that time, was almost a brand-new building. Is that still there, Scott Hall?

SI: Yes.

RM: Yes, all right. [laughter] I haven't been back to the campus since 1984. So, I'm sure things have changed dramatically.

SI: Scott Hall probably still has the same paint. [laughter]

RM: I remember, was it called Bishop, Bishop House?

SI: Yes.

RM: Yes, I remember taking courses there. Of course, that's a wonderful, wonderful, old building and that's where I had "Political Science 101" and, also, I believe I had "American Political Thought" there as well. In any case, yes, the Spring of '65 was really, I think, the time at which I began to have serious doubts about why we were in Vietnam.

SI: You took this test. By the time you graduated, were you concerned about being drafted?

RM: No, no, I wasn't because I--again, General Hershey was changing the rules so frequently, it's a little hard for me to remember exactly what happened, but let me try and explain this as best

I can remember, but it's only a remembrance. [Editor's Note: General Lewis Blaine Hershey was the director of the Selective Service System from 1941 to 1970.]

Against the wishes of my professors and against my better judgment, I enrolled at Harvard Law School in the Fall of 1966. My father dearly wanted me to go to law school, wanted me to be a lawyer. He was a teacher. He thought that if I got a PhD, I would just be a teacher and he wanted me to be a lawyer. So, I went to Harvard Law School and I was absolutely miserable. I thought the courses were hard and boring and, by February, I wanted out. I couldn't imagine myself being a lawyer.

I remember, there was a reunion of Harvard Law School graduates, probably around October or November of '66, and I remember talking to a number of them. I remember them telling me how unhappy they were being lawyers, and I also got the impression that an awful lot of them were alcoholics. I just hated it--torts, criminal law, contracts. The only course I liked was a course called "The History of English Law," which was taught on Saturday mornings as a sixth course. Now, of course, it was a history course, I liked it, but reading those cases night after night after night, I just found it intolerable.

So, unbeknownst to my parents, I got on a train in Boston, South Station, in February of '67 and went back to Rutgers. I stayed in my fraternity house. I had not lived in the fraternity house when I was at Rutgers, but I went back and I stayed in the fraternity house for a few days. I got a hold of Joe Silverstein. I told him that, "I can't do this. I can't imagine being a lawyer. I'm going to be miserable. What should I do?" Well, by then, I had pretty much decided that I wanted to pursue a PhD in International Relations, but I didn't know where I wanted to go to school. So, he gave me some very, very good advice and he suggested that I apply to Johns Hopkins. It was a very small program and there was a fellow named, I believe Cliff Peterson, who had been maybe in the Class of '64 or '65, who had gone to Hopkins and who liked it very much.

So, I applied to Hopkins, I applied to Columbia. I also thought about going to Harvard, but the man who I wanted to study with was serving in the Pentagon at that time, Morton Halperin. That's right, Morton Halperin, who I had met--let me back up. Do I have time to do this?

[Editor's Note: Morton Halperin held several research and teaching positions at Harvard from 1960 to 1966. He then held a series of positions in the Department of Defense in the Johnson and Nixon Administrations before being targeted by President Nixon with illegal wiretaps. He later successfully sued and became well-known for his civil liberties work, including running the ACLU's Washington, DC, office.]

SI: Of course.

RM: Okay, yes, let me back up. One of the more interesting things that I did when I was at Rutgers occurred in December of 1965 when Joe Silverstein recommended that I be the Rutgers representative to what was called the SCUSA [Student Conference on US Affairs] Conference at West Point. It was an annual conference held every December in which students from all over the country would come to West Point and would, over the course of a weekend, debate a

burning foreign-policy issue. I was chosen as the sole Rutgers representative and I remember taking a bus from New Brunswick to Woodbridge--excuse me, to New York--and then, a bus from New York to West Point.

I encountered a young Harvard professor named Morton Halperin, who was the chair of this small study group that this conference had broke--we had broken into a number of small sections. He happened to be the leader of my section and, at that time, he was *gung ho* Vietnam. He would later become a leading critic, but, in December of '65, he was "all the way with LBJ." I remember staying up all night helping to write a position paper arguing that we should withdraw from Vietnam now, before we get in any deeper. I remember him giving us a really, really hard time about this paper. He was basically giving us the third degree, "How can you think that? How can you think that?" or, "How can you assume this? How can you assume that?"

Well, I also remember, while I was at West Point, that General Maxwell Taylor visited. He had been Kennedy's special military advisor, later became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [from 1962 to 1964], had written a book called *The Uncertain Trumpet* [(1960)], which was a critique of the Eisenhower Administration.

I remember being in the mess with--that is, where they gathered for lunch at West Point--with all the cadets there and the representatives from universities all over the country. There was a balcony at the end of the room and Westmoreland comes out--excuse me, not Westmoreland--Maxwell Taylor comes out and everybody in the Cadet Corps goes, "Whoa." They stand and they cheer, and I don't remember whether he made any remarks or not, but it was a very, very fraught atmosphere, because almost all of the cadets, *almost* all of the cadets, that I encountered were *gung ho* Vietnam, even though they realized that they were going to be on the firing line very soon. Not everybody, there were a couple who had some qualms about it, but almost everybody thought it was a very, very good thing.

Anyway, we wrote this position paper, and then, we--and then, I--delivered it to the assembled group of conferees. That was basically it, and then, I came back. I came back to Rutgers, I guess sometime a couple of days later or so, but it was a big deal at the time. It was a big honor to represent Rutgers at this national conference. It was a big deal to be able to argue against this Harvard professor and it was a big deal to be able to write this position paper arguing against our policies in Vietnam.

Anyway, so, fast-forward now--now, I'm back at Rutgers in February of 1967, looking for a place to go to graduate school. Since Morton Halperin had since left Harvard--I don't know why I wanted to study with him anyway--but, in any case, I thought, "Well, if he's not there, I don't want to go to Harvard." Columbia accepted me, but they didn't give me any money. It's just as well I didn't go to Columbia, because the Columbia Campus exploded in the Spring of 1968. If you recall, students were burning the research of Columbia professors, they were breaking into their offices, there were fights on campus. The Columbia football team was fighting against the demonstrators. It was a mess.

Anyway, I got what was called a National Defense Education Act Fellowship from Johns Hopkins, which paid my way. I didn't have to pay a thing. Tuition and room and board was paid for, plus, I got a stipend, walking around money, and I didn't have to be a TA [teaching assistant]. So, it was a very, very nice deal and there were only five or six of us entering this international relations program in the Fall of 1967.

My father was very, very disappointed that I had left Harvard Law School. He still thought that getting a PhD would somehow mean that I was "just going to be a teacher." I don't think that he could envision that I would become a university professor. Unfortunately, he died before any of that happened. In any case, I decided, at that time, that I would apply to graduate school, and then, I called my parents and told them what I was going to do, that I was leaving Harvard and that I was going to enroll in graduate school.

Well, that was all fine and good, but it exposed me to the draft, because I then lost my 1-S status during the Summer of 1967. So, I sat around the entire summer waiting for the postman to come, thinking that I was going to have a "Greetings" letter in the mail. Meanwhile, I wrote a letter to the head of the Perth Amboy Draft Board. The rules had changed again. If you are a second-year graduate student, you were given a deferment. If you are a first-year graduate student, you were susceptible to the draft. All right, logical, right?--no, no logic at all, it was insane. I wrote a letter to the draft board in Perth Amboy and I argued that my first year at Johns Hopkins should be counted as my second year in graduate school, because I was simply moving from one program to another. I thought, "What did I have to lose?"

Well, much to my relief and amazement, they bought the argument. I got a letter back, late that summer, saying, "Yes, we will now reclassify you 1-S again," because I had been whatever the classification was at that time, when you were 1-A. I was susceptible to the draft for the entire summer. So, by the end of the summer, I was safe, at least for now, because who knows? They could've changed the rules again. So, when I entered Hopkins in the Fall of '67, I had a student deferment, but I didn't know for how long I would have it, all right.

SI: Tell me about getting into the program at Hopkins, in terms of the material, the professors you worked with, and the area that you concentrated in.

RM: Yes. Well, again, it was a very small program. There was a professor there named Robert W. Tucker, who had graduated from the Naval Academy, oh, maybe in '45 or '46, had gotten a PhD at Berkeley, had arrived at Hopkins around 1957 or so. It was Tucker who Silverstein wanted me to go and study with. It was a small program. There was a young professor named David Butler, who had gotten a PhD from Harvard at the age of twenty-three, and he was teaching "Comparative Politics." There was a man named Bob Rothstein, who had a PhD from Columbia, and he was teaching "Theories of International Politics." Bob Tucker was teaching "American Foreign Policy" and "International Law."

So, I took courses from all of them and we had a paper to write for "Comparative Politics" in the first term. This was a course made up both of Hopkins graduate students and undergraduates, taught by David Butler. There were about a hundred in the class and he liked my paper so much that he put it on reserve in the library and invited everybody else in the class to come and read it,

because he thought that it was exactly the kind of research paper that everyone at Hopkins should be writing. So, that made me feel really, really good, of course, and thought that, "Well, maybe, this really is the thing that I should be doing."

So, I enjoyed my time at Hopkins quite a bit. It gave me an unprecedented opportunity to read and to do research. There weren't too many classes to take, particularly after the first two years. I took my qualifying exams, I think, after two years or so. They didn't offer a master's degree. They only gave master's degrees to people who washed out of the program. So, I don't have a master's degree, I just have a PhD. So, I had a lot of time and I didn't have to be a TA, so, I didn't have to grade papers and teach undergraduates. So, I had a lot of time to ruminate, to read, to research. I did research on things like Bolivia, for example, for David Butler. I did a deep dive into the Peloponnesian Wars for Bob Tucker, who was teaching a seminar on Thucydides.

In retrospect, between my experiences at Rutgers and my experiences at Johns Hopkins, I got a first-rate liberal education, where I learned how to think critically, read critically, write clearly and articulate my thoughts. This was not a vocational education. I didn't go to learn to be a something. I learned to expand my mind and I look back, really, with a great deal of fondness, really both at Rutgers and Hopkins, for encouraging me to do that, and I was able to carry that over then into my professional life.

SI: I am curious, at Hopkins at the time, obviously, the antiwar movement was everywhere ...

RM: Yes.

SI: How would you characterize it at Hopkins?

RM: It wasn't as--it was obviously there--it wasn't as evident and divisive as it was at, let's say, Columbia. We had a president at that time, Hopkins did, named Lincoln Gordon, who had been--oh, he was either our Ambassador to Brazil or was an Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs. Anyway, if you recall, we invaded the Dominican Republic in May of 1965. That was another thing that happened at Rutgers that I was quite outraged about.

I had a TA--I was taking the American history survey at the time at Rutgers and I had Lloyd Gardner, who I ran into many, many years later when I was teaching at the National War College. He and I were on a panel together, back in '06, I guess, and I hadn't seen him since 1964 or something like that. Anyway, I had a TA named Jerry Israel and he was just vehemently opposed to the intervention in the Dominican Republic. He persuaded me that we ought not to have done it, either. Anyway, so, since '65, I had thought, "This was really a big mistake." So, Lincoln Gordon had become the President of Hopkins. He'd taken over from Milton Eisenhower, who was President Eisenhower's younger brother. He came under a lot of pressure because of his role in the Dominican Intervention and he was eventually forced out as president while I was there.

I also remember going to a session about Vietnam where Averill Harriman was present. This was a panel discussion in Shriver Hall about the War in Vietnam; I'm trying to think when this might've been, maybe 1969 or so. Harriman had been our first negotiator at the Paris Peace

Talks that began at the end of the Johnson Administration. He had been in every administration, really, since the Roosevelt Administration and he had been our Ambassador to Moscow during World War II, for part of World War II. So, he was really part of the foreign-policy establishment. He'd been the Governor of New York for one term before [Nelson] Rockefeller.

Anyway, he was at Hopkins, along with some others who I can't remember, and there were a lot of students who were being unruly and were accusing Harriman of war crimes and this, that and the other thing. I remember Harriman, at one point, reached up like this and did something behind his ear with his hand. He announced to the students that he had turned off his hearing aid, so, anything that they were about to say afterwards, they were welcome to say, but he wasn't going to hear it. I had very ambivalent feelings about Harriman. He had partially turned against the war at that time, but he was not really making any apologies for getting involved in the first place. So, I was very, as I said, very ambivalent.

That's really the only major thing that I recall. Seems to me that, maybe in the Spring of '68, when all hell started to break loose, final exams may have been canceled for undergraduates, but I had very little to do with the undergraduate population at Hopkins. Interestingly enough, if you know anything about Johns Hopkins, it was founded on the German model, the German university research model, and it was always geared towards graduate students. Undergraduates really got shafted, I think. They just weren't paid much attention to. Graduate students were doted on. So, it was a very good place to be a graduate student. It wouldn't have been such a great place to be an undergraduate. So, I didn't really have very much to do with the undergraduates, but I seem to recall that final exams were canceled for the undergraduates, but there was no violence on campus, nothing like Columbia.

SI: Once you entered your dissertation phase, what did you focus on?

RM: Yes, well, I wanted to do my dissertation under the auspices of Bob Tucker, but Tucker was not accepting any graduate students at that point. He had become quite involved with a think-tank in New York and he really wasn't paying very much attention to his students. It was quite disappointing, because I had gone to Hopkins with the express purpose of studying with him. Well, I had taken a number of seminars with him and I had anticipated that I would be able to do my dissertation with him. He said no. He didn't want to do that.

He said, "Go ask Bob Rothstein." Rothstein did not have tenure and it turned out he did not get tenure. Well, Rothstein and I came up with a topic, a dissertation topic, and I took it to Tucker and I said, "What do you think of it?" He said, "I think it's terrible." "Okay, so, what do I do now?" He said, "Well, go study with George Liska," L-I-S-K-A. I should've mentioned him earlier.

Liska was the fourth of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" at Hopkins [laughter] and Liska was a very, very odd man. He was originally from Czechoslovakia. He did not speak English particularly well. He had been in the Czech Embassy in 1948, in Washington, when the Communists took over Czechoslovakia. He was vehemently anti-Communist, very, very conservative. When word got out that the Communists had taken over in Czechoslovakia, he simply walked out of the Czech Embassy, walked across the street to the State Department and

asked for political asylum, which he was given. He then went to teach at the University of Washington and, at some point before I arrived at Hopkins, he did.

I remember taking a course--the Hopkins Library was built in such a way that most of it was underground--and I remember taking a seminar with him my first year there called "The Evolution of the International System." It was on a Friday afternoon and he would read in this monotonic voice in a thick Czech accent and I had all I could do to stay awake. I mean, it was just dreadful. Anyway, Tucker wanted me to study, to do my dissertation, with Liska. I really didn't want to do that, but I didn't have a choice. So, that's what I did.

I got saddled with Liska as my dissertation advisor and he got me into a topic that was virtually undoable. It took me--let's see, I started writing it in--well, it probably took me four years, maybe, to write it, turned out to be six hundred pages. It was extraordinarily obscure. It had to do with theories of regional systems, historical regional systems, in fifth century Greece, Renaissance Italy, India before the invasion of the Mongols, and the Caucasus before the invasion of the Russians in the nineteenth century. Oh, it was--the dissertation just drove me crazy. I couldn't finish it while I was still at Hopkins.

By that time, I had taken a position on the faculty at UCLA. This would've been 1972 to 1974. I was a visiting lecturer there, which meant that it was non-tenure track. I was really at the very bottom of the trough and I was trying to write my dissertation as well as teach classes for the first time. Well, I walked into my first class at UCLA in September of 1972 faced with four hundred students taking the "Introduction to American Foreign Policy." I was replacing a fellow named Simon Serfaty, who had been a student of Tucker who had been on the faculty at UCLA, who had just left to become the Dean of the School of Advanced International Studies run by Hopkins in Bologna, Italy.

Well, Serfaty left behind at UCLA a legacy, which I was expected to fill. Here I was, twenty-seven years old, and I walk on to the stage faced with four hundred students. No one had told me that I would need a microphone. I had put one copy of every reserve book in the library, just one copy on reserve. Students were up in arms about this. They couldn't hear me. I was giving my first lecture literally shouting, with my hands cupped over my mouth. I was virtually in tears after the first class. I thought, "What am I going to do? I've got to teach these classes and I have to write this dissertation, which seems to be leading nowhere."

Well, I got myself together. I got a microphone, I got more books put on reserve. I was able to regain my composure. By the end of the trimester--they were on ten-week sessions in the UC System--by the end of the trimester, when I would walk out on stage, there were a group of students in the front row who would start singing the theme song to the Johnny Carson show as I would come out on stage, because I had discovered that I had a knack for ad lib humor. So, I was able to lace my lectures with off-the-cuff humorous remarks that went over really, really well. I didn't know that I had this talent. So, who knew?

So, anyway, as it turns out, I did very well teaching at UCLA, but they didn't have any room for me. So, I couldn't get a tenure-track position. A couple of things--I don't know whether we have time for this or not.

SI: Let me pause for a moment.

[TAPE PAUSED]

RM: Okay. When I was at UCLA, just a couple of things, I was invited to a party with my then girlfriend, later to become wife, at a faculty member's house. There was a kid in the driveway shooting baskets and he was throwing them in from forty feet out. I couldn't believe it. He was probably ten, twelve at the time. The professor's name was Malcolm Kerr and he was a Mideast expert. He later became the President of the American University in Beirut and, in 1984, a Muslim terrorist came into his office and assassinated him. The kid, as it turns out, was Steve Kerr, who is now the coach of the Golden State Warriors. Well, I met him when he was twelve years old, shooting baskets in his backyard in Pacific Palisades, California. So, I thought that was kind of interesting.

Anyway, I was in desperate search for a job and there were very few to be had in 1974, because it was a recession. It was in the aftermath of the OPEC oil embargo. The American economy was a mess. I sent out my vita to a number of places and, lo and behold, I was invited to have an interview at Kenyon College in Ohio. I was one of 382 applicants, as it turns out, and, as luck would have it, I got the job--turned out that it was a mixed blessing. It was a very good college. It was out in the middle of nowhere. I was in a very conservative department that I never really felt comfortable in.

I was there for fourteen years, from 1974 to 1990. I had a two-year break from '80 to '82, when I had a series of fellowships in which I was able to write my first book, but it was at Kenyon where I really learned how to teach. The classes were small. There were no graduate students. Students got their hands held by their professors. It was a very good atmosphere for liberal education. There were about fourteen hundred students there, I guess.

I eventually became the Director of the brand-new International Studies Program, which I founded in about 1984 or so. It focused on non-Western civilizations and that went very, very well. It was the first interdisciplinary major that Kenyon had and I was fortunate enough to be the first director of it, which I did for, well, until I left Kenyon in 1990, at which time I became the Acting Director of the International Relations Program at Brown University in Providence.

SI: You wrote your first book while you were there.

RM: Yes.

SI: Tell me a little bit about that.

RM: Yes, the first book was called *Writing History and Making Policy* [(1983)] and what I did was interview a number of former Carter Administration officials who had just been turned out of office in the 1980 Election. I interviewed people like Madeleine Albright, for example, Anthony Lake, who later became the National Security Advisor to President Clinton. Albright,

as you know, later became Clinton's UN Ambassador, and then, Secretary of State. They tended to be mid-level people in the Carter Administration.

What I wanted to find out was how the debate over the origins of the Cold War, which they would've encountered as graduate students, how that had affected their outlook about American foreign policy and, secondly, how their view of the Vietnam War affected the way in which they conceived and executed policy during the Carter Administration. I guess I conducted about two dozen interviews. My wife and I moved to Columbia, Maryland, so [that] I could be close to both Hopkins in Baltimore and Washington, where I did most of my interviewing. Over the course of two years, I eventually wrote this book and it was published and was well-received in the academic community.

SI: In 1990, you left Kenyon for Brown.

RM: I left Kenyon for Brown, thinking that I would probably come back, but I didn't want to. Both my wife and I really, really wanted to get out of Kenyon and one of my strategies for getting out was to do a lot of publishing. So, I also, at that time, had published a number of articles and I had gotten tenure at Kenyon, which was a mixed blessing. They were "golden handcuffs," because, on the one hand, I had lifetime career security. On the other hand, it made it very, very difficult to leave. When you have tenure at a liberal arts college, it's very difficult to move to other academic institutions.

I just so happened to be lucky and, in the Summer of '86, I got a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship at Brown. I went to Brown in the Summer of '86 and was in a group of college professors studying under the auspices of Professor Charles Neu, N-E-U, who taught an extremely popular course on Vietnam at Brown. He and I became fast friends and he arranged for me to start teaching summer school at Brown, which I did in the Summer of '87, '88, '89. So, people got to know me a little bit.

When Terry Hopmann, who was the Director of the International Relations Program at Brown, went on leave, they did a search to see who would replace him and I was in the running. I went for an interview and, lo and behold, I got the job. It was only supposed to be for one year, but Hopmann took a second year off, so, I wound up being at Brown for two years. I encountered some just extraordinary students there. I thought Kenyon students were good--well, Brown students were that much better. They were very, very good, really kept me on my toes. I really, really liked it.

I would've stayed there. Once again, they had no tenured positions available, and so, I was faced with going back to Kenyon, which I really did not want to do. Well, in the Spring of '92, I got a call from someone at the National War College in Washington inviting me to come for an interview. The National War College was in the process of hiring a small number of civilian PhDs that they were adding to what had been a primarily military faculty. I went to Washington, had the interview and I was made an offer.

I accepted, after much debate, going back and forth, because the issue was, there was no tenure at the National War College. You were given renewable two to three-year contracts and, with

the drawdown that was occurring in our military at the end of the Cold War, which was certainly occurring in 1992, it was unclear whether or not the Defense Department would have sufficient funds to continue to pay civilian professors at the National War College. So, it was a close-call, but we finally decided that anything would be better than going back to the wilds of Central Ohio. [laughter] So, we did go there.

SI: Kenyon must have been really bad. [laughter]

RM: Well, the students loved it, the students loved it, but it was just a boring place to be, particularly in the summer. I mean, you just watch the grass grow. Columbus, which was no great shakes then, was an hour away, Cleveland was more than two hours away. It was very hard to get to either place and there just wasn't much to do there. Plus, I was stuck in this very, very conservative department.

So, we decided to move to the Washington area. So, I was at the National War College from 1992 until 2010. I was a Professor of National Security Strategy and I taught the equivalent of--we called them "05s"--they would be lieutenant colonels in the Army and Air Force, commanders in the Navy, Foreign Service officers, CIA officials. We had a number of foreign military officers represented. The nice thing was that it was an extraordinary faculty-student ratio. There were three students for every faculty member, and so, I taught, as my colleagues did, we taught in seminars with just thirteen students. I was very, very good at it, if I must say, [laughter] and I continued to write.

I published another book called *American Foreign Policy since the Vietnam War: The Search for Consensus from Richard Nixon to (eventually) George W. Bush*. It went through four editions. The first one was published in 1991, the last one was published in 2005. While I was at the National War College, I wrote the second, third and fourth editions of that book, in addition to doing some other writing as well.

So, it wasn't my cup of tea completely, because it was a military organization, it was a top-down organization. The people who were in charge were military. We had a two-star, a major general or a vice admiral, who were the commandants at the National War College the whole time that I was there, but I got along very well with the faculty. There was much less backbiting that went on there than occurs in most academic settings. By and large, I thought that it was time well spent. So, in 2010, I retired and looked around for something to do. I eventually found a program at George Mason in Fairfax called the Osher Institute for Lifelong Learning, or OLLI, and I started teaching there. I taught a number of courses in American foreign policy there.

My wife died quite unexpectedly in 2002. About five months later, I met Mary Matthews, who now has been my domestic partner, really since '03. We moved to Durham in the Summer of 2015, moved into a retirement community, the Forest at Duke, a continuing care retirement community just a mile or so from the Duke Campus. I continue to be very active in OLLI at Duke and I have taught four courses now at OLLI at Duke, about to teach a course this winter on Henry Kissinger. I'm also on the Board of Advisors for the Osher Institute at Duke, and we like the area very, very much. We enjoy classical music a lot and there are a lot of opportunities for that around here, both in Durham and in Raleigh and in Chapel Hill.

SI: It is interesting, there is an OLLI program at Rutgers now, too.

RM: Oh, is there?

SI: Yes, and I have interviewed a number of people who either have taught or are taking classes there.

RM: Interesting.

SI: What is your take on this new phenomenon of lifelong learning?

RM: Well, I mean, in some ways, it really saved me, because after I retired from the War College, I really floundered for a year or so. I really didn't know what to do. I didn't really feel like writing another book. I experimented with a number of things. I joined the Smithsonian Encore Chorale, where I became part of a singing group for about six months. I took voice lessons from an opera singer for about six months, and then, I sort of wearied of that. It didn't really fulfill me. I tried a number of book groups around the Fairfax County area, just outside Washington--turns out that all of the book groups are made up of women and they read fiction and I didn't enjoy that.

Then, I just happened to stumble upon this Osher Institute at George Mason. I don't think it was nearly as good as--the one at Duke is probably one of the best in the country. We offer 140 courses in the fall, 140 courses in the winter and about eighty courses in the spring. I was the Associate Chair of the Curriculum Committee for a while and, now, I'm the Chair of the Volunteer Relations Committee and, also, a member of the Board of Advisors. So, it's really kept me busy, it's kept my mind active. I get to lecture, I get to still use my ad lib sense of humor and I've really enjoyed it. It's really filled a void, I think, that, otherwise, would've been there and I strongly recommend seniors to consider it.

SI: You mentioned that the department was very different at the National War College, a lot of things were different.

RM: Yes.

SI: This was the first time you were teaching much older students.

RM: Yes.

SI: What was that relationship like?

RM: Yes, when I got there, I was about forty-six and the average age of the students was forty-three, and I think that, initially, I was looked upon with suspicion. I think that overall--and I don't think, I'm convinced--overall, our officer corps is very, very conservative and very Republican. Most of the so-called Title X professors, that is, the civilian PhD professors at the National War College, were quite liberal. So, there was an inherent tension between them.

One of my challenges was to run the seminars with a very, very even hand and not wear my political inclinations on my sleeve, because, if I had done that, it would've destroyed any credibility that I would've had in the classroom. So, I had to entertain the most bizarre of ideas and treat them seriously. I think I was successful in doing that and I think most of my colleagues were more or less successful in doing that, but, yes, it was a challenge.

The Iraq War and the invasion of Iraq in '03 put the place into some turmoil and there were students who were returning from Iraq, who were becoming students at the National War College, who looked down their noses at the civilian faculty, because most of us had been opposed to the invasion of Iraq and they were *gung ho*. A couple of years later, they were much less *gung ho*, as things went badly in Iraq, but, for a couple of years, there was a significant amount of tension between the military students and the civilian faculty. Most of the State Department people--of course, they were in the small minority, they made up about ten percent of the student body--they were, almost to a person, very, very critical of the War in Iraq.

I happened to co-teach a number of seminars with Ryan Crocker, who later became our Ambassador to Iraq, and I basically got to know an awful lot of movers and shakers in Washington while I was at the National War College. People like Brent Scowcroft would come regularly to lecture at the National War College. Henry Kissinger came occasionally. Paul Nitze, N-I-T-Z-E, who was one of the originators of the strategy of containment, came year after year. All of these generals would come through, many diplomats. Madeleine Albright came over on a number of occasions. So, I really felt that I was very much in the mix, although I wasn't in the policy mix, I was sort of in the analytical side of things, but I got to meet and talk to a number of senior policymakers, which made it very, very interesting.

I want to go back to Kenyon just for a minute, because it reminded me of something that I did there that was fun.

SI: Sure.

RM: In, it must've been around 1979, right after the hostages were taken in Iran, Kenyon arranged to have a debate between Ramsey Clark, the very, very liberal former Attorney General in the Johnson Administration, and William Westmoreland, who had been the commander of our forces in Vietnam. I got to moderate the debate and there must've been, oh, probably a thousand people or so in the hall at Kenyon. There were camera crews there from Cleveland and Columbus to film the debate, or at least parts of it, and I got to meet Westmoreland and Clark. I also got to ask each of them the first question after they [spoke].

Westmoreland was railing against how Jimmy Carter had "sold the farm" to the Soviet Union, how we were a declining superpower, how things were just terrible, terrible, terrible. So, I got to ask the first question and I said, "Well, General Westmoreland, if you were the Chairman of the Soviet Politburo or the President of the United States, which position do you think," how did I put this now? "Do you think that the Chairman of the Soviet Politburo is in a better strategic position than the President of the United States? Do you think that the Soviet Union has now become more powerful than the United States?" He said, "Oh, well, no, no, I don't really think

that." So, my first question immediately forced him to back off some of this more outrageous rhetoric that he was spouting at the time, but, as it turns out, Reagan came to office in '81 spouting the very same kind of rhetoric that Westmoreland was spouting, about how the 1970s were just like the 1930s, it was a decade of appeasement, Jimmy Carter was a weakling, dah, dah, dah. Anyway, so, that was a fun thing. That was a fun and interesting kind of thing to do.

I also had a radio show for a short period of time, WMVO, "The Voice of Mount Vernon, Ohio," and the owner of the station wanted me to come on once a week to answer questions about American foreign policy. Now, most of the listening area was made up of farmers, really, Knox County, Ohio. This would've been around '82 or '83, '83, right after all of those Marines were killed in their barracks near Beirut, when we intervened, unfortunately, in the civil war in Lebanon. I went on the radio shortly thereafter and I guess I had the show maybe for six months or so. I would get these calls from farmers in Knox County, asking me my opinion about various aspects of American foreign policy. That was a lot of fun. [laughter]

When I was at the National War College, C-SPAN came over one day and one of my colleagues, Bard O'Neill, and I sat in the rotunda at the National War College and were interviewed by Brian Lamb for C-SPAN. Then, he opened up the microphones and anybody from around the country could call in and ask questions about the National War College. That was about 1997 or so, something like that. So, that was kind of fun. Another time, I was invited to go on BBC Radio, right after President Clinton had recognized Vietnam diplomatically, and I was interviewed by the BBC and that was also fun. So, again, living in Washington was exciting, as opposed to living in Knox County, Ohio, which was, in some ways, intellectually stimulating, but it was very isolating.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add to the record?

RM: No, I don't think [so]. I just look back very fondly at my days at Rutgers. One of the reasons that I've not returned to campus since 1984 is because I am fearful that my emotions might get the better of me, just going back and seeing those places. I'm just afraid that I would sort of tear up and it would be a difficult thing to do. I have very, very fond memories. I think I got an excellent, non-vocational education for a song. The tuition, at the time, was four hundred dollars a semester and I thought I had a very, very enjoyable and intellectually-stimulating experience there.

SI: Thank you very much.

RM: Okay, you're welcome.

SI: I appreciate it.

RM: All right.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 7/9/2018

Reviewed by Richard Melanson 7/16/2018