

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

**JOANA “EGGIE” RAZI**

*Interviewed By: Jewell Fenzi*  
*Initial Interview Date: March 28, 1986*

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**INTERVIEW**

*Q: This is Jewell Fenzi on Friday, March 28, 1986, and I am interviewing Eggie Razi.*

RAZI: Jewell, I wanted to ask you something. The lady you interviewed yesterday, she was even an Ambassador’s wife disenchanted?

*Q: Yes. She felt that she...*

RAZI: Let me ask you something. Was it because of the...I’m sorry to put it like that, but the quality of the younger people coming into the Service? I’m sure they were highly qualified.

*Q: But their attitude.*

RAZI: Exactly. I found this very disenchanting myself. I found them terribly rough, the newer generation, really. Awfully rough. So just found it very unpleasant in certain instances. I can't generalize, but there were a few younger people, both working husbands or working wife, and the spouses not working, it didn't matter if they were. But what I wanted to say, was that they were not very nice. They wanted so much for themselves, and such extraordinary egomania about them, that it just didn't seem right. They should have stayed home, and done their own thing, and go for whatever they wanted to go for, but Foreign Service didn't seem to me appropriate. Because one needs an enormous amount of dedication, I think, to plunge into that.

*Q: I agree. No, that was not her complaint. Her complaint was just more basically between herself and the Foreign Service. She felt that she had been cast adrift in 1972, and that there was no appreciation for what she was doing. No recognition from anyone but her husband. But you see, Guido told me years ago, after the 1972 Directive....It really did cast us adrift. He said everything you do from now on is for personal satisfaction. And I did it out of loyalty to him. I mean you do do a little internal flag waving because you are doing it for the country.*

RAZI: I agree. I subscribe to your way of thinking completely.

*Q: When did you retire?*

RAZI: Mike retired in 1979.

*Q: '79. And was that from Madagascar?*

RAZI: We came back...we had to come back in '78, so we retired in Washington. That came after Madagascar, in Washington.

*Q: Tell me again -- you told me the other day but to get it on tape, tell me about the award that he won. I probably shouldn't say won -- that he was awarded. The distinction he was awarded by the Malagasy government.*

RAZI: Yes. We served there for four years, and during those four years we had an Ambassador at the beginning of our stay, the Mendenhalls [Joseph A. Mendenhall was AEP to the Malagasy Republic 1972-75], and they left shortly afterwards. There was a coup. The Prime Minister was assassinated and a new man came to power. And during the next three years, there was really very little communication -- only very nasty communication, really -- between the Americans in Washington, or especially in the post. There was really no one that volunteered to see Americans from the Malagasy. There was very little going on between the Malagasy and the official American community. Michael was director of the Culture Center there. A very lovely place, and there were many, many people coming because of their attraction for learning English and things like that. Immediately after his arrival, he started attending the different sessions that the Malagasy Academy had. It is a very well established place, very much like the French academy. The Malagasies are highly intellectual, and very good students like that, very much

interested in their own culture, and in becoming good lawyers, good doctors, all of that. So he was interested in the history of Madagascar, very much so. He started attending these sessions. Read a lot, and at one point, gave several communications -- they're called -- on different things, on different people. I can't tell you all of that. I would have to have his papers with me. I don't remember exactly, but I know they were very interesting. They had to do with Americans who had been connected at one point with Madagascar, either pilots or the first Consul. From that evolved a book that he wrote. And then later on, he was asked, when we came back to Washington, he was asked to this for the, I think, centennial of American-Malagasy relations. He was asked to do a history of this. So, I think, all of these different things put together, made it that the Malagasy -- the same person had come to power when we were there, and really turned its back to the United States, and doing anything American, and really violent campaign, awarded this distinction.

But he became a member of the Malagasy Academy and anyway the ties are strong, and very interesting ties because -- they have a wonderful history. It's the only Afro-Asian nation. They speak the same language. The island is one and a half the size of France, and they had their kings and queens very well established before the French came and occupied Madagascar, which was in the 19th century. So they have a lot of pride. It was a much harder society to penetrate than any of the African societies that we have met. They're not as open. They have this Asian trait to them. Much more reserved, and things aren't that simple with them. You can't just win them over by asking them for dinner. It doesn't work that way. So it was really very interesting for us. They were wonderful four years with many friends. A very complete state from many points of view, and I enjoyed, I think, certainly just as much as Mike did. I've talked for hours...

*Q: No. That's the idea. Did you have children with you there?*

RAZI: We had Maria, who is the youngest one of the lot. She went to school there. She went to -- there was a French lycée, she started schooling in French. And we had all the other children, except for our son, visit very often. As a matter of fact, our second daughter, Joana, who is now as a pediatrician. At one point she had been very sick, and came to stay with us for a few months, and she worked in one of the hospitals there. She wrote her doctor's thesis on a particular disease. Again, I can't be too precise right now. I would have to tell you the name, if you are interested, in what she wrote about. It had to do with the work she had done at the hospital in Madagascar, in Tananarive.

*Q: But how nice for her that something that was started out not so pleasantly turned...*

RAZI: Exactly. It started in an awful way, and because we were told that she would be a cripple for the rest of her life, she had rheumatoid arthritis while working here in the Children's Hospital, and was sick for months and months. And then through homeopathy she got well, and came, and recovered, and was able to work, and even had her...yes, that was very interesting.

*Q: And she's all right now?*

RAZI: Oh, yes. she's okay.

*Q: So what did you do most of that time? The usual traditional Foreign Service spouse role?*

RAZI: Yes, yes. But again because of this I would say just one thing. I did what I usually do, what I do here also. Just being at home, and ready to take care of the things which have to be taken care of. Michael has other obligations, preoccupations, occupations, all of that. We really had many, many people all the time at the house, and as I told you on the phone, it was the only house where Malagasy would come and talk openly. It was very important to them because they didn't have any let-up. There was a curfew for almost a year. So nobody saw each other at normal functions. So the fact that they could drop in....What I wanted to say was, there was an interesting organization there -- you know how the women's club exists in probably all the countries you have served -- it was something called The Wednesday Morning Group. It had been created by an American, by the wife of a former Ambassador, and through those very difficult years that organization kept on meeting and the charity work was very substantial, and very interesting, traveling in the country, going to different...some of them were missionaries to whom we were giving money, or different kind of help. But the encounter with so many Malagasy in different places, and on different levels, and the participation, of course there were very few foreign wives who were associated with this Wednesday Morning Group, but there were a very large number of Malagasy women.

*Q: A wonderful opportunity...*

RAZI: ...so it was extremely interesting for me. I was quite active in that and so I also knew very many people, for example, that Michael wouldn't have known because of that, so they also came to the house. So that was what I did really. I didn't do very much otherwise, a lot of entertaining but not entertainment...we've never entertained just for the sake of entertainment. It was always much more serious entertaining because of what interested us. Because of our own interests. We never felt we were forced doing these things. It was very natural, and I think the same thing is true of all the different posts we served. We were in Chad before that, and God knows you hear, "Oh, you served in Chad, it must have been terrible." It wasn't terrible at all, it was wonderful. It was the first African Moslem country we served in so that was very new, and very interesting. It was the first country with desert, and the trips we took. Also the Chadian political upheaval had started before we came so it became really a very dangerous, in a way, situation.

I want to say that there is always -- and you know this as well as I do -- always so much to learn in the places one goes to. I find that even if you don't do...let's say that I would have a profession, I had one, I worked for the Voice of America for years, and also I studied romance languages, I have a degree from the Sorbonne, I never used all of that but it didn't matter to me because that was not the time to do that. I did what I thought was apropos then, and if it was apropos just to see people, that's what I did. Or to accompany Michael on trips, or to...I don't know. All these things. I think that questions

would prompt different answers.

*Q: I was just going to ask about the political upheaval in Chad. Were you frightened, or threatened, or...*

RAZI: No, no. We were not. We were afraid for our Chadian friends, but not for us. I don't know if you know the situation, but you have the north, and the south, and the population is Christian in the south, and Moslem in the north. And because of Libyan presence, and wanting to take part of northern Chad, it was very active that way. For example, our friends, and most of the government, was from the south and they were very much afraid traveling, of being taken away, their families -- something happening to their families. So it was (inaudible), you know, there was no personal...but, for example, in Chad if you took a trip away to the north, you could be kidnapped. That happened. There was a famous story -- you might remember -- of a French woman. That happened while we were there. So you had to know where to go, and what to do. I would go to the market, alone obviously, and make trips by ourselves. We were never afraid, but maybe other people had different feelings. I'm just saying for us, for the family. I don't think we were afraid in any of the places we were.

*Q: You're showing me the same self-possession that I saw when we were in Rabat together. Just move into a situation, assess it, and do the right thing.*

RAZI: Well, I don't know about that. It's just a feeling that...one does have a feeling. I'll tell you what it is I think. Maybe we have it more than other people, I don't know. I wouldn't say that at all. I think it comes from a deep interest in other things, other places. Not thinking that "it" is either France, or the United States, or Romania where we come from. Just allowing, making room for other people, for other places, for other customs, for all of that, and being able to listen. I think this is extremely important to the people we meet in the foreign countries. They have a very quick assessment of this. If you have it, or you don't have it. And you might be as sweet and kind, and all of that. It doesn't matter one bit. It's not that, they just know. They used to say "il est gentil, il n'est pas gentil". They just sorted you out that way. I remember this was in Zaire and they would say, "Ah, Monsieur Mike, il est gentil" And that meant everything, and then you could count on him that you...so I think this...I think that the children helped a lot in these places. I think their attitude, which is very similar to ours and wasn't being imposed because this is what Washington wanted, or anything like that. It was a very personal approach, the way we are here, or the way we are in Maine, or the way we are in any other place. It wasn't tailored to Africa, or to the people there. It was just, that's the way we are, or we were, or we'll always be. I think the children -- I wanted to say -- were very helpful because they had their own friends, and, oh, they're doing this. There was never this thing of here they are, and here we are. Not at all that kind of a relationship, and I think that helped us a lot. And it made for very, very happy years in places where probably you could have heard the greatest disaster stories. Well, we didn't feel that way. We weren't trying to generate any kind of happiness. We were just...

*Q: It was just your family relationship.*

RAZI: Yes, yes.

*Q: And I think, as you said, our host country people they know when we're genuine.*

RAZI: I think so.

*Q: I've always maintained that.*

RAZI: But you did so beautifully. I remember you in only Morocco. I remember you at Hadija's wedding. Weren't we there together?

*Q: Yes, I remember that.*

RAZI: Do you know how well they're doing? Beautifully. Marvelously. We have a house in Maine. I have to start by that because it's interesting and over the years that was our home leave address, and that's where the children went back, and so for them the American continuity really happened there. An extraordinary thing. At one point we got a letter from Hadija saying that she was sending her children -- she has two children -- to summer camp, and she told us where. Well, that's exactly where we are in Maine. So, three years ago Hadija came to visit the children. I had been with all the girls in 1977, and stayed with them in Casablanca. They are happily married, her husband is one of the most successful lawyers in the country. She is very, very wealthy, a beautiful house, everything just impeccable, with vacations here and there, with a house on the sea on the Mediterranean. Hadija is just as adorable, just as natural and enchanting. It's so wonderful. She told me that when we arrived in Casablanca, she said, "You must be so happy to see how well we've done." And it was so true.

*Q: Oh, how sweet.*

RAZI: Yes, exactly. It's wonderful. And then we took a taxi, and we went with a nurse to Rabat to see our former maid, Zora and her husband Mohammad. It was so sweet. They came to see us -- we were staying with the Public Affairs Officer, the Wrenchlers -- and they came in their little car. They said, "(in French)" They were so happy, with big smiles. We just went for the day and saw Zora and Mohammad with whom we have kept in touch through letters. It was such a delightful moment, and both Hadija and (inaudible) were so happy because they had moved ahead, and wonderfully so. So Hadija is just doing so well.

*Q: Goodness. That was how long ago? Twenty years ago.*

RAZI: Yes, we left in '66. It was 20 years ago. She has children who are, must be 16 now, something like that.

*Q: I do remember that. We went with Nancy, remember. Nancy Roberts. remember Hadija's conflict because she wanted to do the traditional thing for her family, and how it*

*was supposed to go on for days and days.*

RAZI: You remember, it did go on for days. She had worked so hard in order to have all of the things that she was supposed to have -- with the golden bell, golden coins that she had to have and everything just right, by the book. You should see her living now, totally different. She has a beautiful villa and just delightfully run, and with all her sweetness and generosity. She was very disenchanted by USIA there at one point. A horrible man came along, and he treated her really in such a horrible way, that she resigned after all those years.

*Q: A Public Affairs Officer?*

RAZI: Yes.

*Q: Oh, I can't believe it.*

RAZI: Terrible, terrible. Just unbelievable and how silly because those two, that couple Mohammad and Hadija, know everybody. All of Morocco they know, and they have such a wonderful relationship with so many people that they were so helpful. And she had been such a devoted person. But then you have some kind of idiot who thinks he can change everything all by himself and just hurt so many people. It was a very sad story, and I fell right into that and her husband was so distressed because Hadija didn't need the money, they didn't need anything.

*Q: She just liked what she was doing.*

RAZI: She liked what she was doing, and she was really devoted to the United States. I don't think we've lost that because her qualities way beyond...I don't think she would question her loyalty and her beliefs, and her good thinking about the United States in general. But certainly that thing was a very, very nasty episode.

*Q: Was that one of these young people that we're talking about now?*

RAZI: Not at all. Older and then somebody else was at the top was really a top jerk who continues to be one of the top people in the agency, and he is still around. Maybe the only unpleasant conversation I've ever had with anyone because obviously I didn't have to be with the things Michael had to but I remember saying something because this friend knew Hadija very well, and I said, "Are you aware of what's happening in Casablanca?" And he said, "He changed completely, he was a different person." And I said very nicely, I wasn't talking in front of other people, I said, "I would like to see you for a minute, and I would like to mention something to you because maybe you don't know." And he said - - I can't remember what he told me -- but he turned into an iceberg as if I had asked to see [George] Shultz, or something like that. And he was so rude. Well, I've never seen him again, good friends with his wife, but I just couldn't believe it because he had decided that he would handle the matter the way he had.. He didn't want to talk about it. You know these people that are just fine when you see them at cocktails, and then you

run into them and they're awful. That's the way he was. But anyway he was awful. That was certainly not for your taste.

*Q: We saw, in Trinidad, our last post, we thought really lovely, capable, bright, attractive young people coming in. But it was an entirely different situation. They were all single. One of them was really charming, and he got a cable from us about his household effects. He said, "I didn't have any household effects. I had to go out and buy some to ship down here."*

RAZI: It is very nice. This is just fine, but I understand what you are saying, a different breed.

*Q: A different breed. None of them would know how to give representational dinner parties. They never did. People do not do representational entertaining like they...*

RAZI: Nothing.

*Q: Nothing. And as much as we did in college -- they'd go out in groups -- the single officers and the younger secretaries, and what have you, and they'd do all these things together. And in the line of duty, they made their contacts...*

RAZI: But they limited to what they really had to do, not going beyond.

*Q: Right. And I'm sure that wasn't just Trinidad. I'm sure that's happening...*

RAZI: No. When I saw this happen in Chad, and in Madagascar that we had these new people coming in...

*Q: So far the six months have gone very well for us, and you've been retired for about six years.*

RAZI: For about...yes, six years and a half.

*Q: You said the initial chaos at first...well, when your house is upset...*

RAZI: It came when we thought we had a few more years to go which would have allowed us to settle back in Washington where we hadn't lived in 16 years. Our youngest daughter had never lived in the States really. We left with her when she was two. So she had her adjustments. She was going to university, George Washington. There were many different level of peoples in the house, so it was hard.

*Q: She had studied mostly in France.*

RAZI: Yes, she had. She'd gone through Moroccan schools, and Paris schools, and Ivory Coast schools, and various schools, Chad, and then Madagascar, where she had had her French baccalaureate. And then when we came she was given one year credit, she had 30

credits, so it took her two years and a half to finish, which was a good thing. But even though she knew she had only that little time really to spend in college, it was very hard for her, the adjustments. But for Mike, I think it was very hard. To begin with he -- I think you remember he died in a certain way, you know.

He doesn't like to do the little things around the house. If he does them, but he's not good with his hands that way. What he does; he plays the piano for me when I do things. Or he reads to me, when he reads things which are interesting. He always had his own preoccupations outside of the work that he was doing, which he carried over through the years. He always did other things besides...you know he's a lawyer by profession. He's done comparative law a lot, for example. When we came back there were one or two things which happened. He was given a Fulbright to teach a course in comparative law at the university in Port au Prince, of course, in French. So that was something very interesting. So he always had other things going on, but the fact that he was going to retire was very unpleasant. [end Tape 1, Side A]

...the surprise. Surprises are never good, bad surprises are always hard to take. Had he known that he would retire, it would have been simpler. But just not knowing, and having to sort everything out, was hard. And then shortly afterwards he started working with Sheldon Vance, who had opened his law office. But he wasn't in the mood to look for clients, and waiting around wasn't going to help at all. And what he did was, he worked for the District Court here as...you know you have a list of lawyers who want to work, and are paid by the...how do you call that? You know, you called in, and you say...

*Q: We call it contract...*

RAZI: No, you called in and say that you want to work for two months, and you say, I'm available. And somebody would call you up and say, will you come. Are you interested in taking this case?" And you go in and defend Mrs. Johnson, who was caught with cocaine, or something like that, or something else having to do with what happens every day in the District. So he did that, and was interested in the work because it put him back in the mainstream, let's say, Washington, DC, and knew what the city was really all about. So he did that. And then this Fulbright professorship came for a few months.

*Q: He went alone to Port au Prince?*

RAZI: He went alone. I was in Washington and I came and spent some time with him there, and that was just wonderful. I was very happy because I went to several of the courses he gave, and I was so pleased to see how he was handling things, and he did very well. The students were very responsive, and it was very interesting for both of us.

*Q: And probably very good for his ego, too.*

RAZI: Very good for his ego, sure. But good because he did something that he was really interested in, and that he knew a lot about. He didn't have to -- of course, he had to prepare for the courses -- but his background in comparative law allowed him to do this

with knowledge and with pleasure, and with interest in being able to convey...and also constitutional law. He knows constitutional law, and it was just before the elections. It must have been...what could it have been? What year? Explaining American elections.

*Q: Was it in 1980?*

RAZI: '79 probably, it was.

*Q: Well see, the elections are always even years, so it must have been '80.*

RAZI: I know the elections are, but you talk about the elections before. It was in '79. It was in the spring of '79, and the elections were to take place in November probably. Aren't you sworn in on the even years?

*Q: I thought it was the other way around. That you were elected in November of '80 and then...*

RAZI: I'm not so sure about that. I think probably not.

*Q: I'll tell you why I know because in 1979, when we gave our first Fourth of July reception in Recife, it didn't have any theme. In 1980 when we gave our Fourth of July reception, the theme was the American election, and we held a mock election which President Reagan won, and I had been home, and I had gone around San Francisco to all of the campaign headquarters, and had gotten bumper stickers, and buttons, and T-shirts and everything, and took those back. And that was our decor.*

RAZI: I remember the 1960 elections because of Kennedy, and then I remember he was inaugurated in '61 so it was...

*Q: ...when it was cold.*

RAZI: Exactly. So you are absolutely right.

*Q: But how interesting that Mike was telling the Haitians about our...*

RAZI: Yes, about our electoral system here, of course, is very different from any others.

*Q: Certainly different from Haiti.*

RAZI: But you know their constitution isn't very different from the French constitution, or the German constitution.

*Q: It's just the way they operate.*

RAZI: The mandation is where the difference lies.

*Q: Perhaps to go after Haiti when he came back to Washington.*

RAZI: Yes, he came back to Washington and continued with law but then he was hired in classification and declassification in CDC. And he's been doing work there ever since, as much as he's allowed to, in a sense.

*Q: You can only work so many hours.*

RAZI: Yes. And also what he's been doing, and it has given him great joy, is escorting and interpreting.

*Q: Oh yes.*

RAZI: He took the exam for the French, and I think, for the Greek, and for the Romanian, and he has been doing that. As a matter of fact, when he finishes now on March 31st in CDC at the Department of State, he will accompany a Moroccan for three weeks. He enjoys traveling in the country. He usually comes back with stories about new things, new people, always terribly interested in what he does. It has really helped him a lot in these hard years for him after retirement. But that was a solution, I think, which was very suited for Mike. I don't know how many people would like to do that.

*Q: I think it must be perfect because he's only doing it part of the time and then is home.*

RAZI: Exactly. He does it in the summer. He's had, I don't know, maybe six, or seven, or eight trips and they were always with very interesting people. A Nigerian, the dean of the university in Algiers, the Tunisian, the Zairian, different people, and different high positions in their countries, and it has always worked out very nicely, and they correspond and there's a special relationship. If I'm around they come for dinner at the house so that I meet them too, and they kind of know where he comes from so he's not just an interpreter, hanging loose. It's a nice way of meeting people, and being helpful.

*Q: And you're still playing your role, even into retirement. You really are.*

RAZI: I don't know about that. Well, that I think helped Mike. The first time we did that, he said, "Can I bring this Algerian gentleman to the house? I think you would like him very much." And I said, "Yes." A little bit reluctant because I wasn't sure. The gentleman was just delightful, and I was very happy to have met him. And then on different occasions – I haven't met them all -- as a matter of fact, the only person I really didn't like at all, was the Romanian, of the whole lot. He was a theater man. I don't know if you know, but a very good Romanian stage director. There's one of them running at the Hiram Guthrie theater in Minneapolis. And there's a wonderful play right now at the Arena, called The Bad Duck. An Ipsen play that got raving reviews, and the man who put it on is a Romanian. Well, there was this other fellow who came on a tour, and he wasn't... I didn't think he was very nice at all. And I didn't like him. So the one person I should have normally liked, I did not. But I haven't met them all.

But, just to answer you, what you said, your question, your assessment that I still do the same thing. It's the way I am, or we are, towards our friends, to people who ring us up -- I don't know, we had friends from Maine who came and I did exactly as I would have done maybe for the Algerian. It's just the way of being with people. That doesn't mean that I like everybody, or that I want everyone to come to the house. I'm very happy when I'm alone, and I need time alone, in the garden, or reading, or writing, or doing all sorts of things. I don't have to be with people. I'm very happy when I'm alone. As a matter of fact, I was very, very shy, and I still am. Extremely shy. It was an ordeal for me in the beginning to have to talk to people I didn't know. It was awful, absolutely awful, but I just pulled it through.

*Q: I don't think you're alone in that, because at our last post I still would go into a big reception and at the Hilton -- you know, when we first arrived -- and I didn't know anybody, and you had to start making your contacts. To the very end I hated that.*

RAZI: It's not so much the hating -- of course, the hating because you don't like to do -- but somehow it was very, very hard. It was something that I didn't really look forward to at all. Not now, and not for many years, it's much easier. But I really had to make an effort at the beginning because I didn't think it was important, I questioned everything very, very much. But then what happened was somehow I just was with the outsider exactly the way I was with my friends, and with the children. I had the same way, or with people working for us. The same attitude without putting them in a special category.

*Q: But I think you have taken your family relationship, and your attitude, and you have just expanded that. And that's what has been so charming about your family at all these posts, and your sincerity in your relationships with the host country people. You really have done such a beautiful job. I think someone like you should be an example to others. We were talking about these young people coming in who have a different attitude.*

RAZI: No, I'll tell you what it is. It's the terrible roughness which has developed over the years in young people, here and elsewhere. It's not only American, it's really prevalent in France, and other places exactly the same way. Out for themselves, and don't bother me with anything else. It doesn't have to do with my career, so I don't want to listen to it, I don't want to have anything to do with it. And it's so unpleasant an attitude, and certainly makes them...I don't think it makes them very happy in the predicaments where you really have to give in order to enjoy anything abroad. How can it be? It isn't as if you were working at the Berlitz School, and you go and do your teaching, or your typing, and then you're back home and all of that work ends the minute you step out of that place. It's not at all like that. It's terrible, and I think they're not very happy, and they count the days, and unless they do very well towards Washington, vis-a-vis Washington, otherwise it absolutely ends in frustration. It's no other ending for that kind of an attitude, I think. When you only want to take care of your own little self there.

*Q: And the other thing I've seen happening too, is the women who are working, wives who are working, and then their husband has been here and you'll probably stay five years, I think, then they don't want to go. They don't want to give up their jobs.*

RAZI: I think that's also very hard. We're like in a marriage, Jewell, here. We know now, actually you know, and I know, and everybody else knows that's been married for a long time, that there are so many things that have to get adjusted, all the time.

*Q: Give and take.*

RAZI: All the time, from the first moment to the last moment.

*Q: And especially the life that we live.*

RAZI: Exactly, exactly. And I think one should know this. When you marry, and you go into this kind of life -- I didn't know this when we first married, but when we discussed...you know that Mike had at one point a choice, this was after he was with the Voice of America for a number of years, in the Romanian desk. He arrived in the States in '52, became an American citizen in '57, went to Washington and was working for the VOA (Voice of America), he was running the Romanian desk. And then he thought about moving into the Foreign Service, and he worked first for the French desk with VOA, and then was made a Foreign Service Officer but was sent as VOA man for North Africa in Rabat. What I wanted to say was that the commitment was made then. I understood what it was all...I thought I knew what we were going into. I didn't quite know, but anyway I had an idea, and I approved of it. But what I wanted to say was that there was a choice in those years. As I told you before, that he had written quite a bit for different law reviews for the Michigan Law Review, articles on constitutional and comparative law. And he was offered a job at Yale to teach, and there was this choice between doing that, or going into the Foreign Service. You know what really made us make the choice were the children. We had three children then, the little one wasn't yet born, and those were beginning to be hard years here. Hard in the sense that the outside influences were very, very strong and we weren't sure we wanted the children to have to go through all of that here. Protective, certainly, sure, who isn't as a parent. So it had a lot to do with the children, and also thinking that it would be so wonderful for them to know what the world was all about. And, of course, for us too it was a wonderful opportunity. But the choice was made then for us. Also what it was going to be. The first year Mike traveled very, very much. He spent about three-fourths of the time traveling when we were in Morocco.

*Q: I didn't realize he was away that much.*

RAZI: Yes, he was away then. And then when we went to Paris he was Information Officer there, and then Abidjan the same thing, and Kinshasa. Then he was no longer the VAO, he was doing press and cultural affairs. So there was a lot of traveling. And even afterwards he was asked to travel, I remember, quite a bit for one reason or another. So in the beginning I was very much alone with the children, and I accepted that. I knew it was going to be like that. No reason to make life more complicated than it was.

*Q: Were the children in school in Rabat at that time, or did they go immediately to*

*Tangier?*

RAZI: No, they were in Rabat. You remember there were American schools in Rabat. And then John went to the Kenitra, the base school, and then Catherine went there. Then they went to the Tangier school. Then by the time we arrived in Paris, John had finished and he went to the American college in Paris. Catherine finished school in Paris, and then she went to the American college there. They both had their two years -- it wasn't a very good school for a number of years.

*Q: Well, Ruth and Cammillo -- Ruthie never went to school in Rabat because she was too old for the school and they went up to 7th grade.*

RAZI: ...and she went to Kenitra.

*Q: She went to Kenitra for a year. Then she went to Tangier, and Cammillo went to Kenitra for a year. He absolutely loathed it.*

RAZI: It was terrible at Kenitra. The pits, like the children say. It was really the pits.

*Q: Really. It absolutely was. But he really didn't want to go away to boarding school again because he'd been to boarding school in Switzerland part of the time when we were in Sierra Leone. So he stayed home for a year and went to the Rabat school because by that time it had a seventh grade. He never did sixth grade, but he did seventh grade twice rather than go away to boarding school again. But then he did go up to Tangier; now of course, we were only three hours away -- three and a half hours away.*

RAZI: Did he like it in Tangier?

*Q: But my children liked that Tangier school.*

RAZI: Yes, so did ours a lot.

*Q: They liked it very much, they liked the teachers.*

RAZI: They loved McPhillips, as you know.

*Q: ...loved McPhillips. And I just wrote to him the other day because I found a letter that Ruthie had written to her grandmother. Ruthie had the lead in the "The Bacchae", the play. She was a senior, and she'd written her grandmother who was a theater manager herself for years and years, and she'd written all about the play. I xeroxed it and I gave a copy to Frances Dixon, and I sent a copy to Joe McPhillips. I wonder if he ever got it.*

RAZI: We saw Oedipus, when was that?

*Q: John was in Oedipus. Well, this was two years later. She stayed three years in Tangier.*

RAZI: Our children were just for one year. A very short time but certainly had an extraordinary impact on them, and Joe McPhillips did because of his wonderful teaching.

*Q: And the other thing the children ran into, in Tangier, they ran into drugs, and they ran into homosexuality. And they coped with it.*

RAZI: Bravo.

*Q: They coped with it, and really all of those children at this school did.*

RAZI: Catherine, you know, took a lot of hashish for many, many years because of that, and it all started in Tangier.

*Q: Oh, it did start in Tangier?*

RAZI: Not John, but it affected Catherine. It was a few years and she came with us to Paris because we didn't want to leave her, she wanted to finish, and we didn't want to because of the hashish. Little did we know that she had her little supply of hashish, and did exactly the same thing in Paris, and was very miserable. It was a terrible year for her. She came back on vacation, you remember. She came and stayed with Ruthie, is that possible?

*Q: I do remember, yes.*

RAZI: There was something that they saw each other then.

*Q: No, she stayed with us for a while. I do remember that. But she got over that all right?*

RAZI: Oh, yes. She did a long, long time ago. But you see not all of them were capable to stay away. I think that the attraction for Tangier, and everything that Tangier had good and bad, was very strong then. It was very, you say in French like some kind of a spell, you are kind of spellbound, I would say.

*Q: ...by what was going on.*

RAZI: I think so, in so many ways.

*Q: Now there were two children who did get involved in drugs after your children left, but they were children who had family problems. But they were the outcasts, they were not part of the...*

RAZI: But Catherine wasn't just for (inaudible). I don't think she was on drugs all the time. I mean, I don't think she took hashish, it was just a thing like that on the beach or something. But anyway, she certainly tried it.

*Q: Oh, I'm sure that my children tried it. And I think perhaps it's best to try it in a situation like that where they felt secure at the school. They enjoyed it, they really did. And, of course, we were close by and could talk all the time and everything.*

RAZI: Were they open towards you about everything that happened there?

*Q: Yes, I think so. You never know.*

RAZI: Of course you never know.

*Q: But I think it was also the fact that they could come down with their Moroccan friends to Rabat. That's when their parties were starting with beer, and cigarettes, and what have you. But I always felt that those should be at home, so that you know your children are there and they're not going to be driving with someone afterwards.*

RAZI: Yes, yes, and driving and accidents.

*Q: It wasn't an easy time because they were growing up.*

RAZI: What's the difference in age, between the children?

*Q: Not quite three years. But you see Cammillo was always very large and people have frequently thought that he was the older, and so they were protective of one another and they're still very good friends. I'm sure your family is the same way, when we do all four -- five now that my son-in-law has become part of our family -- when we all get together it's wonderful. We have a lovely time.*

RAZI: We get together in Maine at the time when family reunions take place, and it's so delightful.

*Q: But you see you let your children lead their own lives, and we tried to do that too. They weren't brought up believing that they were furthering their father's career by passing peanuts and what have you, and wearing little bow ties, and knee socks.*

RAZI: No, no, but they were very polite.

*Q: They were very natural children.*

RAZI: Yes, natural about everything, and if they wanted to be there when you had people in, that was fine. But there certainly was no obligation. And then they enjoyed it that way. It worked out very nicely.

*Q: I remember once when we were in Holland, and I had had a tea for the Consul General's wife when she had just arrived at post. And my children were upstairs. I said, "Don't you want to come to the tea?" No way, no way. And so they were upstairs with their phonographs, and spent the afternoon that way. And then they heard me say*

*goodbye and they thought everyone had left and they came tumbling downstairs -- now at this point they were maybe about 21...*

RAZI: When was that?

*Q: It would have been 1973. It was '73 so Ruthie was 22. ...came tumbling down the stairs in their blue jeans and their sweat shirts. They thought everyone had gone. Well, there was the Consul General's wife. They came down, "Anything left to eat?" She didn't realize that they had been upstairs, and I thought she would think I'm terrible because I didn't make them come. And she said, "Oh, what beautiful children." Because they were themselves, whereas hers were not. Her husband expected her children to further his career, which I've always felt was hideous.*

RAZI: It doesn't usually work.

*Q: It doesn't work and your children are much more of an asset to you if they lead...I had that impression of your children in Morocco too. They were their own person.*

RAZI: Oh, yes, I think so. I hope so. This is how we would have wanted them to be, and I hope they were. They have their own memories, their own friendships, their own life.

*Q: You're so very family oriented, and you've experienced retirement. This is valuable because you've weathered it all, and so beautifully too.*

RAZI: You're asking here...I think there was something about servants, or something like that?

*Q: Oh, yes. Your relationship with your Zora in Morocco.*

RAZI: No, but I think again, you see, the same thing. We happened to have very nice people each time. We remain in contact. We write, I don't even know what you wanted. What was it that you said? They were always wonderful, really. Of course, there are very amusing stories, and the bad stories. We found our visit interesting. We had a very nice and wonderful man as a cook in Zaire in Kinshasa and one day he said, "You won't believe me, but can I take off a few days?" And I said, "Of course." And I said, "What is it Laurent?" And he said, "You won't believe me but I have to go to my home province." It was quite far away from Kinshasa. He said, "I have to go because we still have slaves. Our family still owns slaves, and we have decided, the family has met, and we have decided that it's time to let these people go back to their families. And we know where they belong, but they don't know." So our cook, Laurent, who had ten children, who had very little money, who had always worked as a cook, and his brothers too, had their Zairian, had their Congolese slaves, who had been slaves of the family for probably 100 years, and they had decided, this younger generation was no longer young, he must have been 50 then, that it was time for those poor people to go...you know, the generation was probably their age, to go back where they came from. But those people didn't have any idea where they came from. So this was quite extraordinary. Talking about servants, this

is the kind of thing that I found most extraordinary. Stories like that.

And then there was a story...

*Q: So he did go and he gave back the slaves?*

RAZI: He did go and freed the slaves, and I said, "How did the business go?" He said they were happy, and we were happy that we had taken care of the business.

And then another story. It was a sad story in Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire is on the Congo River. And there were very many people who went swimming, or went on outings on the river. There was a military family next to us, and one Sunday they went, and the husband was eaten up by a crocodile. Now, it was a terrible story because everybody was around -- we were not -- but other people were and the story was told to us. The man just disappeared. Well, the way Laurent saw this story, the same Laurent, he said, "You know he was not eaten up by a crocodile. What happened was he was taken by a man crocodile, who wanted him." An extraordinary story that you go into anthropology here, and very interesting things.

So through the people who worked for us, during the years abroad, we learned so much, and it was so interesting. And they were such a wonderful addition to the family. They brought a lot of warmth and understanding of the country through them. But then again, I was brought up with people working for us, so I didn't have this handicap not knowing what to do with them, and feeling they are intruders, and treating them differently. They were part of the family. They had everything they wanted, and we never had any kind of troubles with stealing, or anything like that. We were lucky. I'm sure we could have not been lucky.

*Q: It's a great deal your attitude toward them too.*

RAZI: So it was wonderful, and to this day Maria, the youngest one, she always wants to know about Laurent and \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, and this wonderful woman whom we had in Madagascar. It was the most beautiful face I have ever seen, an enchanting woman who used to come back from the market...I've never seen anyone shop like that woman. She was so happy. She would come back with things which we would eat, and of course, she would eat too, but it was for us.

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### BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Spouse: G. Michael Razi

Spouse Entered FS: 1962

You Entered FS: Same

Left Service: 1979

Left Service:

Status: Widow of FSIO (Foreign Service Information Officer)

Posts:

1963-1966 Rabat, Morocco  
1966-1967 Paris, France  
1967-1968 Abidjan, Ivory Coast  
1968-1972 Kinshasa, Zaire  
1972-1974 N'Djamena (Fort-Lamy), Chad  
1974-1978 Tananarive, Madagascar

Spouse's Position: Public Affairs Officer

Place/Date of birth: Bucharest, Romania; June 28, 1926

Maiden Name: Heliade-Radulescu

Parents (Name, Profession):

Longin, Lawyer  
Catherine

Schools (Prep, University):

Sorbonne, Romance Languages, License ès Lettres

Date/Place of Marriage: June 22, 1947, Bucharest

Children:

John  
Catherine  
Joana  
Maria

Volunteer and Paid Positions held:

A. At Post:

English teacher at the American Cultural Center in Tananarive

*End of interview*