

TAPE #51--SIDE A
RUTHIE CHIPPARONE--NOVEMBER 20, 1981

KF I want to know when and where you were born.

RC I was born in Chicago, August, 1944.

KF Tell me about your parents.

RC My parents? My mother was born in Indiana. My father was born in Chicago. They were just middle-class people. My father was a truck driver and my mother worked many jobs in between raising children to help support everybody. I have a sister and three brothers, who are all married. I don't see them that often.

KF Where did you go to school?

RC I went to a local Catholic school for the first three grades. I went to a high school that was all girls, which was about 50 minutes from the house. Graduating class had only 42 girls. After that I got a job working for the government and that is where I met Paul.

KF Tell me about that.

RC Meeting Paul or working for the government?

KF I mean meeting Paul.

RC I use to go down to the cafeteria to get coffee for the Colonel. I was sitting at a table, some of my friends knew some of the fellows. I was just talking and he kind of ignored me for awhile. So I ignored him for awhile, then all of a sudden he asked me for a date. We dated for about a year and a half.

KF How old were you then?

RC I was nineteen. We got married in Chicago. Lived there a couple of months, moved to New York. And that started our traveling.

KF You went to Iran in 1977.

RC I first went to Iran in June of 1977 to see what it was like.

KF What did you think?

RC I was not impressed at all. Paul would say do you want to move here and I would say I don't, I can't. But he really did want to move there. The job was something that he really wanted to do. I have not regretted it really.

KF Did you change your mind about Iran when you got there?

RC Oh, yah. About the first three weeks we were there I was not too thrilled; leaving the house in Pennsylvania that I really liked, leaving my friends. But once you got into the swing of things, met some people, knew your way around, it became quite enjoyable.

KF What did you like about Iran.

RC Probably, people, the American people seemed to want to help everybody else. In the states, you know, are xxxxx. But over there you are much closer to everyone. The Iranian people were nice to us.

KF Were you evacuated on the 7th, 8th, or 9th?

RC The eighth, early morning.

KF As a fact, you and Emily were the first.

RC Yes. So I found out.

KF How did you feel about all of that? Did you want to get out at that point?

RC No, I really didn't want to leave. That is not the way that I wanted to be leaving Iran. I was not able to tell my friends that I was leaving. I don't think until the night before, the kids even knew. They went over to friends house to play and I went upstairs and packed their suitcases. Trying to decide what we should take. Paul had said to pack lightly, not to worry about anything. I knew I would be going to the States, so I knew I had to take plenty of clothes for the kids. Not realizing that I probably should have brought a lot more with me.

KF Where did you go then?

RC When I got to the airport in Tehran, it was unbelievable the amount of people there. You could look around and the majority of the people were Iranians leaving. You're thinking, "What are you doing. I don't really want to leave like this and you are pushing us out." The plane was, of course, late leaving. You recognize a lot of people that you would see in church or something like that, also leaving. I happened to meet a friend of ours who just happened to be leaving that day because her husband's duty was over. They had this date scheduled for months and months. I went up to her and she said what are you doing. She wanted to know where Paul was. I told her Paul will be coming. So Emily and I got on the plane with the kids, then went to Copenhagen and checked at the airport for our room which supposedly was already reserved. Fortunately the hotel we were talking to did have room. We took the bus, or a taxi, and went there. Spent the night in Copenhagen and then left, I guess, the next afternoon for the States. Landed in New York about ten hours after we were suppose to. Our friend was at the airport since one in the afternoon. He took us back to his house and we stayed with him for a couple of days. While I was there Ross called and said that his problem with the fellows, you know, having their passports taken, to be resolved and didn't understand what is going to happen and all of this. I stayed

there a few days and then went on to Chicago. Paul called Christmas morning and said he had a present for me. I asked if it was his airline ticket and he said, "No, I bought you some (books?)."

KF You would have preferred to have the . . .

RC Of course, yes, at that point it was already three and a half weeks since we had seen him. I am trying to think if that was the last time I talked to him. He might have called me the day of the meeting. I said, "What are you going to do there." He said, "Oh, no problem at all, they just want to talk to me. Ask me a few questions. I am going to spend a couple days here clearing up some work. Will be in Chicago at your parents for New Years." Which never materialized.

KF OK. You are staying with your parents in Chicago? What kind of a house do they have?

RC It's on the southwest side of the city, an older house, probably 85 years old. I had grown up in that house. They kept it up. Two story.

KF How many bedrooms?

RC Four bedrooms.

KF Was the house made of brick, stone?

RC I guess so.

KF It had four bedrooms, it wasn't too bad.

RC Oh, with the kids?

KF Two children; you and two children.

RC There was plenty of room.

KF What kind of a Christmas did you have?

RC It was a Christmas that I would not want to repeat again. I had brought back with me from Tehran a few of the gifts that I had gotten for the girls and then when I got into Chicago my brother took me out and I bought a few more things. It was a Christmas that they really were not use to. They were use to getting a lot of toys and things like that. So, they got some toys. It was a little strange not having Daddy around for Christmas.

KF A little half hearted?

RC A lot, yes. I know my brothers and sisters came down. Everyone asked about Paul. At that point, Christmas Day it was, I would probably be seeing him for New Years. Other than, you know, him not being there, Christmas was passable.

KF Tell me what happened on December 28th.

RC I called Dallas because I knew they were having a meeting and I didn't hear from anybody. I think it was about 11:30 in the morning I called down here and talked to some of the guys and asked how did the meeting work out. They said, "It didn't go to well." I said, "What do you mean, it didn't go to well." They were arrested. I said, "What, they were arrested?" I said, "You're kidding."

KF Who were you talking to?

RC Jim Nyfeler. They had been in Tehran and we were good friends with them. I talked to Bill Gayden. He said, "We don't understand this but, we are sure that we can straighten this out in a couple days and get it over with. It is just a matter of days." From that point on, you see that was the 28th, Ross called, Tom Marcus called, Ross called.

RC They kept calling. My mom and dad, I did not tell them that Paul was
Cont. in jail since they are old I did not want to bother them. My mom said,
"Why does Ross and the fellows from EDS always keep calling you?"
They just want to make sure we are ok, you know, and that's all. My
mom said, "That is so nice of Ross to call you." When I was talking to
Dallas they didn't know at that point other than it was going to be a
couple of days, not to worry. But, I had to get the girls back in
school. Karen had been out since the first of December, she was in
sixth grade. After a month of not being in school, I think that she
needed to get back. Emory was in kindergarden and was getting really
bored being stuck in the house in Chicago with snow. I talked to
Dallas. I guess Bill Gayden said, "OK, we will get you reservations to
come down here." So I left Chicago on the 2nd and came down to
Dallas. Jim Nyfeler's wife, Kathy, called and she said that they (could
not understand) and that we could spend a week with them and by
that time Paul would be back. She said, "You can go look for a house,
where EDS is going to send you or whatever." New Years in Chicago
was terrible. I spent New Years eve with my parents, watching
television, and had a glass of wine with them, thinking, "Gotta smile."
It was terrible. Came down here on the 2nd of January. My mother
kept saying, "Why are you leaving? Why don't you just stay here until
Paul gets back? Put the girls in school up here." I had to get down
here because I could talk to people and I didn't feel that I was free to
talk because I didn't want to upset my parents. So, I came down here
and invaded the Nyfeler's house with my kids.

KF Your parents still didn't know?

RC No.

KF The children didn't know?

RC Nobody knew up in Chicago. We came down here and Kathy and Jim
moved us into their house. I thought it was only going to be for a
week. I thought it would not be too bad. I enrolled Karen in school.

RC Found out that Emory wasn't eligible because of her birthday. So I had
 Cont. to find a nursery school for her. The weeks kept rolling by. I kept
 telling Kathy I was going to move out. Kathy said, "No your not. What
 are you going to do." I said, "I can't stay here. I have been here two
 weeks already." She said, "You are going to stay here because if you
 move into an apartment, what are you going to do there?" I said, "Well
 because." She said, "You are with us, we will help you." So I stayed
 with them until Paul came back, which I guess was about six weeks.
 They were just great. Kathy tried to keep me busy taking me
 shopping, out to dinner. things like that. Poor Jim, every night he
 would come home and we would ask what he had to tell us. Poor guy,
 he couldn't tell us everything that was going on. We watched the news
 every night. I started calling (?), talked to Bill Gayden. Bill went
 over to see what he could do in Tehran. Then I started calling Tom
 Marcus and Tom Walters a lot. I found out that Ross had gone over to
 see the fellows. I did write a letter to Paul, which was very hard to
 do. I never thought I would have to write him another letter. He got
 that letter and then Bill Gayden called me up one day from Tehran and
 had a letter from Paul, which he read on the phone.

KF What was in your letter?

RC What the kids were doing. Trying to keep it light and happy. Trying
 not to be too emotional. Just trying, hoping it would pick him up. I
 was depressed so I am assuming he was depressed too.

KF What did you mean when you said you never thought you would be
 writing him another letter?

RC Well, when I was dating him, he went home to New York for
 Christmas. (Could not understand). Once we were married, he was out
 of the service by then. There was never any need to write letters. So
 I never thought of me writing to my husband.

KF What was his letter to you like?

RC I am trying to think. I am sure that he missed us and was glad that the kids were in school again. He was so, so. Met a few people. Learned how to play chess. Did a lot of reading. He had been sick. I guess, it was (?) that we would all be together again. After Bill read the letter, I really felt much better. It was really the first time. . . Other than the fellows saying they had talked to Paul. Paul said, "Do this, do that." That he is ok, how are the kids, stuff like that. First time I felt like we were closer.

KF Didn't you start looking for a house at some stage?

RC Oh, yah. Probably the third day after I was down here. Not having been to Dallas before, I didn't know where to look. Kathy showed me a house in her area. I went around looking into different suburbs. All I remember Paul saying is Central Expressway is terrible. So I thought maybe I should stay away from that. So I really didn't know how far he wanted to go out, what kind of a house he wanted. I spent a lot of week-ends looking at houses, taking the kids to the movies, finally found this one. (Somebody) came and looked at it and thought it was a good investment. He talked to somebody from EDS and they thought it was also a good investment. Might as well buy it. So I put a deposit down and then we went to closing which was interesting. Closing was scheduled for one day and they are waiting for papers to come giving Tom Walters the authority for him to sign for him. That was sent to the American Embassy in Tehran, I think the beginning of February. It never showed up, so we postponed it. A couple of days later we went to the closing and Tom Walters comes, I have my check, and the papers still isn't there. He said there is no problem at all. OK. So the lady in charge of the closing, the realtor there, I'm there, Tom is there. She said, "Who is going to sign for Paul." Tom said, "I'll do it." She said, "Do you have the authority?" Tom said, "No, well but I am sure we can work something out." She said, "I'm sorry, we can't do it." (Could not understand). So after about an hour and a half of

RC Tom calling lawyers and the title company calling their lawyer, they
Cont. agreed on Tom signing some kind of paper. So, we closed our house. I
think that was probably on a Thursday, and the fellows came home on
that Sunday.

KF Did you ever tell your parents before it was over?

RC No.

KF And the children?

RC I lied to Karen. Bill Gayden called them. She was say when is Daddy
calling. When is Daddy calling? Because usually when he goes away,
he calls at least one a week. She came home from school one day and I
said Daddy called. She wanted to know why he didn't wait. I said,
"Karen, those phone lines are hard to get through to Tehran because
of all the trouble over there. This is the only time he could get the
phone call through. That I had talked with him and he is doing fine
and he should be home in a couple of weeks. So that kind of settled
her for a little bit. She was getting antsy. Emory I didn't say
anything to, being five, and she was easy to (?) My mother would call
and wonder why Paul wasn't back. I would tell her that he had so
many things that he had to do to close the office and things are
difficult and he is fine and as soon as he gets everything squared
away he will be home. Mother could not see why he was away so
long. I told her everything would be ok, he would be home soon. My
brother would call sometimes and I would give him the same story.
"Paul called." Which of course was a big bluff. The girls didn't know,
until, let me see, we get the papers in Dallas. I don't remember the
date. Karen was home sick and Jim called from the office and said that
their pictures are in the paper, their names are in the paper, I don't
know how you are going to hid it from the kids anymore. I went out
and bought five papers and came home and explained to Karen.

KF I guess that much have been the 16th.

RC I have all the paperclippings. It was just a matter of days before he was home. So then I showed her the paperclippings and everyday we went out and got more papers and started saving the papers. I don't remember Emory, I guess I told her. To her, Dad was in jail, no big deal.

KF OK. Before they got out, did you ever think about the possibility that they might not come back at all?

RC A lot of times. Yes. I would go to bed at night and never slept more than an hour. Would wake up all the time thinking if that was the last time that I would ever see him. Sometimes the guys at work, very frustrated. Talking about the meetings the Iranians would be having to drop the charges. I would call the next day, and they would say, "No they didn't do it because there was trouble downtown, somebody was afraid to go down there, or it is snowing and couldn't go down there." So that was (could not hear).

KF Did you think about what you would do (too low, could not hear)?

RC I thought, what I really did was say, "What would I do?" Do I really want to go back to Chicago." I would stay with my parents for awhile. I don't want to live with my parents. I really was dependent on Paul. Other than that, all I could think of.

KF Did you think about would you work or something like that?

RC No

KF You didn't think that far ahead?

RC No.

KF Did you always really think they were coming back. Where there moments when you thought that were not coming back?

RC Jim came home one night and I guess the kids were watching TV and Kathy went to get her hair done. And I said, "OK, what happened today." After hearing the same story over and over, that they were going to this but couldn't do this. Nobody would meet. I just broke into tears and I said, "Jim," and left the room. (Sounded as though she is crying)

KF I am sorry to upset you.

RC That is ok.

KF Let's talk about when the news turned good.. Sunday, February 11.

RC That following morning, Jim was up and I heard him say, "Well she is sleeping." If I hear Jim walking, I would follow him and question him. He came over there said that (Jean Walters?) is on the phone and wants to talk to you. She said, "Ruth, I have good news for you. The guys are free. They got out of jail. Everything looks great. I will let you know more later." That was the beginning. They never told me how they were getting out. Jim would say, "You'll find out. You don't want to know." I could picture them in uniforms or in caskets, or anything just to get them. Never thinking of the real way that were going to do it.

KF You must have felt very good then? Or were you just worrying about what would happen next?

RC No, I felt good. I really had confidence that they were going to get home Ok.

KF You still didn't say anything to the children.

KF What was the next thing that happened? They didn't even tell you that Paul and Bill had got to the hotel?

RC No.

KF So the Iranians didn't know where they were.

RC Jim would come home, he would say that things were going ok, please don't question me because I can't tell you. I guess when they got to Turkey, on a Friday night maybe?

KF It was a Thursday night when they crossed the border, but you may not have know about it until Friday.

RC They called and I talked to Paul for the first time.

KF Where was he when you got the call?

RC I think it was Turkey.

KF Well (could not hear). He may have called you from the border?

RC No. No.

KF More likely that Ross would have called you.

RC No, they were with Ross. I am sure of that.

KF OK, that is at the hotel in Istanbul. That was Friday evening in the middle east, which would have been Saturday morning here?

RC I think that was night when they called and I talked to him. Kathy said, "Don't go to pieces when you are on the phone to Paul." He sounded great. Asked what the kids were up to.

KF Do you remember what you said?

RC Probably silly things, like, "Hi, how are you, what are you doing." There were so many things you wanted to say but when you pick up the phone, "What do I say." It was a short conversation.

KF Do you remember what he said?

RC He said, "Hi." His usual, "Hi, what are you doing." I said, "What do you mean, I'm waiting for you." I don't remember more of the conversation.

KF It probably didn't make a lot of sense?

RC Yes.

KF So, you talked.

RC He told me that he would see me in a couple of days.

KF You must have then told the children when he was coming back.

RC I talked to the children Saturday and told them their Daddy would be coming home. It may have been Saturday night or Sunday.

KF When did they get there?

RC They got home Sunday, but their plane was late. I know Jim was at the office and called and said the time would be pushed back. Jim said just sit down and be calm. I can't just waiting for this time. I went to the airport. We were suppose to be in a reception room when their plane was coming there. Kathy and I were walking and Tom told us to go that way quick, the press is coming. (Too low, could not hear) Finally came and he looked grungy. His hair was long, matted. None of the clothes he had on belonged to him. I asked, "Where did you get

RC this." He said, "I don't know, somebody loaned it to me." That was on Cont. the bus. A lot of hugging and kissing as each guy came on. I don't know how many wives are on the bus. I think it was six. (Could not hear). Bill Gayden was on our bus. The bus went a little way down and we went into a big reception room.

KF What did you wear?

RC A new coat that I had bought down here because I did not have a dress winter coat to wear, left mine in Iran.

KF What color was it?

RC Beige. I think I wore a jumper with a turtleneck. Boots. I had acquired a new pair of boots. The girls got dressed up. I think they wore plaid skirts that we picked up at Neimans. Dress coats. I remember the reception room was so hot. I think we were at the end of the line coming in. I remember meeting Jean Walters and she said, "We did it, didn't we." Saw a lot of other people I hadn't seen for awhile. You could hear all the clapping and all of that. Other people were walking by saying what is going on. People gave speeches. It was really nice. Then we went back to Kathy's house. We were going to stay in a hotel. Jim thought it was not a good idea because someone else said that the press might be at the hotel. So Jim said to spend the night at their house and they would go to the hotel instead.

KF That was nice.

RC (Too low). That is the end of the story.

KF You met Simons that night?

RC Yes. Talked to him.

KF Did you ever get to know him?

RC No.

KF How do you feel now when you look back on it?

RC In which way? I would never want to go through with something like that again. I can sympathize with the wives whose husband's went to Viet-Nam and are still missing. I only went through it for 46 days and it was terrible. It is in the past. We can joke about it now. Ross was great. How many bosses would do something like that for their employees.

KF No man.

RC When they first got in jail. I thought who would I call. Where would I begin. Thank goodness Ross was there. A bunch of great guys to help us.

KF It was, all the same, a risky thing to do. You didn't know what Ross was doing. (Could not hear).

RC It was probably good that they didn't tell me everything. Because I think I would have worried, I don't know how I could have worried anymore though.

KF So, most of this time you spent in Nyfeler's house. Can you describe that house?

RC It is approximately like this. Four bedrooms, game room, living room, kitchen. Their oldest daughter gave me her room. So I slept with Emory and Karen and her daughter either slept in the den or got the sleeping bags out and slept on the floor.

KF Did you manage to stay even tempered through all this or did you get irriated?

RC I got through it alright.

KF Did you shout?

RC I don't think so. Probably with the kids sometimes. I remember yelling at Karen one time. I thought to myself, "I don't need this with your father in jail." She had a hard time adjusting in school. Once she fits in she is fine, but until that point, for the first few weeks at her new school she was always coming up with tummy aches or something. Emory was just the opposite. She didn't care. She met friends fine. Tom Walters wife took me out to lunch. Bill Gayden's wife took me out to lunch. Kathy and Jim took us. Kathy would call Jim up at the office and say, "Ruth has had a bad day. I think we should go out to dinner." He would say, "Ok." We would go out to dinner and try to get. I would question the poor guy again, third degree. I think people knew about it at the office, but didn't want to talk about it. They would ask, "How is Paul." I would see them again in a couple of weeks and Paul's name was never mentioned. So you knew that they knew and didn't want to bring it up.

KF Yes.

RC But then I thought that nobody wanted to know about Paul.

KF I think I have run out of questions.

RC Really.

KF Unless you can think of something. Oh, did you meet with any of the wives of the people that had gone over there. Schwebach's wife, Poche's wife, . . .

RC Some were down here, some were not. I think Schwebach's (could not hear), Poche's I don't think was down here, I didn't see her.

KF Did you see any of them?

RC We went out to lunch in the beginning. Mary Boulware, Ruth Coburn and Kathy and Emory because she had to go because I didn't have anyplace to leave her. I would ask, "What are you husband's doing." They would said that they were in Paris doing something. I would say, "What are they doing in Paris." They would say, "I don't know." I really don't know if they knew exactly where their husbands were or what they were doing.

KF They were not suppose to know. They were all guessing.

RC I guess so. I kind of starting a guessing game too. Somebody would say their are in Paris. Oh well they are trying to go through Embassy because of the Iranians were on friendly terms. So they are trying to work something out.

KF Basically, since there are all these things that people were not suppose to know, the wives could not talk frankly about what was happening?

RC That is right. Plus, I don't think we really knew exactly.

KF Mary Boulware was to have seen Ralph with \$11,000 dollars in his briefcase, he had opened it briefly when she had walked into the room. She said, "I suppose I shouldn't ask." He said, "No." She had some idea that something was going on that she wasn't suppose to know. I am sure Jay's wife had some idea, but she wasn't suppose to know. I image that you met and everyone was not saying what they each suspected. They weren't suppose to know.

RC That is right. I was hoping somebody would slip. If they knew, they didn't discuss it with me. Plus a lot of time the girls wanted to call and see how it was doing, but they were afraid to call. They told me this afterwards. I had wondered what had happened to my friends, nobody is calling anymore.

KF Didn't you and Emily at one point contemplated getting yourselves diplomatic passports and going over there yourselves. She did?

RC She did. I told her I didn't think that was a good idea. I didn't think Paul would like that.

KF That was probably it. She wanted to go there and talk to Dadgar.

RC I had never met Dadgar. I didn't see any point talking to him. If the Embassy couldn't talk to him, there was no way he would listen to a wife. What upset me was that the Iranians when they first put the guys in jail would not allow us to even talk to them. I thought they would be a little lenient, since we were over here, as opposed to us being in Tehran. (Could not hear). The guys I talked to every night were probably sure glad when this thing over with too.

KF Everybody was.