

An Oral History Interview

with

ELMA UDALL (part 9)

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: This is Tape #59, it's February 22, and I'm with Elma Udall. We were talking about East and West Berlin, and you were commenting on East Berlin opera being so wonderful. I just wondered where they got the funds for that.

EU: East German government—they were very proud of it.

JF: I always had the impression that East Germany didn't have a lot of money.

EU: They got it from the Russians, as far as I'm concerned. (chuckles) But anyway, Berlin, there were an awful lot of nice people there. Some of them are still my very good friends. I had German friends, and I learned a lot. Emmy, my one friend, she had lived through the whole thing, and we'd walk down the streets and she'd—the end of the war, the Russians came through here.

JF: This is in East Berlin?

EU: No, this was West. Well, there was only one Berlin when it blew up.

JF: So Germany is where you really got to be friends with people who lived there?

EU: Wherever you were, if people spoke English, you could be friends. But through another friend, I had known her, I'd visited her before, before I ever went there. Anyway, it was a very good assignment, I liked it. So I had a year there.

JF: What office were you working for there—still a political office?

EU: Yes, I always worked—that was my favorite, I always worked for the political counselor. Of course we were under Bonn, we were a little miniature embassy right there. So then my tour was up, and I heard rumors that they were going to send me to Saigon, and I thought, "Oh, please!" So I called my friend in personnel and said, "I don't want to go to Saigon." I'd heard from a friend who was already out there in Saigon, and she said, "Don't come. It's not our war," she said. "The young girls booze it up and sleep around, and the old girls do all the work."

JF: Well, forget that! (laughs)

EU: So I said, "It's not my war, I don't want to go."

JF: When was this, around '67?

EU: Yes. So she looked around and she said, "Well, the Number Two job in Stockholm is open, and nobody's in the queue. Do you want it?" I said, "Yes, I'll take it." So I spent two lovely years in Stockholm.

JF: Now, which job was that—the number one, again, political office?

EU: No, there I worked for the DCM, the deputy chief [of mission]. The ambassador may be political, but it's the deputy chief who runs the thing. He's always foreign service, and I worked for him.

JF: How did you like Stockholm?

EU: Beautiful. The plusher the city, the duller the work—but in a way, who cares? A lot of people spoke English, they had beautiful restaurants. We loved to go out in the countryside. We knew a lot of the Swedes, they were better educated in some ways than we were. They had—The culture, there again, was excellent. The shopping was divine. It was a great oasis.

JF: Great place to work. The only thing I really know about Sweden during that period of time is that it's one of the places that American deserters would go.

EU: We were in the middle of that, yes.

JF: I wondered if you were. That was something you dealt with? Did they have to come through your embassy?

EU: Oh, no, they dare not come near us! But yes, we kept track of them, and they were there, and the Swedes were very nice to them. But no, I didn't know any of them. You knew they were around.

JF: Did you run into any anti-Vietnam War sentiment from the Swedes when you were there?

EU: Well, they had a big demonstration, anti-war. Olv Palme, I think, led it. But personally, they didn't. They were very much into live and let live. I don't know that they were anti, but they were neutral. They couldn't see any point in the war anyway, and if these guys wanted to come, they let them.

JF: I had read somewhere—I get things from the strangest places—around this time the KGB was involved in actively encouraging American deserters to go to Russia to get information, debrief them, and then ship them to Sweden, because they didn't want them anymore.

EU: Oh? I never heard that, but that's possible.

JF: Apparently the deserters would think they were going to Russia, but then once Russia got what they wanted, they....

EU: Sent them along. Well, I still say that with a lot of those guys—or anybody deserting—you've got a real disadvantage if you don't have the language.

JF: Yes, they did. I mean, Scandinavian languages are difficult.

EU: Well, but most of them speak English. They like to travel. You don't travel much with Swedish as your only language.

JF: That's right. Yes, they do start with languages very, very early.

EU: It used to be German, before the war, but now it's English.

JF: Was that one of the reasons that American expatriates or deserters would go there, is because they did speak English?

EU: Well, I think it was the fact that they let them in, to begin with. But it was probably a plus that you could.... Anyway, after Stockholm....

JF: Let me back up a bit. Where did you live in Stockholm?

EU: There again, the embassy took over an apartment house and we all had apartments. We didn't ship furniture and stuff—you just took over the flat that the girl you replaced had. It was all very comfortable. And if it was snowing for a week, you could spend the weekend having an ongoing bridge game from one apartment to the other—a lot of things to do. We kept busy.

JF: After Stockholm, did you go back to the United States?

EU: You always get a month's leave, six weeks' leave, and then go on to your next post.

JF: Was that when you heard Mo's Vietnam war address, was during that break?

EU: Yes.

JF: Did you see that coming?

EU: Well, he kind of, you know.... I'd only been home a short time. I hadn't really been able to spend too much time with him. But he invited Mother and me to come over to Tucson to hear his speech. He got a very good reception. It was a little slow in coming, but he got—were you there?

JF: Yes, I was, actually—I was in school there. By then he'd been divorced and was he remarried yet? Let's see, this was '68.

EU: Yes. Let's see, he and Pat split while I was in Moscow. Yes, he was married to Ella by then, I think.

JF: One question about that. He and Pat eloped—I gather because....

EU: They didn't elope. He was playing for the Denver Nuggets, and that's where they met. And then he was coming back to Tucson, and she came with him. They were married on the

way down. They never talked about it, neither one of them. They would never tell you where they got married or when, but now we know.

JF: I just wondered, they were the only ones that weren't married by your father, weren't they?

EU: Yes, I guess that's right. We didn't have him by then, either.

JF: Oh. Okay. Wow, I didn't realize that.

EU: Wait. Yes we did, of course we did. They got divorced after he died. They were married before they got to Tucson.

JF: I imagine your mother would have been pretty disappointed.

EU: No, she let us live and let live. A lot of people would [ask], "When did Morris get married?" And she got tired of asking him, and he wouldn't tell her, so she just made up a date, and we went on from there.

JF: I think I would have really liked your mother.

EU: So then I went to—I can't remember just how, but anyway, all of a sudden, the girl that I was replacing in Laos was getting to stay on another month or something. So I said, "Well, why can't I go by ship?" So I flew to San Francisco, and on one of the President Lines, I went to Yokohama on a ship.

JF: Why did you prefer to go by ship, instead of flying?

EU: Well, I had this extra time, and I'd never crossed the ocean, and I liked ships.

JF: Other than on the brides' boat.

EU: Yes. No, I'd crossed when I went to London. Well, I flew over, but I came back on the *United States*. But anyway, it just seemed like a good idea to spend some time, and then I stopped and went up to Tokyo, and then I stopped in Hong Kong, and then I went to Bangkok, and then I went to Laos.

JF: Were you traveling alone when you went to the places you just mentioned?

EU: Yes.

JF: How many American women—well, I guess there were a lot of American women traveling alone then.

EU: Well, state department people certainly did—you didn't go in pairs. You had your ticket, you had your passport, and you went.

JF: But so often you went from one point to the point you were working. This time you went to a number of Asian places beforehand. Did you make arrangements before you left?

EU: Yes. I had to travel with—you know, the state department travel, she booked me in these Hyatt Hotels and airline tickets.

JF: That would be very nice. You had your own travel agent, basically.

EU: Yes.

JF: I assume you enjoyed yourself in those places, just seeing them.

EU: Oh, sure. It was my first look at the Far East—I had a great time.

JF: And then Laos.

EU: Vientiane. Vientiane is on the Mekong River, Thailand is over here. Vientiane is the capital, Laos is the country. It borders against the Mekong in Thailand, and then on the other side you have Vietnam. And then down below you have Cambodia. Laos is landlocked. All those other countries....

JF: Have some kind of port.

EU: But we had the river, the Mekong. In the dry season, it was way down there. But it flooded once, and it was really something. But it was kind of “through the looking glass.” Some British newspaperman described Vientiane as looking like a leftover Tarzan movie set. The houses were up on stilts. I don’t know, it was out of this world.

JF: Did that fit the description for you?

EU: It sure did.

JF: So kind of back in time—not modern?

EU: You had Buddhist temples here and there. You had the monks in their robes walking down the street. See, this was the secret war, kind of. There weren’t any military troops there, at all. This was an enclave.

JF: And in fact, wasn’t the military working out of the embassies at that time?

EU: Well, yes, but not in uniform. Yes, we had military attachés and stuff like that. But there were no actual troops. Well, there were some air force across the river. But anyway, we were supporting the Vietnam War, but we were really supposed to be kind of neutral. So yes, our job

was supporting the Vietnam War. And there I worked for the Number Two man, the deputy chief of mission.

JF: Was it ever, in that kind of situation, ever uncomfortable for you, or made uncomfortable for you, that your brother was actively against the war?

EU: No. I don't think they even knew much, or cared. We were so far out of it. Well, the kind of funny thing was, we would get visitors once in a while—congressmen and what have you. Not very many, but some of them would come. The ambassador, if these people were pro-war, he'd give them the grand treatment. But if they weren't, they got kind of short shrift sometimes.

JF: Who was the ambassador then?

EU: Doesn't matter. But anyway, in the final analysis, if they ran out of things to do, these congressmen, they'd bring them over and introduce them to me, so they could go home and tell Morris they saw me. So I had a little chat with a lot of them. Johnny Rhodes came, we had a great time.

JF: Oh, great!

EU: Anyway, we worked very hard, six days a week, and lots of overtime. We got paid for it. But every now and again, you got to get out of there. So I went to Katmandu with the administrative officer and his wife. And I went to Australia and New Zealand.

JF: You didn't do a tour of Laos, huh? (laughs)

EU: We were forbidden to go outside the city limits.

JF: Oh, were you really?

EU: Well, see, the Viet Cong and Pathet Lao were up north. But we did fly up one time with the ambassador.

JF: Could you go outside of the embassy compound?

EU: Oh, sure, to the little town. But if you went outside the town, you weren't supposed to.

JF: The Ho Chi Minh Trail was operating?

EU: No, it was on the other side. See, we were on the west side. The Ho Chi Minh Trail started in Vietnam, to go around the DMZ [demilitarized zone], and then it'd come into Laos, then go back in. But it was jungle.

JF: Now, was this a period of time when America was not supposed to be—we were supposed to be neutral and not involved in Laos at all, but were bombing Laos?

EU: They were bombing from the ocean. They weren't bombing from the land. They'd come in from there and bomb. Yes, they were bombing, but not from us, no.

JF: Were you aware of that?

EU: Oh, sure. We got all the reports.

JF: Was that scary at all?

EU: Well, no. I mean, we didn't have any war near us. I went over to Saigon a couple of times. You could see bombs once in a while. They were bombing the Cambodian border then. And I went to Da Nang.

JF: Oh, you did go to Da Nang.

EU: Yes, my boss went over there for some kind of a meeting, and he said, "Why don't you come?" So I went. And I had a friend over there that I stayed with.

JF: What an amazing experience, to be in those places at that time.

EU: Well, see, there were a lot of state department people out there, there were a lot of aid people out there, as well as all the military.

JF: Did you feel safe at all times?

EU: Well, yes. If you're with the local Americans, they know what the lay of the land is. And if you're with them, you feel pretty safe. But if you were playing around on your own, that's another matter.

JF: In the embassies, did you eat pretty much American food?

EU: Yes, we had a commissary.

JF: Was it mostly American food, or did they have local cooks?

EU: Well, there was a little place across the street from the embassy where you could get noodles and things for lunch if you wanted to. Most of us went home. We had Lao or Thai maids. They'd go down to the morning market. They had beautiful fruit. They'd go down to the morning market and buy all the fruit and stuff.

JF: Was there any problem getting stomach viruses or bacteria?

EU: No. We had strict rules. Our water was filtered, and we each had a filter thing that we drank out of.

JF: Was this a period of time—was the embassy at all involved in trying to find missing American pilots in the north there?

EU: That came on afterwards. You were there, trying to find them the minute they went down, but you didn't get into this missing people thing, because there was no way you could. We weren't able to do that until the Vietnamese would cooperate with us.

JF: Were you able to keep up with your family? It sounds like you did it primarily through Mo's friends in the Congress.

EU: Oh, I always wrote to Mother and my sisters. Mother wrote every week, and put in another carbon for every kid that went away. The boys didn't play much, but Mother and my sisters and I, we always did kind of a—they were good about once a week, but I kind of would go every ten days or something. Yes, I always wrote home. See, we had APO, it would come in.

JF: It's probably a whole lot faster than when you first got into this business.

EU: Yes.

JF: How about the Church there?

EU: No.

JF: No missionaries? I guess they wouldn't be in there.

EU: They're in there now, but there weren't any.

JF: Not then.

EU: No. They wouldn't just go straight in. They usually went into countries that were already Christian. They didn't go into Buddhist countries, where you had to start from scratch.

JF: I had another question about keeping in touch with your family.

EU: I didn't have many visitors up there. (laughter)

JF: Nobody wanted to come see you? So how long were you there?

EU: Two years and three weeks.

JF: You lived in the embassy compound?

EU: No, we lived in Japanese Quonset huts.

JF: Oh, you did?!

EU: See, the Japanese had been in there. It was called Silver City, and all of us, we each had a little house with grounds around it, and barbed wire fence all the way around us.

JF: Did you ever run into people that you had worked with in other embassies?

EU: Quite often, yes.

JF: Other women working in clerical. . . .

EU: Yes, and officers too.

JF: Were you aware, while you were in Laos, of Mo running for majority leader?

EU: That was before that, wasn't it?

JF: Was that before Laos?

EU: That was one of his first audacious moves, I thought.

JF: I do think that term fits well. You went to Budapest next. Was that direct, or you went home first .

EU: No, I'd been there my full time. The nice thing was, that Bangkok is halfway around the world from Washington, D.C. So I went out from Washington west to Bangkok; so I came back through Europe. I went around the world.

JF: Oh! (facetiously) How terrible! (laughs) That's wonderful! So you really got to do some—you took advantage of your jobs, it sounds to me, by getting [unclear].

EU: I mean, you learned the options, and put in your request, and there you were.

JF: And then you went home for a while?

EU: Let's see, after Budapest. No, I didn't really have another assignment.

JF: This is before Budapest?

EU: Okay, yes. I knew I was going to Budapest. I had extra time, because the girl there wasn't leaving. So I had, oh, I don't know, a couple of extra weeks, I guess, before I got home. But I had a friend in Beirut, which was still the original, hadn't been smashed to bits. I stopped in Beirut. I had friends in Tehran. I went back there after forty years or whatever it was.

JF: What was your impression when you went back?

EU: I couldn't believe it. It wasn't the same city at all. You know, the oil money, and all this stuff. Big buildings, clean streets, the whole thing. It was fascinating to see, and they took me all over.

JF: You got to see a lot of places in their authentic self.

EU: I went to Beirut, and I went there, and I stopped in....

JF: Was Beirut beautiful?

EU: Oh, yes. My friend's flat was right on the Mediterranean. It was gorgeous. And then I stopped in Greece. A friend of mine was in Salonika. These were state department friends. That's the nice thing about traveling with friends all over. And then I went to Vienna, and then I went to London, and then I came home. And I had a month at home.

JF: Did you stay with your mother?

EU: Oh, yes. I'd always stop in Washington—I had to. I'd stop in Washington and see Stewart and Lee and Morris, and then I'd go to Richmond, and then I'd go home and see her and my sister and friends, and visit with Mother. Anyway, then I went back to Washington, then I went to Budapest. They say it's fascinating now. I'd like to go back. But to me, it was kind of a city more with a past than a future—you know, having been part of East Europe, although it had such a great heritage, having been part of the Hapsburg Empire. And the beautiful buildings and stuff, but everything was all very run down. But there again, it's on the Danube, and the apartments where the embassy people lived were right on the Danube. I could lie in bed and watch the hydrofoil go. It would go every morning at seven o'clock to Vienna. It'd shoot out. I'd see it go, and then I'd see it come back in the evening. And I'd go on it sometimes. I had a good friend in Vienna, so I went over there quite often. I worked for the Number Two man in Budapest. It was not like an iron curtain country. I mean, you felt quite free to move around, and the relations....

JF: The cold war was pretty much over?

EU: Well, not really, but it was not so evident in Budapest.

JF: More so than....

EU: Yes. And you were not in the line of fire so much. And the Hungarians were managing pretty well. They let the Russians handle the foreign affairs in the military and stuff, but locally they were able to run a lot of their own affairs. They didn't have KGB all over. And they had very good opera and ballet and that sort of thing. And then I didn't have one, but several of the people had their own cars. We used to go out in the countryside quite a lot, in these little villages, which was lovely.

JF: Again, though, you had a language problem there, I would imagine.

EU: Oh, yes. Hungarian—I never learned much about that. Let's see.... Mother took ill.

JF: While you were in Budapest?

EU: Yes. Actually, I'd gone to London on vacation, and Alice called me and said, "Your mother's being operated on. If I were you, I'd come."

JF: Was this something that came up suddenly?

EU: Well, she had not been feeling too well. Anyway, she was in Tucson with Burr and Alice then.

JF: Living with them then?

EU: Well, no, she was living by herself, and Alice came and got her and took her over there for the doctors. Mother was kind of stalling on going to the doctors.

JF: But your mother was living in Tucson by herself?

EU: No, no, no, she was living in Phoenix. Oh, no, she never lived—she stayed right in our house. But anyway, they'd taken X-rays or whatever, and they were going to operate. So she had pancreatic cancer.

JF: That's a bad one.

EU: Yes. But she came out of it, and that was in October. So then I went home. I took a couple weeks' leave or whatever, and went home. Morris had this—she'd had her operation, and they'd done a bypass and she was doing pretty well, but you knew that it wouldn't be too much longer. This was the first time—he was having a fund raiser, and Archibald Cox came.

JF: Was that in Tucson?

EU: Yes. The first time he had appeared anywhere since the Saturday Night Massacre, and he came to speak. But Morris called us and said, "I'd like to have you come. Mother, you always come, but you never speak, so would you say a few words?" And she said yes. And she did. Anyway, she was on pills, she was hurting, I could tell. We went to the dinner, but of course it lasted longer than anything. She was very stoic. I took [a pill] anyway, and finally I said to Burr, "Get her a glass of water, and give her this." Anyway, she was not looking good, and I cried on Morris' shoulder for a minute, and I said, "I'm not going back. Call the state department and ask them to put me on leave without pay." And he said okay. I told him who to call. Anyway, we went back to Phoenix, and had an appointment with the doctor and went, and she had jaundiced, and the doctor said, "We've got six weeks to go." So we kept her home.

JF: When she spoke, was that taped at all, do you know?

EU: I don't think so. She had notes, which I gave to Morris.

JF: He announced his candidacy for president in '74. Were you still....

EU: I was in London when he ran for president.

JF: But when he announced was '74. He announced two full years ahead of time. (laughs) He was the first to do that.

EU: I guess I missed that.

JF: So you stayed with your mother then?

EU: Yes. She died in February—it's coming up to the anniversary. And I cleaned out the house, cleaned all that stuff. And I had not much longer to go before I could retire, and I thought, "Well, I'll just retire." I mean, I'll go back to Washington and do my time and retire. And so everybody kept pushing me to go. I finally finished up with the house and I went. And I was working in the department, and they offered me Vienna, several other places.

JF: You had gone back to the department of state in Washington to work?

EU: My leave without pay was up, and I went back. But I was hitting sixty-two, which was when I had to retire. Well anyway, I didn't have much longer to go before I was eligible to retire, and I thought, "Well, I'll retire." But I went back there to work to fill out my time. One of the girls I know that works in personnel, I saw her one day and she said, "There's a vacancy coming up in London. Why don't you write me a memorandum and tell me you're interested?" And I thought, "Yeah, sure. I'll never get London." And so I didn't [write the memo]. She called me and said, "Hurry up." So I did, and by gum, they sent me over to—I was supposed to go at Christmas time, and then another girl got transferred, and they said, "You've got to go earlier." So all of a sudden I'm going to London. So I went for three years and worked for the political counselor. I was going to retire. I really was eligible then. I was going to retire and come home. [Ambassador] Kingman Brewster, walked through my door and said, "Why don't you stay and work for me?"

JF: What bigger honor could you get?

EU: Exactly. So I worked for him for a year and a half, practically two years, and at that time I said, "Having worked for the ambassador to the Court of St. James, named Kingman Brewster, the only place to go after that is out to pasture."

JF: What did you think of Kingman Brewster? What kind of guy was he?

EU: Nice, nice, capable man. He was not a bureaucrat. He had lots of academe friends all over London. He'd had a sabbatical there once. Anyway, he knew a lot of people, and he was a great

friend of Cy Vance. They'd been in school together. He was Carter's appointee. Brewster told me on the side, "Your brother was my candidate." (laughs)

JF: Oh, really? He had been the president of Yale—that's pretty impressive.

EU: Well, anyway, so it was lovely, I had a great time working.

JF: That must have been just an amazing experience. Now, there, did you attend embassy functions?

EU: No. See, there were so many—there was the political counselor, the economic counselor. You had all this big office staff. You've got 400 people there in London. And so he had a dinner party for me when I left. And I think the CIA chief or somebody, he had a dinner for them. In fact, I invited me, put me on his list, because I always moved him in to see Kingman whenever he wanted to. No, we never expected anything on the.... I mean, in that big a place, at my level.... Although the political counselor that I worked for, he had more friends over in Parliament, the people liked him very much. And one of them, he was not a member, but he had worked there for years. Bill arranged one day for Ellen, the personnel officer, and me to go over and have lunch with him, and he would show us all through Parliament—which he did. We had a great day. Bill thought we'd be back after lunch, but we stayed all day. Anyway, I met this—what was his name? Anyway, he said, "You know, when the queen opens Parliament in the fall, if you'd like, I might be able to get you tickets." We said, "Well, that would be lovely." So as time drew near, I said to Ellen, "Okay, are you calling him, or am I?" And by gum, we went.

JF: Really? Tell me about that.

EU: Well, you had your instructions. You had to wear a hat, and you had to be over there at a certain time. See, she doesn't go into—I'm getting tired—she doesn't go into the House—she's not allowed into the House of Commons. But there's the House of Lords, and there's this big place in between. There's a robing room. Where the tower is, she comes in there, and then she comes out from there, and then makes her speech and all that, and up and walks right by us. So we got all gussied-up and went. Here were all the lords and ladies [unclear] visiting around with each other. You had quite a while to be there, to get in place. It was fascinating. They bring the crown down from the tower where all the crown jewels are. It comes in its own carriage.

JF: It has its own carriage?

EU: It comes down, and you can hear the "clop, clop, clop" of the horses, and they carry the crown in on its cushion, to her, before she comes out. Anyway, it was a very regal occasion. Then when it's over, Westminster Abbey is nearby, and the bells were ringing.

JF: What experiences! What incredible experiences. So you retired after that?

EU: Yes.

JF: I can understand. Sort of hard to beat that. As the secretary of the ambassador, did you get any perks? Was housing basically the same as you had experience before?

EU: Oh, sure. I had a nice apartment, I could walk to work. I had visitors for five years. Everybody came to see me: my brothers and sisters and friends, and from all over. But it was great because I could orient them and get them started on their touring and all that, and go to work.

They have the trooping of the color on her birthday, which is a great event. It's pretty hard to get tickets, and I got brave one time and wrote a letter and said I'd been there all those years and never been, would like to be considered to go, and they sent me back a couple of tickets.

JF: Who was the letter to?

EU: Well, to the protocol at the palace, or whoever.... No, I guess it was military, actually, that was in charge of trioping the color. But that's how they celebrate her birthday.

JF: Did you get pictures of all these things?

EU: I don't think so.

JF: There probably are pictures.

EU: Oh, yes.

JF: So was it a letdown when you retired?

EU: No, I was ready. I always wanted to go while I was ahead. A day or two before I left, I said to him—there was nothing on his calendar—I said, “What are you doing for lunch today?” He said, “I'm having a sandwich here with you, and you're going to tell me what you think of this place.” (laughs)

JF: Did he want a debriefing?

EU: (chuckles) Anyway, we had a good lunch, a good visit. But I told him, “I'm ready to go. I take my interest in foreign affairs, my love of travel, and my friends and happily go out to pasture.”

JF: Do you keep up on foreign affairs now?

EU: Yes, if I can. I take *The Washington Post Weekly*. And I've got a friend in Washington who's very much—she's retired—and she's very much into everything. I talk to her quite often. She's got friends all over the town, and she knows....

JF: And she keeps you up on things?

EU: Yes.

JF: And you originally went back to Tempe to live?

EU: Yes.

JF: Why did you go back there?

EU: I looked the world over, but I always knew I was going home. My sister lived there, I've got lots of cousins, I've got nieces and nephews, friends.

JF: That was Inez?

EU: I didn't want to live in Phoenix. She was teaching at Mesa Community [College], so she was living there. So I lived there about ten years, and went to London nearly every other year.

JF: Well, it had become home for you, I'm sure.

EU: Oh, it is.

JF: And in the meantime, Mo had developed Parkinson's. Has anybody figured out whether this had anything to do with St. Johns?

EU: No.

JF: Nothing to do with pesticides, or....

EU: I don't know who started that—that's silly. My mother's brother and sister had Parkinson's.

JF: And were they from St. Johns?

EU: No. They were in Thatcher. And they had both had—after the First World War—that awful flu that came through. They had both had flu. And there's one theory that maybe if you'd had in your youth—like Morris had had spinal meningitis—if you have a very high temperature, that later on, that might....

JF: I read that recently. In fact, spinal meningitis, I think, was one of the things mentioned.

EU: Well, that came on later, after he went to not NIH, but.... So they had it. Mom's sister, Aunt Lela, her son, who was a doctor in Modesto, California, he had it. Morris and Inez. It's Lee, it's not Udall.

JF: Okay, so genetic.

EU: At first they were saying that it wasn't a genetic thing, it wasn't a family thing. But with that many, I think they have to admit that it is.

JF: I think that's one thing they have said, it was genetic. But it can have other causes. So did you stay until your sister passed away, in Tempe?

EU: No, I came here two years ahead of that.

JF: And why here?

EU: Eloise and Warren had left Richmond, and were coming west. Their children are mostly—they didn't want to live right next to them, but this is, as I said, exactly the same altitude, latitude, everything, of St. Johns.

JF: I would have thought that St. Johns was colder.

EU: Why?

JF: Because I've been at Springerville too often. (laughs)

EU: Well, that's much higher. Stewart and Lee were in Santa Fe. Eloise and Warren decided to live here, and I was getting sick of Tempe and Arizona—not Arizona, but Phoenix and everything. And so they just kind of said, "Why don't you come?" And I thought, "Well, why not?" Inez was not very happy, but I came.

JF: I'm sure you stayed in touch.

EU: Oh, she came over often, and I was there all the time.

JF: And how has retirement treated you?

EU: Oh, I've had a great time. You won't believe it, but I've been retired twenty-five years now.

JF: Have you really?! Twenty-five years!

EU: I retired in '79.

JF: And you've continued to travel quite a bit.

EU: And I've had lots of my foreign service friends come see me, and I go see them. I've been to Kenya twice.

JF: Do you have a favorite place?

EU: London! (laughs)

JF: London itself?

EU: Well, yes. I mean, I don't want to live there, but it's my city—they speak my language.

JF: It certainly sounds like in the arts and everything, that's just....

EU: Well, when we were working there, we were working five days a week, sometimes had to do overtime. So you could go to the theater and all this evenings and weekends. But when I go over now, I can do whatever I want. I can catch up. I never felt I caught up before.

JF: Where do you stay when you go over there?

EU: With friends.

JF: How wonderful.

EU: I've never paid a hotel bill over there. And I've had friends down in Dorset and Kent. I mean, I don't just—I move around. I'm very fortunate.

JF: Do you still go there every other year, about?

EU: Well, I go whenever I feel like it. I used to rather pay an airline ticket to London than air conditioning in Phoenix.

JF: Well, we set our priorities, and I happen to understand that one. (laughter) Well, Elma, thank you so much. It's getting late, and I can always come up with lots of extra questions, but I think I'm going to give you a break.

EU: Well, I think it's time.

JF: We'll call it quits for now. Thank you very much, Elma.

EU: Thank you.

[END TAPE #59, SIDE A; END OF INTERVIEW]