INTERVIEW OF CHARLES F. C. RUFF

February 5, 2000

This interview is being conducted on behalf of the Oral History Project of the District of Columbia Circuit. The interviewee is Charles F. C. Ruff, and the interviewer is Patricia Shakow. The interview took place at Mr. Ruffs home in Northwest Washington on Saturday, February 5, 2000, at 10:30 a.m.

Ms. Shakow: Please tell us your full name, including those mysterious double initials, and the name of the firm in which you are a partner.

Mr. Ruff: My name is Charles Frederick Carson Ruff, and I am a partner in Covington and Burling.

Ms. Shakow: Let's get on the record with a few essential facts about your immediate family: your wife's name, your children and their names, and your grandchildren, and the city in which each lives.

Mr. Ruff I am married to Susan Ruff for going on 38 years, and we have two daughters. Our older daughter, Carin, is a professor at John Carroll University in Cleveland, and our younger daughter, Christina, is a teacher at Hebron Academy in Maine. She's married to Nathaniel Wagner, and they have a daughter – our granddaughter, Samantha.

Ms. Shakow: What is your wife's maiden name?

Mr. Ruff: My wife's maiden name is Willis.

Ms. Shakow: That's easy. We inay return to this subject later, but I'd like to start with your childhood, indeed, your pre-childhood. What do you remember about the place where you were born, the city and the date, and what your parents were doing at the time?

Mr. Ruff: I was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on August 1, 1939. My father was a reporter for the *Cleveland Press,* a paper that no longer exists, and I don't believe that my mother

was working at the time. We only stayed in Cleveland – we lived in Shaker Heights – for about six months, and then we moved to Toledo, which was my mother's hometown, where my father became a reporter for the *Toledo Bee*.

Ms. Shakow: And, tell me more about your parents, where they were born.

Mr. Ruff: My mother, oddly enough, was born in Salt Lake City. My grandparents were from Hungary, and came to this country I guess the early years of the twentieth century and moved from city to city where my grandfather ran various businesses and ended up finally in Toledo. My mother was one of five sisters, so I had plenty of aunts as I was growing up.

Ms. Shakow: Were they in Toledo?

Mr. Ruff: They were all in Toledo, yes. And, I spent the first three years of my life living in Toledo before my mother moved to New York, and eventually I moved to New York. I don't know anything very much about my father's background. My mother and my natural father were divorced when I was, perhaps, a year old. I know that he was of Scottish ancestry because his father was for a time the leader of the MacGregor clan in the United States, but other than that, and knowing that my natural father, Mr. Carson, was a reporter and an editor for many years ultimately working for the *Baltimore American*, I don't know much about him.

Ms. Shakow: You don't know when his family came to this country.

Mr. Ruff: I think in the late nineteenth century, just from some references to his father that I saw in the newspaper once.

Ms. Shakow: So, he was perhaps third generation American.

Mr. Ruff: I think that's probably right.

Ms. Shakow: And, tell me a little about your mother's fainily. What was her

maiden name?

Mr. Ruff Her maiden name was Klein. Her father was Morris Klein.

Ms. Shakow: She was not a Mormon.

Mr. Ruff: She was not a Mormon, no. It was a Hungarian, Jewish family, although I think it's fair to say that the family did not actively practice their religion over the years, although I think that changed a little bit in the ensuing generations, but they grew up in the early mid-years of the twentieth century in a wooden, frame house in the middle of Toledo. I have vague recollections of the house when I was perhaps 3 years old, and then the sisters all went their ways, but almost all of them, all but one, stayed in Toledo. One went off to be a WAVE in the Second World War and ultimately moved to New York, as did my mother, but the core of the family remained in Toledo.

Ms. Shakow: What were your mother's sisters' names?

Mr. Ruff The oldest sister was named Selma, never married, and she went off to Los Angeles to be a legal secretary. The next one in order of age, I think, is Erma, who still lives in Toledo, was a housewife. I don't believe she ever worked, but was actively involved in the Toledo art museum. Then, I think my mother was the third. The next sister was Bernice, who also remained in Toledo for her entire life. The youngest, known as "Babe" in the family, was Ruth, the adventurous one who went off to World War II and then moved to New York.

Ms. Shakow: Are you still in touch with them?

Mr. Ruff: Yes. I have had over the last several years a number of cases in the Toledo area, so I see them periodically, and keep in touch by phone with them.

Ms. Shakow: I assume that they have had children, who are your first cousins.

Mr. Ruff: They have indeed. I don't see very much of them, although the

daughter of one of my cousins is attending American University Law School, and I see her occasionally.

Ms. Shakow: So, she comes for dinner and advice.

Mr. Ruff: We take her out to dinner.

Ms. Shakow: How about your father's family?

Mr. Ruff: My natural father's family, I don't know much about. I've seen an obituary. He died in 1974 in Baltimore, and there's a reference there to a family that grew **up** in the Baltimore area, but I've never met any of them. I've seen my father only once, when Sue and I were down in Baltimore. I was playing lacrosse in college, and he came to one of the lacrosse games, and that was in 1960, was the only other time I've seen him.

Ms. Shakow: So, you don't know whether he had brothers or sisters or cousins.

Mr. Ruff: I think he had a brother, but I'm not sure.

Ms. Shakow: I take it we can say then that you didn't stay in touch with your father.

Mr. Ruff: Other than that one occasion in which we met after the lacrosse game, no.

Ms. Shakow: That must have been a very odd meeting, not having seen him in all those years.

Mr. Ruff: It was **odd.** Sue and I were going out together then, and he was standing on the sidelines during the game, and came **up** to us afterwards, and then took us out to dinner in a club in Baltimore. It was an **odd** occasion.

Ms. Shakow: Were you expecting him –

Mr. Ruff: Yes, we'd arranged that we would see each other, but I had no way of

recognizing him, but he said he recognized me.

Ms. Shakow: Do you think that this separation was his choice?

Mr. Ruff I just don't know. I've never talked to my mother about that situation, but it was so soon after my birth I just don't have any sense of it.

Ms. Shakow: Yes, yes. Now, when they separated, did your mother go back with you and live with her family'?

Mr. Ruff: We lived in my grandparents' house in Toledo.

Ms. Shakow: Lots of babysitters.

Mr. Ruff: Lots of babysitters, aunts galore, and I'm told by my aunts of course I was a perfect child, was always entertaining their boyfriends when they came to visit. Then, ultimately, I think in 1940, my mother moved to New York to begin a career, and I stayed back in Toledo with my aunts until I, too, moved to New York, which would have been 1942, probably.

Ms. Shakow: Was that separation very difficult?

Mr. Ruff: I don't have any recollection of it. I think I was in such a house filled with so many people that I'm not sure that I particularly noticed that one of them was gone, but I think I was young enough that it probably really didn't make much difference.

Ms. Shakow: President Clinton had somewhat of a similar experience, his father having died before he was born and his mother having to go back to nursing school, and I think that while he was well cared for, he found that separation very traumatic, but he was a little older than you were –

Mr. Ruff: **And,** if **I** think back to it, I really just have the feeling of being so surrounded and so supported during those early years, and that continued during my childhood. I'd make periodic trips back to Toledo and would be fawned over by all my aunts; it was a great

experience.

Ms. Shakow: Were you the first grandchild?

Mr. Ruff: I was, indeed.

Ms. Shakow: Tell me about New York. Where did you live and what did your mother do when you first arrived?

Mr. Ruff: My mother moved to New York and went into the public relations business, where she has been practicing literally for the last 60 years, still working and living in New York. And, very early on, I think, began to represent figures in the music industry. I don't know all the details of those early years, but I do know that in the very early '40s she was representing and had dealings with Leonard Bernstein, who continued to be a client of hers over the years until he died. And I moved to New York, I believe, in '42 and we lived in an apartment on East 51" Street on Beckman Place in New York. And I have memories of that apartment, which was right on the river. And, then my mother met my adoptive father, Carl Ruff, and they were married just before he went overseas to fight in World War II, and we continued to live in that apartment on East 51st Street until 1947, when we moved six blocks uptown to 57" Street, and that's where I grew up –

Ms. Shakow: Now that address tells me that your mother must have been very successful as soon as she came to New York.

Mr. Ruff: I think that's right, although the cost of everything was – I can't translate the cost of things in the early 1940s to the modern day – but I think it's fair to say that she was successful, and my adoptive father when he returned from World War II also went into the public relations business, and we certainly lived a comfortable life.

Ms. Shakow: Did they work together?

Mr. Ruff: They did for a very short period of time, but, by and large, they had separate careers. Starting in '45 my mother became the public relations director of the Metropolitan Opera, and she did that job for 10 years, and then essentially opened her own office after leaving the Met.

Ms. Shakow: Can you tell me a little about your adoptive father.

Mr. Ruff My adoptive father, Carl Ruff, who really to me was my father for all intents and purposes, grew up on Long Island near the city, and went to Duke University, came out of Duke in the mid-30s, began himself to work in the public relations area, working for WOR radio station in New York and others up until the time that he went into the Army. He served in the infantry, in the 9'' Division, in Africa, Sicily and ultimately in Normandy, became a major in the intelligence arm of the Army, and was severely wounded in the early fighting in Germany, stepped on a land mine, lost a foot and the lower part of his leg. The first vivid memory I actually have of him is a Washington-based memory; he was in Walter Reed for a long time after he was brought back, and I think it must have been – we have not really talked about it – that there was an arranged meeting which my mother took me down to Washington to meet this man, who I had actually met previously at the wedding, but obviously had no recollection of it. He had a room at what is now the Shoreham, and I have a vivid recollection of going into the hotel and meeting him, and I think the purpose of the meeting was to enable me to get over the fact that he had lost part of his leg and used crutches and had a stump instead of a foot. I don' t remember ever being particularly worried, but I do have a vivid recollection of that first meeting in that hotel room which is probably the same hotel I could find now.

Ms. Shakow: Was that hotel being used as a hospital? Or, had he been discharged?

Mr. Ruff: I think he took a room for that weekend, and was out at Walter Reed, and didn't want to meet me in the hospital –

Ms. Shakow: How old was he at that time?

Mr. Ruff: He's two years younger than my mother, so he would have been 32.

Ms. Shakow: **A** good age for an Army officer. Did they draft him? I guess until **36.**

Mr. Ruff: No, actually, he would have been about 29 when he went in, and 32 when he came out.

Ms. Shakow: Tell me about the wedding.

Mr. Ruff: There are pictures, so I know I was there, but I don't have any recollection – There are pictures of my father and my mother and me and my grandfather, who was a lawyer in New York, but other than seeing those pictures, I would have been just three or four years old, and I have no recollection of it.

Ms. Shakow: Was your grandfather influential in your choice of a career?

Mr. Ruff: Not, at all. No, he was a wonderful, wonderful man and practiced in his own small firm in New York, went to Columbia Law School, but, no, I never wanted to be a lawyer until I went to law school.

Ms. Shakow: You had to go to law school to decide that you really wanted to do it. Tell me what you remember about World War 11.

Mr. Ruff: I don't remember a lot about it, except I was in Toledo on V-J Day, and **I** was visiting my aunts, and I have a vivid recollection of celebrations in the street and parades. Other than that, my recollection is playing out on the street, on 51" Street, with my good friend who lived next door playing games that were war-oriented games, and I remember having a game

called "Washington Calling" – There was some great crisis and we would be called by some important person in Washington and go off and perform some heroic act, but other than that, I really don't have any recollection of the war years at all.

Ms. Shakow: It surprises me that you said you were able to play in the street on 51st Street.

Mr. Ruff: Well, you know, as well as I, growing up in New York, the street was your backyard. First of all, 51st Street is a dead end, a cul-de-sac, so there's very little traffic, and you can go out and run both on the sidewalk and in the street, although we weren't supposed to. And, so it was a great place to play.

Ms. Shakow: What sort of games did you play, as a city kid?

Mr. Ruff: All the standard games, take out a Spaldeen – one of those little pink rubber balls – and bounce it against the stoop and –

Ms. Shakow: Stoop ball is the technical name for that. (Laughter)

Mr. Ruff: Absolutely. Stoop ball and play the equivalent of baseball. We did not play stickball, which is really the city equivalent of baseball. Actually, there probably weren't enough of us. I had this good friend next door.

Ms. Shakow: What was his name?

Mr. Ruff: Interestingly enough, his name was Snippy.

Ms. Shakow: He wasn't a dog? (Laughter)

Mr. Ruff No. His name, which was a New York story all unto his self, was Neil Fink. His inother and her side of the family were classic New York Irish Democrats. I think her name was McNamara, and his father was Jewish, which is an odd pairing under the best of circumstances in New York, but they had three sons who met all the requirements. They had one

son who became a doctor, one son who became a lawyer and a doctor, and my friend, Snippy, became a priest.

Ms. Shakow: Is that right?

Mr. Ruff': And, Father Snippy – actually, he has left the priesthood and got married and is living in his mother's apartment, the same apartment he lived in 50-60 years ago. And I've seen him on occasion, but we were absolutely inseparable friends. I had dinner at his house; he had dinner at my house; we could actually look out my bathroom window into his bathroom window across the alley. It was one of those classic New York –

Ms. Shakow: Did you have two cans with a string between them? (Laughter)

Mr. Ruff: We never did that actually.

Ms. Shakow: How long did he remain a priest? And were you in touch with him during that time?

Mr. Ruff: Occasionally, yes. We sort of kept track of each other. My inother actually kept track of him as well, and he had the standard development of a young priest, he was an altar boy at St. Pat's, came under the protection of Cardinal Spellman, went to the seminary, became a priest, and he left the priesthood in, I would guess, the late '80s. After his mother died, he left the priesthood. I think it was a situation where he was not going to do that while his mother was still alive but as soon as she died.

Ms. Shakow: That's very interesting.

Mr. Ruff': And, he actually was an extraordinarily good-looking man. He came to visit me in the hospital when we came back from Africa, wearing his collar, and I think all the nurses – (Laughter)

Ms. Shakow: How about other friends? Anyone else from that period that you

remember?

Mr. Ruff: I'm told that there was a little girl in P.S. 135, second grade, named Mitzi, but I don't have a very good recollection of her. No, I think Snippy and I were the only kids on that block; actually, it is just the nature of that block that it doesn't produce a lot of young kids.

Ms. Shakow: So, you played more stoop ball than baseball.

Mr. Ruff: Yes.

Ms. Shakow: Where did you spend your summers when you were growing up?

Mr. Ruff: Most of my early summers were spent – at least a good portion of them – with my father's mother, my grandmother, who had a house in Inwood, Long Island, and belonged to the Inwood Country Club and the Inwood Beach Club. So, I would go out and stay with them and spend most of my days at the beach club, and my parents would be in the city working, and I'd be out with my grandparents.

Ms. Shakow: Sounds very nice.

Mr. Ruff: It was, indeed.

Ms. Shakow: Did you go back to Toledo at all during the summer?

Mr. Ruff: I think I probably went back virtually every year, because I remember awful train rides from New York to Toledo. It was a long, overnight haul.

Ms. Shakow: By yourself?

Mr. Ruff: Many times by myself and occasionally with one parent. I have memories of very hot summers in Toledo. As cold as it is in the winter there, it's a bit warm in the summertime.

Ms. Shakow: Sort of West Buffalo.

Mr. Ruff: Indeed.

Ms. Shakow: When you were a child in New York, what was your favorite place to spend time when you were old enough to navigate the city on your own.

Mr. Ruff: Ebbett's Field, no question.

Ms. Shakow: I should have known that. That's where all my brothers spent their time. Did music play any part in your early life?

Mr. Ruff: Well, I probably had the most extraordinary experiences growing up which came from the fact that my mother was the public relations director at the Met, and almost every Saturday during the season I would go down to the old Met on 39'' Street and spend Saturday afternoon there either in the house listening or frequently going backstage during those extraordinary years at the Met. So, probably in any given year I spent 25 Saturday afternoons at the Met and that was a unique experience.

Ms. Shakow: Are you still an opera fan?

Mr. Ruff: I am, but not at the same level as 40 years ago.

Ms. Shakow: Are you still a baseball fan?

Mr. Ruff: Absolutely. Even though my heart was broken like everyone else in 1958, I still do root for the Dodgers.

Ms. Shakow: And, who were your favorite heroes on the Dodgers?

Mr. Ruff: Of course, everybody growing up in the late '40s was part of the Jackie Robinson era. But, I think probably my favorite player on the Dodgers was Gil Hodges.

Ms. Shakow: He was the steady one.

Mr. Ruff: Yes, and just seemed like a very nice, decent guy, couldn't hit the curve to save his life but nonetheless was the great player. (Laughter)

Ms. Shakow: Was someone employed to take care of you when you were young? Was it just one person, or one person for a long period of time?

Mr. Ruff: Well, there is a whole series of stories that emanate from that, but the first person I remember was a Scandinavian woman, whose name was Mooa Arvard, and I have recollections of her being the nastiest, meanest, most awful person I could ever imagine. While my mother was working, she was in charge of taking care of the house on 51st Street and taking care of me, but the interesting thing about Mooa is her daughter. Her daughter was Inga Arvard, who it turned out surfaced later in the life of John Kennedy. She was the Scandinavian bombshell, who John Kennedy went out with and who also had a relationship with him. It became part of the Kennedy list of issues that he during the '40s went out with this extraordinarily good-looking woman, who before the war years, had some relationship with Hitler. I remember she took me to the Empire State Building for the first time.

Ms. Shakow: Inga did.

Mr. Ruff: Inga did, yes.

Ms. Shakow: So, she was already a teenager or an adult?

Mr. Ruff: I think in those years she was a young adult.

Ms. Shakow: I see. Did her mother stay with your household for a long time?

Mr. Ruff: No. I think, thank God, she left fairly soon because then there was a woman and her daughter, a girl of about my age, who actually moved into the apartment, and were there until we moved to 57th Street.

Ms. Shakow: Do you stay in touch with any of these nannies?

Mr. Ruff: I saw Helen Burns, the daughter of the second nanny, 40 years ago, I guess, but not since then.

Ms. Shakow: When you were a teenager, did you have summer jobs?

Mr. Ruff: I guess the first job I had was as a counselor at a boy's club camp out on Long Island. It was a New York Boy's Club, and they ran a camp out on the North Shore of Long Island, and I worked out there.

Ms. Shakow: Was that a day camp or an overnight?

Mr. Ruff: No, it was an overnight camp, and it would have been the summer of '54, I guess, the summer I turned 15, and then after that it was the ordinary series of jobs. One summer, in a resort up in Vermont, another as a camp counselor in Connecticut, and then just the ordinary run of typical summer jobs for New York kids.

Ms. Shakow: Where did you go to school in New York?

Mr. Ruff: I started at P.S. 135, which was at the corner of 51st and First Avenue.

Ms. Shakow: So, you could just hop out of bed –

Mr. Ruff: Absolutely. Last time I drove by, I think it was a homeless shelter, but it was your typical New York City brownstone cavernous building, and I stayed there until really the first month of third grade, when I was taken out and transferred to Riverdale Country Day School in the Bronx.

Ms. Shakow: Now, how did you commute to Riverdale?

Mr. Ruff: By bus. There was a school bus that came by and picked kids up. At about the same time we had moved to 57th Street, and so it was both a schooling and a geographical reason to no longer go to P.S. 135, but the school bus pulled up everyday, and I was always late getting down for it. I was not much interested in getting up in the morning, and it drove up to the Bronx and took us home at night. If you missed the school bus, you got on the subway, and that was one of the great things about New York. An 8-year-old kid could just go

get on the subway and go to the Bronx.

Ms. Shakow: Without any fear.

Mr. Ruff': No question. That's just what you did. If you missed the school bus, you got on the subway.

Ms. Shakow: Did this make a very long day for you as a child'?

Mr. Ruff: I guess it did, but the New York schedule is that you don't have dinner until 7 o'clock, and that's when my parents got home. Sometimes they didn't get home because they were at a night performance at the Met or something. Dinner was typically around 7:00 o'clock. So, I just sort of thought that was normal, until I met my wife and discovered that people really eat dinner at 5:30. (Laughter)

Ms. Shakow: Did your parents have any children from the second marriage?

Mr. Ruff: Yes, I have a sister who was born in **1948,** Carla. She lives in San Francisco now. She is nine years younger than I am, and I shortly went away to prep school, so we really didn't overlap much in the household.

Ms. Shakow: You didn't go to school together.

Mr. Ruff: No, she actually went to Brearley in New York and couple of other schools. So, I was out of the house most of the time she was growing up.

Ms. Shakow: Do you remain close to her?

Mr. Ruff: Oh yes, we talk regularly, although we see each less frequently because she's a couple thousand of miles away.

Ms. Shakow: Tell me about prep school?

Mr. Ruff: Well, in the spring of 1952 when I was in eighth grade, a number of my friends were heading off in one direction or another to prep school, I remember that, and we made

one of those circuit trips through New England, visiting six or seven prep schools in the course of a few days, Exeter, Andover and Deerfield, Choate, a couple of others, and Andover was bright and sunny and warm, Exeter was rainy and cold. I think that probably was what made the difference, and I was actually anxious to go off and try something else, so Andover was willing to take me, I think rather late in the acceptance year, and it seemed like a good place.

Ms. Shakow: Did any of your friends from Riverdale go?

Mr. Ruff: No. A couple of them went to Exeter and some other places, but I was the only one who went to Andover.

Ms. Shakow: So, you really had to start all over again making friends. Was that difficult?

Mr. Ruff: I had just turned 13 when I went into ninth grade at Andover, and I think I was probably both physically and chronologically younger than most of my classmates because I was really a full year younger than most ninth graders. I had a good time at Andover, but I think probably if I had been a year older when I started, it would have been easier.

Ms. Shakow: Were there any minority students enrolled in Andover at the time?

Mr. Ruff: My recollection was that there was one, a man named Mickey Countee, who actually is a Washington area person, who was for inany years, the head of Maryland Recreations, and interestingly enough Mickey went to Harvard, broke his neck in a diving accident and has been in a wheelchair ever since the middle of his college time, but he and I actually are in touch occasionally for various reasons. There may have been one other, but I think he's the only one I remember.

Ms. Shakow: Was race a subject that was of some concern to you or your friends or your teachers at that time?

Mr. Ruff: You know, I don't think so. I think Andover held itself out and thought of itself as being a forward-thinking – liberal would be the wrong word – but at least a socially conscious institution, and I think realistically and this was true of Swarthmore as well, nobody thought very much about the fact that there were no minority kids, and there were a lot of scholarship kids. Andover has always been very good about scholarship support, but my guess is that more of it was for low-income white kids than it was for minorities.

Ms. Shakow: Did you have any favorite subjects there or influential teachers?

Mr. Ruff: Well, actually, and I take credit for passing these genes onto my daughters, I took Latin and Greek at Andover and really enjoyed them very much, but I had one extraordinary English teacher at Andover, Dudley Fitts, who was then and is now a man of some renown as a classics scholar. He's translated many of the ancient Greek works, and I'm reading some of those translations now, but he was just one of those people who you were surprised to find teaching eleventh- and twelfth-grade kids at a prep school. He was quite an extraordinary man.

Ms. Shakow: And, was Andover the kind of a place where you were invited to a faculty member's home occasionally?

Mr. Ruff: Well, many of the dorms were in fact faculty houses. There were two kinds of dormitories, the typical red brick building filled with 50 or 60 or 80 boys in which you typically were not invited, at least with any regularity, to the faculty members' living quarters. But, in my second year I lived – only four of us – upstairs in a faculty member's house, and that was very much supportive of the family life, but I would say probably there was less of the invitation to dinner kind of activity with the faculty. They were the house parents. They were good and supportive, but it wasn't as though you were brought into the family, and I think

probably because they wanted some life of their own. (Laughter)

Ms. Shakow: Did you make any close friends there?

Mr. Ruff: No, I really didn't. I've been in sporadic touch with people in my class, but I don't think I came away from Andover with any really close friendships.

Ms. Shakow: Where did you go to college?

Mr. Ruff: I went to Swarthmore College.

Ms. Shakow: In Pennsylvania?

Mr. Ruff: In Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

Ms. Shakow: And, how did you choose Swarthmore?

Mr. Ruff: Well, having spent four years at an all-boys school in Massachusetts, the two things that were at the top of my list were coeducational and small, and my mother very badly wanted me to go to Harvard, and I went in for a couple of visits, but that wasn't either small or really coeducational, so actually a wonderful man who's still on the faculty at the college came up to do the interviews at Andover, Gil Stott, who's a philosophy professor, and we talked about Greek and it wasn't your typical "what do you like to do for fun" kind of interview. It was redly quite a – I remember it even today. I was really very impressed with that, and more impressed with the fact, that it was half boys and half girls.

Ms. Shakow: Did either of your parents go to college?

Mr. Ruff: My mother went to Toledo University. I know she got a masters degree at Ohio State.

Ms. Shakow: So, she had experience of all this when she was advising you.

Mr. Ruff: She did, but my father went to Duke, but it really was more a matter of Andover and Harvard is the next logical step, and in those days, three quarters of the graduating

class at Andover went to Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Amherst or Williams, and I think I was the first person in 15 years to go to Swarthmore. It was not a logical choice.

Ms. Shakow: Did your sister go to college?

Mr. Ruff: She did. She went to Wisconsin. She was at Wisconsin in the hectic closing years of the '60s.

Ms. Shakow: What was campus life like in the '50s?

Mr. Ruff: Idyllic, I think. I mean from the perception of those who were there at Swarthmore, although it's only 11 miles from Philadelphia, it was a really isolated little community. It was really a big deal to get on the train and go to Philadelphia, and so campus social life was on the campus. There were fraternities and I was a member of a fraternity, but it wasn't raucous, beer-swilling typically. The campus was dry. There were Saturday night movies or Saturday night dances, and it was really a pretty low-keyed, unsophisticated social life.

Ms. Shakow: So, you stayed there on weekends.

Mr. Ruff: Basically, yes.

Ms. Shakow: And, you were happy with your choice of Swarthmore.

Mr. Ruff Oh, I loved it, absolutely. It was a great place. It was small and it was coeducational, and it was also informal. The first two days there I wore my coat and tie as I did at Andover, and then I realized I was the only one there who was wearing a coat and tie. I didn't work very hard, but I enjoyed myself for four years.

Ms. Shakow: Did you travel abroad or live abroad when you were in college?

Mr. Ruff: I took what then was the standard end-of-junior year trip around Europe by myself on a motor-scooter, had a wonderful time for three months, but that was really my only experience living abroad until Sue and I went to Africa after law school.

Ms. Shakow: What was your major? In what subject did you do best?

Mr. Ruff: I was a political science/international relations major. Asking what I did best in is probably the wrong question. It was probably what did I do least badly in. (Laughter) I was not in any sense a stellar student. Actually, I probably did best in history, but as I said I did not devote very many long hours to studying whatever it was I happen to be taking.

Ms. Shakow: You didn't bother with the honors program.

Mr. Ruff: No, I didn't. It was very much a part of the college and I think had a real effect on all of us who were there, but I neither did well enough in my first two years to have made it into the honors program nor was that was the direction I wanted to go. I just did well enough to make it through but had other things I enjoyed more than studying.

Ms. Shakow: I think you're probably being very modest.

Mr. Ruff: No, I'm not as anyone will tell you. (Laughter)

Ms. Shakow: And, did you write a thesis when you were there?

Mr. Ruff: If you were a political science major you had to write a large paper in your spring semester. I'm damned if I remember even what it was about. I was not a big fan of political science even though I was a major in it.

Ms. Shakow: I'm going to get to Sue in a second, but did you have other close friends at Swarthmore?

Mr. Ruff: I did. One of the nice things about the college is that we were a very enclosed community, and we still have a lot of associations with our classmates and others who were at the college with us. My college roommate is a professor of psychology at Princeton. I see him quite a bit. One of my close friends at the fraternity lives across the river in Virginia, and I see him, and it tends to generate a lot of very close relationships.

Ms. Shakow: Were you involved in extracurricular activities, other than the fraternity?

Mr. Ruff: I played junior varsity football and lacrosse, and that sort of absorbed a lot of time. Sporadic other things, but I think probably sports was the thing I devoted most of my nonstudy time to plus an occasional poker game.

Ms. Shakow: Did you play with Andy Frey?

Mr. Ruff: No. Even then, I was not in his league. (Laughter)

Ms. Shakow: Were you active politically at Swarthmore?

Mr. Ruff: No, but I don't think anybody really was in the '50s. There are those known to you who were off working on grand quasi-political matters, but you didn't get the sense that the campus was sort of caught up in the world of politics. Remember these are the Eisenhower years. There weren't very many people who sort of stirred the soul there for those of us who were Democrats.

Ms. Shakow: A typical '50s college experience.

Mr. Ruff: Absolutely.

Ms. Shakow: Tell me how you met your wife.

Mr. Ruff: Well, she will tell you if you were to ask her that she saw me very early on in my career at Swarthmore, but in fact she went out with my roommate, John Darley, the person now teaching at Princeton, for a while, and she went out as well with others who were friends, and for reasons that I'm not entirely sure of a mutual friend suggested in the spring of '59, which was our junior year, that I ask her out, and I did and took her to a DU Weekend, that is the spring festivities of the Delta Upsilon fraternity, which were several notches below what anybody would think of as festivities at any other school, and we started going out that spring. And then I

went off to Europe for the summer, came back in the fall, and just to show you how well I knew her, I brought her a bottle of perfume from my travels in Europe, and she informed me that she didn't wear perfume and in fact it gave her a headache.

Ms. Shakow: Did she tell you that right away or many years later?

Mr. Ruff: No, no, right away. (Laughter) She tried to be polite, but we began going out seriously that fall. In fact, something that probably doesn't happen anymore, we were pinned. I gave her my Delta Upsilon pin.

Ms. Shakow: This was your senior year.

Mr. Ruff: This was my senior year.

Ms. Shakow: Were you classmates?

Mr. Ruff: We were, and I think it's fair to say that by the fall or winter of 1959 into 1960 we were a fairly serious, steady item on the Swarthinore social scene.

Ms. Shakow: Where is Sue from? And tell me a little about her family.

Mr. Ruff: Sue grew up in Philadelphia and over in the town of West Chester, Pennsylvania, which is about 25 miles from Philadelphia. Her father's family goes back to Georgia, south Georgia, United States. Her mother's family, her maternal grandparents, came either directly or indirectly from Russia, Russian Jews.

Ms. Shakow: So, do you have the same ethnic split, more or less?

Mr. Ruff: Yes. Oddly enough, I guess we do.

Ms. Shakow: It bodes well for my children.

Mr. Ruff: And, her inother was a schoolteacher. I guess when Sue started to go to college, her mother went to work as a teacher at West Chester High School, and was just a marvelously, funny woman, who sometimes drove her children crazy, but I guess they all do, but

tells wonderful funny stories about her kids and I suspect just generated love, warmth and enthusiasm among her students. So, the family that I met when we started going out was really quite a nice one. It was a little bit crazy like all families, but I got to meet Sue's grandparents and spent time at their house in West Chester, and Sue in turn was exposed to life in a somewhat dysfunctional New York family. So, it was an odd mix of – not exactly a country girl – but someone who had grown up in a small town and went to a small school and somebody who had grown up in the streets of Manhattan.

Ms. Shakow: Did you become engaged before you graduated?

Mr. Ruff: No, we didn't. We both went back to New York after graduation. Sue worked for the American Field Service, which was a program for sending American kids overseas and foreign kids to the United States, and I to go to Columbia Law School. I absolutely detested law school. I was bored silly, and in the first year of law school spent a lot of time looking at other things to do like going in the Peace Corps or taking a tramp steamer around the world or anything else I could think of to avoid continuing law school. And basically Sue said you can do that if you want, but I ain't going be here when you came back. So, that sort of led inexorably to our becoming engaged and getting married after my second year in law school.

Ms. Shakow: Second year. So, you had two years in New York before you got married after school. I forgot to ask whether Sue had siblings.

Mr. Ruff: Sue had two siblings, a younger brother who died some years ago, and the youngest in the family her sister, Linda, who now is a lawyer up in Pennsylvania.

Ms. Shakow: So, there are at least two lawyers in the family. Why did you choose Columbia?

Mr. Ruff: Well, I didn't get into Yale, and I thought it would be a nice idea to go

to law school in my hometown. Maybe I had sort of idyllic memories of what it was like to live in New York, but I think taking the bus to Amsterdam and 116'' everyday and sitting in a room with 150 other law students disabused me of the notion that this was some kind of a wonderful memory-evoking experience of life in the big city.

Ms. Shakow: Not to mention the time available to do all these wonderful things. Did you live with your parents when you went back to New York?

Mr. Ruff': I lived initially with my mother on 57'' Street. My mother and father had been divorced in the mid-'50s, and then I moved out and lived with my Father for the remaining year and a half or so before we got married. Then, Sue and I lived in an apartment on the roof of the American Field Service on East 43rd Street in New York, which we got for free in exchange for taking care of the foreign kids who were living in the dormitory one floor below us.

Ms. Shakow: You were like the teachers at Andover.

Mr. Ruff: Exactly. We were house parents.

Ms. Shakow: Do you remain close to your stepfather? I gather you did, your adopted father, excuse me.

Mr. Ruff: Yes. He died in April of '98, and we were close. He was a wonderful man. First of all, I never knew in any way my original father. The fact that he was my adoptive father was meaningless to me, and we were close, and he was a very, very lovely man.

Ms. Shakow: Tell me about your wedding.

Mr. Ruff: We were married in June of 1962. The ceremony was at the Ethical Society Headquarters on Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. Sue's parents had been members of the Ethical Society in Philadelphia while she was growing up, and I remember mainly that it was about 110 degrees in Philadelphia that beautiful June day.

Ms. Shakow: Was there air conditioning?

Mr. Ruff: No air conditioning. I also remember for whatever reason – the level of tension whatever it may have been – Sue recognized none of her own relatives or friends who were there, and I was introducing her to people that she had known all her life. The ceremony was conducted by one of the leaders of the Ethical Society, and we had gone in to meet with him beforehand and talk with him about what he would say and what he would read, and she'd remind me more specifically but the subject he was proposing was something about vestal virgins, which we tried to strike out of the ceremony, (Laughter) but somehow it snuck its way back in. It was an odd occasion and also a blur, but both Sue's father and my father had what may have been psychosomatic, identical problems with their arm and shoulder both in slings. I mean these are sort of the moments that leap out at you from these otherwise blurred memories, but we managed to survive.

Ms. Shakow: Was it a formal wedding? White dress and veil?

Mr. Ruff: Oh, absolutely. And, Sue's aunts came in and produced cheese sticks and other eatables, and it was really a family-supported –

Ms. Shakow: And, did your family came from Toledo, some of them?

Mr. Ruff: Some of them did, yes, indeed. And, at that time my mother was actually remarried and living just off Rittenhouse Square, so I stayed with her the night before, and some of my college classmates came in and served as best man and ushers and so forth. So, it was as formal as we were likely to get, but as I said mostly it's a blur.

Ms. Shakow: Did you have a honeymoon?

Mr. Ruff: We did. We went off, spent the first night at a wonderful place my family had gone for a while, and Sue and I been occasionally, called Mohonk, which is a

wonderful old hotel which sits on the top of a mountain north of New York, and then we went off to the Berkshires. It began to rain, so we drove further east and spent one night in Boston and then went down to the Cape and then circled back to New York, and I started my summer job with a law firm.

Ms. Shakow: Which law firm?

Mr. Ruff: **A** law firm which was then small and is now one of the great giants called LeBoeuf, Lamb and Leibey, which was in Chase Manhattan Plaza, and I spent July, August and September there, and then my final year at Columbia.

Ms. Shakow: Had you spent the previous summer at a law firm?

Mr. Ruff: No, basically in those days you did your second summer – I guess the summer before that I actually worked as a night clerk in an apartment house on 66th Street.

Ms. Shakow: Let's go back to Columbia. You said earlier that it was at Columbia that you decided it would be all right to be a lawyer, and yet you say you really didn't like it.

Mr. Ruff I was distinctly of the group that went to law school because that's what you did because you could do anything after law school, rather than with some shining goal to practice in a particular field. I thought actually that when I went to law school that I'd work in the international field somewhere. And, then in my second year I really enjoyed a criminal procedure class, and I began thinking about doing criminal law of some sort or another, and I began to enjoy law school more my second and third year, and still I think with no clear notion of what I was going to do but at least **I** was interested in criminal law and trial work and so forth.

Ms. Shakow: Did you have any professors there who were particularly influential?

Mr. Ruff: My criminal procedure professor was a man named Monrad Paulson, who later went on to be the dean at the University of Virginia Law School, and he was very, very

good, and I really enjoyed that class. I think that's what got me interested.

Ms. Shakow: Did you specialize in courses on international law and then later switch? Or, you just took a wide range?

Mr. Ruff: I just took whatever there was. I took some international courses and seminars, but basically I took whatever I thought might be interesting or fun. Once you get past the first year in law school, it's all downhill from there.

Ms. Shakow: What did you think about LeBoeuf, Lamb? Did you enjoy that summer?

Mr. Ruff: I did enjoy it. Strangely that firm at the time was largely a public utilities and corporate firm. They represented Con Ed. They were a sinall firm, about 35 lawyers. I got hooked up with some people who were doing a criminal antitrust case and some other sorts of litigation matters. I enjoyed that firm. It was a good experience. As a matter of fact, one of the young associates at the firm that summer was Tony Essaye, who lives just two blocks away. Those lines go back 38 summers.

Ms. Shakow: Did you work those terrible New York hours as a summer associate?

Mr. Ruff: It was sort of fun. We worked until 7:00 or longer if it was required, but that was the nature of the beast.

Ms. Shakow: And it wasn't that experience that led you not to consider Wall Street, or did you consider Wall Street?

Mr. Ruff I considered Wall Street at the moment when all people do when they're looking for a job in their senior year. I was interviewing with the typical Wall Street firms, but that was the time also we were contemplating the prospect of going off to Africa. And when that

became available, we did that rather than the sort of typical next step into Wall Street.

Ms. Shakow: You had already decided to go to Africa while you were in your senior year?

Mr. Ruff: Yes, late in my first semester of my senior year and into the spring we were in the process of working through whether it was possible to go, where we'd be going, and so forth.

Ms. Shakow: So you had chosen Africa as opposed to choosing a certain organization.

Mr. Ruff: What happened was that an assistant dean at the law school named John Bainbridge had become involved with the Ford Foundation program called SAILER which sent recent graduates along to African law schools.

Ms. Shakow: Is that an acronym?

Mr. Ruff: It is an acronym. Staffing of African Institutions of Legal Education and Research, and it was only a year old at that point. It started in 1962, and he put a sign on the bulletin board saying, "Anybody interested in teaching in a law school in Africa come see me." So I asked Sue if that was something she would want to do, and she said why not. Well, at least that's what I recall she said and we sort of started down that road during the course of the school year. Originally we were scheduled to go to Uganda and then something happened in Uganda that made Americans less welcome for these purposes, so we got shipped into Liberia, and that was sort of towards the end of the spring, beginning of the summer of my senior year with a scheduled departure date in the fall. So, I took the bar and –

Ms. Shakow: Let's talk about that, this terrible ordeal everybody has to go through before taking their first job. Did you take the New York bar?

Mr. Ruff: I did. I did what everybody did at the time. I took a bar preparation course.

Ms. Shakow: Which one did you take?

Mr. Ruff: PLI, which was down at the old what is now the Hotel Pennsylvania and was then, I guess, was formerly the Sheraton down at 33rd and 7'' Avenue, sitting in the ballroom there listening to these lectures. I will tell you that I basically replicated my Swarthmore experience. I did virtually no work at all. These courses were in the evening, so I spent the day playing softball in Central Park (Laughter) and did whatever else seemed more entertaining but struggled through and passed the bar by the time-honored means of cramming everything in and hoping that there was enough there that came out at the right time. It was a strange experience, a summer in New York.

Ms. Shakow: Again, no air conditioning.

Mr. Ruff: No air conditioning, showing up every evening with 300 law students with ranges of fear about what they were doing and about their experiences. It was strange.

Ms. Shakow: Did you take the bar at City Centre?

Mr. Ruff: No, I took it at NYU Law School.

Ms. Shakow: Much nicer, I'm sure. What was the impact of the Kennedy presidency, on your career choices?

Mr. Ruff: I suspect it was more atmospheric than anything else. Clearly, I was a Democrat, and I remember the '60 campaign in part for the battle between Kennedy and Humphrey, and I also was sort of a Humphrey fan, so I'm not sure that as between the two of them I had any great choice. I remember in the fall of '60 Sue and I were down in Times Square

and we wandered by one of these television stores with a television set in the window playing the Nixon-Kennedy, I'm not sure which one it was – I suspect the first, debate –

Ms. Shakow: You had not planned to stay home and watch this debate.

Mr. Ruff No. I think then the notion of the debate was can you go through that, and I probably had the same reaction everybody else did, but for me Nixon was – I knew what Nixon was, I had grown up in the late '40s and early '50s, watching McCarthy, Nixon was an evil man, so I didn't think there was any question of who I was going to vote for in my first presidential vote. But, then it was the Peace Corps, it was the sense of yes, we can do it, and I suspect that probably affected the notion of picking up and going off to Africa.

Ms. Shakow: Many people our age felt impelled to enter public service at that particular time, to do something other than making money. I'd like to discuss Africa with you, but I think we're running out of time. Perhaps we'll start again at that point next time. It is now 10 minutes of 12 and the interview will be continued at another time. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ruff Thank you.

INTERVIEW OF CHARLES F. C. RUFF

April 22,2000

This interview is being conducted on behalf of the Oral History Project of the District of Columbia Circuit. The interviewee is Charles F. C. Ruff, and the interviewer is Patricia Shakow. The interview took place at Mr. Ruff's home in Northwest Washington on Saturday, April 22, 2000, at 11:00 a.m.

Ms. Shakow: The following interview was conducted on behalf of the Oral History Project of the District of Columbia Circuit. The interviewee is Charles F.C. Ruff and the interviewer is Patricia Shakow. The interview took place at Mr. Ruff's home in Northwest Washington, D.C. on Saturday, April 22, 2000 at 11:00 a.m.

Chuck, we finished our last session at the point at which you had graduated from Columbia Law School, passed the New York bar and were preparing to leave for Africa. Would you tell us about your decision to teach in Liberia and how you and Sue went about preparing for that assignment?

Mr. Ruff Well, the decision was very much a spur of the moment thing. There was a sign that went up at the law school asking if anybody was interested in teaching in Africa. The program was being run by one of the assistant deans there, John Bainbridge. I went up to see him. He described the program and I think I probably had the sense that if there was ever a moment in time when one could go off and do something totally different this was it. I went home and I think, the conversation with Sue lasted about a minute, at least that's my memory. She may have a different one. And wouldn't it be interesting to go do this and I think she said sure and so we went further in the exploration. Originally, the notion was that we were going to go to Uganda, which evoked all sorts of wonderful visions of mountains and gorillas and East

African animals of one sort or another, and then somewhere in the middle of the summer Uganda decided that it did not want American lawyers corning to teach in its law school and we were told that instead we would be sent to Liberia.

Ms. Shakow: The year was 1963.

Mr. Ruff: 1963.

Ms. Shakow: Did they give you any preparation for this at Columbia, any courses, refer you to the embassy or anything like that?

Mr. Ruff: It was very strange actually now that I think about it. There was no preparation whatsoever. Actually, as it turned out, because there was a somewhat more extended gap between graduation and departure, which ultimately happened in December, I needed to get a job and I ended up working for a statutory codification project that was run in New York City by Cornell University, that involved codifying the laws of Liberia. So I had the advantage of about two or three months of actually working on Liberia on legal issues, but that was really more of an accident that anything else.

Ms. Shakow: And language wasn't a problem in Liberia?

Mr. Ruff: (Laughter) Even though they are an English-speaking country. But occasionally the English that is spoken is not that which one would find in the streets of Washington or in New York.

Ms. Shakow: Even in New York? (Laughter)

Mr. Ruff: Or even in New York and the fact that there are some 20-odd, I think, indigenous tongues in Liberia. **And** so one should get along well in English but occasionally you will bump into either dialects or languages which one didn't understand.

Ms. Shakow: How did you get to Liberia?

Mr. Ruff: We shipped our worldly goods literally by boat and we decided that since we were going off into the wilds of Africa we would spend a few days in Paris on the way. So we flew to Paris and as it turned out it was fogged in so we ended up flying on to Rome where they kept us for one night. We spent one night and a day in Rome and they flew back to Paris. This was December 9 or so of 1963. We spent a few days in Paris and then took an Air Afrique flight from Paris to Roberts Field, which is the airport in Liberia.

Ms. Shakow: Now when you mentioned your worldly goods before, what sort of things did you bring? Certainly not appliances and a car.

Mr. Ruff: No, clothes and books and other things. The most important thing, however, was that we had a special air freight allowance. I forget exactly how much it was, but we used all of it to send our dog. We had a German shepherd that we had bought when we just were married the year before and he was the most important element of our family, not having any children. And so we left him with my father while we went to Paris and then down to Liberia, and then he took care of getting him shipped from JFK to Roberts Field where we met him at the other end.

Ms. Shakow: You didn't have any quarantine problems of the type the British impose?

Mr. Ruff: No, not at all. The bad thing was that in order to allow the dog to make it on this very long flight from JFK to West Africa, they had, I guess it was still called Idlewild at that point – the airport – they had to give him tranquilizers. So we were waiting on the airstrip in Liberia and it was about 100 degrees out and the plane landed and out came this bedraggled-

looking dog that was weaving from side to side still not recovered from all the tranquilizers. (Laughter) That was our welcome to –

Ms. Shakow: Not as excited to see you as you had hoped he would be. What were political conditions in Liberia when you arrived?

Mr. Ruff Liberia was at that point in actually the later years of a very lengthy reign of William Tubman who had been president since the 1940s and who was a member of what was really known to be the America-Liberian establishment in Liberia. These were the descendants of the American slaves who represented only about 10% of the population, but were the ruling population in Liberia until the revolution in the 1970s. So it was a quite calm and stable political setting with some ferment under the surface but not much, but also a country that was absolutely in the most desperate straits economically, had virtually no industry that provided any sustenance at all to the Liberians, although it did have the Firestone rubber plantations and a huge coal mining operation that was run by a Swedish-American conglomerate, but the country as a whole was deadly poor.

Ms. Shakow: Had Tubman been elected?

Mr. Ruff: Tubman was elected in the 1940s and he was elected thereafter every four years. Indeed, an election had just taken place before we got there in which President Tubman announced that he had voted for the opponent in order to demonstrate that this was truly a democracy and that anyone could run for office, but he had been elected every four years for the last 20-odd years before we came there.

Ms. Shakow: And, was the military a factor in the government or in life in general?

Mr. Ruff: No, it wasn't. The military was not a very prepossessing body of soldiers whom you can see marching up and down in the military headquarters in the city, but they weren't a factor in the government.

Ms. Shakow: And, because of its rather unique history in Africa, was the American government in any special position there?

Mr. Ruff: America was the dominant force in Liberia. It was really sustaining the country with aid money. The ties between the United States and Liberia were very close. Roberts Field, the airport, had been a major military staging point because it was a place where military planes could stop on the way to Africa and so during World War II, a very important place. And, of course, Firestone Rubber was the major economic force in the country so the United States was the predominant force in the country.

Ms. Shakow: Did you have any sense at that time that this country, though extremely poor, was on the rise, headed for better things?

Mr. Ruff: On the contrary, there was a real sense that one could not see a future out there that was much brighter than what they were having at the moment. The coal mining operation in the hills – and it was really one of the richest coal mining areas in the world – sent all its profits to its corporate owners and very little remained in the country. It was very difficult to see how the economic fortune of the country could turn around.

Ms. Shakow: Who were the coal mine owners?

Mr. Ruff: They were Swedes and Americans and they simply shipped the coal out and took most of the profits and so there was very little impact felt from that economic development in the day to day life of the country.

Ms. Shakow: Was the U.S. AID mission there any help in encouraging economic changes?

Mr. Ruff: Not so we noticed, but, of course, we were relatively young and unsophisticated observers. I think it was true that there were more AID dollars per capita going into Liberia than any other country in the world, but the effects were not noticeable.

Ms. Shakow: Were they going into things like road building, health and education?

Mr. Ruff: I think it was mainly health and infrastructure, but neither of those areas showed the effects of much aid. I think that my sense was that there was a lot of drainage of whatever money came into the country often into the pockets of the ruling class.

Ms. Shakow: Where did you live in Liberia? In Monrovia?

Mr. Ruff: We had a wonderful living arrangement, we had a house on the outskirts of the city that was air-conditioned at least in the bedroom which was a major, important thing. We had a nice kitchen and a living room and working bathroom and it was really quite nice. Better than we probably could have lived in, with a beginning lawyer's salary, in New York. And we had a Volkswagen, so we were probably living a better lifestyle in Liberia than we could have anywhere else.

Ms. Shakow: And, what about food? Was that easily available?

Mr. Ruff: There was a supermarket about maybe a half mile or mile from our house and periodically a ship would arrive from Denmark or the United States carrying a supply of frozen food and it would end up in the supermarket, and if you were lucky you would race in and snatch up whatever was being delivered and use that until the next shipment came through.

But there were great avocados which were a nickel a piece. There was fruit, but sort of day-to-day normal western food was occasionally difficult to come by.

Ms. Shakow: So you didn't eat much meat, I would guess.

Mr. Ruff: Not much unless one was a fan of goat.

Ms. Shakow: Yes, then there's the frozen turkey which always seems to reach every American serving abroad.

Mr. Ruff I have one memorable dinner in which the main course was a container of frozen chicken hearts, but we actually ate very well, there were a couple of not bad restaurants in the city and we ate spaghetti and chicken and fish.

Ms. Shakow: Did you have any help at your house?

Mr. Ruff: We did, we had a houseboy who was passed on to us from our predecessor. James was his name. I guess he was about 15 years old and James wanted more than anything in the world to be a taxicab driver and he had at one point during our stay decided he would learn to drive in our car without permission. James helped clean the house and generally take care of things, but he was, I would say, about an even-Steven trade. We were probably more in the business of taking care of James than he was in taking care of us.

Ms. Shakow: I assume that the water supply was safe.

Mr. Ruff: No. The water supply was occasional to start with and water had to be boiled so we had a big water container on the stove that we boiled water in and poured through a filter and then used that water for drinking and for brushing teeth and things like that. But water was mainly memorable for the many days in which there wasn't any.

Ms. Shakow: Were either of your daughters born in Liberia?

Mr. Ruff: No. Not until we got home.

Ms. Shakow: So you didn't have to worry about caring for infants under those circumstances.

Mr. Ruff: No.

Ms. Shakow: Would you say that there was an attitude toward Americans generally among the Liberian people? Were you held in special esteem or resented?

Mr. Ruff: Well, we arrived in an extraordinary time in Liberia as you can tell from the date on which we left the country. We left basically three weeks after the Kennedy assassination and when we arrived in Liberia in early December there was great mourning still going on for President Kennedy. Indeed one of the first things we attended was a memorial service for President Kennedy in which a chorus made up of Kru tribeswomen, they are one of the indigenous tribes over there, sang the *Messiah* in Kru as part of this memorial service to President Kennedy. And the country for those first weeks really was, wherever you went, draped with American flags and pictures of Kennedy with very emotional reactions of that. So, our entry into the country was distinctly at a time in which Americans were held in high esteem.

Ms. Shakow: To go back a few months, where were you when you heard the news the president had been assassinated?

Mr. Ruff: I had been working at this Liberian codification project which was housed in what I guess still exists, the French Building on Fifth Avenue and 47th or 48th Streets in New York. And I had gone over to the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, because it was the nearest law library, and I was working away there all morning. And at about 2:00 p.m. I simply left that building and headed back to my office, got back up to the office and

people were gathered around the radio and I said, "What happened?" That was really the first I knew of it.

Ms. Shakow: It must have been hard to leave the country under those circumstances.

Mr. Ruff: Exactly. We both felt that. We both felt that we were sort of deserting the country in a difficult time.

Ms. Shakow: Everybody our age remembers that moment. Well, it's a good thing that you were home then, I guess.

How large was the United States' official presence in Liberia? How large was the embassy? Do you remember?

Mr. Ruff: I don't know how many people specifically. It was probably? obviously, the largest embassy there, and it was a substantial force in the country. The Ambassador was essentially an Indiana politician who had been appointed by President Kennedy to serve as Ambassador. I don't think he was a particular force in the country himself, but the American presence, largely because of the AID role, was a major one.

Ms. Shakow: Were there people your age at the embassy?

Mr. Ruff We never had anything to do with anybody at the embassy. The two other American groups that we dealt with were the Peace Corps volunteers.

Ms. Shakow: They must have been among the very earliest to go out.

Mr. Ruff: They were and we had two Peace Corps lawyers who were part of the faculty at the law school and a lot of our friends were Peace Corps volunteers. And then there was another group of Americans from Cornell University and other universities that were there

helping to run the university.

Ms. Shakow: I see. Were most of your friends Americans when you were there, or did you make any strong friends among the Liberians?

Mr. Ruff: All our friends really were Americans, we had good cordial relations with the Liberians but there was a real divide between the Americans and the Liberians, even the ones who were our colleagues at the law school. They were uneasy, I think, about socializing with Americans and there is a sort of odd social tradition which we learned in our early days there. When you were talking with a Liberian, one of your colleagues at the law school or somewhere else, they would say, "Are you going to be hoine on Sunday?' and you would say "Yes," and they would say, "Well, we will drop by and see you." So, for the first several Sundays we actually waited at hoine for visitors and then we realized that that was just a sort of easy way of ending a conversation. People, in fact, did not come to visit you as promised. But, that was reflective of sort of the odd tension between the Liberians and the Americans.

Ms. Shakow: Are you still in touch with any of the Americans you knew there?

Mr. Ruff Any of the Americans we knew there? Yes, a number of them. Some very close friends. The other lawyer who was on the same program I was on at the law school, we just saw in Oman last October.

Ms. Shakow: And, what is he doing in Oman?

Mr. Ruff: He actually created and runs an organization in Rome that trains lawyers and government officials from third-world countries all over the world and he was running a program in Oman and asked if I would come and speak to this group of Oinani legislators. And so we have kept in very close touch with him and his wife. Probably one of our

best friends is one of the Peace Corps lawyers who was there with us, now lives in Boston.

Ms. Shakow: What was his name?

Mr. Ruff: His name is David Matz. He teaches at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. And a very close friend, an African-American woman named Vernella Maxwell, who is now a magistrate in the federal district court in Toledo, has since remarried. She married a Liberian and moved to Liberia before we got there and then came to teach at the law school, divorced her Liberian husband and has since remarried an American, but we keep in touch with her as well. We have a number of very close friends from then.

Ms. Shakow: I think those tend to be very close.

Mr. Ruff: They are – lived through difficult times.

Ms. Shakow: When you are far from home especially. Can you please describe the law school physically? Was it all in one building, was it a number of buildings, is it part of a university?

Mr. Ruff: The university campus was, I think, what everyone would imagine in comparable institutions in African settings. It was a series of one-story buildings with open passage-ways, stucco cinderblock buildings. The law school consisted of basically an office, two classrooms and the one air-conditioned room which we used as a library and we had, I guess, 30 students or so in theory. Some would come some days and some would not. No physical facilities in Liberia were very good because just the incredible heat and humidity 365 days a year doesn't admit of keeping things in very good shape, which is why having an air-conditioned room was such a major benefit. And then there were other parts of the university, along the same area, that were for the undergraduates so did we were simply an arm of the operation then. I

think we were the only graduate school.

Ms. Shakow: Was this the leading university in the country?

Mr. Ruff: It was the only university in the country.

Ms. Shakow: Was there a decent library at the law school?

Mr. Ruff: No. It was as much as other institutions were around the continent, constantly looking for donations of books and materials from the United States and elsewhere. Typically, it would have editions of text that were several years or decades behind and none of the physical facilities and none of the support facilities really were anywhere near adequate.

Ms. Shakow: You mentioned that there were some other Americans on the faculty in addition to Liberians. Can you tell me about them both?

Mr. Ruff We had two lawyers from the SAILER Program. I was one myself, and Michael Hager, who I mentioned earlier.

Ms. Shakow: The man who is in Oman.

Mr. Ruff: Who lives in Rome now, but ran the program in Oman. And then we had two Peace Corps volunteers, David Matz, the man I mentioned who now teaches in Boston, and a woman named Sandy Meese who I think is now living in St. Louis. They actually had been the two Peace Corps volunteers that had arrived about six months or so before we did, part of the regular Peace Corps organization.

Ms. Shakow: And, they were lawyers?

Mr. Ruff They were lawyers. Actually they were among the first Peace Corps lawyers to come out. The Peace *Corps* had just begun experimenting with having lawyers in the program. Then there was Vern Maxwell the African-American woman I mentioned who really

was not part of any program, but there she was a trained lawyer in Monrovia and came to teach at the law school. Then the rest of the faculty was made of up Liberian lawyers. The dean, Joseph Garber, a wonderful, wonderful man and a number of Liberian practitioners. The system of legal education in Liberia, such as it was before the law school opened, was one of apprenticeship, and so what happened was those who became lawyers went to work essentially for nothing, for practicing lawyers, and at some point were declared eligible for membership in the bar. Most of the lawyers, the leading lawyers of the country, however, had gone to get their training either in England or in the United States so there were some who were fairly well educated.

Ms. Shakow: Was that true of the faculty members and the dean? Where had they studied?

Mr. Ruff: The dean had grown up in Liberia, he had not studied abroad, but a number of lawyers had studied in London and actually a couple at Harvard.

Ms. Shakow: You said that there were approximately 30 students at the law school, that is in its entirety?

Mr. Ruff: In its entirety.

Ms. Shakow: How many would be in a class that you taught?

Mr. Ruff: On a good day, perhaps 12 to 15.

Ms. Shakow: And, did you use the Socratic method or case method or just lectures? I shouldn't say just lectures, I'm sure they are more difficult.

Mr. Ruff: We Americans have the advantage of teaching in a country whose laws were modeled on American laws and whose system was much more modeled on our common law system, indeed, more so than on the English system so that we could in theory use American

cases and American case books to teach. So I taught property out of the same case book that was in use at Harvard and taught criminal law out of the same case book I had used at Columbia. But it became obvious within a few minutes of my first class that simply leaping in and trying teach out of these case books was really a pretty forlorn proposition. We had students who, although they theoretically had graduated from the University of Liberia as undergraduates, were probably somewhere at a early high school level in terms of their general capacity to read and understand English and their general background in kinds of world affairs that we normally take for granted.

Ms. Shakow: Excuse me, you said you did teach property and I missed the other subject.

Mr. Ruff: Criminal law.

Ms. Shakow: I see, criminal law. How did you deal with this? I assume there was no compilation of case law in Liberia, of their own, to turn to.

Mr. Ruff: They did have a reporter of volumes of their Supreme Court decisions, but very few of those decisions really bore much on the sort of basic issues that we were trying to deal with in the first year of law school. They were not very helpful. So we would mimeograph materials that we brought with us. We used the material in these American case books. Very early on, I think, we went back to sort of fairly simplistic problems that we would begin to talk about rather than trying to walk through these decisions in the way you would with a first year law student.

Ms. Shakow: But you were able to get the concept across by presenting a case in a Liberian setting I would guess.

Mr. Ruff: We would try, but it was very difficult. Students were, a lot of them

were bright and eager and interested, but they came with the background that was simply years short of anything you would expect in a first year law student in a sense.

Ms. Shakow: Were they at all responsive? Did they engage back and forth?

Mr. Ruff: They did, surprisingly. I think all of us tried to use the Socratic method or at least so much of it as we could because that is how we had been trained. All of us were literally three months after our own graduations from law school. So that's what we knew. I think there was a reluctance at the beginning on the part of the students to engage because they were largely embarrassed to speak up in class. But I think over the first year or so that changed. I think we had a hard core of students who were at least willing to participate in the process. Sometimes one would be a little discouraged with the product, but it was fun.

Ms. Shakow: How long was their program? Was it three years?

Mr. Ruff: It was supposed to be just like an American law school, three years.

Ms. Shakow: So you were not there long enough to see one class all the way through.

Mr. Ruff: No I wasn't.

Ms. Shakow: What kind of careers did these students aspire to?

Mr. Ruff: I think most of them thought of going to work for the government which was sort of a presumptive employer for many people. It paid well, gave you an office, gave you some stability. I'm not sure any of them really sort of thought very much about the notion of simply going out and opening their own law firm or going into law firms, which is really a misnomer in Monrovia. There were a couple of firms that might consist of three lawyers, that would be a big firm.

Ms. Shakow: Did the students pay tuition at any time?

Mr. Ruff: Yes, they did. I couldn't tell you exactly how much it was. I suspect most of them probably couldn't afford to, but I'm not quite sure how that was handled. We weren't in any way responsible for the money.

Ms. Shakow: I'm wondering if that limited the pool from which you -- but I suppose having had to graduate from a university first already limited the pool.

Mr. Ruff: It did. Well, we had some people who had just recently graduated from the university, but we had many people who had been out doing other things. Indeed, I think one of our students in that first year was a man probably in his mid-60s, and we just had a wonderful mix of people.

Ms. Shakow: Did you have any women?

Mr. Ruff: No.

Ms. Shakow: And, you didn't have any people other than Liberians, or did you? Or other African Westerners?

Mr. Ruff: I'm trying to think. I think there probably were one or two who might have come from other countries, but they were principally Liberian. They didn't come from other countries to go to the University of Liberia Law School. They would be people who would simply be in the country.

Ms. Shakow: How were the students chosen for admission?

Mr. Ruff: Basically, I think, if you applied and had an undergraduate degree you could get in. I believe there was no selective admissions process.

Ms. Shakow: Did you become friends with any of the students in the way

American faculty would?

Mr. Ruff: No. I think there was a much greater distance between students and faculty at the university level and certainly at the law school. We were friendly and I think they all felt comfortable coming around and talking to us, but the social and economic and other differences were such that there were virtually unbridgeable gaps.

Ms. Shakow: Were the students at that time involved politically or even thinking politically about changing their own government, or their place in Africa as all these other new nations were arising?

Mr. Ruff This is not a country in which people feel free to talk about those kinds of issues. I think it is fair to say that a number of the students understood the problems with the system they were living in and probably were interested in doing something about it. But when you talk about the American-Liberian community – and most of these students came from that community – you are talking essentially about the ruling class, and if anything, they were worried about where they were going to fit and how they would inake their career in that world, and not so much about changing the system.

Ms. Shakow: Did they have any interest in, or were they following, the American civil rights movement at the time?

Mr. Ruff: They had some interest in it, in the sense that they knew who some of the principal players were. James Meredith came to visit West Africa while we were there and he was clearly treated as a hero without perhaps fully understanding exactly what his role had been in the United States. Nonetheless, he was known to be a public figure. And, perhaps most interesting of all, Sue and I got to spend an evening with Malcolm X.

Ms. Shakow: Tell us about it.

Mr. Ruff He came to Liberia. I guess it would have been mid to late '64 and there was a cocktail party at the home of one of our neighbors in a house just behind us and we went to that party and, I think, we weren't the only Americans and only whites, there were very few. And he just held court in this cocktail party for the entire evening and was literally surrounded by lots of women. I don't have clear memories of what he was saying. He and I engaged in a brief little by-play but I don't even have a very good recollection of that. As I think back on his having passed through that somewhat odd world we were living in, it was really quite extraordmary.

Ms. Shakow: Is there anything else about the experience, the teaching experience in Africa that I have failed to raise that you want to add?

Mr. Ruff: It was, for four lawyers who literally had just graduated from law school and were sort of feeling their way through the business of running the school, buying books for the library, teaching, administering tests and so forth, it was just really an overwhelming experience in some ways. But it was great fun. Very frustrating when the electricity went off and the water went off and you would come out of a class in which you clearly were talking about issues that your students didn't have any sense of at all, but then you would just sort of take a deep breath and go in and try to do it anyway. It was quite an amazing experience. Sue spent time working with this Cornell University group on a number of projects that they had – more broadly running the university – and it was an odd lifestyle because you were totally separated from the world. We subscribed to *The New York Times* which would arrive, the Sunday *Times,* in six week bundles every six weeks by ship and we would save them up and read them one Sunday at a time just sort of pretending that we were keeping up with current events even if it

was six weeks old. I had a radio that if I went out on the balcony of our house and put my fingers in just the right places could pick up the Armed Forces radio and that is how I kept in touch with the baseball season. We really were living in a world apart and it was an honest living.

Ms. Shakow: I would like to discuss your illness and what happened to you during that period. Can you tell us what is the affliction, what is it called? Is it a form of polio? And when and how did you first realize that you were in trouble?

Mr. Ruff: Well, I just woke up one morning and discovered that I couldn't get out of bed. I couldn't walk.

Ms. Shakow: Out of the clear blue sky.

Mr. Ruff: Out of the clear blue sky.

Ms. Shakow: What year was it?

Mr. Ruff: It was December of 1964.

Ms. Shakow: So you had Just been there a year.

Mr. Ruff: **A** year, and we were very lucky in one respect and that is that the Firestone plantation, which is about an hour outside of Monrovia, had its own hospital for its own largely western senior employees. We were also very lucky because the best doctor in Liberia was a neighbor of mine, so some of our friends from the university carted me down into a station wagon and drove me out to the hospital. If I had been in most other countries in the area without those kinds of facilities, I probably would not have made it. Nobody quite knew what it was then and, indeed, nobody ever found out what it was. I spent, I guess, two weeks in the hospital at the Firestone plantation and then **I** was shipped back to the states. My father actually came over from New York to help Sue get ourselves organized to head back. Sue was trekking

back and forth between Monrovia and the hospital which was a long haul and then just loaded us on a PanAm flight back to New York. Actually, we came back in a snow storm that forced us to spend one night in Bermuda on the way home.

Ms. Shakow: I'm sure you were delighted.

Mr. Ruff: That's my only time in Bermuda, got to spend a night at the Princess Hotel thanks to PanAm, but then ended up in New York in the New York University Hospital. The most important thing about our trip home was that we were bringing home both a cat and our cusimanse. Well, something like that. It was a kind of inongoose and we had this mongoose as a pet for a number of months while we were in Liberia and we arranged to bring both it and the cat home together in a cage.

Ms. Shakow: That will protect you from the snakes in New York.

Mr. Ruff: So most of the effort was expended in making sure that they could get the cat and the mongoose through customs, but I think I was their sort of protective shield, because there I was being rolled through the airport and they didn't pay much attention to the two animals. Actually, the mongoose came to visit me in the hospital much to the dismay of the doctors, but that was really the important thing. But, I ended up spending about six months in a hospital in New York and ____ in the Rusk Center.

Ms. Shakow: At NYU?

Mr. Ruff: Yes.

Ms. Shakow: When you were in the hospital in Nigeria, excuse me Liberia, were there American doctors there?

Mr. Ruff No. I'm sure, I don't remember what nationalities they were but they

weren't American.

Ms. Shakow: Were they Westerners?

Mr. Ruff: I think some western some Asian doctors.

Ms. Shakow: Did you feel that you received the best possible care there?

Mr. Ruff: Well, I candidly felt that I was lucky to get even moderately sophisticated medical care enough so that I was able to make it through the early stages and get shipped home.

Ms. Shakow: Did your condition deteriorate while you were there?

Mr. Ruff: No, it sort of –

Ms. Shakow: Woke up with it and it didn't change –

Mr. Ruff Woke up with it dramatically whereas over the course of the day or so and then began to get a little better.

Ms. Shakow: But you were never on a respirator or anything like Guillain-Barre.

Mr. Ruff: Well, the first notion was that it might be Guillain-Barre, they also actually sent blood samples and things to Dr. Salk in Pittsburgh to see if he could tell what it was and nobody could tell.

Ms. Shakow: Did anyone else have this that you know of?

Mr. Ruff: No.

Ms. Shakow: Tell me why you were in the hospital so long? **Six** months now seems like off-the-wall time to get out of a hospital bed.

Mr. Ruff: Well, this is before HMOs, I guess. It was, I think in those days the notions of physical rehabilitation medicine were very slow moving and graduated. Rehabilitation

with exercise, strengthening exercises and so forth. I suspect today I would have been home considerably sooner than that.

Ms. Shakow: During the period in which you were in rehabilitation there, did you live at the Institute or come back?

Mr. Ruff: I was an inpatient for the first six months and Sue lived for part of that time with my mother who lived up in the 70s in New York and then we rented an apartment on East 38th Street and so when I came out of the hospital in July Imovedinto this apartment and I went in as an outpatient for the next six months or so.

Ms. Shakow: When did you return to work of any kind? Tell us about that.

Mr. Ruff: I was really very lucky. John Bainbridge the dean at Columbia who had set up the program was very helpful and supportive and he arranged for me to start in January of 1966 going back to Columbia to work at the African Law Institute, which was a little organization in the law school that did research projects and other work in connection with Africa. So I went there in January and Suejust dropped me off every morning and picked me up at night. I worked there for the first six months of 1966 and that was a good way of getting back into the world.

Ms. Shakow: But essentially you had lost a year?

Mr. Ruff: Yes.

Ms. Shakow: Were you doing work specifically on Liberia or it was general African –

Mr. Ruff: No, the program was being run by a man named Cliff Thompson who himself had been in Africa on the SAILER Program in Ethiopia and had come back to sort of run

this Institute and basically just did general research projects on African law. It was a good way to get back into the business of being a lawyer. Then again, through contacts through the SAILER Program, in about August of 1966 I went to teach at Penn Law School.

Ms. Shakow: Yes. Over the next 10 years or so you seem to have done a lot of teaching. Can you tell us about that? You were at Penn, at Antioch, at Georgetown.

Mr. Ruff: This job at Penn was another good transition job. It was Dean Jefferson Fordham of Penn Law School was also very much involved in these African projects and he offered me this job to teach legal writing and research to first year students at Penn Law School. Candidly it was not a lot of fun, but it was a good way to just get back in the world again. I taught there for that one school year.

Ms. Shakow: You moved to Philadelphia?

Mr. Ruff: Moved to Philadelphia, lived out in Northwest Philly.

Ms. Shakow: Was that difficult for you commuting or was Sue able to help you out there?

Mr. Ruff: We lived in an apartment in Northwest Philly and it was about a 20 minute commute into the city and Sue would drop me off in the morning and pick me up at night, which was undoubtedly a pain because by that time we had our younger daughter.

Ms. Shakow: When was she born?

Mr. Ruff: She was born in summer of 1965.

Ms. Shakow: When was the older daughter born, we missed that.

Mr. Ruff: Oh I'm sorry, I meant the older daughter in the summer of 1965.

Ms. Shakow: While you were in the hospital?

Mr. Ruff: Just after I got out of the hospital in August of 1965. And then our younger daughter was born in 1968. So Sue had a basically one year old baby and life was a little complicated, but it worked out well. I would spend my days at the law school, but as I said I wasn't thrilled, so I was looking around for other possiblejobs. In December 1966, I came down to Washington, actually for the American Law School convention where one goes if one is looking for a teaching job, and stopped in at the Justice Department and talked to people at the organized crime section and that seemed a lot more interesting than teaching and so I ended up coming to work at Justice in the spring of 1967 after the school year was over.

Ms. Shakow: To go back just a bit though, I understand that you did this while you were teaching, but is there more to be said about your teaching?

Mr. Ruff: The year, as I said, is sort of a bland year. Being at law school was a nice place to be, good people, good students, some of who have actually went into ensuing parts of our careers, but teaching, legal writing and research to first year law students is perhaps not something I'm cut out to do.

Ms. Shakow: I remember.

Mr. Ruff: You know, it's multiple rewritings of memos and briefs and so forth and so the year from that perspective passed in a blur for me. I don't have any vivid memories of at least the teaching part. Actually, our daughter was between one and two and that was a much more interesting part of our life than the teaching part was.

Ms. Shakow: But Antioch must have been an exciting, controversial place to be?

Mr. Ruff: Antioch was, I've said in inany settings, the single most exciting on a day-to-day basis of any job I've ever had, which may sound odd given some of the other places

I've ever done but I decided – I'd been at the Justice Department for five years – and decided I really wanted to try teaching, and the founders of Antioch (there was a lot of newspaper coverage and a lot of discussion about the new law school) were two Swarthmoreans.

Ms. Shakow: And two Yale law students.

Mr. Ruff: And two Yale law students.

Ms. Shakow: Jean was in my class.

Mr. Ruff: Edgar Kahn and Jean Camper-Kahn. And so I wrote to Jean without knowing anything about them really other than what I was reading in the papers saying I was going to impose on our mutual connections at Swarthmore. Well, actually, as it turns out, that's probably the worst thing I could have possibly have said since Swarthmore was not their favorite place by any matter and means, but nonetheless I ended up giving an interview there and decided in August of 1972 to go to Antioch which was literally just getting ready to open then in that September. That year our first offices were in an office building, the school was in an office building on 19th Street in a dilapidated unused office space with a wonderful class of entering students who came right out of the '60s and early '70s right out of the anti-war movement. There was one man in the class who literally just had been released from Sandstone Penitentiary in Minnesota where he served time for draft evasion, there were other kids who had been on the street rioting, demonstrating for the last 4 years. Just a wonderful, wonderful group of bright, eager people, but as you can imagine from that description, not your usual every day first year law school.

Ms. Shakow: Some had not been to college as I recall.

Mr. Ruff: Very few, but that was perhaps more of a myth than reality. We had a

number of Native American students, a number of Hispanic students. It was a marvelously diverse group and Jean and Edgar had collected a faculty basically – other than me – the people from the same world. And I would say for the full 12 months I was there there was not a day when there wasn't some kind of havoc in the school. It was just extraordinary. Jean and Edgar were the most imaginative, creative people in the world, but they didn't have a clue about how to run this place so every day there were battles over the large and small. The students were activists, they weren't going to sit still for just sort of an ordinary, everyday law school teaching and so they were pitching in in these battles in one fashion or another. And at one point towards the end of that first year – this was a no grading arrangement theoretically – and finally toward the spring some time Jean and Edgar decided that in order to really make their students competitive in the outside world they had to at least have honors, pass-fail, and the students went berserk. This was absolutely an egalitarian society and there was not going to be anything like honors or anything like that so they decided that they would put their exams in escrow until they could work out a solution to this battle. Escrow agents were established as an example and that was just sort of a culmination of a year of just wonderful riotous living. It was just incredible.

Ms. Shakow: What subject did you teach there?

Mr. Ruff: Well, there weren't any subjects that you would recognize. Part of the school was new names and new structures, but by and large I taught criminal law and procedure.

Ms. Shakow: It was very useful in this group.

Mr. Ruff: Yes. Of course, I had just left the Justice Department so the notion of them having an ex-prosecutor in the midst of this world sounds sort of odd, but it was just a great year.

Ms. Shakow: Well, you did that full-time then?

Mr. Ruff: Full-time from 1972 to 1973.

Ms. Shakow: And Antioch has survived, hasn't it, as UDC? Or is it entirely different?

Mr. Ruff: Well, they like to find their roots in Antioch. Antioch in 1979 got into a pitched battle with Antioch College in Ohio, which was its parent organization, and eventually was cut off from the college, and its funding was cut off. So Antioch, as it was, died and then it was resurrected or at least we made the same faculty members and it is now known as UDC Law School.

Ms. Shakow: And you taught at Georgetown. Was that ever a full-time position?

Mr. Ruff: Always a full-time position.

Ms. Shakow: Oh, because I see you have many other jobs in the same years. How did that work and what did you teach there?

Mr. Ruff: That happened because as I got to the end of my year at Antioch which was the 1972-73 school year, a friend of mine on the Georgetown faculty called up and said one of our faculty members is going off to teach in Africa as a last minute thing – they still had the same program that I'd been on previously – and, he teaches contracts, and would you be interested in coming over to Georgetown and teaching contracts and other things. So I went over, and I think at that point I was probably more interested than anything else in getting out of the maelstrom the way Antioch was, and ended up teaching contracts which I love, teaching as well in the criminal clinic and the juvenile clinic in Georgetown that first year. Judy Areen who is now the dean at Georgetown and I were teaching the juvenile clinic together and so that was a

very different life. That was a much more organized stable, indeed one might say stodgy, institution.

Ms. Shakow: Were they in their new building on Capitol Hill?

Mr. Ruff: Yes, they had moved out of the red brick building that they were originally in on E Street and into their new building, and so life was considerably calmer. As it happened literally just at the moment when I was leaving Antioch and getting ready to go to Georgetown, the Watergate office opened and I was asked to go work there.

Ms. Shakow: May we go back now that we've gone through the teaching phase of your life briefly to your Justice Department career. How do you get to the Justice Department, who recruited you?

Mr. Ruff: As I said, it was really just accidental. We were down here in December 1966 to really look for a teaching job by going to the "slave market'' that they hold every year at the convention of law schools, and I had been up to New York to interview with the United States Attorney's Office in the Southern District and had not heard from them. I was uncertain whether that was possible or not and just went into the Justice Department to talk to them. Met with Henry Peterson, who was then the head of the organized crime section, and a number of his senior people and went back home to Philadelphia to sort of think about what inight be possible, and got the offer from Justice. I didn't have anything else immediately on my plate so I accepted. And I think, like the day after I finished grading my papers at Penn, we got in our car and drove down to Washington and I started at Justice on May 1, 1967.

Ms. Shakow: Who was the AG then?

Mr. Ruff: The AG then was Ramsay Clark. And, so I served for two years under

Attorney General Clark and then did three years under Attorney General John Mitchell.

Ms. Shakow: I see. Where did you live when you came to Washington? You had never lived here before?

Mr. Ruff: Never had. We had two important needs. A building that would take dogs and would take the children and there was only one of those in the city. It was 3100 Connecticut Avenue, right across from the Zoo, which was not then what it is now, a condominium, it was just a big New York-style apartment building. Apartment building with white tiled floors. The halls looked like they were the longest men's room in the world. But it was a big apartment with two large bedrooms and large closets and a living room, kitchen and a bathroom for $175 dollars amonth.

Ms. Shakow: Those were the days.

Mr. Ruff: And, it had an elevator and it took dogs and it took kids and so we lived for two years at 3100 Connecticut Avenue.

Ms. Shakow: You haven't gone very far, have you, in terms of residences. Because it is such a lovely neighborhood.

Mr. Ruff: No.

Ms. Shakow: You went into the Organized Crime Division at the department'?

Mr. Ruff: Section of the Criminal Division.

Ms. Shakow: Who were your mentors there, who were your friends?

Mr. Ruff: Well, the head of the section was to me one of the great lawyers and people I ever had anything to do with, Henry Peterson, who probably and not happily, is better remembered for his role as an Assistant Attorney General during some of the Watergate years.

But he was just a wonderful man and a great lawyer. The other senior person in that section was a inan named John Keeney who is to this day the Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division at age 78. There were probably some 50-odd lawyers in the section at that time. It was the most active section in the department really because it had been created by Bobby Kennedy in the days when he was conducting the Teamsters' investigation and that sort of made it the centerpiece of the criminal division operation. So, we were very active in pursuing people who could be identified as bad guys, I mean there was no sort of black or white here, it was gray. You knew who was good and who wasn't and there was sort of an energy in the section then that perhaps doesn't exist in the same way today. The Section was engaged in both, a typical Washington support effort and in actually getting out and trying cases out in the field which is unusual for a Washington-based lawyer.

Ms. Shakow: Did you do any of that?

Mr. Ruff I did some. My main role was to be responsible for a support office in Washington that handled all the appeals and provided legal advice for the other lawyers in the section as well as for the U.S. Attorneys, but I was lucky enough to get out and handle some matters on my own.

Ms. Shakow: Tell us about some of the cases.

Mr. Ruff Probably the first real practical involvement I had was in a strange case that involved the murder of a narcotics agent in Gary, Indiana and I was lucky enough to hook up with one of the grand old warhorse trial lawyers of the department, a man named Victor Woerheide, and Vic had been around for many, many years, had tried some of the war crimes cases and he was responsible for investigating and then trying this murder of the drug agent. He

dragged me along essentially to do the legal requirements, there is a lot of deceptive, (laughter) the case was being tried in Hammond, Indiana. Not one of the garden spots of the Midwest. (Laughter)

Ms. Shakow: It's probably a lot of fun on weekends.

Mr. Ruff: We would live in Chicago and truck down to Hammond to the courthouse. There was that and there was –

Ms. Shakow: How did the case come out, did you convict a lot of people?

Mr. Ruff: The defendants pled so it never actually went to trial. I spent actually a couple of years commuting back and forth to Anchorage, Alaska where we were investigating the head of the Teamsters Union in Alaska. My main involvement was handling the appeals for the section so I got to travel around the country to argue cases in six or seven of the courts of appeals around the country which is really the best experience for a new lawyer, which you can imagine.

Ms. Shakow: Absolutely.

Mr. Ruff: All in all in that time in the Organized Crime Section which was 1967 to 1970 was a wonderful way to begin. It was exciting, you were doing things that you sort of get out of bed in the morning because they are really worthwhile and it was a lot of fun.

Ms. Shakow: Do you have any friends who remain your friends from that period?

Mr. Ruff: Oh sure, this city is a small community under the best of circumstance and when you grow up in that kind of world you stay in touch with everyone who was there plus those who are still in the department and those who left and are out in private practice.

Ms. Shakow: I suppose a good number went out into private practice.

Mr. Ruff: A good number did but many, many just stayed on in the department. A

number of the senior staff of the Criminal Division are people who were around in the Organized Crime Section and then when I was starting out in the late '60s.

Ms. Shakow: I guess they just prefer to be on prosecutor's side.

Mr. Ruff: Yes. The problem with getting out of that job is that you know you will never have more fun than what you've been doing, so it's easier to stay in.

Ms. Shakow: At some point you left the department.

Mr. Ruff: I left in 1972. In 1970 they created something called the Labor Management Section, which was responsible for labor racketeering matters, and I became the Chief of that section and I did that for two years and then I left the department itself.

Ms. Shakow: And went to Antioch?

Mr. Ruff: To Antioch.

Ms. Shakow: And when you finished at Antioch you went to the Watergate office.

Mr. Ruff: I went both to the Watergate office and to Georgetown at the same time.

Ms. Shakow: Tell me how you joined the Watergate team?

Mr. Ruff: One of the senior people who came to the Watergate office very early on is a man named Tom McBride who actually headed the Organized Crime Section and left before I got there in the late '60s. But I got to know him through various other jobs he had and roles he played in the city and he called up and said, "Can I come talk to you" and we were home one Saturday and he came in and said, "I'm going to go run the campaign finance, illegal contributions arm of the Watergate office. Would you like to do that?' I think there were probably lots of current and ex-prosecutors around the city who were sort of waiting for that call.

Ms. Shakow: And would have given anything for it. Give us a time frame.

Mr. Ruff: This was late June of 1973.

Ms. Shakow: All right, so what was the status of the scandal at that point. Early 1973 was when the first prosecution –

Mr. Ruff: No, what was happening was that the break-in was Juneof 1972. The U.S. Attorney's Office had been running the investigation and also Ervin and his people and running the investigation throughout 1972, had gotten convictions of some of the principals involved in the break-in itself.

Ms. Shakow: The straight local crime angles, yes.

Mr. Ruff: And then, but there was still all of the scurrying around trying to figure out who was really behind it. The Ervin Committee hearings had begun and John Dean had surfaced as the principal source of information about what was happening. But then Mitchell resigned and then Kleindienst resigned in early 1973. Elliot Richardson had been recruited to be the new Attorney General, and in the process of his confirmation the Senate had insisted that he create a special office to handle this investigation.

Ms. Shakow: So there had been no special prosecutor until this time.

Mr. Ruff: That's correct and Richardson essentially negotiated a set of regulations that established the Watergate office as part of his confirmation process and in early June of 1973 Archie Cox was named by Richardson to be special prosecutor and he began putting an office together. He brought down Jim Vorenberg from Harvard, Phil Heymann from Harvard, Steve Breyer, actually, from Harvard. In addition he recruited Henry Ruth, who is also an Organized Crime Section alum and most recently had been the head of criminal justice matters for the city of New York, to be his principal deputy, and Hank in turn had reached out to people who he

knew, one of whom was Tom McBride who was the one who came and asked me if I would essentially help to run this office.

Ms. Shakow: So you were really in this at the ground floor.

Mr. Ruff: Yes, I was, I forget what number is on my identification tag, but there was by the time I actually got there, I think I was like the 30th person in the office, or something like that. But the principal team had been formed earlier with Jim Neil as its leader to actually handle the Watergate investigation that ultimately became the Watergate trial. Tom McBride and I and a group of younger lawyers were responsible for campaign finance investigation.

Ms. Shakow: I think this probably a good place to stop. It is 1:00 p.m. Thank you for your time, we'll resume soon.

Mr. Ruff: Not at all. Fun as always.