

An Oral History Interview

with

ELMA UDALL (part 7)

conducted by
Julie Ferdon

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Elma Udall Biography

The second of six children, Elma Udall was born on Dec. 23, 1917, in St. Johns, Arizona. She attended Flagstaff Teacher's College and Brigham Young University, eventually graduating from Arizona State University with a degree in social work.

During World War II she signed up for the Red Cross and served in Africa and the Middle East. Following the war and a brief stint with the FBI, she joined the newly formed CIA and worked in London and Helsinki. She later worked for the Department of State in Moscow, Berlin, Stockholm, Vientiane, and Budapest. She ended her career working directly with Ambassador Kingman Brewster at the Court of St. James in London.

JF: Okay, this is Tape #58. You were just saying something about lost luggage.

EU: Well, we flew from Naples on to Cairo, so our luggage had to come by ship. I just had a suitcase and musette bag, and the rest of it came by ship. So by and by, I got this letter from the Red Cross, "This is to inform you that your luggage has been lost at sea. If you had any private insurance, let us know." Well, the ship that was bringing our stuff got hit in the Mediterranean, with a mine or something.

JF: So it didn't come with you?

EU: Well, it did, as far as Naples. But when we flew, it got left to come by ship to Cairo. So I lived out of that for a year and a half. But we'd trade off. Anybody who was going home, and they had something.... I mean, it was my whole group, all eight of us. And they did have some extra uniforms in Cairo, so we got that. But anyway, we were sent—I guess it was in July—back to Cairo. And that's when I was assigned to work for the head man. So we spent VJ Day in Cairo, out at the Auberge de Pyramids—the night club. A lot of us military, Red Cross people, went out. And Old King Farouk was there. He was celebrating too. He wore his fez and his dark glasses and he was sitting at a table with some of his henchmen, and you weren't supposed to know he was there, but he was celebrating VJ Day along with us, or vice versa.

Of course the war had been over for a long time, as far as Cairo was concerned. But anyway, it was a fascinating city. We got to go sightseeing a lot. We flew down to Thebes and Karnak with the military and spent—you know that's where all the tombs of the kings are on the Nile. Absolutely fascinating. There was a Mrs.—what was her name? She was the head of the Egyptian Red Crescent. See, they don't use crosses, but it was the equivalent of the Red Cross. But she was a Copt, which is the early, early Christians. She was not a Muslim, she was a Copt. And she was a very sophisticated lady, and she did all sorts of nice things for us. She'd take us around to sightsee, and we'd go to tea with some of her friends, and that sort of stuff.

And then there was the air force base out on the other end of town. We lived right in town, on the Nile.

JF: Were you in barracks there as well?

EU: Well, in apartments. Oh, no, there weren't any barracks in town. In fact, the British high commissioner had a big house in Cairo. I've never been to Israel, but I've been to Palestine. But anyway, when that was heating up and everything, the Irgun [militant Zionist underground active during the British control of Palestine] came down to Cairo. They were wanting the British out, and they killed the British high commissioner. But the Red Cross headquarters was given his house for their headquarters. So anyway, that's where the headquarters was. But we had quite a large apartment. There were a couple of places around town where the girls lived. But you still had the Red Cross Club, you had

all these various and sundry things that were going on. And so we were kind of busy, but not terribly busy.

Well, one time, a plane came in from Italy. This was after the war. One of the chaplains brought a group, and they stayed in Cairo, and we met a lot of them down at the club. And they were going on to Palestine. So they invited Ginny and me go with them. So we flew up with them.

JF: Ginny?

EU: Virginia—another Red Cross girl. So this chaplain had all the arrangements made. We spent about four days there. We went up to the Sea of Galilee, and we did the whole thing—which was fascinating.

JF: Were these usually on weekends that you did that sort of thing?

EU: The war was over. We got permission to go with this group. They were flying on up to Tel Aviv and they invited us to go, so we went up with them. With this truckload of GIs, we toured all over the area: Jerusalem, Tel Aviv. We went out to the kibbutz, we went to the Dead Sea, we went up to the Sea of Galilee, and it was quite an experience.

JF: What an experience! And this was all in one year, that you were seeing all of this?

EU: Yes.

JF: A lot to write home about.

EU: I was there a year and a half—I mean, in the whole area. And then in April of '46 they were closing out most everything, and they were sending a bride ship into Alexandria.

JF: What kind of ship?

EU: Bride, B-R-I-D-E. Wherever the military had been stationed, all throughout the Middle East, there was quite a lot of them that had gotten married. And so here were the brides, going home, and we were going home with them.

JF: So they'd have a whole ship full of women?

EU: Oh, sure! Haven't you ever read this? Out of Europe?

JF: I've read that people got married, but not that they put them all on a ship and

EU: Well, they were the brides of GIs, and therefore they were—the GI had to go on home, he couldn't bring her with him, so then they had to arrange for them to come. And they weren't going to come on the military ships. But this was a military ship that had

been—well, not really—“fancied-up a little,” I was going to say. But anyway, they brought all these brides from all over, wherever the GIs had been stationed for all these years. I think I counted, there were twenty-one different nationalities. You know, there’s some in Africa, the Middle East. There were a lot of Poles. There was a refugee camp. They had managed to get out of Poland and into Russia, and come on down. And they worked as maids and cleaning girls and stuff like that in some of the camps.

But anyway, we packed up and went out to Huckstep, the air force base, and they were bringing the girls in there. We were having to get them ready. And so I was the finance officer, and I had my field jacket, I had bulges, I’d have to—they were entitled to—I mean, their own money, they could change into so much American money. But I had to go over and do it, and count it. The military was pretty much taking care of everything, but we kind of lived there. It was a hospital area where we lived with the girls. And then they put us on buses and sent us up to Alexandria, which is where the ship was—see, Cairo’s not on the coast—which was a pretty rough ride. And you could come—we knew all the rules and regulations—those girls could come—their husband had to request that they come. It had to all be legal. And they could come if they were not more than six months pregnant, or the child was more than six weeks old—they could come. And we had the lot. And those girls were used to eating with two hands, and they had to hold the baby. I was very good. I could hold a kid and eat at the same time, but they couldn’t. (laughter)

JF: You’d had a lot of experience, too.

EU: Well, I could manage with one hand, but not them. Anyway, it was quite an experience.

JF: Just backing up a little bit. The Red Cross was in Tehran primarily for the supply route to Russia?

EU: Oh, not the Red Cross, the military. That was the military’s job.

JF: Okay, so the Red Cross in Cairo....

EU: We’re an auxiliary.

JF: Right. And then the Red Cross in Cairo?

EU: Was the same thing.

JF: Except this headquarters, they were, all the Red Cross places around in the whole Middle East were under him. So there was a lot of administrative assignments and everything else, out of the headquarters there. But we were there for a week, getting these gals ready to go. I had a list once. I should have kept it. It’d be interesting to see, five years later, how they made out, because there were some that weren’t going to make

it, I could tell. But once we got on the ship, we were passengers, and they had Red Cross and nurses and—military provided all the other stuff once we got on the ship.

JF: You were off duty then?

EU: Yes. But the girls would still come to us. They would have to fill out papers, and a lot of it was kind of sad—especially with these Polish girls. “Where are your parents?” “I don’t know.” The ones I gave the best hope to were the ethnic ones that had married each other. The ethnic GIs.

JF: Oh, ethnic GIs marrying someone over there. Why did you give them more hope?

EU: Well, they had more in common. There were two British white girls that had married blacks, and they were going to Tennessee, and I thought, “Good luck, girls.” There were some kind of weird things. And some, I’m sure the Egyptians didn’t get many visas, and so some of the papas were pushing, putting up money to get the GIs to marry the girls, which would give them an edge to get into the United States. So there was lots of whatever.

JF: So some of these were sham marriages?

EU: Well, they were legal, but it was mercenary, yes. So off we go. We stopped in Casa Blanca. We were hoping to get off, but they wouldn’t let us. And we picked up some more brides. And we also picked up a groom!

JF: One groom?

EU: One groom.

JF: On the brides’ boat.

EU: He had to be in with the crew.

JF: He must have paid a lot! (chuckles)

EU: No, he married an American nurse in Casa Blanca. Anyway, he was a French flyer, and she was an American nurse. Anyway, they probably lived happily ever after. The only time we ever saw him was when he got on board. He was down with the men the rest of the time. And so we sail across and get to New York.

JF: How long? Was that a week?

EU: Oh, yes. But it was spring, it was April.

JF: Was the water better in the spring sailing?

EU: Well, you don't have as many heavy storms like that. We were coming out of the south—the North Atlantic is worse.

JF: On the ship, did they have the ethnic groups broken out?

EU: Oh, no, no. The military never did anything like that.

JF: You just found your bunk?

EU: Well, we had our own quarters. See, we didn't get involved, but I'm sure they had it all worked out: so many people here, so many here. It worked. So we get into New York, and we're very excited. Of course the war's been over for not quite a year.

JF: Where were you on VJ Day?

EU: In Cairo.

JF: Okay.

EU: So we get into New York. Well, the deal was, the GIs were to meet their wives and take them home. Or if they couldn't come—this was all arranged through the military—if they couldn't come, then they put the girls on the train, and one of the Red Cross girls rode with them, to take them to where they were going. But we had some sad occasions, because some of the GIs who said they would be there to pick up their wives did not come.

JF: Had second thoughts, huh?

EU: Well, I don't know what happened, but we had much weeping and wailing. And they had to stay on the ship and go back. But we were anxious to get off and get on our way.

JF: You weren't the ones that had to escort them?

EU: No, not our group. The New York people had to take care of all that. We were just the passengers.

JF: Probably not a fair question, but what percent of the grooms did not show up?

EU: I have no idea. We were anxious to get off. We were going to go see "South Pacific" that night. But we knew, we could tell. The girls were getting kind of nervous as we came in. The last two or three days they were getting kind of nervous. And you know, out there in the Middle East, you have the rich and the poor, and not too much in between. And so a lot of these girls, having had servants and stuff around, they were a little nervous to meet the mother-in-law, and they didn't know much about cooking or anything. I remember one of them was telling the others, "Well, now, I've heard there's

such a thing as a delicatessen, so you just go there and buy everything you need.” And I thought, “Yeah, and when your money runs out, then what?” (chuckles) Anyway, we wished them all well, and we went on our way and they went on theirs.

JF: While you were overseas, did you have communication with your family very much?

EU: Oh, sure. We had V-mail.

JF: V-mail, the forerunner of E-mail? I’m kidding.

EU: Yes. It was! Well, you’d write your letter, but then they would photograph it and send it.

JF: And how often did you get letters from your family?

EU: Well, Mother wrote every week. After the war ended, it came a little faster, but it was several weeks in between sometimes. And the same with our letters going home. It went through—there was no air mail, per se. It went with the military.

JF: So you’d probably just had the initial three weeks or so without any correspondence?

EU: Yes. You know, so did the GIs. Some of them went months without any—the poor devils. If you were stationed someplace, and that’s the address you gave to your folks, and then you got moved, your mail would go here, and then it’d have to get transferred. Finally, there in Cairo, at the Red Cross Club, they arranged that you could call home, twelve dollars a minute. They had a room set up with a phone, and everybody, the GIs, they got on the list, and they were going to call home. And it was all very exciting. The first one in line—the day came—so he went in the room. He wasn’t gone too long, and he came out and everybody asked, “How was it? What’s goin’ on in the States? How was it?” And he said, “My mother cried, and my father asked me why I called.” (laughter) So I think a few of them cancelled.

JF: That wasn’t money well spent.

EU: But the GIs were wonderful. Everybody had a great sense of humor, and you kept up everybody’s morale. Of course we were not in combat, so that made a big difference, too.

JF: Well, this is probably a naïve question, but while you were overseas, were you able to keep up Church activities?

EU: In Tehran there was one little group. There was a man from Utah State University who had been involved with a lot of the dams. He’d been helping the Iranians. And he would come to town once in a while. There were a few GIs he knew—we would kind of get together. In Cairo there was the air force. I got acquainted with a captain and some of those people, and he had been on a mission in New Zealand, and there were a lot of

Maori troops with the British, and a lot of them were Mormons. I'd go to some of their meetings, and I was the only—"You mean, she's an American and a sister, too?!" You know, that I was a Mormon. So they were a happy group. We had a good time.

JF: It's just so amazing for me to imagine going from St. Johns to the experiences that you had. I would imagine they would be very life-changing experiences. Were they?

EU: Well, not necessarily. I mean, you always knew there was home. You knew that this was a temporary kind of thing. And there were a lot of people involved, and you made the most of it, and you enjoyed it. Sure, you learned a lot, but I don't know that I sat down much and compared to what it was. Of course I'd been to school in Salt Lake, and I had lived in Tucson, I'd lived in Berkeley, and I had been in Washington. I'd been around a little.

JF: For some reason, I had that you'd been in Cameroon.

EU: No.

JF: Okay. I don't know where I got that from.

EU: I was in Laos, next door to Cambodia.

JF: For some reason I thought that was with the Red Cross.

EU: No.

JF: So you returned then from New York. Did you then go back to Arizona?

EU: Yes. That's when the judge was running. So I spent the next months seeing all my friends, and involved in the campaign.

JF: That was kind of a reunion for your family, it sounds like.

EU: Yes.

JF: We talked some about that election yesterday. But one thing I thought about later: Did he experience any kind of anti-Mormon prejudice at all, once he was running statewide, instead of in the county?

EU: No. He was well-known statewide. There were a lot of Mormons in public office at that point. I don't think it was an issue.

JF: Stewart and Morris both obviously became interested in politics. When do you think that happened? Did the war do it? Did your father's elections do it?

EU: We grew up with it. My father's philosophy was, if you want a better school system, a better community, whatever—go and be part of it, don't sit on the sidelines and complain. And he lived up to that. He was very involved. He was involved with the Boy Scouts of America, all his Church work. He spent years on the committee of—there was a Catholics and Jewish organization in Phoenix he was very much a part of. To him, he never called it politics—he called it public service. To him, it was the big picture, and we absorbed it. He didn't lecture us or anything.

JF: You learned by example.

EU: By example, that he felt that this was worthwhile, and rewarding. Money was not our thing—his either. I mean, you never thought, "Well, maybe I can go off and make a lot more money." Your interest was in this. And the issues changed. I mean, such a wide variety. You're mixing with people, and learning all the time. And so I think they just came by it naturally.

JF: You mentioned scouting. Were the girls involved in scouting at all?

EU: No, the girls weren't. They had Boy Scouts.

JF: But they didn't have Girl Scouts?

EU: No. The Church kind of—you know, the same people kind of ran it. But my brothers never got too involved. It was a very minor thing there in St. Johns.

JF: After the election, what did you do then?

EU: Well, when the judge was elected, he was elected in November, and we moved to Phoenix the first of January. And I decided our home was being sold, we're out of St. Johns, and if I wanted a home, I'd better go with them. So I went to Phoenix with them.

JF: Was that a hard break for the family?

EU: Well, no. Dad was very much ready. He'd played out this whole thing in northern Arizona. He didn't want another twenty years of the same thing. And I think he was very much looking forward to the whole thing. I think Mother was not too thrilled, but so be it. I mean, she had so many friends, and so involved in everything, and then she has to go down there and start over, so to speak. And she did very well, eventually. But Dad had sold the house and the farm, and we'd had to pack up, and all that sort of stuff. And everybody was having us to dinner to tell us goodbye.

JF: That's hard.

EU: But see, it wasn't so far away. They always went back in the summer. You know, the court would adjourn for six weeks, and so Dad would take his work, and they'd go back to St. Johns, to Apache County.

JF: And where would they stay when they'd go back there?

EU: Sometimes with relatives, friends. Uncle Don had a cabin in Lakeside—they'd stay there sometimes. And a lot of people from St. Johns that had medical problems, or anything like that, when they came to Phoenix, they stayed with us. So we were kind of back and forth. But I went with them, and he rented a house there on Culver, and we moved in.

JF: On Culver? Is that in Mesa?

EU: No, in Phoenix, near the capital. Mom and I went with him the day he went down to be sworn in, and it was quite exciting.

JF: Who swore him in, do you remember?

EU: Well, I imagine it was Stanford, the chief justice. There was [R.C.] Stanford and [Arthur T.] LaPrade and Dad. The governor was being sworn in at the same time, I think. That was special, but the whole capital was alive with swearing-in and what have you. We'd talked about it a lot. My sisters were out of college and were married. Stewart, Morris, and Burr had the GI Bill, and they were in law school. Burr wasn't yet, but he went back to the university when he came home. And so the judge said, "Well, now, if you'd like to go back to school, you can live with us and go to Tempe." I said, "Okay." So I did, for two years. But when he went on the court, there were three judges, and they each had a secretary, and they had the clerk.

JF: The bailiff?

EU: No, the clerk of the court. Eugenea Davis: She'd been there forever. Well, I'll think of it. Anyway, that was it. And he had felt, since he never went to law school and never did research and all that stuff much, that what he wanted was a law clerk, and I could do the secretarial work.

JF: So he would use the....

EU: Bud Jacobson, who's a big lawyer there in Phoenix, he was graduating. He was a friend of Stewart and Morris'. Anyway, he was interested in the job. Dad talked to a lot of people, and Bud was interested and Dad was interested. So he hired Bud to come and be his law clerk. Bud could hunt and peck and type, and so could Dad. So they would do their opinions, get them all ready. But then when it came time for the final thing, I would go down and do it.

JF: So he took the salary for the secretary and split it between you?

EU: No, I didn't get anything. (chuckles) I could use his charge accounts at the stores, so I didn't have any problem. And he was sending me to school.

JF: Aren't you the one, though, who had the idea for the law clerk?

EU: No, no. So this was his idea. He talked to me about it, and this was his idea. And so that's what I'd do. I was going to Tempe to school, but if he needed me.... And I did a lot of his personal secretarial stuff. So we got along fine. And then as time went on, the other judges would say, "Now, I could use Bud. If you'll loan me Bud, you can use my secretary." So I don't know at exactly what point, but after a bit, they all allowed as to how it'd be nice to have law clerks. So it took them a while to get it through the legislature and everything, but eventually everybody got a law clerk and a secretary. Anyway, for at least two years, Bud and I pioneered the law clerk business.

JF: Do you remember clerks after that, [unclear].

EU: Oh, yes, I've got the list. There were a lot of them. They'd last a year, I think. Bud was there two years, though. They were all—it wasn't difficult. He'd have to kind of sort out who he wanted, because there were quite a lot that applied.

JF: So because of you and Bud, it ended up with legislation that allowed the whole law clerk system to get started.

EU: Yes, they had to go to the legislature, to the judges, and the whole thing. I don't remember how long it took. I didn't get involved in any of that.

JF: Did your father ever talk to you about cases?

EU: Oh, sure.

JF: Would you sit around the dinner table or the living room and talk about cases?

EU: Well, there was just Mom and me at that point. But he'd tell us about them. He'd never—it was the point of law, and he was working on this, and he'd tell us a bit about it, and we were always interested. We were well aware of the fact that whatever he told us, you didn't repeat. He never said that, but I never quoted him anyway, on anything.

So I went on to school. I went up to Salt Lake for summer school once during this period, but I graduated from ASU.

JF: What did you study at ASU?

EU: It was the beginning—they'd always just been a teachers' college—but anyway, I studied social work. I was going to be a social worker, and I got my degree. But in order to really work, you had to get a master's, and I wasn't all that interested. Besides, my wanderlust was acting up, so I decided, "Well, I think maybe I'll go back overseas." Well, I guess I was dating an FBI officer there in Phoenix, and I thought, "Well, I'll go with them."

JF: With the FBI?

EU: Yes. And I went to San Francisco and worked for them, but I found out—or maybe I knew all the time—they didn't have very many places. Most of them were in South America. Because they had so few places, there was a long queue of people wanting to go, girls wanting to go. But you had to be with the bureau for three years before you could go.

JF: Before you could go overseas at all?

EU: Before you could get on the list to go. And I thought, "Well, I don't know whether I want to do this or not. At about that time, the CIA was forming from the old OSS, and a lot of the FBI agents were interested in going over to work for the agency. J. Edgar [Hoover] was not happy, and didn't want them to go. I think they had to quit and be out of work for six months, and then they could apply. But anyway, some of those guys said, "Look, if you want to go overseas, this is the way to go." So they told me to go with CIA.

JF: The FBI told you how to do it.

EU: Yes. I mean, you just had to go to the right place and apply and stuff like that. So I did.

JF: And would this have been for secretarial work also?

EU: Oh, sure. That was my thing. I never cared about being an officer and being head of this or head of that. This all gave me a means to an end to do what I wanted to do. I liked working—give me a smart man and let me work with him, and everything's fine. So I think I went back to Washington for about six months, and then lo and behold, they assigned me to London.

JF: What did you do in Washington during those six months?

EU: Well, I worked with the agency and learned the business and got ready to go. Then they assigned me to London, which was delightful.

JF: So you were hired by the CIA in San Francisco?

EU: Well, that's where I applied. Then I had to go back to Washington. I never worked in San Francisco. They told me where to go to apply. And so then I was in London for five years. I went over in '51 and came back in '56. I had home leave in between, once.

JF: Backing up just a little bit: Who did you work for in the FBI?

EU: Well, the system, they had a steno pool. Whenever an agent needed to dictate, he told the gal that was in charge, and she assigned us. Sometimes you came back with a whole day's work. Anyway, it was a complicated thing, but they had it all worked out. You didn't just work for one man.

JF: And how about with the CIA in London? Did you work for a particular person?

EU: Yes.

JF: Can you say who that is?

EU: No. It was all cold war, and it's all over, but no. But we were under state department cover. For all intents and purposes I was working for the state department.

JF: At that time, was the CIA located in the embassy?

EU: Well, they're all over. I mean, some were in the military. It depended on where you were and what you were doing, and all that.

JF: But in London it would be based out of the American Embassy?

EU: Yes.

JF: Where did you live in London?

EU: Well, see, it's '51, and the war is over, but London is still pretty bad off, I'll tell ya'. And so we were given a housing allowance, and if you tried to find something for one person on your housing allowance, you didn't do very good. You either had to put in more of your own money, but if two of you went together, you could do pretty good. But you rented flats that were already furnished and belonged to people. There weren't just a lot of flats for rent—you know, apartments. So some of them hadn't had anything new in them since before the war, and this sort of thing. But we didn't care, we loved being in London. Another girl and I lived in this—well, it was an apartment house, and this apartment had two—it took us a while to get in there—but this apartment had two bedrooms and two baths, which was very unusual. Shepherds' Market, it was within walking distance of the embassy. And some of these military and NATO guys had had this flat. They always passed it on to the next one, and then at the point that they all got transferred to Paris, we got the flat. So I lived there the first tour.

JF: This was also the period in the United States when the Rosenberg trial, and things like that, wasn't it? I mean, you would have been overseas, so I don't know....

EU: No, I don't think I got too involved in that. I was too thrilled with London. We were there when the king died, and [for] the coronation.

JF: I wondered. Did you get to attend the coronation at all?

EU: Yes!

JF: You did?! What was that like?

EU: Well, it was fascinating. I mean, when the king died in 1952, there wasn't much publicity. You knew he was kind of ill, but you didn't realize how bad. And then it came over the BBC—they had this tolling of the bells—the announcement, “His Majesty, the king, is dead.” And then it went off the air, and all you'd hear would be music. And then it was in the morning, and when we went out on the streets at noon, most of the stores were changing their displays. You could have purple and white and black in the windows. And they were putting up their....

JF: Were these for mourning?

EU: Yes. They had a month or more of mourning. This was the traditional thing they did. And all the military men and police, everybody wore a black armband. And for a month, our men, if they went over to the foreign office on business or anything, they had to wear a black tie. So we had black ties hanging around, so if they had to go, they had to put on a black tie. The restaurants, the hotels, everything. Even The Windmill, which had never—it's a girly show—it hadn't closed for a hundred years—it closed. And the whole town was in mourning. The BBC, I guess, after the next day, came back on. But you would tune in, and you just heard the tolling of the bells. Of course Queen Elizabeth, who was in Kenya....

JF: She was?

EU: Yes, they were at Treetops [in Kenya]. And so she had to come home, and the whole thing. But we had already planned a ski trip to Austria.

JF: That was your roommate?

EU: Well, several of us in the embassy, and some of the British, our friends. But the king lay in state in Westminster Hall for two days, I think. So we weren't going to be there for the funeral, but we queued for about two hours in the rain, and it was fascinating. He was on this catapult and candles at all four ends. The soldiers, you know, in the big black fur hats and the red coats, and their guns pointed down. They were standing watch over the casket—I mean, the whole thing. And there were candles and everything—this great big hall, and you walked in, and you walked around it, and then you walked back out, paying your respects. And at one point, his brothers came and stood watch, but they wore the same uniform, and you never knew it.

JF: Oh, really?!

EU: Yes. Anyway....

JF: Was that for protection of the brothers?

EU: No, it's just tradition, I think. And so we left and went on our trip. So we missed the funeral. But then in 1953, in June, they had the coronation. Then they went all out, the whole town was decorated from one end to the other.

JF: How much longer was that, after his death?

EU: Well, he died in February of '52, and I think the coronation was in June of '53.

JF: So who reigned in between?

EU: Well, she's it, but she has to go through the whole procedure at Westminster Abbey and the whole thing. So it was all very festive, and some of the best plays, and the whole town was alive with festivities. Excellent theater. Everybody was putting forth their best. Our group was given two tickets by MI5 [British Security Service], £25 tickets, I think. And Mickey and me won them!

JF: Oh, you won the tickets?

EU: Yes! And so some people spent the whole night out in the rain queuing on the sidewalks so they could have a good view. We were on Oxford Street in John Lewis Department Store. Anyway, there was great regulations. You had to be in a certain place at a certain time, and come from a certain angle. We had to go in the back. The service at Westminster was on television. It was black-and-white, but they had lots of televisions in there. We watched the televisions and we had Scottish salmon and all the trimmings for lunch. And then they had taken everything out of the windows in the stores and put in bleachers. And so we sat out there.

JF: Put bleachers in front of the stores?

EU: No, inside. Where you have all the window displays, they had moved all that, and they put chairs and not just one row, but two rows. And that's where we sat and watched the procession.