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

PEARL RICHARDSON

Interviewed by: Penne Laingen
Initial interview date: September 29, 1987

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dakar, Senegal 1956-1959
- Foreign Service and first post:
- Extensive number of postings
- Courtship and marriage
- First post in Senegal
- Trip down the Niger
- President de Gaulle
- Independence of Senegal
- Cooking in Senegal
- Marketing
- Entertaining
- Trip to Mauritania
- Trip to Guinea
- The Commandanté de Circlé in Conakry
- The Senegalese culture
- The French
- Petit blancs

Saigon, Vietnam 1959-1961
- Assignment to Vietnam
- The first coup
- Ambassador Eldridge Durbrow
- Aide to the Ambassador
- Etiquette and protocol in Saigon
- The French in Vietnam
- Trip through the Delta
- Trip to Angkor Wat in Cambodia
- Leaving Vietnam

Tehran, Iran 1978-1979
- Transfer to Tehran, Iran
- Finding an Apartment

The arrival of Ayatollah Khomeini
Security precautions
Furnishing the apartment
Anti-Americanism
Trip to Afghanistan
Attitudes toward foreign women in Iran and Afghanistan
Trip to Isfahan and Shiraz
The Jalez Square Riot
Mourning

INTERVIEW

Q: I see, Pearl, that you have been in twelve posts and in every continent, except North America ...

RICHARDSON: And Australia.

Q: But you were (in the) Far East; you were (in) Europe ...

RICHARDSON: Southeast Asia, not Far East, Vietnam.

Q: Vietnam, Europe.

RICHARDSON: Europe.

Q: South America, Caribbean, and Middle East. or what do you call Iran, Near East?

RICHARDSON: Near East and Africa.

Q: Africa. That's the main one. And I was very interested. Do you think that's a record? Twelve posts in thirty years?

RICHARDSON: No, there are some people who have had more, but I think it's a nice record.

Q: I think it's fantastic. I was wondering if that isn't the norm for consular posts?

RICHARDSON: I don't know, I really don't know.

Q: Anyway, it was impressive to me, because we had very few posts and always came back to Washington (in between) so I can only list three posts. (laughs)

RICHARDSON: (laughs)

Q: You've been busy.

RICHARDSON: Well, at one time we wanted to come back to Washington, and they told Cy that the law that was in effect was already too late. You couldn't be retroactives and, therefore, you go on to your next fifteen years. Now we're back in Washington.

Q: But you didn't mind all that traveling, packing?

RICHARDSON: No.

Q: You never found it difficult?

RICHARDSON: No. Oh, as I get older I think packing and unpacking gets difficult, but I've enjoyed every place I've been. I've loved going there and, in general, I've loved moving around.

Q: Yes. I see, too, that you got married in November and went right off to Senegal ... to Dakar.

RICHARDSON: A week (later).

Q: Had you ever been overseas before?

RICHARDSON: No, I'd never been out of the United States, except for a weekend in Canada once.

Q: And how did it go?

RICHARDSON: Well, it went well. I always said years later that ... the way I phrased it was ... that if I could survive the first year of marriage without what I called third-party distractions, which means no concerts, no television, no theater ... which for a New Yorker is hard ... married to a man that I really didn't know.

Q: I beg your pardon? (laughs)

RICHARDSON: Well, how well did I know Cy? Our courtship consisted of his coming up from Washington on weekends, and I really didn't know him. So we had the added thing of getting to know each other and moving, not only out of the United States, but to a place where there was absolutely not a single friend, not one, and I didn't speak the language.

Q: And what was the language?

RICHARDSON: The language was French. And neither one of us spoke French, so it was difficult. But not Senegal. The Senegalese are so friendly that you can make mistakes in French. I took lessons, and it didn't matter. With the French, who were in evidence there,

it didn't matter if you made mistakes as long as you spoke quickly enough and they thought you were fluent. Now, Cy's French was much better than mine, but he spoke more slowly to make sure it was correct, and the French automatically turned off their ears. I spoke, just spoke, and I made my point and everything was fine.

I traveled alone before the two years were out ... to Guinea ... and I was able .... I didn't understand news broadcasts, but I was able to tell the Commandanté de Circlé that I thought something important had happened, because everybody seemed so excited. He said that was all right. We would listen to the radio that night and, yes, it was something very important. De Gaulle had just said "Algeria for the Algerians", and General Massu and the others were threatening to parachute onto Paris.

Q: Oh?

RICHARDSON: But anyway, Senegal is a lovely, lovely country. And we'll get a chance now in the Inspection Corps to inspect Dakar. I've been back once on our way to another post in Africa, but not to stay. The Senegalese are among the most gracious people.

Q: Then you couldn't have been luckier to start there, really.

RICHARDSON: Yes. But it's very interesting. That weekend, when I told Cy, oh yes, we could get married, as soon as he left with his ride back to Washington, I jumped into a cab and went up to a girlfriend of mine, and I said, "Look. Cy just left. I told him I was going to marry him, but I'll call him tomorrow and tell him it's all off."

And she said, "Wait, Pearl. Let's paint the worst possible picture." She said, "You get to Dakar. You can't stand the heat (I hate the heat, though I've spent so many years in the tropics). You don't like the people. You don't speak the language. You don't like the Foreign Service. But, worst of all, you've found out you don't like Cy ... "

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: She said, "You get on a plane and come home." And I thought that was one really simple explanation. (laughs)

Q: (laughs) And what a wonderful friend.

RICHARDSON: Yes, which put it in perspective. Now, the most amusing thing that happened in Senegal was that two of the secretaries at the Consulate General were going either up the Niger or down the Niger ... I think it's down the Niger. The period of the trip was falling during our first anniversary, which is November 25, and they asked me if I wanted to go. Cy said, "Of course you want to go." People later asked me, "How could you leave your husband on your first wedding anniversary?" And my answer was, "I hoped there would be more anniversaries, but it was probably my only chance to go down the Niger River."

Q: Right. Very good answer.

RICHARDSON: And we had a marvelous time. We're now married 31 years, so obviously I've had more than one anniversary, and you'll find this (trip down the Niger) the first.

Q: Exactly. How were things there politically at that time?

RICHARDSON: This was before Independence. We had the great pleasure of having de Gaulle come when they were taking a Referendum of whether the old Afrique Occidental Francaise were going to stay with the French or were going to become independent. And de Gaulle was absolutely very impressive, to hear him get up on a balcony and say, "If you want Independence, take it." It was just very, very impressive. And Leopold Senghor was President and he's a renowned poet, but I must admit they were not there to greet de Gaulle. Yet Sekou Toure in Guinea was going to vote "no" and was there to tell de Gaulle in person, "no".

But the Senegalese are lovely, lovely people. You know something? As far as I'm concerned, the best food is found there.

Q: Is that right?

RICHARDSON: They can do fish and rice. The only place in the world where there is marvelous fish. The market had a Vietnamese fishmonger, and I would go down and say, "I would like eighteen fillet of sole, this size or that size, for next Tuesday." And I'd come down next Tuesday and pick up the fillets. The cost of living was very high. At that time, Senegal was, I think, the second highest post we had in the Foreign Service for cost of living. Caracas was first.

Q: When were you in Caracas?

RICHARDSON: I wasn't, but Caracas was, at that time, first. And I think I'm excluding Moscow, because I really don't know where the Iron Curtain countries came in there, but Senegal was the highest. You could get anything you wanted, because the French liked to eat. I had as good cheese, smoked salmon, anything I wanted, that I could find in Paris, but you paid a price for it. Everything was imported, but I remember distinctly it was the same price when you bought a kilo of apples or grapes or plums or whatever it was. They were all the same price. But if you wanted it and you were getting an allowance to help defray the cost and you did have to eat, you had it.

Q: Did you do the marketing?

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: Or did you have a domestic?

RICHARDSON: Yes. No, I had a domestic. In West Africa, the domestics are male, except people who have young children have a nanny who takes care of the child, the child's laundry, and the feeding and everything. Then they are female. Because I didn't have a tablecloth, I had one of those Quaker lace things. The table was so crowded, I didn't have room for bread and butter plates, so I paid a premium for what they call, like a Viennese roll, that wouldn't crumb. (laughs)

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: And the one thing that I did know was that you didn't serve butter at a dinner party, so that was fine. I just had a bread that didn't crumb! And I had two dinners ... I mean, Dinner A and Dinner B, but I wasn't very well organized. So Cy reminded me one day, he said, "Pearl, do you realize that the Italian Consul and his wife, the Massones, have eaten Dinner B every time they've come here?' (laughs) I said, "But they leave and always say it was delicious." He said, "What do you expect them to say?" (laughs)

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: The other thing was, I don't know how to make desserts. My mother was an extraordinary baker. I didn't know until I was in second term high school (I went to the big high school) that people bought cake. I assumed it was made in the house, including beautifully decorated birthday cakes.

Well, naturally, because you're in a post where the French are, there will be a bakery. This was an Italian bakery called Gentina's, and I would order bombe au chocolate, things like that. Every single dessert in some way or another turned out to be a disaster. Now, you must remember we're sitting here in the tropics. We had no air conditioning, but collar and tie for the men ... "derigueur" ... stockings for the women. When I think back on it, it's kind of ludicrous.

Q: Do you think this was the French influence or the British? Certainly was the British with us, where we were posted.

RICHARDSON: Yes, but I think it must have been the French. I don't really know, and I'm wondering now ...

Q: It wasn't the Senegalese?

RICHARDSON: No. They are elegant. You know, they are among the tallest people in West Africa and they dress regally.

Well, one dessert I remember having ... well, only two incidents stand out in my mind ... was I decided I would have the small filled pineapples with each person getting a half.

And Gentina's delivered it with ice cream in it and everything. They'd bring it in a little cooler. Here's Cy, all dressed, waiting for the guests, and he said to me, "Pearl, I think I'd better look at those pineapples. I bet you they never cut off a little piece on the bottom so they wouldn't roll on the plate." Sure enough, they hadn't, and there's Cy ... takes off his jacket, he's got a wood saw, and he's cutting off the bottom of all these pineapples.

The other time, I ordered a bombe au chocolate, and Mrs. Hueybrecht, the wife of the Belgian Consul General, was served first. I carefully explained to (Gentina's) that I didn't want it highly decorated with lots of whipped cream. I just wanted some nuts around it. I hired people, of course, to serve, and one of them had the knife in hot water to offer it so that it would go through the chocolate. Well, he offers it, first naturally to Mrs. Hueybrecht, and she makes an attempt at a stab and nothing happens. Cy looks at her and says, "Make a good stab." So she does, and it goes all over, because the ice cream at this point is melted inside. It was just, you know, a mess. (laughs)

Q: (laughs) But it was very nice.

RICHARDSON: It was very nice. We didn't mind that. I'm amazed, when I look back now, why wasn't I terribly upset? But these were just very, very nice people.

The other thing I would like to say about entertaining in Dakar was, I gave a representational dinner every two weeks. Now, remember I told you, I had only twelve plates, but I also had twelve place settings of silver, and I didn't own any fish eaters. So, I would call the Consul's wife, a very good friend, Louise Edwards, (who were probably the best-liked couple of any nationality in Dakar), and Louise was also one of the most beautiful women you've ever seen. She reminds me of Greer Garson. She looks like Greer Garson. She is fluent in French and Italian, having been born, I think, in North Africa. And Louise, no matter how hot it was, she always looked elegant. She never perspired. Everything was just lovely. Louise also gave a dinner party, and I would call and find out what day she was giving a dinner party. Then, I would decide when I would have mine, so I could borrow her fish eaters. I did this for two years.

I loved Senegal. And I got to travel. The first trip I went down the Niger with the Consul General's secretary and Cy's secretary. That was the only time he had a secretary in the Foreign Service, his first post. And the second trip, I went with Cy's secretary. Some truck was going to Mauritania, and they wouldn't charge us anything. You just fly back. So we went in the cab of the truck to Mauritania.

When we think now that Nouakchott is the Capital of Mauritania and it is a big city, which we will get to see on the inspection tour, I can't imagine it. The day we were in Nouakchott, was the day they laid the stone, the first stone, for the city. It was nothing but sand and signs in the sand saying "Gendarmerie," etc. I can't imagine now that I'm going to see a real city. It's just very exciting.

For my third trip, I went to the Guinea, to the Fouta Djalon which is like a hill station.

And I went by myself. I stayed in Labé and just presented myself each time to the Commandanté de Circlé, one, to let him know that he had the wife of an American in the area, also, who I was. And they always invited me to stay and always gave me a car either the next morning or two days later, to take me further on down the coast.

Q: Explain to me what the Commandanté de Circlé is?

RICHARDSON: The Commandanté de Circlé is like ...

Q: Is it like a mayor?

RICHARDSON: Yes. No, no, no, this is the French. They control their area. In the Bush, it was the District Superintendent, like that.

Q: An English word?

RICHARDSON: The equivalent, yes.

Q: And you had to check in?

RICHARDSON: I didn't have to, but I thought it was politic to do it. I am wandering around his territory, and he could be helpful to me. I really wanted him to give me a car.

Q: Were you safe in those days?

RICHARDSON: I was safe, except what I didn't know was that this was the time when all the problems were happening in France. What I didn't know was that the Consul General had gone into Cy and said, "Where's Pearl?" Cy said, "Frankly, I don't know, but here's a list of the places she'll be going," and he then cabled to every single place with instructions for me to return to Dakar immediately, because they were threatening a general strike, and no planes, no anything.

Well, fortunately, a cable didn't catch up with me until I was ... I don't know ... almost near the coast ... Kindia, I think ... and the Commandanté de Circlé said to me, "You know, we've been looking for you for days in the Bush. We really didn't know who you were. We thought you were a missionary. I'm so glad you came in."

What was interesting was that according to my schedule, I was to be in Conakry, the Capital of Guinea, the day of local elections. My most marvelous experience on that trip was that I stayed with the Commandanté de Circlé, that I didn't know when I arrived, and his new bride, in a place called Mamou. This man ... I don't remember his first name ... but the name is Dequequer. They were absolutely charming. He later went on to be the Ambassador, head of the French AID Mission, and he was a very, very nice person. As soon as I got there, I told him I'd heard rumors. I didn't quite understand what was going on. He told me, he said, "We're quite cognizant of what is going on, but that's not what

worries, me Mrs. Richardson." He said, "According to your schedule, if we continue this way, you are going to be in Conakry the day of local elections, and we've already had some incidents. So I think you will stay here until the elections are over and then you'll proceed." I thought what a lovely man, because he took me out in the Bush to show they were building the voting booths for people to vote. He said, "Here, you have no problem. In Conakry, a big city, you might." They were absolutely lovely to me.

I stayed with them four or five days. What amazed me was they invited people to dinner, and I remember the first course ... the second night I was there ... was cheese souffle. It was absolutely magnificent! Mrs. Dequequer had a marvelous cook. The next morning she took me on a tour of the house. The kitchen floor was dirt. The stove was a wood-burning stove, and there were these big flames shooting up. And I looked at that and I said, "That's what the souffle came out of? I don't think from now on I can blame my equipment."

Q: (laughs) Noooo.

RICHARDSON: And then, when I got to Conakry ... by the time I got to Conakry ... of course, I knew I had to return to Dakar immediately. But I was never going to see the Bauxite Mines on the Ile de Loos in the airport in Conakry, there was a man who walked over to me and said, "Mrs. Richardson." And I recognized him. He was from the Sureté in Dakar. He'd been then posted to Conakry, because, as you see, Dakar was the head of all of AOA. He said, "Well, how can you ...?"

Q: What is AOA?

RICHARDSON: French West Africa. He said, "How can you leave without seeing the Ile de Loos?" Well, I said, "I have orders." He personally called our Consul General and said, "I will be responsible for Mrs. Richardson." And, of course, the Consul General said, "Absolutely not. You just make sure she gets on the next plane out." I had a day in Conakry, and that was the day they were carrying dynamite across the river, so I couldn't go. In any case, it was a marvelous trip, and I did that on my own, speaking very, very little French. But I discovered that body language and gestures, if you're polite ...

Q: ... are the same the world over.

RICHARDSON: It's the same the world over. But people can tell when you're welcoming, and it's just marvelous. That started our life in the Foreign Service, and from then on, I was hooked.

Q: And you have been independent (from the beginning). We'll get later to your story of Iran. (laughs)

RICHARDSON: *(laughs)*

Q: Was there a caste system in Senegal?

RICHARDSON: I don't understand what you mean "caste."

Q: "Caste", among the Senegalese?

RICHARDSON: No, but what's interesting, there's a whole Métisse culture there. For example, we knew that the Hotel de France, a small restaurant that you go to, now that's where all of the best known Métisse officials ate. And that was that. But, no, I never found it so. Of course, I may have been very naive at that time. I didn't really know much about that.

(The caste system in Senegal to which Laingen refers is a very rigid system that plays an important part in the Senegalese society. It is divided into: 1) nobles, 2) freeborn, 3) artisans or skilled workmen, 4) griots or musicians or praise singers, and 5) former slaves and their descendants. While members of different tribes may marry, members of different castes almost never do.)

Q: The people are Moslem (mainly), are they not?

RICHARDSON: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Q: But I thought ...

RICHARDSON: There are Christians though.

Q: Yes, but I thought there was a caste system there, very much like India.

RICHARDSON: No, no, not that I noticed.

Q: And was there ... is there a large Portuguese influence?

RICHARDSON: Yes, yes, yes. One of the most beautiful women there was the wife of the Portuguese Consul ... Anna Albequerque. I remember these people. There was a family in Tunis, but most of the influence was French. What struck me ... and I don't know if it struck me then in Dakar or later on, when we were in other West African posts ... was that when I went to the market, I bought my chickens from a French woman, Madame Pascal, yet I bought my vegetables from Senegalese. They had French women selling chicken, butter, eggs ... and this you never found in former British colonies.

Q: No.

RICHARDSON: The British people would not allow the little shopkeeper to go and open a business. You had to be part of a big firm -- King's Way, John Deere or something like that -- or have certain connections to a big firm. But in France, they allowed these people

(to open little businesses). We called them " petit blanc", the little whites, because many of them had absolutely nothing in France. A number of them were "inter-dit de sejour", because they had committed crimes and they couldn't live in France, so what better thing than to go to West Africa where you could lord it over "the natives", have servants, and at the same time you were a little shopkeeper. It was only later, though, that I realized the difference.

But I went to the market by myself. I used to walk to the market with two big baskets, because my house was close enough to walk. After the first week, there was a little boy there who realized that I came every Tuesday and Friday, and he was waiting for me to carry my baskets. Then when we were finished, he'd find a taxi for me and I'd take my things home. The beautiful thing about the market was that you could buy everything that you needed, plus your flowers, everything was there.

It was just lovely. I never lacked for anything. Of course, there were grocery stores where I would go to buy imported French cheese, but all the vegetables ... and I used the same women for the two years that I was there. One woman sold me tomatoes, another one sold me lettuce, Madame Pascal knew I wanted fresh-killed chickens. I'd buy them one day to use the next day. It was lovely. But, as I said, I always had chicken and I had fillet of sole for my fish course and cold cucumber soup as a first course. Those courses never changed, the first and the fish, but the chicken had two variations. One was with avocado and pineapples, but I don't remember what the other one was. But I never varied, because I didn't really know anything else that I could be sure would be served right and that I could do "buffet".

Q: Did you do your own cooking?

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: Did you have ... what kind of stove?

RICHARDSON: Bottled gas.

Q: Bottled gas. That would be all right.

RICHARDSON: Which I had most of the time.

Q: We had kerosene in Karachi, which I never learned.

RICHARDSON: Ohhh, I've never had kerosene. I once had a different stove in Nigeria, which I absolutely detested, because it burnt everything. I never saw an electric stove that (was like that). Someone told me once that it melted stainless steel pots.

Q: What was the American community like?

RICHARDSON: Very, very small. We had ... I don't think we had fifteen people in the Consulate General. It was the Consul General, the Consul, and two vice consuls, three secretaries, one other, an Admin officer. I mean, you're not even counting fifteen. Married were the two vice consuls, the Consul, and the Consul General. The Admin officer was a single and the secretaries were single. It was a very, very small community.

Q: I think that was a good way to begin your Foreign Service experience, because there probably were not great pressures on you.

RICHARDSON: A very interesting thing is that, I told you we gave representational dinners every two weeks. At that time, dinner for ten, I think, was $75. Now, also, if you remember, Penne, at that time, you had to deduct the cost of your dinner and your husband's dinner, even though you'd never be eating this way if you were eating alone. But that had to be deducted. No, the dinner wasn't ... it was $40, which in 1956 was a lot of money ... $40 or $50 ... I don't remember. But $75 comes in, because that's what I got in representational funds after two years. We left the post $3000 in debt only for doing representational entertaining.

Q: I see.

RICHARDSON: We had absolutely no funds. Fourth of July, we really did the tackiest things, you know. All the wives got together and made little sandwiches. It wasn't very elegant, but there was no money.

Q: Right.

RICHARDSON: But I must say, I enjoyed doing this. There was an unspoken rule there though, which obviously I had broken, because someone had to tell me about it, that you don't invite Americans, French and Senegalese to the same party, because the French didn't like it and no one was really entertaining the Senegalese, except the very high echelons in the French government. I made the mistake of doing that, and someone let me know that wasn't done. So, what I did after that was just have Americans and Senegalese. You don't have the French with them. But we made a few Senegalese friends. Later, in another post, we met a Senegalese man, Mr. Diop who was Counselor for the President of Niger, and we met him, he recognized us, and we became good friends. Later saw him again in Paris, and Mrs. Diop would make up a big pot of fish and rice and give it to me to take home after we'd eaten dinner.

Something else I learned ... one thing I learned ... because I wasn't sophisticated enough ... we were giving a dinner party with Senegalese, and I said our table sat ten. It sat ten crowded. Eight would have been a little more comfortable. In the middle of the afternoon, one of the Senegalese gentlemen called and said that his uncle was in town and could he bring him to dinner. I got very flustered, because it was right at the beginning of my stay in Dakar. I called Cy, and Cy was also at the beginning of his tour and he said, "I'll call and explain the table."

Well, this was a terrible insult. And that's the last time I had a sit-down dinner ... the first and last with Senegalese. It is always buffet, because if someone's mother, brother, uncle or cousin is in town, they are automatically included in your dinner party. I only made that mistake once. I realized it, because I'm sure it was forgiven, because afterwards, anyway, he'd call and say, well, you know, "My aunt is in town." And I would say, "of course, bring her."

Q: It was the same in Pakistan. It may be a Moslem kind of trait. Well, let's move on to Vietnam. I find that very interesting, because you arrived in Vietnam when (our involvement) in the war was two years old. Is that right?

RICHARDSON: No.

Q: No?

RICHARDSON: Not our war. We were in Vietnam '59 to '61.

Q: Oh, that's right.

RICHARDSON: The war had been going on for years. As a matter of fact, we were restricted in Vietnam from the day we arrived. We couldn't even go without an escort, supposedly, to the

Cao Dai Temple, which was about thirty miles outside of Saigon. But, at the time, there wasn't any big concentration of American soldiers. I think, officially, we had a thousand advisors there. Probably unofficially we had more, but no great concentration. We were very lucky. Cy and I made probably the last trip of any official American from Saigon up to the dividing line between North and South Vietnam. We were there for the first coup ... the Armistice Day, November 11th coup, that lasted only a day. They obviously didn't want to kill President Diem and they didn't, and the coup failed.

A very amusing incident, because it was November 11th. There was never a Marine Ball in the years when we were in Saigon, because they didn't want that concentration of Americans in one place. But there was a cutting of the cake. And our DCM said, (we were all going to the Rudolph Serkin concert and this was black tie), and the DCM said, "I have a driver and there's no sense trying to park there, so why don't you, Cy and Pearl, come with us." And we did. After the concert, we drove back to the Cunningham's house and had a drink. We had left our car there. When we got ready to leave, Cy said, "You know, I know it's 12:30, but we haven't had anything to eat. Let's go to a little soup place that's after hours." You could go and get a bowl of Pho, marvelous Vietnamese soup.

Well, we'd go there and have a bowl of soup, and a lot of people are around there, Canadians around us, Australians, Americans, and one of the American women from AID said, "Look. We're going on to our house, and the guitarist is coming. Would you and Cy

like to come?" So I said, "Fine". We did. Mary Pat Hughes was the secretary of the political section in Saigon among the guests. We left, arriving home about three in the morning. As Cy was closing the shutters, he could not hear the guns, but he could see the tracers.

Well, we didn't realize it, but they were shooting up the police station behind our house, and we didn't know that at the time. And Cy just looked at me. He tried calling the security officer, and the phone was busy. He said, "Oh well, someone has gotten to him. I don't know what it is, but I'm going into the Embassy. And I think I'd better get out of my dinner jacket." As he was driving to the Embassy, Mary Pat Hughes was waiting downstairs, because she knew that Cy would be along. And Cy said, "Mary Pat, I don't know what it is, but I know we're going to need a secretary. Do you want to come?" And she said, "Absolutely. I'll change my clothes." And I think they were the first people at the Embassy. Of course, the coup went on. The Embassy was separated from the Residence, The Ambassador couldn't get to the Embassy, so they set up two offices.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

RICHARDSON: The Ambassador was Elbridge Durbrow, with whom we're still in contact. He was an older man and he was marvelous for the morale of the post. I don't know anything about his professional abilities, but one thing I do know is that Cy was his aide. Now, the Vietnamese thought an aide was a more important thing, but we know it's a flunky position. Cy was Durbrow's aide for nine months ... any more would have killed him, because he lost so much weight. Derby's schedule was in my pocketbook, on my bathroom mirror, at every telephone, in Cy's pocket ... I can tell you the man didn't have time to go to the bathroom! The Palace would always call us at home. Our home was an extension of the American Embassy. If they wanted ... Cy was Protocol Officer for the Embassy ... and the Palace would always call wanting to find out about seating.

The one thing this man did, the first thing he said to Cy was ... I can't possibly tell you (everything) about the day of Cy's meeting him for the first time, but that was very amusing. That man was marvelous! He has a blue tongue, but as one of the women told me, "He may have a blue tongue, but he never forgets to say 'thank you'." And there was nobody at that Embassy who wouldn't have died for him, because they knew he would be right there with them. The first thing he said to Cy was, "The one thing you have to remember, young man, is officers are a dime a dozen; good secretaries are hard to find."

Q: Marvelous.

RICHARDSON: On Valentine's Day, he'd say to Cy, "Have Pearl go buy the two biggest boxes of candy she can find in Saigon ... one for the women in the Political Section and one for the women in Communications." And he always did that. He gave Cy standing orders. The Ambassador gave a representational cocktail at least every three weeks, and I'm talking 200 to 300 people. The standing orders were, whoever came into the Embassy who ranked zero and up were automatically invited to the next representational cocktail.

He also held an open house every Sunday, whether he was in the country or out of the country. He ran a badminton tournament, and it was "come for a drink, come in shorts, slacks, for badminton."

Now, everyone thought this was very nice, but for the Ambassador, this was a working night, because it was the only time the press could get in. Open house, and he would be working. The morale at that post was marvelous. After the coup, everything died down. Certainly the Ambassador was getting Meritorious Service awards for the people in the Political Section and the people in Communications, but if he hadn't bothered, they wouldn't have gotten a cash award. And he made sure they got money. He thought that glory was fine, but money was very useful to these people who worked so hard.

Cy later said he wouldn't have been his DCM for all the tea in China. The higher up you got, the more you took from him. I suppose his attitude was, if you reach this rank, then you have to take it. Once we saw Derbie in Paris. There was a man from USIA, and he and Cy were moving chairs so they could have a jazz thing, and Chet looked at Cy and said, "Cy, don't we ever stop working for him?" (laughs) "You know, it was years ago," he said, "and here we are moving furniture."

Q: Was there a Mrs. Durbrow?

RICHARDSON: Yes. Well, we didn't know at the time that Emily was dying of cancer, and she was out of the country. She was home for chemotherapy, and we didn't realize it at the time. But Emily was a very, very nice person, socially undemanding. It was nice being the aide, even though you worked yourself to death, because we were invited every place that the Ambassador went. There was only one constriction. You could not accept an invitation without it going all the way upstairs, so I conveniently never carried a date book, and if people offered the most casual invitation, I would have to say, "Oh, I'm so sorry. I left my date book home. May I call you?" And then I would send the request upstairs.

A number of times it was refused. I remember one British political officer meeting Cy in the street and saying, "Cy, they didn't let you come, did they?"

Q: They weren't fooled for a minute, were they?

RICHARDSON: Right. The most telling thing there, you know, we had the International Control Commission, so the Canadians, Australians, the Indians and the Poles ... well, we couldn't invite the Poles, but we would see them at the other functions ... and somehow or other, I became friendly with the head of the Polish delegation, whose name has just slipped my mind. But he had to write the Polish Constitution after the War. He was a very erudite man ... Andrev ... and he was very handsome. Cy said he was very tired of everybody telling him how handsome Andrev was. Now, whenever I spoke to Andrev I was very, very careful to speak only about Russian literature. That's all we ever talked about, except when Gary Powers was shot down (the U-2 Incident over the Soviet Union

during the Eisenhower Administration), and Andrev was talking to me at a party and he said, "Oh, well, he's going to get off soon, because you're going to send an American lawyer." And I said, "Well, Andrev, you know better than that. Obviously, American lawyers don't practice in Moscow."

We were very good friends, but as Andrev was leaving, he ran into me on the street. We knew he was leaving and we knew there was an official party for his departure, to which we were invited. He said, "Pearl, you know this is the official party, but I'm giving a private party for just the people I really like, and I would love for you and Cy to come." I knew we couldn't go, but fortunately, we were leaving that day for Cambodia to see Angkor Wat, and I could confidently say, "Oh, I'm so sorry that we're leaving today." We found out later from Australians and Brits and others that we were the only American couple invited to his party, but I would have felt very badly to have to write a formal regret, because I did have to do it on another occasion. You got all kinds of invitations for cocktail parties and then a scrawled note saying, "Looking forward to you joining us for dinner." I was told when it went upstairs that I had to write the most formal refusal. Usually I had to get out Emily Post, and I said, "You know, Cy, this is pretty stupid. It was an informal invitation. Couldn't I refuse?" "No," they said, "it had to be a very formal reply."

One thing I'd like to mention is that Vietnam was not only our second post, but it was also our first Embassy. Anything I learned about protocol, which I've since come to realize is nothing more than good manners, I learned in Vietnam. The spouses of all the heads of all the agencies ... and I include *all* the agencies ... were not only knowledgeable women, but they were very friendly, open women.

When I arrived in Vietnam, I was given a list of, I think it was, eighteen people to call on. It was no question of do you get a car or anything like that, but you make your way anyway you can. Vietnam was very easy. There were taxis; there were "pedi" cabs outside your door. We were living at the time in a little box ... I mean, it was just a little box. One of the younger women at the post said, "Pearl, you do realize that Emily Gardner will return your call?" Now, Emily Gardner was the wife of the head of AID, and she had like a thousand women calling on her. And I said, "Oh, don't be silly. She's not going to return my call." I came back one day to find her cards there with whichever corner turned down.

These women were very formal. They also had formal calling hours, which I thought was a good thing, because you went and you got to know everybody in a small group. Also, when I became active in the community, I always knew if I wanted to see Emily for some reason or other, if I wanted to see the Ambassador's wife, I could come into the Residence at the end of the calling hour and know I wouldn't be disturbing them for five minutes. I didn't have to call and make an appointment. But I remember once when we were leaving Vietnam, I called the DCM's wife and I said, "Do you think it's proper for me to make a call on so and so," and the only thing she said to me was, "Pearl, you're never at fault in making a call." And that's all. What I realized later was that protocol is really nothing but good manners.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: And I remember at other posts, which really had nothing to do with rank, when I would see teenage children sitting on the floor as elders came in to see their parents, they never even got up from the floor to greet them just as a sign of respect. These people were older than they were. They were not their contemporaries. And I always just thought that was poor manners. I suppose that's what protocol is ... is manners.

Q: I think so, too. It makes a great deal of common sense to drop cards and make calls, even though it's a hassle sometimes, but how but how else are you going to meet people? It's a way of getting into a community right away and being part of the system. It just makes sense.

RICHARDSON: You could even leave out the cards, but if you have formal calling hours somehow or another, and you're in small groups where you get to know (people), because Saigon, even though later it probably became an enormous, enormous post, I thought it was a pretty big post.

It was one of our favorite posts. We loved the Vietnamese, but I think I was in the Embassy in the two years (we were there) perhaps twice. Both times the Ambassador asked to see me. Cy worked horrendous hours ... I mean, sixty to seventy hours a week. When he came home for lunch, who knew? But I never went into the Embassy. Both times, the Ambassador asked to see me. One time was about choosing a gift for Emily, who, as I said, we didn't realize was dying of cancer. The other time, Emily was out of town, and he gave me his market book and said, "Pearl, would you go over my market book, please?" And I did, and I remember writing ... you know, he insisted we call him Derbie, but in the Embassy, it was always Mr. Ambassador ... and I wrote, “Dear Mr. Ambassador, My servant steals too, but not on such a grand scale!”

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: And I thought that told the whole story. (laughs)

Only one last thing on protocol. At that time, American Embassy personnel were expected at a party ten minutes early. They were not there as guests, they were there to help entertain and represent the United States in the country they were living in. Cy came home one night and said ... (By the way, in our tour in Vietnam, we were out every single night or we had people in. I have never had such a busy social life. It is the most horrendous climate I've every lived in. I remember one thing I said to Cy was, "I would love to leave this apartment dry." I was always soaking wet. Yet amazingly enough, no one ever talked about climate because the place was so interesting that you forgot about it) ... Cy said there was going to be a big party at the Residence, which was really being given by the General. They were just using the Residence. The General, of course, had

two captains as aides, and he didn't think we would have to go. Cy said, "No, we're not going."

The night of the function, he races home and he said, "I think we'd better go."

I said, "Wait a minute, I can't possibly be there on time."

He said, "That's all right. You come late."

I said, "You told me we didn't have to go. It's a military thing."

He said, "Yes, but it is at the Residence, and if anything goes wrong, you know Derbie's going to hang me. It's going to be my neck."

I get there as fast as I can, but I am at least twenty minutes into the cocktail, maybe close to a half hour, and I'm going through the receiving line. The first thing the Ambassador said to me was, "Cy didn't tell you you were coming did he?" He let me know that he knew I would never be late. And that was worth a lot to people there, because they knew that the Ambassador understood. He once came to my house with a bouquet of roses for my birthday. He said, "You didn't invite me to your party, but here I am anyway with flowers."

Q: He sounds like an absolutely fantastic man.

RICHARDSON: We never invited him, because Cy said if he's got fifteen minutes, let him sleep. But the lower rank you were, if you were a communicator or a secretary and you invited him, he made sure to go. This man went to three cocktails, maybe to two dinners every single night. But what I liked about him was: Cy said, "You know, we don't need to (invite him) because he knows how we feel about him. We don't need to invite him. Let him rest. Let Emily rest." Well, Emily always looked poorly, but as I said, we didn't realize she was so ill.

Q: Was he an older man?

RICHARDSON: At that time, no.

Q: No. Is he still living?

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: But she is not?

RICHARDSON: No. He remarried, I think somebody he knew in high school, and they just moved out to California. They used to live right here on Porter Street in the District, and as I said, he's got a hell of a temper, a terrible tongue. Some of the things I will not

tell you that he calls people, but ...

Q: ... but a great human being.

RICHARDSON: ... he was a great human being for the post.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: The morale of the post. The fact that the Residence was open to all the Americans at any time, you know, is very, very nice, and I gather that afterwards this was all changed.

Q: Tell me about Vietnam, though, and the War. Did you feel it was brewing?

RICHARDSON: Oh yes.

Q: At that time, how involved were we?

RICHARDSON: The War had been going on a long while. Now Dien Bien Phu was 1954 (Before World War II, Vietnam was a part of French Indochina. Although the Japanese occupied Indochina during World War II, much of the area came under French control again after the War, but Ho Chi Minh, the Communist leader of the League for the Independence of Vietnam, had disagreements with France. Fighting broke out on December 19, 1946 and continued for eight years when the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu), and, of course, we were going to be taking over for the French. My attitude was that we learned absolutely nothing from the French, as we can see from our War.

What it did though, in Saigon, is that we were never friendly with the French, because we came in sort of in between. They had just lost. There were lots of French there. We had some French friends, but we were never invited to the French Embassy. We were never invited to anything official with the French. It was an entirely separate thing. We made individual friends, but not anybody official.

We did get a change though to make a marvelous trip in our little Volkswagen, you know, up through the Delta and everything like that. I remember we went from Motduc to Kontum, where we only had five men, and they put a pot of spaghetti on the table. The most formal place we were in, when they had to wait for the Colonel to sit down to dinner with Banmethout and maybe there were thirty, forty people there. But in Kontum they said, "How did you get here? it's an escort-road only." Cy said the last thing we wanted was an escort. You know, we did fine.

We loved Vietnam. We bought our little Volkswagen, which we had for eleven and a half years, in Vietnam, and the first trip we made was to Cambodia to Angkor Wat. (Angkor Wat is a temple that lies five miles south of Angkor, considered to be the finest architectural creation of Cambodia. It is the ruins of the ancient capital city of Cambodia,

established in 802, but abandoned around 1431 after its capture by the Thai. French archaeologists rediscovered the city about 1860.) And when I think now that we got to Angkor and it's going back to what it was when Marechal first found it in the jungle ...

But we still have a soft spot. Cy was over at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) last week, and he went to a Vietnamese restaurant and he went every day. That's all we ate on our trip through Vietnam ... boiled soup ... and we thought that's fine to eat.

We had a small commissary in Vietnam -- maybe it was a big commissary -- but the only thing I ever bought there was liquor, which, of course, was rationed. You were entitled -- I think it was done by rank for how many adults -- maybe two bottles of scotch a month, but if you were giving a party, you could submit a request and have liquor for your party. That was an attempt to control the black market, but I bought paper products there, liquor and cleaning products only. I don't think I bought a single item of food, because the markets were so beautiful and they were so full of everything fresh.

And we were never ill, even though we ate the strawberries from Da Lat, which you weren't supposed to eat. They were absolutely marvelous. And the lettuce. Yet, we knew one couple who never ate anything from the local markets, except something they could boil ...

Q: ... and they were sick all the time?

RICHARDSON: ... and they were sick all the time. They bought everything from the Commissary and they were sick all the time.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: People ask us when we've had so many posts, "What's your favorite?" Well, I have to say ... I have to go by continent, but Saigon comes close to being our favorite of all times, even though, as Cy said, we worked so hard. He lost fifteen pounds, and we were assigned directly. We thought, when we left Vietnam ... "Oh, wouldn't it be nice? We have to come in from the Pacific. We'll see the Pacific Northwest of the United States." We're Easterners. But orders come in: "Be in Lagos, Nigeria, yesterday. Do not pass by the United States." I think today they cannot tell you not to go to the United States. (But it was) an absolute refusal: "Don't go to the United States."

Well, the Ambassador realized ... he sent back a cable. He was leaving, and he said that Mr. Richardson may not leave before he leaves. So that when the Ambassador left, Cy left three days later. What the Ambassador also put into the cable was that he (Cy) was going on direct transfer and had had no leave in the three years. (The Ambassador) made a request for Cy to take a (boat) trip from Saigon to Marseilles ... and that was Cy's vacation.

As he tells it, it was marvelous. They told me there was no room on the ship for me, and

Cy would be sharing a cabin. He said at every stop he'd look to see, and no one got on. He had this enormous state room with a terrace all to himself. I followed by plane the next day, only I was making my first trip to India and I got deathly ill in India drinking what I thought was bottled water ... obviously, it wasn't ... on a tour bus. And whereas I arrived in Marseilles, Cy was ready to go and rested, and I was sort of dragging with an intestinal infection I'd had. But it was another example of what the Ambassador had done. If he hadn't asked that Cy wanted to take the ship, Cy would have had no vacation.

Q: Right.

RICHARDSON: But he did, and he realized that Cy needed it. I mean, it was a pressure thing and tremendously long hours. But with all the work and everything, you ask Cy today, he'll say, "Marvelous post."

Q: We were in Afghanistan, as I say, and that was our favorite post, as you say Vietnam was your favorite post. And both of them have gone as far as we're concerned. So, do you feel ... as we feel about Afghanistan ... a real sadness?

RICHARDSON: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Q: It's sort of haunting, I would imagine.

RICHARDSON: Absolutely. But I also feel the same thing about Afghanistan because, you know, when we were in Iran, we made a three-week trip to Afghanistan.

Q: That's right.

RICHARDSON: That whole thing over there is from Afghanistan. (points to a bar in the room).

Q: It is?

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: What is it? A bar?

RICHARDSON: That little piece of carpet with the bells on it.

Q: Oh, that. I see, that. Not the bar.

I'm going to skip over your next posts, if I may, because I think we can have another day of interviewing, because you went on to Lagos, Nigeria, and Niger, and then France and Belgium, and Ghana, and Quito. But I want to skip over to Iran, if I may, because I think that's what I really want to understand. So, we're skipping really from the fifties up to May of 1978.

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: When you went to Iran, you went directly from Ecuador, is that right?

RICHARDSON: No, no.

Q: You had leave?

RICHARDSON: Yes, and Cy had some ... I suppose you could say ... we both had some training in Farsi. I would go to class and I could remember a few words, but l never learned to write and would forget.

Q*: Were you surprised to be suddenly shifted from Africa, South America, to Iran? It was totally different from anything you had had.*

RICHARDSON: Yes, yes, but I was looking forward to it, because I hadn't seen that part of the world. I really was looking forward to it.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: But as far as I'm concerned, it was a tremendous disappointment from the day I arrived.

Q: I would imagine. And Cy was to be what there? Was he the Consul?

RICHARDSON: Yes, the Consul.

Q: Which is what Dick Morefield took over? Is that right? Later?

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: So, when you arrived, first of all, where did you live in Iran? Were you up in Shimran?

RICHARDSON: No, we weren't as far as Shimran. When we finally found our apartment, it was on Golestan Shish, off Saltanatabad. Shish is seven, I think, off Saltanatabad. And what's interesting is that just yesterday we had a phone call from our former landlady and landlord in Iran, from California. They always call us. They're marvelous people. They are Bahais. Cy pushed them out of the country before we got out of the country.

Q: Thank goodness.

RICHARDSON: And I'm trying to think of where we were living. We must have been living in some temporary apartment, because I think I looked at over eighty apartments.

Now, what I found out later was there was really no limit on the housing allowance. I will not mention the name of the Admin officer there at the time, but he decided he could pay whatever you wanted. But this is not the way that Cy operates. Cy takes care of the Government's money as if it were the last two pennies you could rub together and they belong to him.

He gave me the impression that I could only look at things within a certain limit. Well, the first apartment I saw is the first one (I liked), and I said, "Cy, I saw a lovely apartment." And he said, 'How much is it?' I told him, and he said, "Well, forget about it." So, I didn't forget about it, but I was looking all over. When I saw something might be liveable, I would say, "Cy, would you join me to look at it?" Nothing was very nice, and then I said to Cy, "You know, I really like this apartment." It was on the ground floor. It had a small pool. It was brand new. The landlord lived upstairs. And it was well constructed, you know, the faucets worked. It was being lived in by an American couple who had had it for two years when it was a new building, and everything was so fresh and clean.

Now, the rent that was being asked was the rent ... they were in private business, and private business paid on enormous amount of money for these apartments in Tehran. But I liked the wallpaper, because the landlord had let the American couple choose the wallpaper, the kitchen fixtures. Very, very nice people, and I really liked it. I decided that this is the Middle East, and you must be able to bargain. In the Middle East, Near East, what have you, you have to be able to bargain. I thought, "Why should I pay this money? If Cy says we can't pay this money, I'll bargain."

There was an Iranian in the Iranian Foreign Service, I think Section A, which dealt with Americans, a young woman, Sheherazad (Sherry), and I called her one day. We had become friends from meeting at cocktail parties. She was a good deal younger than myself, and I said, "Sherry." And she said, "Oh, I know those people. They're Bahais." And she told me, "You know, my mother became a Bahai." I said, "Oh?" And she said, "Yes, I know them ... the Rabbanis ... very well." And I said, "Would you be my intermediary and why don't you talk to them?" So, she called them and offered them so many "tomans" less, and they said "no". This went on for six weeks. Then, one day, Sherry called me. She said, "Pearl, an American couple has just arrived. They are not with the Embassy and they are willing to pay the Rabbani's price, so I think you'd better forget about the apartment.

Q: So much for bargaining, right?

RICHARDSON: Right. So I said, "Sherry, call me and let me know." She called the next day and said the Rabbanis wouldn't rent to them. I said, "Wait a minute, Sherry. They know they're not getting that kind of money from us." "Yes," she said, "but they have two teenage boys." I said, "The American couple living there have two teenage girls." She said, "You've got it right. That's the difference. They were girls and they have a very young six-year old young daughter, and they do not want teenage boys."

When it got to within 25,000 “rials” of the price I wanted to pay, I said, "Sherry, this is fine." I met the Rabbanis. So I was invited to tea. As you know, the usual fruit bowl, the most magnificent cucumbers in the world, because you eat them (raw). You know, the one thing I remember about Iran as far as the food was concerned (was they have) the best melons I've ever eaten in my life, as well as in Afghanistan. And the cucumbers, which were never my favorite food, were marvelous. Well, I met the Rabbanis, and then they invited Cy, and I think they liked us, not because we had no children, but I think they really wanted to rent to someone from the Embassy. They realized we would take care of the place and they liked us personally. We moved in in July.

Q: So you were two months in a hotel? Where were you?

RICHARDSON: We were in some temporary apartment. Either July or sometime in August, because the first week of September was the first big riot that I remember where people were killed, and it was downhill after that.

Q: Was that the movie house that was set on fire?

RICHARDSON: That was later.

Q: That was later.

RICHARDSON: That to me was one of the most horrible things.

Q: When did the Ayatollah (Khomeini) come? I've forgotten. February?

RICHARDSON: February (1979). He came the day before I left.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: I saw him arrive on television, and I left the next day.

But what's marvelous about this: We go in. The Embassy has to look at it for security. From the security point of view, it was very bad. It was on a dead-end street, but they were so impressed with the way the house could be closed off. We had a guest wing that could be closed off. My kitchen ... all the locks worked ... and I had phones everyplace. The only thing the Embassy did, they put in a peephole, because what we discovered is that once I opened that door, people were in the building, and I can't see anyone. We had only one window on the street, and right after we moved in, Cy said, "Pearl, I think we have to move the fire extinguisher out of the kitchen, because if anyone's going to throw anything, this is the only window they could throw it into, and you don't want a fire extinguisher where the bomb is. You want it someplace where you can get at it."

And it was just beautiful. It was supposed to be furnished, but according to rank, it was a

very big apartment. They delivered the furniture, and the day they delivered the furniture, the DCM's wife was with me.

Q: Was that Jean Naas?

RICHARDSON: Jean Naas.

Q: Good friends of ours. (Bruce and Penne Laingen had known Charlie and Jean Naas in Kabul, Afghanistan, from 1968 to 1971. Charlie was DCM to Ambassador William Sullivan in Iran at the time of the February 14th one-day takeover of the American Embassy and he stayed on as Chargé d'Affaires during exceedingly turbulent times until Bruce Laingen replaced him in June 1979.)

RICHARDSON: And Jean looked at it and she said, "Where is the rest of the furniture?" And the people delivering said, "Well, Mrs. Naas, this is it." And Jean looked around, and there was a whole space as big as that dining room that had absolutely nothing in it. Well, Mr. Toma, who was a Christian at the Embassy who was in charge, I suppose ... I don't know (if he was) in charge of General Services or what ... I went down to the Embassy and I said, "Mr. Toma, do you have any old furniture that I could have recovered? Come to the house and see how bare it is." And he did, and he finally ...

There was an Indian loveseat with the carved wood. It was very uncomfortable, but it was a seating space. And he said, "For the moment, I really don't have anything. If anything comes in, I'll keep you in mind. One day, a couple of weeks later, trucks unloaded an enormous sofa ... a four-place sofa, not very nice, but it looked grand ... not very nice in the sense of flowered patterns. So before they got it into the house, (I asked them about it) because Mr. Toma had said he had no furniture for me. The head man of the crew said, "Mrs. Richardson, this was made for somebody else. It was recovered for somebody else, and she did not like it." She had picked the fabric, but she didn't like it when she saw it, and Mr. Toma said take it to Mrs. Richardson. She won't mind. (laughs)

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: Which was fine. He was one of the few local employees I called before I left to say goodbye and to thank him, because when, for example ... Oh!, the Embassy, of course, delivered a refrigerator and a freezer the first week we were in the apartment, and the refrigerator didn't work at all. My landlady sent down food enough for six people every single night. Then, I found out that, I'd made something for her too and sent it up, but Cy said to me the tradition is you never sent a dish back empty. "You're going to spend the rest of your tour here cooking for the landlady. But she showed me that I didn't have to do that. When she sent back my dish, she put a rose in it. Just as long as it's not empty.

Q: Empty.

RICHARDSON: ... that I didn't always have to cook. She brought me a magnificent plant, and one of the American women there, whose husband was in private business and she does flower arranging at the White House here today, looked at the plant and she said, "Even an Iranian could not have spent less than $75 for this." It was an enormous thing. And they were just lovely people. Well, we hadn't been in the apartment a month when he came down ... her English was non-existent and his was very poor ... and he said they thought it would be better if we took our name out of the bell ...

Q: Oh?

RICHARDSON: ... that it would be fine if it were only an Iranian name in the bell.

Q: So you began to feel the anti-Americanism? It was obvious?

RICHARDSON: It was obvious. But also, we got to use our apartment for two big lunches, and that was it. Then our household effects arrived. They arrived the day before we left for our marvelous three-week tour of Afghanistan. We put the crates (in the apartment), locked the door and left. Well, things went from bad to worse. I never, in the nine months I was in Tehran ... nine months, ten months ... I never felt comfortable as an American. I never felt comfortable as a woman. And Cy never felt comfortable for me in those positions, yet Cy felt perfectly at ease, and I did in Afghanistan.

Q: Exactly.

RICHARDSON: We traveled around Afghanistan. I followed the rules. When I got to Kabul, I went to the tourist office, as I was told to do, and tried to make appointments to go to Bamian, this thing and the other. (Bamian, sometimes spelled Bamiyan, is an old Buddhist city in a valley, northwest of Kabul, with cave dwellings and the remnants of two gigantic carved statues of Buddhist saints. In 1220 Genghis Khan invaded Central Asia, and the following year, in pursuit of the last representative of the Khwarizm Empire, Jalal-ud-din, he passed down the southern valleys of the Hindu Kush and utterly destroyed the old Buddhist city.)

They couldn't have been less interested. After I had done what I was supposed to, I went out and hired a private taxi driver, who traveled with us the three days. Then we'd go back to Kabul and then go on the road again. The taxi had bald tires. It was a Russian car, spotlessly clean, and every place we went, we only ate in "chaikhanas", you know, the tea houses. There was never a woman there. I never went with bare arms, but I never did that in any Moslem country. (Transcriber's note: This was quite a feat for the Richardsons, since the drive to Bamian takes nine hours over unpaved roads, through narrow gorges and precipitous mountain passes, and there are no hotels or restaurants along the way.)

Q: Right.

RICHARDSON: My skirts were never anything but way below the knee, but I also never

covered my hair unless I was wearing a hat for the sun. But they would look at me for one minute and that was that. In Tehran, you could never go into a mosque. It was only one ... well, I don't know what you'd call it ... disaffected? ... that was open for tourists. Those were the elegant mosques that you saw in Shiraz and Isfahan that were open to tourists. But in Tehran, you never did.

In Afghanistan, all men were sitting out and saying, "Please, come in." And in Afghanistan, they were very religious. They have the Mosque of the Hair of Mohammad, the Mosque of the Cloak of Mohammad, that are very holy places, but I was welcome to go in.

Q: Funny that you would say that, Pearl, because we were in Afghanistan from 1968 to 1971 and traveled to Iran, to Meshed. I had the exact same reaction. I felt, in the most remote parts of Afghanistan, safer. And I really feared for my life in Meshed, because Bruce wanted to go into the mosque, and they had given me a very dirty, filthy chador. And I said, "No, I wouldn't do that." So I waited for him in a little shop, but I had a policeman come in and in perfect English say to me, very gruffly, "What are you doing here? What do you want?" And I was frightened. I was frightened a great deal of the time in Iran.

RICHARDSON: What's interesting ...

Q: I don't know why that difference.

RICHARDSON: ... by the time we got there, you couldn't even go in a mosque with a chador.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: Now, we did not get to Meshed, because when we were making our trip to Afghanistan, we didn't go to ... what is it? ... Herat that's across from Meshed?

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: Because Cy said, "I'm going to have to inspect Meshed, and then we'll come across to Herat." And, of course, that never came about. I always regretted it. But there was a mosque that people, I understand, sort of sneaked into, not far outside of Tehran, where the Shah's mother was buried or something like that. And this woman was disguised in the chador. It wasn't a matter of just putting on the chador. She could not be an Infidel.

Well, Cy's explanation of why we felt more comfortable in Afghanistan is an interesting one. He said that the Afghans were not threatened by us. They knew maybe they were back in the 12th Century, where Iran was trying desperately to go, but Iran was so westernized that we were a threat, women, free women.

Q: But my point is also that even ten years before you got to Tehran, that atmosphere existed. So it was not something that came about with the Shah's downfall and the coming in of Khomeini. It existed ... this prejudice against the white Christian Infidel woman or the white Jewish-Christian woman or whatever, Infidel woman ... anybody who was not a Moslem. It was there. It wasn't just a new thing that came about at the time you were there.

RICHARDSON: That's true. We had such marvelous experiences there in certain respects. Once, we were in Horns in Syria, and Homs is a very religious city, like Qum in Iran. "Be very, very careful. Even little girls wear the chador. Very careful." Well, we were with a driver/guide, and I walked ahead, knowing that they were behind me. And an elderly woman ... I thought she was elderly from her voice ... I could hardly see her. She only had a quarter of an eye showing like you see in Libya. And she tugs at my sleeve and says, "American?" And at that point, I don't know what to do. I know they're behind me. They can see me, and I say, "Yes." I mean, in broken English, she says, "Maybe you know my brother in Oklahoma?"

Q: Oh, wonderful.

RICHARDSON: And I thought, here I'm supposed to be terrified. We're going to see an old "nariad", waterwheel, and all this woman wants to know is maybe I know her brother in Oklahoma. That ... you know ... amusing things.

We were in Qum from Isfahan. Cy went down to inspect Isfahan, Shiraz, and I don't know if he went down to inspect Tabriz. But we got to Isfahan, and the young vice consul who was supposed to meet us at the airport was not there.

We went in a taxi to the Shahabas, the beautiful hotel, and it is ringed with military. Our consul had gotten into some kind of scuffle. He had been stabbed, not badly, in his hand. Cy called him and said, "Do you want me to stay?" And he said, "No". So the next day ...

Q: Do you remember his name?

RICHARDSON: No. No, I don't.

Q: He was stabbed? How come?

RICHARDSON: There was an argument with a Bell Helicopter employee in a taxi, and he got involved in it. It wasn't an American-Iranian thing.

Q: I see.

RICHARDSON: But there was a lot of tension going on. I'm trying to think when the riot in Mecca was. Was this about the same time? I'm not sure of the exact date.

Q: It was December, I believe, because (it was) when the Embassy was burned in Pakistan.

RICHARDSON: And roasted people.

Q: Yes. And didn't the Mecca follow that very closely? (Actually, the burning of the American Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, took place in November 1978 as a reaction to the serious riot in Mecca which had occurred a day or so before.)

RICHARDSON: It was something that happened about the time we were in Isfahan, because there was a great deal of anti-American feeling. We were going from Isfahan to Shiraz and we went by public bus. Cy said to me, "I think maybe this is the best place to be today." We were the only foreigners on this bus and we were obviously foreigners. People could not have been more considerate.

The bus, by the way, was beautiful. Each person had his or her own cup. They passed out water. On this bus was a marvelous young woman with her elderly father. She was wearing a chador, but one of the printed see-through chadors that kept falling off. She kept grabbing it on again, but she probably wasn't interested in the chador. And I often wondered if she ever got married, because she was just too independent to put up with this nonsense. At every stop, every comfort stop, she would rush out and motion to me to wait, and she would rush into the bathroom and then she'd say, "Yes, come in." She was inspecting the bathroom.

Q: Oh.

RICHARDSON: It wasn't anything but a hole in the floor anyway, but she was seeing whether it was good enough.

Q: But in that part of the world, it was a bathroom! (laughs) It didn't matter what it was.

RICHARDSON: (laughs) Cy couldn't get over her, because he said, "She's never going to make it in this society."

Q: No.

RICHARDSON: She's too independent, too much get-up-and-go.

Q: She's probably long gone.

RICHARDSON: Yes, that's the unfortunate thing.

Q: But this riot you mentioned ... the first riot ...

RICHARDSON: The first big riot in Jaleh Square? I don't know how many people were killed, but according to the Iranian tradition, a week after that you have a day of mourning and forty days after that you have another day of mourning. The one thing I remember about Iran was that we were always in a period of mourning. I felt that they had nothing but sad holidays ... this muharram where they flagellate themselves. We were constantly getting notes from the Embassy, "Be sure not to play your radio very loud. It's Muharram."

Q: "Don't go out on the street."

RICHARDSON: "Don't go out on the streets." The only happy holiday was Nau Roz, the New Year, but other than that I don't remember a happy holiday. But yet, what can I say? I didn't like the Iranians generally. It was the first country I ever lived in where generally I didn't like the people. But with lots of exceptions.

Q: Of course.

RICHARDSON: What price would you put on: There were three Iranian doctors who lived in Rasht on the Caspian. They called Cy in September of 1979 and said to him, "Things look very bad. If you can make your way to Rasht, we will hide you."

Q: Oh?

RICHARDSON: Now, what price do you put on that? What price do you put on a man whose brother is executed and when he finally gets to the U.S. by the route through Pakistan, the first thing he asks for is Mr. Richardson, "is he a hostage?" Because we weren't giving out names. Now, these are things that you cannot forget.

The landlord, when Cy said to him, "Could you get $150,000 together to get a businessman's visa?" ... Two of his children were in the States, one a high school girl, Nicole, living with a Bahai family, a black Bahai family I might add, in Oklahoma, I think. And Majid, the son whom we later met, who married, living and going to the University of Wisconsin. So Jamal would go back and forth twice a year to see his children. He never took his wife, Rafia, and Cy said, "I think you ought to flee." Bahais were already being killed. And he said to Cy, something we'd never heard an Iranian man say, "But I don't know if my wife would like the United States." So I said, "Christmas is coming. Take her to the United States for Christmas and come back." Well, when they came back after New Year's, as soon as I saw Rafia, I knew they were going. She couldn't talk to me, but in between broken English and broken Farsi, she said, "I didn't have to hide that I was a Bahai, and chicken is so cheap!

Q: Ohhh.

RICHARDSON: The Iranians love chicken, and it was more expensive than meat. And that's the first thing that she said. Well, they left. What they did ... the universities were

closed. They had their nephew from down in Isfahan, where he was going to school, to live in the house, so we would not be alone in the house. But long before this happened, it was so many things going on that the landlord came down one night and said to Cy ... (we could not get fuel for heating and it gets cold) ...

Q: Oh, yes.

RICHARDSON: ... He said, "We have enough fuel for six weeks if we have no heat, just hot water." He said, "It will only last three weeks if we have both. What do you want to do, Mr. Richardson?" And Cy said, "Turn off the heat. We'll have hot water." And I remember distinctly calling Mr. Toma and asking him did he have a scrap of rug, anything that he could give me so we could put it on the kitchen floor under the table. And I remember sitting with my feet on a hot water bottle, in a sweater, with candles, playing Scrabble, listening to the guns and "Allah o Akbar," because the electricity went off every night.

And one day, Cy came home ... you see, originally, when Cy went to Tehran, he was going to drive to the Embassy everyday. Well, he realized right away that that's not possible, and, of course, the Embassy had armored, not armored, but bullet-proofed things. But what I liked about that was that even if he came home at a different time, as they came by a different route and they left at different times, he may have brought home a briefcase of work, but he was there in the house ...

Q: Sure.

RICHARDSON: ... with me. And I knew where he was! One day, he came home and he came in and said, "This will never do, Pearl! You are absolutely silhouetted." Of course, I had lovely kitchen curtains that had been there, but he said, "No, this is the only window on the street, and you're silhouetted in the kitchen." So he found old rags and hung them inside and stood outside until he said, "When I can't see you, that's fine." But it's interesting. I wonder why I didn't think any of this abnormal. I mean, hanging rags in the kitchen!

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: So no one can see me! That I move the fire extinguisher out in case they throw a bomb! That they put in a peephole. That one day I am home, my only window on the street is covered with rags! (laughs)

(End of Tape I)

Q: We were talking about your kitchen window.

RICHARDSON: Yes. Well, that was the only window that I had on the street. One day ... I always looked out the window very carefully. I didn't fling aside the rags, I just peeked

out ... and I saw a station wagon, an American station wagon, with the hood up in front of my apartment building. Now, at this point, I am alone. Cy had previously taken me up to the roof of our building, and he said, "Look around, Pearl. We are the only people on the block." But I never realized that those enormous houses on Golestan Shish extended through to the next block and that all they had in those houses were servants. I did not have a servant, so I was all alone. The most marvelous thing of anything that happened through this whole thing was that the telephone never stopped working.

Q: That is amazing.

RICHARDSON: So I could call people until they left. I could call the Embassy to find out if I could leave my house, which I had to do anytime. The American Woman's Club, which at one time was the largest American woman's club in the world ... we got threatening things. They were going to bomb us. So I was there twice to play bridge, I remember, and that was that. Well, anyway, the car with the hood ... I waited awhile, about fifteen minutes and it was still there, so I called Cy at the Embassy. He said, "Pearl, wait another ten minutes. If it's still there, call back." Obviously, he had something wrong with his hood, something in the motor, and he went away.

Another time, I could see ... this was long before everyone had moved off the block ... that the military people living down the street ... that I could see their car. I saw two Iranians at the car that I knew belonged to this American military man. I couldn't see what they were doing, but I was so petrified that I spent the entire couple of hours at the window waiting for the military man to come home. He came to his house, and I immediately ran out of mine and said, "Please examine your car. Don't get into it. I don't know what they were doing."

Q: What did you think?

RICHARDSON: Well, what were the Iranians doing at the car? I didn't know what they were doing. As it turned out, what they were doing was siphoning gas, but I don't know if they're siphoning gas or putting in a bomb.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: So I did that. During this whole time, the telephone worked. And the garbage collections worked. At six o'clock every morning, the garbage man, the "ashkoli," would ring my bell. The reason he rang my bell was that he knew that what I put on the street was garbage and that anything useable I waited to give to him. So he would ring my bell every day at six o'clock and greet me, and I would give him any plastic containers or bottles that I had.

Now, we had no fuel oil. The landlord then goes. He leaves. His nephew is there. Cy, through an Iranian, makes an arrangement that he can get a delivery of fuel oil, but it has to be at one in the morning, because they were attacking fuel trucks because nobody had

fuel. There were long lines for kerosene, for cooking oil, and the nephew said, "Oh, that's ... I will be there." They filled our tank and, of course, it was foolish, because we left it for the terrorists. Because then we were out of the apartment before we could use up all the fuel oil. I always thought how stupid. Why didn't they put water in the fuel? It was perfectly absurd. We didn't pay a premium, the price was totally amazing. By this point, the schools are closed and the entire American ... the American school was closed, universities are closed, and the entire American dependent community left Tehran.

Q: This was December 1978?

RICHARDSON: The 8th and 9th of December. And the reason they left ... and it was not called an "evacuation", which I think came later when it came to finances ... it was called "voluntary departure." And I'm very glad they later changed it to "evacuation", because there was really nothing voluntary about it, even though the people left. Well, had I had school age children, I would have left with them. The children had no schools, and they worried about their children, so they all left on the 8th and 9th.

Q: In fact, I thought there was a lot of criticism that the families were kept there too long, that they should have gone much before December.

RICHARDSON: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, looking back on it now.

Q: I mean, people were not safe in the streets. They felt their children were being ...

RICHARDSON: No, they weren't safe in the streets, and the wife of our security officer, who recently died ...

Q: Yes, I know ... Clare Bannerman, oh yes.

RICHARDSON: I remember her being pinched on the street in broad daylight. She wasn't provocatively dressed or anything like that, no, no. There were many, many incidents.

Q: Yes. She actually helped me write a paper for the Overseas Briefing Center, and that was one of the things that she said, that it was ironical that her husband was the security officer, but she felt very strongly that the families should not have been kept on, just to, in order to stave off a signal to the Iranians that if the Americans were leaving, a mass exodus, that something was wrong politically. They shouldn't be guinea pigs that way.

RICHARDSON: Yes. I think in most of these places at the beginning, before it gets absolutely terrible, it's left up to the Ambassador. And I think this was his choice. But I probably have another criticism, which I have no basis for saying, but I think at this point, before it happened, Embassy staff should have been ... what's the word I want? ... we should have been getting rid of ...

Q: ... non-essential personnel.

RICHARDSON: Yes. We were too big. Now: the one thing that happened to Cy ... don't forget, we were having to evacuate thousands ... what is it? ... 60,000 people, something like that. Cy took our car. The military had just built a multi-million dollar commissary. It was open like three days, something like that. And Cy thought that the parking lot would be a good staging point, you know, to process people going. So he took our car and drove to the commissary grounds. As he got out of the car, a teenager put a gun to his head and told him not to come back. Well, of course, he called the Embassy and said, "I don't think we'll be using that place as a staging area."

Through all this, I must admit I never knew what evacuation meant. I didn't know that it was either "you can go if you want" or "you have to go", something like that. I just knew people were leaving December 8 and 9th. I thought it was perfect that they should leave then with their children. But I let Cy know that under no circumstances would I go. I had no children. My attitude was that I was going to stay there with him. If he's going to die there, it's going to be perfectly fine for me. I don't have to worry about anybody. Cy never disabused me of my feeling, and I said to him, "Will you get me a job?" He never said anything that "you couldn't get a job," anything like that. All right. Everyone goes off. Who's left at the Embassy? Myself, Economic Counselor's wife ...

Q: Who was Andy Sens?

RICHARDSON: No, no.

Q: Who was Economic?

RICHARDSON: Mills.

Q: Mills? I think it's the Mills we were in Pakistan with.

RICHARDSON: Oh yes?

Q: Yes, I can't remember the name.

RICHARDSON: Lives in Virginia, I think. John and somebody ...

Q: John?

RICHARDSON: Well, we were staying. I mean, there was nobody left, but we were staying. I didn't see any reason not to stay. Comes February. Oh! Now, we're at December 8th and 9th, but then, in January and February, they were starting to go, but not in the tremendous numbers, not the thousands of people.

Q: Not the mass exodus.

RICHARDSON: Not a mass exodus. As a matter of fact, the day before I left, some people left, and Pan Am put them in first class. So I remember Cy calling me. I think I left February 4th. Cy called me February 2nd and he said, "Pearl, you will tell me on the telephone right now where do you want to go - Rome, Athens, Frankfurt, or home?" I said, "Wait a second! I'm not going anyplace. You get me a job." He said, "Pearl, we're not hiring you. The only people to be hired are from Washington, even the PITs (Part-time Intermittent Temporary jobs), everyone is going. I said, "You never told me this." He said, "I know I didn't, but that's it. And you're leaving the day after tomorrow, so you will tell me now on the telephone." And I said ...

Q: Were you prepared at all?

RICHARDSON: Oh, no.

Q: Nothing?

RICHARDSON: No. I said, "Well, I don't know anyone in Frankfurt," forgetting that I knew Frank Nelson, the Personnel Officer. "No, I don't know anybody in Athens. Let's make it Rome, because Inge is there." Now, Inge is someone we've known for years and years. Inge Hemphil, a marvelous woman, and when we went to Tehran, we stopped to see Rome for a day on our way into Tehran. And she said, "Pearl, when you're evacuated" (she didn't say "if" you're evacuated), she said, "when you're evacuated, remember I'm in Rome." And I thought how providential! So, of course, we sent a cable to Inge.

But, I must admit, I really thought my evacuation was temporary. I thought I was going to be back in three months and that's why I didn't go home. That's why I went to Rome. So I stayed in Rome six months, moved on to Paris, and I'm still there. I made one trip home. Lost thousands of dollars in airline tickets bought with American dollars, American Express, because they told me I could go back to Tehran to collect money. We had tickets from Tehran to Sri Lanka and back. We had other tickets, and I got absolutely nothing. I think we lost $2,500 on tickets then.

Q: What about your household effects?

RICHARDSON: Oh, that was fine. They were going to ... when I left, Cy says they're not going to let me stay in this apartment. It's too far from the Embassy. He was moved into a small apartment right opposite the Embassy, Bishan Alley, and they were packing up the household effects. That all went out. But there comes the day of departure.

Q: February 4th.

RICHARDSON: Right. And we are ...

Q: That's ten days before the takeover?

RICHARDSON: We are ready. Cy knows that I know that we're getting powers of attorney, because we remember I could never cash a check at an embassy in Europe unless I had a power of attorney.

Q: That's right.

RICHARDSON: So, we got a power of attorney. We're getting all that. Who's leaving on this Pan Am Flight? Mrs. Sullivan, the Ambassador's wife, Mrs. Mills, and myself. Now, the day before, somebody had left who had been put in first class. Pan Am notified the Embassy that it was too dangerous to come in and get us, and from that moment on, I was furious. I said to Cy, "We have to fly Pan Am. We must fly American airlines, and when push comes to shove, it's too dangerous to come in and and get us?" We're going to the airport, the Ambassador is going with Mrs. Sullivan ... looked like a perfectly ordinary limousine, but you know, it was a tank..armored.

Q: Armored, yes.

RICHARDSON: I mean, really armored! Because once a car got too close to it, and it was just ... probably the chase car, and it was just crunched. And the point was, I was in a jeep that we were not to stop for anything. There was the Ambassador's car, the chase car ... a chase car in the front and the Ambassador, and another chase car. I was close enough that I could see the people in the chase car on their walkie talkies, and our jeep ... and we're going the back way into the airport. We're not going (the front way), and what's going to be is this enormous C-120 cargo plane to take us out, filled in the middle with crates, dogs, everything, the bucket seats, earplugs, no windows ...

Q: No window, yes. And straight to Rome was this?

RICHARDSON: No, Athens, because we have a military base there.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: And I thought to myself ... what an ignominious way for the American Ambassador's wife to leave a country, because no matter what happens, I thought to myself, we know she can't come back, because he won't come back once he leaves, we know that. But it's still ignominious. I felt so sorry for her, because there we were with earplugs, and she had the good sense to have her staff make sandwiches ... there was no food, you know, for us.

And the Ambassador in Athens, of course, was there to meet us and it was nice traveling with the Ambassador's wife, because we stayed overnight there, and then we each made our own planes.

Q: At that time, who was the Ambassador to Greece? It wasn't Monty Stearns, because he came later.

RICHARDSON: No, no. The Political Counselor was the one that handled everything. He took our tickets, you know, and was routing us on to different places. That night was just a lovely stay.
But the incident on the way to the airport really got me. We are very close to one of the entrances we're supposed to go in, and I remember distinctly this, that we were not to stop. We just go. And I see the Ambassador's chauffeur rolling down the window of the car!

Q: ... of the tank.

RICHARDSON: ... of the tank, and I see the chase car behind him going wild. And they're talking, and I'm saying, "You're not supposed to stop!" I don't know what it was. I never found out. They rolled up the windows and went on, but I could just see bombs or anything, and the chase certainly thought this was it ... this is an ambush, you know. I thought, I didn't think any of this was abnormal, which is still worrying me ... that I'm thinking it isn't abnormal.

Q: Not for Iran! (laughs)

RICHARDSON: (laughs) Not for Iran. It's perfectly normal.

Q: Crazy days.

RICHARDSON: Okay. Wherever I went in Europe, I heard nothing but Farsi. It was getting to the pont where I couldn't stand it. I mean, I'd grit my teeth. I'd see all these people, spending their money, and, you know (laughs), I thought it's just terrible. I would call Cy every week, and every time I picked up the phone, as I picked it up, it was $47. Then I'd go upstairs in the Embassy and I'd pay whatever it was, the bill. I found out about February 14. Everything was fine, this that and the other thing. He said we're just working very, very hard.

Q: On the day? February 14th? He said this?

RICHARDSON: No, no, no. I didn't call February 14th, but afterwards, I was worried, so I called.

Q: Oh, yes.

RICHARDSON: You know, they went through ... they looted the Residence and the DCM's. You know the compound had twenty-six acres.

Q: I know.

RICHARDSON: And the Residence was very lovely. Interesting thing, because it

happened later with the hostages. The Iranians stole all the shoes from the Residence. You remember, any hostage came out with the Iranian plastic sandals. I couldn't imagine, they manufactured so many things, don't they make good shoes? Evidently not, because they just, they always took the shoes.

Q: Well, if you're going back to the 4th Century, you don't wear shoes.

RICHARDSON: The funniest thing Cy thinks, before my evacuation. He comes home that night this is February 2nd, was that the night that Khomeini arrived; it was terrible they didn't get home until 10 at night. Traffic in Tehran was terrible to begin with. This was awful. He came home and as I greeted him, he said,"are you packed." I was allowed one suitcase. I said, "No." I didn't have time. He walks into the kitchen and there is meat and chicken lying all over. He said, "what in the world are you doing girl." I said, "I'm cooking. What are you going to do with these lumps of meat and whole chickens." So I defrosted everything in the freezer, I cooked everything. I made packages of twos so he could always have someone. And I wrote directions of how you reheat everything. Cy entertained during that time. He ate all the food in the freezer. He said, "You know, of the three wives going, you're probably the only one cooking."

I decided to go back into Tehran. As I told darling Bruce [Laingen] I hadn't really looked at a Muslim calender and I hadn't really realized it was so close to Ramadan. I met Bruce 4th of July and I remember his greeting to this day, "I am so pleased to meet you Mrs. Richardson, when are you leaving?" In one sentence.

Q: (laughter) And you had just come.

RICHARDSON: I told him I had just arrived, but that I would be out before Ramadan. And he said, "I certainly hope so." And then, as I may have told you the story, the Admin Officer was ... I know his name so well ... wife's name is Marjorie ...

Q: From Ohio.

RICHARDSON: Moore.

Q: Bert Moore.

RICHARDSON: Bert Moore. And he said, "We've evacuated you one time, Mrs. Richardson, and we would not like to have to do it again." And I looked at him and I said, "Yes, Mr. Moore, and you'll send me the bill." He said, "We certainly will." I'll never forget that conversation, because tragically these people that I met then, some of them, of course, had just arrived, were going to be hostages a few months later.

Q: But, tell me, Pearl. If we could back up a little bit to the February 14th occurrence, your husband was the Consul and he must have been seeing more and more Iranians arriving for visas out. Then the day of the takeover, where was he?

RICHARDSON: Cy was at home. Orders had been ... the Consular Section had been closed, by the way ... that unless you had urgent business at the Embassy, do not come in. Cy wouldn't have any urgent business at the Embassy. And a couple of other people who were there were just doing what I would feel, would be making brownie points, by going into the Embassy, because certainly people in the Economic Section would not have urgent business there. So, Cy missed the 14th of February.

Q: Did he stay in the apartment? All day?

RICHARDSON: Yes. He stayed in the apartment all day.

Q: And did he have contact by telephone? With people in the Embassy?

RICHARDSON: Yes, yes. As I said, the one thing that worked throughout the whole mess were the telephones. It was unbelievable. You really could telephone and everything was fine. Later, I spoke to Cy every week. I wrote to him all the time. He had an interesting thing ... I forget who's living in the building with him ... but he'd invite people up to play backgammon and serve them dinner, but he said he thought there would be more drinking than there was ... with the men left alone. But he said they didn't. Somebody would have a beer or something like that, but he didn't personally see it. We know that there were some people who arrived as alcoholics, so it wasn't a matter of they became alcoholics. But he found that they were doing their job and coming home at night the way they were supposed to.

And then, I called him and said, "You know, you've always wanted to see Petra and the ruins of Syria, so why don't we get tickets? I'll buy Paris-Damascus-Paris, and you buy Tehran-Damascus-Tehran. I think the tickets were for October 24th or 25th. Well, interestingly enough ...

Q: We're talking about October 1979.

RICHARDSON: 1979, right.

Q: You had come back in July ...

RICHARDSON: And left three weeks later. (In October), I spent my time cooking.

Q: July, August, September ... yes, I'm sure ... and you went out in October ... with Cy?

RICHARDSON: No, I left three weeks later. I was there on a visit.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: Now, what I was doing was testing. I had my passport. My visa was still

good. When I left the airport that day, Cy could no longer see me. He was there with somebody else from the Embassy to see me off, but once I got the point where he couldn't see me, there was an armed guard who said to me, "Do you have a hundred dollars?" I said, "Of course I have a hundred dollars." And he said, "Well, I want it." And I said, "No, I'm not giving it to you." Afterwards, I thought I've got to be out of my mind. This guy is sitting there with a machine gun, and I'm saying to him, "No, you can't have my hundred dollars," and I just walked right by him.

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: You see, all of this I had to tell Cy later, because he could not see it. I was already past that point.

Q: Where did you live those few months?

RICHARDSON: Where? In Paris?

Q: In Tehran.

RICHARDSON: No, I'd only been there for one month ... three weeks to a month.

Q: That's right. Where did you live then?

RICHARDSON: With Cy in the apartment at Bishan Alley.

Q: The same apartment ... no.

RICHARDSON: Not the beautiful one, no.

Q: No. I see.

RICHARDSON: The one opposite the Embassy.

Q: The one he moved into when you left?

RICHARDSON: Right.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: The one that later Bob Ode took over.

Q: Oh?

RICHARDSON: Yes. It was a two-bedroom apartment. It was a tiny apartment, but it was fine. And there was one woman there. I forget what her husband did ... private business.

She was still there -- Dotty Duggin -- I remember she gave me a lovely recipe for pickles using those cucumbers that you didn't have to cook or something. And she took me shopping, and I bought food and spent the three weeks cooking when I wasn't down at the Embassy.

Q: What was the atmosphere like?

RICHARDSON: Terrible.

Q: It was ... then?

RICHARDSON: Yes. And I did not go out. I wasn't going to give the Embassy any grief, I was there, as far as they were concerned, I had been evacuated, and I said, "I'm a tourist." "I'm a tourist" is not what they wanted to hear, and I just did not do anything. And then I left.

Q: But you met Bruce. Did he invite you to the Embassy for dinner or anything like that?

RICHARDSON: No, but I was there for the Fourth of July party. But I must have been there for something else, because I remember Kate Koob had a birthday or something. But I saw people other than that, because I did go to the Embassy, but that was all.

Q: Also, Bruce was trying to change the guards there, I remember Jean Naas told me that before she left (in December of 1978), these Iranian revolutionary guards were there and they had the run of the Embassy (compound). They would come and put their dirty boots and rifles on her white couches, just march into her house. So, I think along about July or August ...

RICHARDSON: Cy told me, one day he came home and he said, "l don't know if they're there to protect us or to prevent us from leaving." Cy had a fight. Here is Mahshallah ... big, fat ...

Q: Yes, Mahshallah, yes.

RICHARDSON: And he's fighting with Mahshallah. Mahshallah has a gun. Mahshallah is not letting him into the Embassy. And Cy is fighting with him. And I said, "Cy, you have to be out of your mind. This man has a gun!" An hour later, Mahshallah carries up a cripple and says to Cy, "I want you to give him a visa." (laughs) Cy says, "These people have absolutely no logic, no perspective." He was collecting ... he had a whole bunch of passports, and Cy said, "Absolutely not. Out of here! But they didn't hurt Cy. The whole idea of the juxtaposition that he's having a fight with the guy and an hour later he comes up with this cripple and wants a visa, it was almost like a stage play in my mind, you know, what was going on. Exactly what was going on, I don't know. Cy wrote letters. I called every week, and that was all.

Q: But those three weeks you were there, there was rifle fire and bombs?

RICHARDSON: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Q: ... being hurled into the compound, was there not?

RICHARDSON: Yes. But also, I felt ... Cy was really right across the street, you know. I would go out. I'd call the Embassy first to see if I could go out with Dotty Duggin. She'd take me shopping. Just food shopping. And then I would go home. I didn't socialize, you know, with anybody.

Q: No.

RICHARDSON: Then I left. What was going on then ... I know things were pretty terrible, and everything was ...

Q: Weren't you terribly concerned, though, to leave Cy?

RICHARDSON: Yes. I was very concerned, because I wanted to stay to begin with. And they said, "Absolutely not."

Q: So, where did you go then?

RICHARDSON: I went back to Paris. I was staying in one cheap hotel after another. It was one hotel near the Embassy which was marvelous ... the Hotel Tamise .... I remember, because we used to put people up there in Paris. It was near the Embassy ... a small hotel. It was inexpensive. I went there and told them, when I arrived in Paris, that I was a refugee from Iran, but I really couldn't afford their rates. I mean, I really couldn't afford it. I was getting at that point $9.41 a day, which would buy breakfast in Paris. I said I really couldn't afford it. And they said, "But you know Mrs. Richardson, we have rooms upstairs that originally were a private home and they are maids' rooms, but there is no private bath. But since nobody is up there, the bath is all yours."

Of course, by law, every French hotel room must have a basin and a bidet, so you can do an awful lot. And it was with breakfast. It was very small rent. And when I was leaving to go to Iran, I said, "I want to leave my luggage here, and suppose I come back and all your maids' rooms are rented?" And they said, "Mrs. Richardson, we'll give you a regular room for the same price if we don't have that room." (laughs) Everyone was very, very nice. Okay. I'm living there. I always go to the Embassy and make ... that wasn't where I lived all the time ... I stayed at one place, which I later figured out, was this fashionable street in the Sixteenth (street area), and I discovered I was living in a brothel.

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: I mean, people were walking in at odd hours of the day. Nobody was

renting rooms by the day. It was by the hour. It took me awhile to figure it out, but eventually I did and decided I'd go. Then, someone asked me to housesit on Avenue Foch. That was interesting too. The building had been bombed, and the only inhabitable apartment ... What was the writer they were trying to get? It (the bomb) was 25 pounds. It destroyed the entire building. It was an old building, and I had to go in a back way. The woman told me I'd have to have a flashlight to go up the stairs. But her apartment was fixed up, and I stayed there for three weeks. It was rent free, and that was the main consideration.

Well, I called Cy and said, "It's time for you to take a vacation." Okay. I'll buy tickets. We decided on the date. I don't remember exactly the date, but the one thing I must say, I was officially evacuated to Rome. Therefore, I should have had some help from the Personnel Office or something.

Q: In Rome?

RICHARDSON: In Rome, because I was officially there.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: Absolutely nothing. Yet, I got to Paris, and everyone in Paris, including the women in the cafeteria, remembered Cy from 1965. People that I never knew remembered and worked with, came up and hugged me and said we're so delighted to know that he's not a hostage. Oh, that was later when I went back. But I get to Paris and go and present myself to the Personnel Officer, who now I know. I certainly know all the French employees ... Claudy de Wolff and everyone like that. And Claudy says to me, "You're not officially here, so we can't make a file for you, but what we'll do is take a folder and put it on top of the file cabinet, and anything that comes for you or if there's a reception at the Embassy that's open to people ... like there was an art show when the Hartman's (Ambassador Arthur Hartman and wife, Donna) were there. We'll put an invitation in for you." They were absolutely lovely. Now, I'm not officially there. This is because people were so fond of Cy.

Q: And Pearl.

RICHARDSON: Mostly Cy. And then, any mail that came, they would. Rome, I would have to go and ask for the mail ... here, I didn't have to disturb anyone. I just looked at my folder and took out what was there. One day, I walked into the Embassy, and Claudy de Wolf said, "Pearl, something terrible has happened. Cy is being evacuated for open heart surgery from Iran." I said, "Wait, you've got to have this wrong." She said, "There's a copy of the cable in your folder, but here's the cable." It said "Frankfurt." And so, it was from Frank Nelson, so I said, "Could I call Frank?" And I called Frank, and he says, "Pearl, I have no information. I just know that Cy's arriving on Iran Air, such and such a flight, and I will be at the airport to meet him." I said, "I will get a reservation out of Paris and try to get there at the same time, but don't worry about me. If I don't make it at that

time, you take care of Cy."

Q: Try to get to Frankfurt?

RICHARDSON: Yes, about the same time. I said, "Don't worry about me. I'll find my way to the Consulate." So, I called an airline and got a ticket ... tremendously expensive to fly internally in Europe. I got a one-way trip to Frankfurt. Believe it or not, Iran Air was on time. I got there just five minutes after their plane had landed, but nothing. I changed money at the airport, took a taxi to the Consulate, Frank was there and said, "Cy is at the hospital. Everything's fine, and it's not open-heart surgery."

Q: Thank God.

RICHARDSON: I just couldn't believe this.

Q: Because you had seen him in?

RICHARDSON: July.

Q: In July, and this was?

RICHARDSON: October.

Q: October. And he was fine in July?

RICHARDSON: He was fine.

Q: Had he had a heart attack? No.

RICHARDSON: No, no. What he had was evidently an irregular heartbeat, and I think it was the pressure, the tension.

Q: Sure.

RICHARDSON: And he had terrible chest pains. The doctor had put him on ... they gave him nitroglycerin to put under his tongue. Well, I saw him use that.

Q: Yes. Angina?

RICHARDSON: No, it was something like that. I go out to the hospital, and they say, "Look, Mrs. Richardson. (He was at Wiesbaden) They are going to do an angiogram." (The doctor) said, "There's no sense in your staying." Frank had said, "You and Cy will stay with us." He is by far one of the most marvelous people ... a houseful of kids ... it was a nice atmosphere. And Cy was there two days. The angiogram, they said, there was sort of an irregularity in the oxygen getting (through), but it was not anything serious.

And Cy said, "Can we go on our trip to Syria?" The doctor said, "fine", so we did.

We get to Syria and we're staying with a girlfriend, Vera Barone, who was caught ... she's a communicator ... was caught in the February 14th takeover (in Iran). She was sent on TDY from Damascus to Tehran and she was the one who was caught there. She said it was bitterly cold. She later told me they tried to take one of the people in the building out. She was not at the Embassy then. She was in the big building, but she said the Iranians just said who was in the house ... to take them out ... and one of the men, also TDY with her, had a bad cold. They were taking him out in his shirt sleeves, and she said, "I just raised a fuss, kicked and screamed until they let him put on a coat."

We were staying with Vera, everything like that, and Vera has got a trip. And she said, "Pearl, there's no room in the jeep for you and Cy to Ebla. Cy wanted to see it. There's a marvelous exhibit right now at the Smithsonian from Ebla to Damascus, and Cy said, "Fine, Vera, we'll take this opportunity to go to Jordan and see ... "

Q: Petra.

RICHARDSON: We go to Amman. I forget what hotel we stayed in, and the next day, November 3rd, we go to Petra. We wouldn't stay overnight. It was a long, long day, so we got back to the hotel and November 4th we went into the Embassy. We knew some people at the Embassy, the Admin Officer as a matter of fact, and we're sitting in a little snack bar. I don't know if you know Amman, but it's a very small snack bar, and even if you had talked in a low voice, anyone around you can hear your conversation. It was in the Embassy, and we're talking November 4th, and a young man comes over to the table and he said, "Did I hear you say you were from Embassy Tehran?" And Cy said "yes". He said, "I think you'd better come upstairs." And they had just gone over the walls.

Q: ... the walls.

RICHARDSON: Now Cy had a ticket back to Tehran for November 15. I had a ticket back to Paris November 15. This is November 4th. Cy tried ... I know Cy sent several cables to the Embassy Tehran. The Embassy Tehran claimed never to have gotten them. You know, what should he do? Well, it was obvious they weren't letting him back, though he tried desperately to get back to Tehran.

Q: Fool that he was. (laughs)

RICHARDSON: (laughs) Exactly. But they wouldn't let him go back.

Q: Good thing, too.

RICHARDSON: We go back to Syria, and I said, "Let's continue our tour." We went to Aleppo, where Cy got very, very sick.

Q: Oh, he did?

RICHARDSON: No, not sick with his heart, but he had a bad, bad cold. But I had seen what I think they were worried about in Tehran, the doctor. We were sitting on a bus, at ease, just sitting on a bus, and all of a sudden I'd see he's reaching for the nitroglycerin.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

RICHARDSON: But all this passed. All this had to have been the tension and depression. As we're in Aleppo. Then we went back, we did tours of Syria, and we went back to Damascus. They're evacuating embassies. They are getting rid of non-essential personnel in all the Middle Eastern embassies. And at that point, Cy is nobody.

Q: I was going to say ... a man without a country.

RICHARDSON: He is nobody. He offered any help to work. No. You know, shredding or whatever. No, they didn't need that. So they evacuated Cy from Damascus to Rome and then right on to the United States. That was that.

Q: What had he left behind?

RICHARDSON: Everything, everything.

Q: His belongings.

RICHARDSON: Oh, yes. Everything. That's an interesting thing, but they're not evacuating me, because they said, "You've already been evacuated." and I said, "Don't worry. I will make my own way back to Paris by myself and I will find my way to Washington by myself," which of course I did. I left the next day for Paris. Cy, meanwhile, gets to Washington. But, in Aleppo, he was spending his time thinking what he had, trying to remember. Now, Cy takes very good care of his clothes. He particularly takes very good care of his shoes. I have never known Cy in the thirty-one years we're married to wear the same pair of shoes two days running. Every pair of shoes had shoe trees marked lOC.

Q: He's as bad as Imelda Marcos! (laughs)

RICHARDSON: Cy had seventeen pairs of shoes, and I remember when we were back in Washington, when he was making a claim for his clothing. I had just been down to Woodies (Woodward and Lothrop Department Store) to try ... I wanted to buy some shoe trees for Cy. He had to buy new clothing especially, because he had absolutely nothing. He went to Aleppo in cut-off jeans. He had one suit with him in case we were invited out someplace, but that was it. I go to him and I say, "How much did you put down on the claim for the shoe trees?" And he said, "Oh, two and a half dollars." The shoe trees at Woodies were $14.50 or $16.50.

Q: Apiece?

RICHARDSON: Apiece ... I mean, a pair. I remember that distinctly, and I said, "You know they're $14.50," and he said, (sharply) "It's only money!" A month later ...

Q: He must have been feeling a tremendous guilt or something?

RICHARDSON: I know

Q: Because he wasn't there?

RICHARDSON: I know. I can imagine the guilt that your Bruce was feeling by being in the Foreign Ministry.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: But I know that Cy was feeling ...

Q: ... the same thing.

RICHARDSON: And I would like to tell you that I would not like to spend that 444 days again the rest of my life. Cy was impossible to live with. It was just awful. He was filled with such guilt feelings that Bob Ode -- you see, Bob Ode arrived before Cy left, and he said to Bob, "Why go to a hotel?"

Q: Bob Ode was the oldest hostage?

RICHARDSON: The oldest hostage.

Q: With heart trouble.

RICHARDSON: And he said, "Why go to a hotel? You're taking over my job, take my apartment."

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: And he stayed for a couple of days with Bob.

Q: Well, Cy was a hostage too.

RICHARDSON: Oh, he was absolutely so guilt-ridden.

Q: And you, too, (were a hostage of sorts).

RICHARDSON: And it was months before he would come up and meet Rita Ode. He couldn't do it. He was just so guilt-ridden. And I did something I will never forgive myself for, and when I say I did something, it was really terrible. One day ... also, I was under tension working every day at the Iran Working Group ...

Q: Of course.

RICHARDSON: ... with the families. I worked from 8 o'clock in the morning until 6 at night. Obviously meals were a little sketchy. We lived at the Rock Creek Motel and just had an apartment, but I remember saying to Cy one night, "You know, I think I would have been better off if you'd been a hostage." At that point, I could have cut my tongue out!

Q: Sure.

RICHARDSON: Because I was just ... he was just impossible to live with. He was so filled with guilt feelings that he should be the hostage ... that there was nothing to do.

Q: What did he do? (End of Tape II, Side A)

I was asking you, Pearl, what did Cy do while he was home, because obviously his post had been interrupted in Iran and he had no assignment, but also the fact that he felt guilt. He was on a temporary basis the whole time, so it must have been very difficult for him psychologically.

RICHARDSON: Oh, I'm sure it was difficult for him psychologically. But it's funny that I don't remember what he did. He was doing something with the Iran thing at the beginning, but what he did afterwards, I really don't remember. I just remember my strong urge as soon as I got to Washington ... (of course, naturally, from Washington, we went back to New York for Christmas, so we got to Washington officially in January) ... the first thing I did was go into the State Department and ask if there was any group working on the Iran problem that I could volunteer for. They said there was an Iran Working Group and gave me Marion Precht's number. I remember calling Marion, and from that day until the day I left, August 8, I worked every single day, except weekends, from 8 in the morning until 6 at night.

Now what's interesting about -- as far as I knew at that time -- that was the only secure conference room in the State Department. That meant there were no windows, as you well remember, Penne, and no desk drawers. Everything is out. Also, you didn't know if it was snowing, if it was raining, what was happening outside. You took a break, you either brought your lunch or you went down to the cafeteria and brought your lunch back.

The way the group operated was, it was a rotary form ... by that I mean, connected. There was one member, whoever was free, picked up the phone and said, "Iran Working Group, Pearl Richardson" or "Iran Working Group, Marion Precht." The people who were there

all the time were Katharine Keough, Louisa Kennedy, myself, Marion Precht, Sylvia Josef, who came in as a volunteer even though her husband was retired from the Foreign Service. And then, off and on, we had lots of other people.

Q: You had Betsy Barnes ...

RICHARDSON: Betsy Barnes wasn't there all the time, but Betsy was there.

Q: ... wife of the Director General.

RICHARDSON: Right. She was then the wife of the Director General.

Q: How about Mrs. Sens? Did she come much?

RICHARDSON: No, not that much, but what I felt was that this was my way of saying "thank you" that my husband wasn't a hostage, and, therefore, I had to do something, you know, to help the people whose husbands were hostages. I also felt it was very, very important for the State Department to have this volunteer group, because what we ended up doing was not only counseling families and talking to families every single day, sometimes for over an hour at a time with one person, but we were taking the calls from congressmen, senators, the press, anybody who called in to find out "what could I do?" And giving them advice.

By the way, we gave advice off the top of our heads. We weren't going to ask anybody, but we had to be relieving the working staff from a lot of the nitty gritty things that they would have had to assign officers to take all this. And it really wasn't necessary. We could handle it very well. The way it worked was that ... you know that you may not make a collect call to the State Department, but if anybody wanted to call in, any of the hostage families, they would call collect, and the State Department would say, "We cannot accept collect calls," and we would know and call them right back.

The woman who was working would say, "Well, I'm at work," and another one would say, "fine", and we would call back immediately. In most cases, we didn't have to wait, because we would call people. It became almost as if certain of us dealt with certain families and others with others. You set up a rapport with families, but it didn't matter, because we spoke to whoever was on the phone.

The State Department did things that I'm sure the general public is not aware of. We had, in one case, I can only call her a child bride, a second wife of one of the hostages, and she wasn't living anywhere near the Washington area. She couldn't open a checking account. She didn't have a power of attorney from her husband. We managed to call the bank, explain the situation, get her a checking account. We got her a job. We did all kinds of things for people.

What I did notice was that I think a lot of people grew, because they had to do certain

things that they weren't used to doing. But a lot of people didn't. There were families where the younger children were getting sick. Now you know it was psychological. Little girl goes to school ... she has to be brought home because she was throwing up. She doesn't sleep at night. This took a toll on many families.

One family was getting hate mail. I remember it was a family I dealt with, and I didn't know what to do. I called the Postmaster General and found out what we do about this, and he told me the procedure that she has to give up the right to all her mail. They'll return it, but this is what to do. And I called her right back, and she said, "fine, that we'll do."

Rita Ode would come in and work. A number of the women were in the Washington area. I always felt that if Cy had been a hostage, I would have been right here in Washington. An interesting thing, about two years after the hostages were released, one night in the middle of nothing, Cy said to me, "What do you think you would have been doing if I had been a hostage?" And I looked at him and I said, "I think I would have done exactly what I was doing, but I probably would have gone to New York more often to see your mother." And he said, "You know, I thought that's what you would be doing." And that was the end of that. Iran was never mentioned after that. But it's interesting that two years later, he ...

Q: It was still with him.

RICHARDSON: It was still with him, and he was still wondering what I would have done. in the back of my mind, I thought, "Did he think I'd have gone out dancing?" But, no, he knew I'd be doing exactly what I was doing. Well, I found this extraordinary.

Q: Of course, emotionally, every which way.

RICHARDSON: Mentally.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: Mentally exhausted. At one point, the State Department must have realized it, too, because they got a psychiatrist to come and talk to us about "burnout" and things like that. It was very, very ... well, I think the State Department did an awful lot. One thing, I remember hostage families talking about their enormous telephone bills. They didn't have any enormous telephone bills, because there were no collect calls. We bore the freight for all the telephone calls.

Q: But I do think, Pearl, there were bills where they called one another (and extended family members out in the country that they had to keep informed and whom the State Department would not call), and this was important to them.

RICHARDSON: Very important. And I think that we should have been able to do

something about that.

Q: I think so ... set up some sort of Watts Line ...

RICHARDSON: Yes, a Watts Line for the families to call each other

Q: ... because as wonderful as you were, there was benefit in calling people who were in the same boat.

RICHARDSON: Yes. Yes.

Q: And, you know, because there's empathy there. And I found, too, people would call me late at night and they were on the verge of (depression) ... and you weren't on duty late at night ... and they were going through a depression. Maybe the next night they'd be hauling me out of it, so ...

RICHARDSON: Right. Right.

Q: That is where their phone bills ran up.

RICHARDSON: Yes, and I think we made a mistake. If we couldn't set it up as a fund, it should have been some kind of lump sum afterwards ...

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: ... for people ...

Q: It would have been good.

RICHARDSON: It would have been good for morale, but also it would have been just and right ...

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: ... because I don't think people should have, along with the emotional energy they're spending, to have financial problems. But you know what was very interesting? We were dealing with many kinds of people. We were dealing with young Marines' families; we were dealing with retired Foreign Service people; we were dealing with people whose marriages were "on the rocks" when they went to Iran. They went for the money. There’s no doubt in my mind about that. I don't condemn them for that, but that's what they were doing there. We were dealing with people who were caught in the Embassy accidentally. They weren't supposed to be there. We were dealing with all kinds of people, all age groups, all educational backgrounds, and you had to ... I don't know ... you sort of had to have a feel for it ...

Q: ... be very flexible.

RICHARDSON: And I think after awhile, certain people always spoke to certain families that they would build up a rapport with. It wasn't that they wouldn't talk to anybody else, but it was just that you had sort of built up a rapport. We also kept a card for every family. The importance of the card, to my mind, was that I thought ... and I'm sure the State Department did too ... that when all this was over ... (and there was no doubt in our minds that it would be over) ... that there would have to be some kind of record that the State Department officially contacted these people on such and such a day.

I think I mentioned to you, Penne, when I was at your house, that we often wondered what happened to the cards, because I always remembered if I was the last person out of the office, I would take the cards into the Task Force Center and they were put away. But also, something else: the 7th Floor is a little awesome to somebody who doesn't work in the State Department. The whole room is secure, but I could walk ... the cables were out, marked "Secret", and I'm reading them and I'm thinking, "I really have no business reading them." But they were all on Iran, and I was interested in doing it, and I also knew that much more secret things were not put out there. Someone always came around with a black book for Henry (Precht, head of the Iran Task Force) to look at every morning, that we had absolutely nothing to do with.

I wondered sometimes ... a lot of the people who wanted to go to Iran, and one woman did go. Everybody knew who she was. We were very upset. The State Department was very upset that she was going. One, did you have any assurance she wouldn't be made a hostage too? We now have the example of Terry Waite (the Anglican cleric, who in 1987, on a mediating mission to seek the release of American and British hostages in Lebanon, was taken hostage himself), so we didn't know that. But, also, what was worrying us was that if she could go, why couldn't everybody else get their little passport and go? And, you know, I always felt that the Iranians made a big mistake. They should have given that woman her son and let him come out, and it would have caused the greatest problems in the world for the State Department, because then, you'd have every family member getting out of there.

What also was happening then, which was very bad, there was a family of one hostage that heard absolutely nothing for 444 days, except when the Red Cross went in, he was allowed to write the fifty words on this message paper that they had ... fifty words. Other families heard all the time. Some people, if they used their real name, the letters never got to their husbands. If they used an alias that the husband was aware of and they wrote on the corner of the envelope, "friend", (because we now know the Swiss were taking in the mail), and that letter got there. The letters were bad.

The Iranians, we realized after awhile, were not going to let anyone die, and the release of Richard Queen was ...

Q: ... the tip off.

RICHARDSON: ... the tip off of that. (Richard Queen, one of the younger Foreign Service officers, who developed Multiple Sclerosis while in captivity, was released in July of 1980.) And I must admit that none of us in the Iran Working Group believed he had MS. We didn't know what it was. We thought the whole thing was a ploy. And why couldn't we make it contagious and get them all out of there? I think it was Dr. Korshak (Dr. Jerry Korshak was a psychiatrist and head of the State Department Medical Division at the time), who came down and gave us a rundown of what MS is. It wasn't a matter of the Iranians not knowing MS, but he said it was more a matter of elimination, than diagnosis. They had released Richard because they could not stop his vomiting. They had given him some medication, but it just went on. And when they released Richard, we realized they don't want to harm anybody.

Q: No. And we families knew that if he was ill and released, it meant the others were well.

RICHARDSON: Yes. Of course, the hostages themselves had such novel ways of letting you know (how they were). One of the hostages ... Oh!, one thing we did do ... we asked the families when and if they heard from their hostage if they would send us a copy of the letter with the assurance that only Security and psychiatrists would be looking at the letters, because they were looking for stress, strain, and also ...

Q: ... clues.

RICHARDSON: ... clues they could glean from it. Well, one woman called, and of course, I answered the phone and called her right back. She said, "I just got a letter from my son. I'm going to run right out and make a copy. It's a very short letter, but I want to read it to you first." And she started reading, "Dear Mom, I'm well and I'm playing a lot of Scrabble, Hearts, and something else." I said, "Wait a second. Repeat that." And I had everyone pick up the phone, and I said, "Listen." And she said it, and I said, "That means he's with two other people, because you cannot play hearts with less than three people." And when we got the letter ... now that was his way of telling it ... when ...

Q: ... that he wasn't in solitary confinement.

RICHARDSON: No. When we got the letter, his script was so small, because he only had a 5x7 piece of paper, but "Hearts" was printed, but so small that anyone scanning it wouldn't have noticed that the script was different. And there were all kinds of ways that people were letting you know that they were well or how many people they were with. And the Iranians evidentially -- your treatment there, according to what we found out later -- was based on who was guarding you.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: Some of them gave you mail. Some of them didn't. But for the families,

I was perfectly amazed that in the time I worked there, that we didn't have a serious heart attack, a serious accident, or so-called illnesses. People may have had an off-day or something, but we didn't have a serious thing, which you think would really show the tension and depression these people were under. But the ... I don't know ... do you want to ask me something specific, Penne?

Q: Who gave you the most ... not names ... but the most difficult problems? What were some of the things that drove you right up the wall with these families?

RICHARDSON: One woman always called to say that the check was late. That was the most (aggravating). The people who had the most problems, who had never heard from their sons (or husbands), they didn't get anything, but it was every morning, she would call ... this family.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: ... because what did we have to say? Nothing. No, there were no real problems. The hate mail was one. The little girl getting sick in school ... psychological ... and we arranged for psychiatric help for family members who needed it. There was one military wife, we didn't know at the time, who had absolutely no contact with us. We were not allowed to telephone her. We telephoned her liaison person, unless we had something very important to tell her, and then we could call her. But we found out later that these were her husband's instructions. She was told that she was not to do anything but to get in contact with this liaison person and deal with him and not with anybody else.

Q: There was a real dichotomy, it seems to me, between the families of State Department employees and families of the military. In the beginning, too, I think the military had their own idea of how the families should behave and how they should be treated, and I felt that the families were well aware of this controversy going on between the agencies.

RICHARDSON: Maybe they were, but they didn't really express it. Some of the military were very pleased that they had the military umbrella to be under, but at the same time, I think they were absolutely delighted to have us at the end, because I don't think they could have the same kind of hour-long conversation with their military liaison that they had with us. I think they felt they could tell us things. And there were things I found out about families that I've since forgotten, fortunately, but I didn't want to know ... personal things ... someone's lost a job, someone's not doing this, they're not able ... and what happened to them ... it's not my business. In a way it was, but I can only counsel. But I've forgotten those things ... memories are marvelous, if you don't want to remember them.

Q: But you had no training, any of you, except your long experience in the Foreign Service, which I think is a form of training.

RICHARDSON: Oh, yes. I think we were all probably sympathetic, empathetic ...

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: And we were ... I think I grew and learned a lot. I got a tremendous kick out of telling a senator I couldn't tell him the names of the hostages. Now, that was childish, but when can I tell a senator off? Really, I just got a tremendous kick out of that.

Q: I told Barbara Walters off (the ABC Television News interviewer), so there you are! (laughs)

RICHARDSON: (laughs) I mean, I just thought it was marvelous to be able to tell a senator off. I can't give you the name!

Q: Did you get any sort of instruction, though, on what the families were going through ... the cycles, the anger ... that was normal ... to expect them to yell and scream at you, but it wasn't anything personal?

RICHARDSON: Yes, yes.

Q: They trained you that way?

RICHARDSON: No, they didn't train us. It was something we knew. I don't remember being trained. Maybe they did this when the group was first started, because the group started right after the hostages were taken.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: And I didn't come in until a month and a half later.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: Two months ... in January, the beginning of January. But the experience for me was wonderful. I hope I was of help ...

Q: I'm sure you were.

RICHARDSON: ... to the families. I know one thing I did. We left for Lima on August 8th, and the day before I left, I called every family member. In some cases, we were dealing with divorced families, so I called everybody, not always the families I dealt with on a daily basis. I told them we were going to Lima, but that I would be home when the hostages were released. And every three weeks in Lima, I went down and bought one hundred or so postcards and sent them off to the families to let them know that I hadn't forgotten them. I always kept up the contact, and when the phone rang in Lima at three in the morning and it was Wayne Meile at the other end ... ! First of all, when the phone rang, Cy said, "It's gotta be for you." The rumors were already in the wind, and I picked up the phone, and Wayne said, "Pearl, I think you can buy your ticket. I think the

President's going on the air."

And smart Cy. I said, "Cy, go and buy me a ticket today," and he said, "Pearl, wait a day. You know the Iranians. It's not going to happen tomorrow as planned." (laughs) And, of course, he was right. And the best thing that happened was that I was outside the State Department, the bus (with the returning hostages) went by, and Bruce (Laingen) was the first person off the bus. He walked right into my arms! And he stepped back and he said, "What are you doing here? You're supposed to be in Lima!"

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: I said, "I came to welcome you home." And I remember the tears in Cy's eyes. Cy was crying when he got a letter from Bruce wishing him luck in his new post, and Cy was just out of it. He said, "Here this man takes the time and the energy to write me a letter (while he's in captivity)." Well, when I saw the families at the Marriot Hotel, some of them I had seen that came into family meetings in the Washington area and they were the people I knew, but other people came up to me and said, "You're Pearl. We didn't really believe you'd come home." I said, "Well, with everything I went through, I thought I ought to be here for this."

Q: They knew your voice?

RICHARDSON: Oh, yes. There was a lot of resentment, because, as you well know, President Reagan wanted to downplay this as much as possible. The original plan was that they would not allow the buses to go by the State Department. When one of the hostage wives heard this, and her husband said, "There is no place else I am going. This is my home," they allowed them to come by. I'll never forget this. The C Street Entrance ... after working hours ... so, therefore, a lot of people who had car pools would have to leave if they lived in the suburbs, but it didn't work. There were an awful lot of people there. And when we were all out on the ...

Q: I remember you, Pearl.

RICHARDSON: We were all out on the White House lawn, freezing and everything, and I thought how petty and small-minded the President of the United States was. I'm sorry, my big regret was that it didn't happen before the Inauguration, because I really felt, no matter what your political feelings, granted it was Carter's headache, his life's blood, and he should have been there.

Q: It should have been his triumph, not necessarily winning the election.

RICHARDSON: No.

Q: His personal triumph, when it wasn't. I agree with you. And they let him go to Iran, I mean, to Frankfurt, and see the hostages, but there were many that were so angry with

him. So I don't know how pleasant a trip that was for him either.

RICHARDSON: It wasn't.

Q: No.

RICHARDSON: I think a lot of people thought the State Department wasn't doing anything. I think a lot of the families felt that way, but, my God, they don't know the things that the State Department was doing. To this day, I wonder. It was somehow or other never a question of money, whether it could be done or it couldn't be done. In the conference room, the television set was always on ... twenty-four hours a day..there was always a tape, a blank tape, in case something came on on Iran, they had it on tape. But when the Iranians sent us the tape without sound, I remember clearly that the State Department got a deaf mute to come and tell us what the people were saying.

Q: Is that right?

RICHARDSON: And when one of the Marines was doing card tricks, they found a magician to come and look, was he telling us something or was he just fooling around? He was just fooling around. He didn't know anything about card tricks. But also, what I thought was marvelous, too, was the outpouring of the American people.

Q: I was going to ask you about that.

RICHARDSON: We had calls from all over the United States. One Marine had said on this tape that was played on public television that he missed tamales, I had a call from Texas. I happened to pick up the phone, and this man said, "I have a factory and I make enchiladas and tamales. I want to send cases of it to Iran." I said, "You realize there's no American airline going and you realize they may never get them." He said, "I don't care. I want to send them." And he did.

But people called. We got letters from school children, and we scrupulously saved every letter, if it came from a class, we put one in each hostage envelope, and we also put one in each family envelope, so they could get the general gist of how the country was feeling. I thought in general that the State Department did a marvelous job.

Q: I did too.

RICHARDSON: I don’t know what more that could be done. I know they were doing things that we knew nothing about. There were all kinds of secret negotiations going on, but at the same time, I think they were doing it. And these people who were living it, morning, noon, and night ... certainly the officers working on it morning, noon, and night. And an interesting sideline on the hostages ... when the consular hostages were released, when they were taken out of Iran by the Canadians ...

Q: That was February 1979. (Interviewer means 1980)

RICHARDSON: I remember Cy saying to me, he said, "Pearl, you do realize if I had been there, I could not have gone with them ... with the Canadians." And I said, "Why?" He said, "Because I was too well known at the airport." And I said, "Where would you go?" He said, "I probably would have gone to the French Consulate. His wife was such an excellent cook." (laughs)

Cy always worried about food, but he pointed out to me that he couldn't have gone, he said, because he wouldn't have jeopardized their safety, because he was so well known at the airport. Also, we have much contact now. Lots of contact now with many, many Iranians. As I told you, yesterday we had a call from our former landlady from San Jose, who goes to school. Her English is perfect (now) and just marvelous, we've been to see them. And for a woman, you know, she didn't have much of an education. Also, she spoke no English. But we see Iranians all the time.

Two years after the release of the hostages, an Iranian who is still in Iran, told us ... he was making trips back and forth ... he was even questioned about Cy. He was called down to the Komiteh and he was asked where was Mr. Richardson? And he just said he didn't know. He wasn't in Iran. We couldn't understand this, you know, that years later somebody was still concerned and wanted to know where Cy was. We just never figured it out, but he said he was called down to the Komiteh and asked about Cy.

Q: There are many strange things in this whole story.

RICHARDSON: Ohhhh

Q: Tell me about the hostage rescue mission. Where were you when you heard about it? (In April 1980, the United States launched a rescue mission to Iran under the direction of Colonel Beckwith with a commando team. Tragically, the mission failed, because of mechanical difficulties with some of the helicopters, which meant there were not enough functioning to make the final move into Tehran. In their efforts to leave the Tabas Desert quickly, a helicopter, blinded by the sand, took off and crashed into one of the larger C-13O planes, and eight commandos were killed.)

RICHARDSON: I was sitting in the Iran Working Group, wasn't I?

Q: When it failed? But were you surprised when Vance resigned? (Secretary Cyrus Vance, who had opposed such a rescue mission, because he felt it would surely end in the death of perhaps 50 percent of the hostages, resigned his office in protest).

RICHARDSON: No.

Q: You knew (how he felt)?

RICHARDSON: I wasn't surprised. And I was standing in the lobby after that. I had to have been there, because I was there in the C Street Lobby saying goodbye. I was in tears, I remember that distinctly. I thought the rescue mission was a mistake from the outset. I also ... I don't know if it's true or not ... I also, in my own mind, thought that the President was absolutely pushed into it ...

Q: He was desperate.

RICHARDSON: ... as if to say, "Do something."

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: And when the details came out, I was angry. I was angry, because it was ill-conceived, ill-equipped I don't know what else you could say about it. One, I thought it was foolish. I mean, Tehran isn't on the coast and Tehran is inland. Okay, take away all that ... nothing is inconceivable, but to have it fail because of mechanical failures, and then you get this busload of Iranians that has suddenly appeared and what do you do with them? The whole thing was so ludicrous. Helicopter failure. Equipment failure. And what would we have accomplished? If it had succeeded, if it had been well planned, if, if, if ...

I am not sure that we wouldn't have lost 50 percent of the hostages. We certainly would have lost all of the hostages that were in Tehran. I was horrified by it, but what was very bad, too, when we were trying to call the families that day, the phone lines were busy, because the press was on the phones. We could never get through for us to talk to them, because the press was there. Now, the press has a right to be there, but I remember one hostage wife came into the group to work, because she lived in the Washington area. We got a call. I answered the phone, and her neighbor was calling her to tell her not to come home because all the television trucks were in front of her house and everything. So she went to her brother's house. She had already made a statement that she would not talk to anybody until the hostages were released and then she would give an interview.

How people handled the press was another thing. Everybody knew that Louisa Kennedy was the spokesperson for the families, and I thought that was a very good choice, because Louisa not only was a bright person, but she was very articulate. But she also knew her limits. Louisa sat next to me when she was in the Iran Working Group. One day, it was three in the afternoon, she said, “Pearl, I’m too tired to deal with the press and I don't want to say anything I don't mean, so I'm going home." And she's not going to answer the phone to anybody. But she was open with the press. They always knew they could get her there or at home, because she was the spokesperson. And she said, "Just take any message and tell them I'll call back tomorrow." Now, there, I thought, was the sign of an intelligent person.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: That day she wasn't feeling up to par. "Let me lay off now and not say

anything I didn't mean." I haven't had any reactions from people later of what they thought the State Department did right, what they thought they did wrong ... I don't know, Penne, have you?

Q: Some. Yes, I have.

RICHARDSON: Because you are in contact.

Q: But now, you see, what is happening to the families of the Lebanese hostages, and by contrast, it is like night and day. This group has very little, by comparison, being done for them. Of course, they are not ...

RICHARDSON: ... official.

Q: They're not official people.

RICHARDSON: They were there because they wanted to be there.

Q: Yes, that's true. But I feel at one point ... I think it was along about five months into the crisis ... that some of us felt we were not getting the right answers. We had, for instance, our income tax was coming up that had to be paid, and we were continually told to call the IRS, but they had no answer for us. What should we do? That was just one example of the kind of thing we felt we needed input into. That's when I founded FLAG (The Family Liaison Action Group), and I know there was some worry or concern or criticism that FLAG was founded. What do we need this group for? But from the family's perspective ...

RICHARDSON: I think it was a good idea.

Q: We really had to have some input. We had to tell the Department what it was we wanted.

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: So we came up with this list of questions on medical, financial, legal, administrative problems, and I think eventually FLAG was seen as a necessary thing. There was also a point where we thought the hostages would be released into the custody of the families, not the U.S. Government, so we had to have an apparatus where we could function and do that. So there was a reason for it, but in the beginning, particularly the military, they were against the formation of FLAG (probably because of their experience with the family organizations that were formed for the Vietnam POWs and MIAs).

RICHARDSON: Oh, yes, that I knew. I was never against it. I thought ...

Q: I remember you said that.

RICHARDSON: I thought that there should be ... I mean, I'm an outsider. Of course, in my group, there were some of the hostage wives, but I always felt that they should have their own group where everyone else is excluded whose not part of the problem. No, I thought it was very important.

A funny story that happened about FLAG: You weren't at a meeting here of FLAG at the State Department, and let's see, it was Louisa and Katharine and I forget who else, but they were not in the conference room. They were off in another room having a meeting. The telephone rang, and I picked it up, as usual, and said, "Iran Working Group." And someone said, "This is the White House calling." No, she didn't say it was the White House calling. She said, "May I speak to Louisa Kennedy?" I said, "I'm very sorry, but Louisa is in a meeting, and if you'll give me your name and number, she'll call you back within a half hour." And the woman said, "This is the President calling." I said, "One moment."

I knocked on the door and I said, "Louisa, the President is on the phone." And she said, "The President of what?" I said, "The President of the United States." She dashed out and she picked up the phone, but she never sat down. "Yes, sir? No sir? Thank you, Mr. President," but she never sat down. It was as if you're talking to the President of the United States! And I always was so amused when she said, "The President of what?"

Q: (laughs) I think I was there, because I think it was the trip to Europe that was being planned.

RICHARDSON: Maybe it was then.

Q: Yes. And that was interesting, Pearl, because it was in April, and we had a family meeting. One of the wives was very agitated about the possibility of some military action. We knew nothing about the plans of the raid, but there were great suspicions. We could all feel the momentum.

RICHARDSON: I think we all felt it.

Q: Let's do something to get them out! Because the Waldheim Commission had just failed, and where do we turn next? And also, the election was beginning to gear up. At any rate, the four women had gone to Europe, and we had this meeting. One of the wives said, "I want to go to Brzezinski in the White House, because I want to talk about the War Powers Act." She said we should not let anything military take place. And I said I thought Lloyd Cutler would probably be a better person, because he was the President's Legal Advisor and he seemed more ... he would probably be more understanding of our point of view than Brzezinski would.

So I called David Newsom (then the Under Secretary of State), and I said the families wanted to meet with somebody in the White House. He said, "Before you do that, why

don't you come in and meet with me?" So, we set up a night meeting, and at that point, the mother had flown off to Iran. We were sitting in this meeting, and they passed around a paper which did not deny us the right to go to Iran, but it was certainly throwing some sort of obstacle in our way. I remember David Newsom saying that absolutely there would be no military action taken, that they had the ...

RICHARDSON: He promised?

Q: Promised, yes. And they had the welfare of the hostages on the front burner. They would never do anything that would harm the hostages. So we left that meeting feeling sort of relaxed and placated and so forth. Oh! I also remember saying that I resented the mother going off to Iran.

RICHARDSON: So did the father, you know.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: Because he called immediately.

Q: Absolutely. And I said, "If we had wanted a spokesperson from the families to go, it would not have been she, and that there were 52 others involved. It wasn't just this one son." And another teenage son piped up and said, "And I resent your resentment!"

RICHARDSON: I know who that was without your even telling me.

Q: I know you do! (laughs) What really was amusing in a way was that his mother had already bought a ticket to Iran, and I didn't know that, you see.

So, at any rate, we went home and we were fairly placated that nothing would happen. At one o'clock or whatever it was, the very next morning, my call came from Henry Precht that there had been a rescue mission and eight commandos had been killed. And he said, "First of all, I'll tell you that Bruce is all right." So that was such an irony. And poor David Newsom, obviously was using Vance's line or whatever, that he was against it, but he didn't know.

RICHARDSON: No.

Q: But after that, the families were rather suspicious of David Newsom, you know, can you really believe him?

RICHARDSON: Yes. Well, probably against the State Department in general.

Q: Probably.

RICHARDSON: Even though this was a military operation.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: And then, the outpourings after that! One woman came in with a flag she had made with gold stars for the commandos. Well, you remember the ceremony?

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: At Arlington. (A poignant memorial service was held at Arlington Cemetery for the commandos that had been killed in the raid. It was a highly emotional meeting of the families of the hostages with the families of the commandos. Any reservations that the hostage families may have had concerning the raid, however, were not expressed. There was a general sadness, yet pervasive admiration and awe that there were such brave men who would lay down their lives to rescue their fellow Americans.) And I just thought it was a terrible waste. My first thought was one of disbelief that they'd do this. When Cy and I discussed it, he said it didn't make any sense to him. Then, when we heard about all the equipment failures before, it was unbelievable to us that this would go on.

But, one thing, to sort of end on this thing in Iran is that ... how many years is it now?

Q: Eight since the takeover. Almost seven since their release.

RICHARDSON: Eight since the takeover. I think that everyone's life has been affected in some way, not only the hostage families, of course, but I'm thinking of myself, of Cy. Things ... we will always be affected by this. There was a period before the hostages and then there was the hostage taking, and there's just something in that. I don't know if it's for good or bad, but it's affected all of us.

***

BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Spouse: Cecil S. Richardson

Date spouse entered Service: July 1956

Status: Spouse last Consul General in Nassau. Since June 1987, in Inspection Corps.

Posts:

1956-1959	Dakar, Senegal
1959-1961	Saigon, Vietnam
1961-1962	Lagos, Nigeria
1962-1965	Niamey, Niger
1965-1968	Paris, France

1968-1971 Accra, Ghana
1971-1975 Brussels, Belgium
1975-1977 Quito, Ecuador
1978-1979 Tehran, Iran
1980-1983 Lima, Peru
1983-1983 Sao Paulo, Brazil
1984-1987 Nassau, Bahamas
1987-present Washington, DC

Place and date of birth: New York City, New York; March 9, 1927

Maiden Name: Rachlin

Parents:
Saul Rachlin - Electrician
Minnie Rachlin

Schools: City University of New York B.S. and M.A.

Profession: Teacher

Date and place of marriage: November 25, 1956; New York.

Volunteer and paid positions held:
At post: Dakar - taught English, volunteer; Saigon - edited technical reports, $45/wk., hospital volunteer, taught 6th grade 3 mo.; Lagos - teaching, correspondence, $50/mo.; Niamey - English teaching, volunteer, AID secretary, paid; Accra - educational counseling, $0.45 hr; Brussels - volunteer; Quito - volunteer; Lima - volunteer.

In Washington: volunteer, Iran Working Group, January, 1980-August, 1980.

End of interview