

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection  
Rusk YYY YYY  
C. Jane Mossellem and Gus Peleuses interviewed by Richard Rusk  
1985 March

RICHARD RUSK: I'm talking with Gus Peleuses, who was the security man for my dad back in those days, and Jane Mossellem, who used to be Jane Rothe and was secretary to my father 1961 through '68. There are written notes that precede this tape recording.

PELEUSES: We were on a trip. Ernest [Kidder] Lindley was with us. Do you remember him?

MOSSELLEM: Yes, very well. He was a speech writer.

PELEUSES: He was a speech writer who used to be a writer for *Newsweek*.

MOSSELLEM: Several magazines, but I think primarily *Newsweek*.

PELEUSES: We stopped at the Fiji Islands. We had come all the way across from India or somewhere like that. We stopped in the Fijis and they had a ceremony there. That I'll never forget because they cooked up this brew of some sort that looked like thin clay. They served it in coconut shells, and they all sat in a circle and did their thing. I thought Lindley was going to die when he drank that stuff. He was pretty old at that time. Your father sort of looked at it and blinked and gave it a shot. He blinked again. And the rest of us who weren't party to this were really glad we weren't party to this ceremony. We were on the fringes.

MOSSELLEM: We were watching.

PELEUSES: But he took it down.

RICHARD RUSK: What was this brew again?

PELEUSES: I don't know what it was. It was some kind of a native brew, an exchange of friendship, I guess akin to smoking a peace pipe among American Indians or something like that.

RICHARD RUSK: Give me the story about Jim [James Lloyd] Greenfield and the plane taking off.

PELEUSES: The plane lost a fuel pump on one engine and they were going to fix it. Bert Bennington was down there. He had been in the Air Force. He had been a mechanic. Bert was down there talking to these guys and the mechanics were really getting upset about it. We were going to leave, then we weren't going to leave. They had to fly a part in from Honolulu before we could leave. We were trying to make hotel arrangements. At any rate, Greenfield left the party and went off to the beach and went swimming. This was kind of funny in itself. The mechanic took a ballpeen hammer

in disgust and just smacked the fuel pump as hard as he could and the thing started humming. It started. And so everybody said, "Okay, it's fixed. We're ready to go!" In a 707 if you can get off with four engines, if you lose one [after take off], it doesn't make any difference. It keeps going.

RICHARD RUSK: Each engine has its own fuel [pump]?

PELEUSES: Yeah. So here we are waiting. And Greenfield isn't around. And your father finally said, "Let's go." And we closed the doors and we took off and left him behind. This is the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. Off we went.

RICHARD RUSK: Did it cure him?

MOSSELLEM: It did cure him. He was never late again.

PELEUSES: Your father felt that the only time that he could really relax, ever, while he was in office, was when he was on one of these planes going across the ocean. He was locked in this metal tube and nobody could get to him. We could relax. He could relax. And everybody did relax. And that's when he enjoyed playing bridge. He'd grab anybody who was around and sit down and play bridge. He loved to play bridge. And he would say that this is the only time that he had to himself that was real.

MOSSELLEM: No phones on the airplane.

RICHARD RUSK: And the radio communications would not be secure?

PELEUSES: No. No way. So these were the few times while he was in office that he felt that he could really relax. And he did. And we all kind of respected that. We left him alone if he wanted to be alone. When he was here at home at night, that really didn't mean anything.

RICHARD RUSK: No, that's true. As a matter of fact, he had a hell of a time relaxing around the house.

MOSSELLEM: That's because of the phone.

RICHARD RUSK: He came home and the phone and the pressure.

PELEUSES: On the first trip that he made overseas, somebody asked what he would like to drink--you know, in his room or in his quarters or wherever he was. And he said, "Haig & Haig pinch," just sort of off the top of his head. From then on, for the next eight years, not matter where in the world we went, and I mean this literally, there was always a bottle of Haig & Haig pinch there. And he said, "You know, I can drink any other scotch just as well, but people keep insisting on bringing me this." Just offhand remarks will set precedents for as long as a person is in office.

RICHARD RUSK: I see. When you're holding a job like that, the outer links pick up on whims and

quirks, then it's policy.

PELEUSES & MOSSELLEM: Oh yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: How do you spell that scotch?

PELEUSES: The same way as the Secretary: Haig & Haig. It's the pinch bottle. It's got caved-in sides.

MOSSELLEM: I don't know whether it was all pinch bottles, but we always had a pinch bottle wherever we went.

PELEUSES: That's right. And the reason was because the first time somebody asked him, the first time he went on a trip, what he would like to drink he just said that off the top of his head.

--Blair House and watching Alan [Bartlett] Shepard [Jr.] go by in the parade because Shepard had just gone up for the first time with the Mercury astronauts and sort of bloomed into the ocean. He was the first one to go up. And that's when [Habib] Bourguiba was here. After that detail was finished was when I came on the detail with your father, whenever that was: spring of '61.

MOSSELLEM: Your first trip may have been the presidential trip to Paris and Vienna and London.

PELEUSES: It well may have been. Yeah, I made that trip.

MOSSELLEM: And then right after that in August the Secretary went to Paris for the Prime Minister meeting on Berlin.

PELEUSES: From then on I was with him for six years except when I got married. There was a father and son team that hijacked a plane in Houston and they were on the ground making demands. Your father and I had just been to the White House and we were coming back. And he said, "Get in back. I want to talk to you." He used to do that once in a while with all of us. And up went the divider window. I didn't know what was happening. They'd gotten the word. And he said, "This and this and this has happened. Do you have any ideas on how we can handle it?"

RICHARD RUSK: So he would ask you folks for a little input now and again?

PELEUSES: Oh yeah. And my immediate reaction was, "Who's on board the plane?" This sort of thing.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, look, you'd have as much insight on it as he would. You're security and that's definitely a security question.

PELEUSES: But it was at the beginning of the administration. As the administration progressed then they weren't floundering as much. But every administration does this.

RICHARD RUSK: He would approach you and others around him more initially as he first came into office?

PELEUSES: Right.

RICHARD RUSK: And later became more institutional, more channeled?

PELEUSES: Yet, later on he would still talk to us about things. During the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, it was in the middle of the afternoon. We were coming back from the White House. We pulled into the basement and were coming up through the elevator. It was deathly still, as the elevator is. It was cruising up there. And on the elevator were George [Wildman] Ball--.

RICHARD RUSK: You wouldn't recall when during that thirteen-day period?

PELEUSES: No. It was before the relief. The tension was really mounting.

RICHARD RUSK: Had the president given his speech?

PELEUSES: Not yet. I can't put it in perspective exactly. In any event, as we were coming up the elevator, it was George Ball, Dean [Gooderham] Acheson who had been called back as an advisor, your dad, Leo Crampsey, security, and myself. And your dad said, apropos of nothing, "The only halfway decent advice" or something like that "that I'm getting is from these two fellows."

RICHARD RUSK: And he pointed to you and Leo Crampsey? He was a security man?

PELEUSES: Right. And without even a breath, Leo popped up and said, "That's because you've surrounded yourself with dumb-fucks, Mr. Secretary." And your dad just came apart. He just started laughing so hard. And that was the first break during this period where your father started laughing. Well, needless to say, Ball and Acheson were extremely uncomfortable. I was hoping that the floor would drop out and I would get swallowed up. I thought, "Oh, we're going to get fired." But your father really took it in a good way.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall what Ball's and Acheson's reactions were?

PELEUSES: They sort of turned red, but didn't say anything else. Leo left here eventually and went over to Vietnam as the regional security officer. He and Bruce Furie ended up being decorated heroes when the Cong attempted to take over the Embassy on the night of the Tet Offensive. The two of them and one Marine guard held off this entire effort by themselves and ended up getting medals and all this sort of good stuff. Leo was a pretty tough guy. He was an ex-pro football player. He's as big as that darn door. Everything he said he prefaced with "Duh." He was from the coal mines of Pennsylvania, and everything was "Duh." He played football with the Los Angeles Dons, a defunct team now. He was a lineman of some sort. As a result of his speech habits people sort of wrote Leo off, but he was sharp as could be. We were coming back from Europe somewhere, I don't know

where it was. I was sitting back in the back of the plane, sort of half dozing, and I got a tap on the shoulder. I looked up and there was your dad. And he said, "Come on." Do you know how he used to do that? He'd beckon you with his finger and sort of a twinkle in his eye. And so I jumped up and said, "Yes, sir." He said, "We're going to play cards." So I went up. There was Llewellyn [E.] Thompson [Jr.] who was then ambassador to Moscow, Paul [H.] Nitze, your dad, and myself playing bridge. And here I am, a young punk kid, playing bridge with these heavies. And we were changing partners. We're flying all the way across the Atlantic. And finally the steward came up and said, "Mr. Secretary, we're landing in about twenty minutes." And your dad sat there and he started totaling. And he said, "Paul, yours is so much. Tommy yours is so much." And he sort of laughed and he said, "And mine's only so much." And they started digging in their pockets. He handed me thirty-two dollars and I almost fell out of my chair. We were playing for money and I didn't know it. I said later, "Don't ever do that to me again." I was playing well, relaxed and pretty wild, and it turned out that we were playing for money, and I didn't know that.

This is an event that really surprised and caught him completely off guard. Effectively you could say it caught him with his pants down. We went to Finland. The Fins were having this black tie dinner for the American delegation, the president of Finland and so on. I can't remember his name. We arrived in the car and the president came out and greeted him in black tie and everything. We had gone out and scouted the area first and we knew that the dining hall was straight ahead. And he took him by the arm and they made a turn and they went in and they all took a sauna before they went to dinner. And your father was completely caught off-guard by that. He simply didn't expect that.

RICHARD RUSK: Stripped down? Sitting there in the buff?

PELEUSES: Yeah. Chatting for about twenty minutes. Then they all got dressed and went in in their black ties and went to dinner.

RICHARD RUSK: He was a good sport about it I take it?

PELEUSES: Oh yeah. He was very good. And the Fins fell in love with him. Someplace at home I've got a collection of pictures. Your father and your mother went to the flower market. Anybody who goes to a flower market is okay by the Fins. This made the news, you know.

RICHARD RUSK: He must have been tipped off by one of his aides.

PELEUSES: Well, you know, your father has a sensitivity for this sort of thing. He picks up very quickly on what the right thing is to do.

Do you know the story about after the Cold War got really cold. We weren't talking to each other for a long time. Finally, [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko came to the General Assembly. And you know, your father is alleged to have said during the Cuban Missile Crisis, "We've been eyeball to eyeball and I think the other fellow just blinked." Okay, time and a half goes by. Now we're at the U.N. [United Nations] in New York and the Russians invite us for dinner. We go in to dinner and at some point in the dinner there is the exchange of toasts. And Gromyko stands up and says, in his inimitable

accent, "Mr. Secretary, I want to welcome you where once again we are balls to balls." And it goes on and they exchange the toast and everything and the dinner is over with. And we get in the cars and head back to the Waldorf. And I take your dad up to the suite. And he said, "I want everybody who was at that dinner up here right now." So Bert and I grab the phones and start calling everybody who was there.

RICHARD RUSK: How big a delegation was it?

PELEUSES: Oh, there were probably eight or ten of them, something like that. So we get everybody in there, and he turns to Bert and me and says, "I want everybody to have a drink." Everybody got a drink. And your dad said, "I want to tell you all how much I appreciate the fact that not one of you laughed." Everybody kept their cool. But that's a story that's never leaked out.

RICHARD RUSK: Balls to balls?

PELEUSES: Yeah, instead of eyeballs to eyeballs. And you know, we were never sure whether Gromyko knew what he'd said or not, whether it was intentional or not. His English is not that bad. We were talking about how newsies [sic] can build on something. We were talking about the spitting incident in Uruguay and how that was misreported and exaggerated. Okay, we went to Moscow for the Test Ban Treaty. A couple of things happened. I really got involved in this thing. I don't remember the newsy's name, but sometime before the Cuban Missile Crisis he did a show. It was a collection of stills, of paintings in Moscow, and he did them beautifully. It was about an hour long. And the person he interviewed was General Vizdyenen [?]-I can't spell it for you--who was the commandant of the Kremlin. And as it happened, the Test Ban Treaty came along and we went over there for that. And General Vizdyenen [?] was still there and very active, and I recognized the name. I can't remember who all was there. They all went in for the formal sit-down luncheon and the rest of us, the gunslingers--

RICHARD RUSK: Who were the gunslingers?

PELEUSES: Security people.

RICHARD RUSK: They called themselves gunslingers?

PELEUSES: Yeah, various security people.

MOSSELLEM: They had lots of other good names!

PELEUSES: You know the French were there; the British were there; and they all had their own security. And so, Vizdyenen [?] had an interpreter. He didn't speak English. This was fascinating to me. You know, the classless society--this is what I'm talking about. Vizdyenen [?] invited us all to have lunch with him. He had this humongous big table with gorgeous crystal and china and silver, and it was all Czar's stuff, and we sat down. The first thing you do is you have oodles and oodles of brandy, and you don't need that sort of stuff, but not much choice. We'd all decided we had to go

along with--as the Russians put it, it was mir i druzhba. Every time you saw one it was "Mir i druzhba, Amerikanski:" peace and friendship. We go in and have the actual signing ceremony. Everybody had their clerical types handing them the pens and switching pens and switching papers. And the cameras were going to beat hell. And then they make speeches. General Vizdyenen [?] got so smashed at lunch that he went over sideways like a felled tree in the middle of [Nikita Sergeevich] Khrushchev's speech. And what he hit was a table that was like a card table. It was full of colored telephones: a red phone, and a green phone, and a black phone. Who knows what they were! And these phones were everywhere. And all any of us could think of was, "Oh my god! The balloon is up! So much for the Test Ban Treaty." Well, they picked him up and sort of carried him off. And the interpreter from the foreign office came over and he said, "You must excuse Comrade Vizdyenen (?). After all, you know, he's only a peasant." This is in the classless society! All right, we're walking down this grand staircase afterward to get in the cars and go to our respective embassies. And I was feeling pretty good myself, no question about that. I was walking with your father and I looked up and I said, "Well boss, we did it." And he looked at me and he said, "It was a long time coming." He'd had this bothering him for a long time.

I was going to tell you about how the newsies exaggerate things. From Moscow, as guests of the Russian government we went down to Sochi on the Black Sea. Gromyko met us at the airport and we got in the car with him to go to Sochi. We were pulling up into this dacha where we were to stay, to be the guests, this fantastic estate-like place in Sochi, after the Test Ban Treaty. As we're pulling in the driveway, I'm sitting in the front seat riding shotgun. Gromyko is in the back with your dad. And he said, "Mr. Secretary, this once belonged to Comrade [Lavrenti P.] Beria. But don't be afraid, there are no ghosts in Russia." Subsequently, we went over to Khrushchev's dacha. Khrushchev had a ping-pong table. and the newsies posed your dad and Khrushchev for pictures. Your dad held up a ping-pong paddle and Khrushchev held up a ping-pong paddle. No more than three times did they hit that ball and the story came out that Khrushchev had trounced your dad in a game of ping-pong. This idiotic stuff started coming out like this. It was always like that. It was not done to be funny. It was just, "The Russians are still beating us in every way" sort of attitude.

RICHARD RUSK: That was the slant of the coverage?

PELEUSES: Yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: You're not referring to, by any chance, instead of ping-pong, a little short match of badminton on a Persian rug? I think that might have been it.

PELEUSES: Now that you say that, there was a Persian rug there. You're right.

RICHARD RUSK: It was badminton they played without a net and they just hit it back and forth a few times.

PELEUSES: Just for the newsies sake. A photo opportunity. And they made a big thing out of it in the papers here that he lost the game and all this sort of garbage.

RICHARD RUSK: I think Khrushchev hit one, my dad missed it, and my dad said to him, "You play a very good game." And Khrushchev beams and says, "It takes practice." Something like that.

We're talking now about the flight to Japan at the time that John [Fitzgerald] Kennedy was assassinated.

MOSSELLEM: Right. We were just out of Honolulu, one hour.

PELEUSES: Because I can remember we turned the plane around and it took us another hour to get back.

MOSSELLEM: And I'm sure Gus described that to you as vividly as it was. I do think in the files downstairs I will have a verbatim record of what the Secretary said at that time.

RICHARD RUSK: On the plane or on the ground?

MOSSELLEM: On the plane. Because he received the first phone call and talked to everyone. And then that's when Gus told you that several of us were going to get off in Honolulu and fly directly to Dallas because we had no idea--

RICHARD RUSK: You remembered it as being something like, "The king is dead and we have a new king. Long live the king."

PELEUSES: "The king is dead; long live the king," is the traditional thing. What I recall him saying is something like this--Jane will have it--"Our president is dead. We have a new president. Long live the president." [At this point President Lyndon Baines Johnson had been sworn in and we had been advised.]

MOSSELLEM: That's probably very close to it.

RICHARD RUSK: If it's going to be a chore digging it out, forget it. I'll paraphrase it.

MOSSELLEM: That's very close to it. That was after the second phone call.

PELEUSES: Everybody was deathly still. And I told you, we were scared stiff that [Luther Hartwell] Hodges was going to have a heart attack because he looked like he was about to have one.

MOSSELLEM: He was sitting right across from us.

PELEUSES: He lost his color, and we were really concerned. I was concerned about your father, but your father handled it very well. Nobody said anything. Your father left the [general passenger compartment of the] plane and he went and sat in the chair in the little compartment.

MOSSELLEM: Right across from your mother, back in his compartment.

PELEUSES: And he was just sitting there and a tear came down. You know, you asked me about whether your father felt these things. Yeah, I'll tell you he felt them.

MOSSELLEM: He put his head back, because I could see him. Gus was sitting next to me and I could just see him. That's when we became a little more concerned. He was releasing his own feelings. I noticed a single tear.

PELEUSES: There's no question that it affected your father. It affected your mother. It affected all of us.

MOSSELLEM: There was not a dry eye on the plane.

PELEUSES: I told you the story of the night of the funeral, after the funeral when we were all upstairs on the eighth floor [the diplomatic reception area of the State Department]. I was standing next to the guy from Arizona, the Secretary of the Interior, [Stewart Lee] Udall. I coincidentally happened to be standing next to him. Johnson had the receiving line going and all the heavies were there from all over the world. And she [his wife] said to him, "Oh, Stu, we'll never laugh again." He said, "No, you're wrong. We'll never be young again." And I think that was it. It killed our youth. There was a whole generation of Americans who just lost their youth overnight. There's no other way to describe it. It affected all of us.

RICHARD RUSK: He really appealed to the desires and dreams, the vision of country.

MOSSELLEM: The entire country, young and old.

RICHARD RUSK: That's why Vietnam was such a bad thing in a sense, because we went from that to this other thing which was just awful. And it happened in a matter of three or four years. The unraveling of the country, we went from a position of a vibrant, hopeful--

PELEUSES: I don't know if you can use this, but you just triggered another one. We went to Vietnam. The first time we went--

RICHARD RUSK: Did you go to Vietnam?

MOSSELLEM: I wasn't on the first trip, no. I went later, but I didn't go on the first one.

PELEUSES: Henry Cabot Lodge, who just died a week or two ago, we had a nickname for him. We used to call him Henry Cabbage Cod.

RICHARD RUSK: He was a little bit stiff and formal, I take it?

PELEUSES: Yeah. He had an Army colonel working as his security officer. There was a lot of

informal institutionalization that took place in Vietnam, because of Vietnam. It wasn't like any other embassy. An ambassador in Vietnam was pretty darn powerful and could run things the way he wanted to, and got what he wanted because we were deeply committed. Well, we learned from the colonel that we were going to visit an area, and we were concerned. It wasn't fun and games. There was some shooting going on. And we were concerned. And we were told that we were going down to the delta. So we had made all our arrangements through our security channels with the other guys and the military to insure that there was security where we were going. And Lodge's idea of security was not to tell anybody what he was doing at all. So we got in the cars in the motorcade. And we had, I think, a military bus or two of newsies. And we drove to Bien-Hoa. Do you remember the temporary buildings that were down here on the mall? Bien-Hoa airport was surrounded by two-story old military tempo-type buildings. And you drove through the building. It had a cut-out on the first floor and you drove through it. And we drove through and made a turn and down a line there were about fifteen very long-winged, droopy-winged airplanes. And I almost dropped my teeth. It was full of U-2s. Publicly we were saying we didn't have U-2s over there. That had become an issue. And I turned back and looked at your father, and he sort of moved his head from side to side. And I didn't say anything. What stunned me is our fantastic newsies. Not a one of them recognized a U-2 when they saw it because obviously they would have blown it sky high. It never came up. They're very recognizable. Here we were, driving down a line of these damn things.

RICHARD RUSK: These were for reconnaissance flights over China, the Soviet Union?

PELEUSES: No, we were using them over Nam and North Vietnam, that area, in an effort to control. We weren't militarily totally committed yet. We got in the plane and took off; we got up to altitude and we were cruising along. They were the old DC-3, C-47s, whatever they're called. They were groaning away there. Bert and I were sitting together. Your dad and Lodge sitting together talking. I was looking around. I'd never been in Vietnam before. Something was bothering me and I didn't know what it was. I said, "Bert, there's something wrong." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I don't know. I can't figure it out. There's just something wrong." To make a long story short, we suddenly realized that the sun was coming in the wrong window. We were going north, weren't going south to the delta. That was the first we knew that we weren't going to the delta. We had all these security arrangements down in the delta and here we are going north. This was Lodge's idea of security, not to tell anybody, including the Secretary, where we were going.

We landed at someplace. I don't recall where. Everybody got into helicopters. That was up to that point the largest helicopter operation in the Vietnam business. We all went up to this [montagnard] village up in the side of a mountain. Your dad is making a speech through an interpreter; Lodge is making a speech through an interpreter. All these villagers are no more than--maximum height, probably the tallest guy in the gang was probably five feet two inches or five feet three inches. And your dad was over six feet. They were smiling at this fantastic white person who was towering over them. I know it kind of bothered your father as to what were these people really getting out of this sort of stuff. It was a performance for the newsies. Well, there was an Army major standing there who was assigned to the area apparently. He came up to me and he said, "Are you with Dean Rusk?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Boy, I really admire that man." I said, "I do, too. I work for him." He said, "You know, I really admire him." And I said, "Yeah, Major, I do, too." He said, "No, I mean I really

admire him."

And I said, "Major what the hell are you talking about?" And he pointed down the side of the mountain and here about six hundred yards away were a bunch of these little people with those little funny cone-shaped straw hats that I had never seen before. And he said, "Do you see those guys down there?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "That's the Vietcong." I went over and grabbed Bert; we grabbed your father; and I said, "Mr. Secretary, it's time to go." Your father was really super this way. If we said, "It's time to go," he would go. And that was it. We had no idea where Lodge was taking us. He did things like this that really threw us for a loop.

RICHARD RUSK: Were those guys armed at all?

PELEUSES: I don't know. But I wasn't going to hang around to find out with responsibility of your father. It was interesting. I did the advance when he went to Athens for the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] meeting, obviously. [I'm of Greek descent.] I couldn't wait to do that advance. Your dad arrived at the airport and they had the little ceremonies.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you tell my dad who that was down there?

PELEUSES: Maybe it's something he blocked out. But, boy, we got out of there. We cut that short.

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, and I meant to tell you a little follow-up. He made his one trip to the field in Vietnam. I think that he never went out in a field situation again. But while he was flying in this great big helicopter formation someone told him, or he asked, how many men it took to make these kinds of security arrangements for his visit out into the countryside. And he was told something like thirty battalions were drawn off the line for his security. And then he looked down from the chopper. There were choppers all the way around him and he saw two choppers skimming low over the trees down below and he asked what the purpose of that was. And those guys were down there to draw fire. When he put all that stuff together, he said, "No more trips to Vietnam if people are endangering their lives for the sake of my security." And that's why he didn't make any more trips.

PELEUSES: One of the things that happened on the chopper is Lodge leaned over--there was a gunner on the chopper--Lodge leaned over and grabbed this machine gun and wheeled it up, barrel first, across everybody's face. And the gunner yelled, "No, no, no!" And he grabbed the gun and pulled it away from him. And I looked at him and said, "What's the matter?" He said, "Man, all you've got to do is touch that thing and it's going to go off." He had it all armed and ready to go, and Lodge is picking it up trying to demonstrate it. This is the kind of craziness that was going on. Lodge used to carry a forty-five around, with his ice-cream suits: just idiotic stuff.

RICHARD RUSK: Kind of macho man?

PELEUSES: Yeah.

MOSSELLEM: And out of control.

PELEUSES: I started to tell you, we went to Athens and I did the advance in Athens. We arrived, they had the airport ceremonies and everything else. We got in the car. I was riding shotgun again. [Henry Richard] Labouisse [our ambassador to Greece at the time] said to your father, "Well, Mr. Secretary, we're going to go up to the Acropolis right now." And I turned around and I said, "Mr. Secretary, you can't go. You've got an appointment." And he said, "Right." And we went to the residence. And Labouisse was a little bit put out. He didn't know quite what was happening. When we got to the residence--and your father was just super about things like this. If we said something like that, he really went with us. And he said, "What was all that about?" And I said, "There were about sixty newsies who heard him say that." The car hadn't pulled away yet and they heard him say that. I said, "You want to go up there to the Acropolis with all these newsmen?" He said, "No, you're right." So we waited about half an hour. Then we got in cars and went to the Acropolis. There were only about three cops and a couple of us and the Secretary and the ambassador. And we went out to look at the Acropolis. Here were four sailors from the sixth fleet walking along, had no idea who your father was or who any of us were. And one of them said, looking at the Parthenon, "Boy, isn't that something?" And the other one said, "Shoot, we got one in Tennessee that ain't all busted up like this." And your father almost fell down the steps of the Acropolis laughing. I don't know if you're aware that in the capital of Tennessee is a copy of the Parthenon.

MOSSELLEM: These were the good moments for him when he was totally relaxed and he didn't have 500 newsies around him then. He could enjoy it.

PELEUSES: He could enjoy it because being on stage you've got to watch what you're doing, you're got to watch what you're saying. You know, you can relax and really enjoy what you're looking at. That was funny that time. I'll never forget that sailor saying that. The presidential party went on the Southeast Asia trip. Your dad did not get to all of that. They had gone down to Australia and had stayed on a ship because no hotel was adequate, and all this sort of malarkey. The presidential party went on to KL [Kuala Lumpur] and Bangkok, and I can't remember which went where. I think we went to Bangkok first and then to KL. Everybody was staying in this one hotel.. Here are all the White House types, all bragging with newsies standing around, how they're all gone to cat houses the night before and paid off with LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson] pens. To us who had traveled before, we were stunned and appalled at the way these people were acting. We went to Manila then. The Hotel Manila was a big u-shaped affair. We were in one wing and across from the entrance in the other wing was the presidential party. The presidential science advisor--I've forgotten his name--he was a little dark-haired guy. Ed [Edward Southard] Little was on that trip. He was a Special Assistant. He and I were reading the traffic together. Just tons of it was coming in. It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and we had some protection: Philippine police. There was a possibility that there would be some demonstrations. Everybody was coming. He came running around the corner from his wing over to our wing carrying a paper bag. The window was open. And I said, "What are you going to do?" And he said, "I've got a bag full of water. I'm going to get me one of these cops." Here's the presidential science advisor who's going to throw a bag of water out of a hotel window on a cop that's protecting this clown. I can't think of his name. Anyhow, he was Lyndon Johnson's science advisor, or whatever the title. In any event, it developed

that we were going on a trip that was unannounced, unscheduled. We went down and flew over to Sangley Point, the Naval air station. The plane [Air Force One] was over at Sangley Point, we got on the flight and zoom, off we went to Nam.

RICHARD RUSK: Unannounced?

PELEUSES: That's the trip you're talking about.

RICHARD RUSK: You went to Cam Ranh Bay.

PELEUSES: Yeah, we went to Cam Ranh Bay. Johnson made his speech in a mess hall about, "Bring the coon skin back so we can nail it to the wall." And here are all these eighteen-nineteen year old kids looking at this guy and wondering what he's saying, not being able to understand him. Kids are walking in who have been out on patrols for two-three days, muddy, dirty, not knowing this, coming into the mess hall and saying, "Who is he?" This was, I thought, kind of a sad commentary. Here's the president of the United States making a speech and the people that he talked to didn't know who he was. Your father was super on that one, too.

RICHARD RUSK: Was my dad with him at that time?

PELEUSES: Yeah, we were on that trip. Your father went around to the GIs [Government Issue], when they finally came awake as to who was who, and took names from anybody that he was talking to, asked them where they were from and their home phone numbers. And he came back and he called every single family of the kids that he had talked to, from the office. And he told them that he had seen their son.

MOSSELLEM: He tracked every one of them down.

PELEUSES: Tracked every parent, every relative down. He made a point of that.

MOSSELLEM: He had notes on every kind of piece of paper in the world--napkins--

PELEUSES: He was asking us for paper. Anything he could find. What's your name? Where are you from? How do I get your parents or your relatives?" These kids were swarming around. He was just super that way. This, again, emphasizes what I was telling you the other night about the concern. He always kept his roots. We went down to Atlanta to see your Aunt Margaret [Rusk]. He made a point of having the car go by the area where the house used to be when he was a kid. It's now the site of a railroad bridge abutment or something like that. He made a point to go over there to look at it. He never lost that sense of his roots.

MOSSELLEM: [On Henry Alfred Kissinger] Maybe it was early on when he came in and I had asked to be his personal assistant. I told him when I was asked to take the job that I would help him in every way that I could, that I didn't want him to feel that he had to make a commitment to me initially because he might not like me at all and he may well have somebody else in mind for the job. That

was not problem for me because there were lots of jobs that I could go to. We had been working together for, I would say, six months, seven months. I went on a trip with him, which I didn't do very often. I traveled very little with him. I stayed at home and had a staff of twelve secretaries or so. All the girls took turns and I really stayed in Washington. I had done my fair share of traveling at that point. But he was being smart in front of an audience on one of these trips and made some comment that I had worked for Mr. Rusk for eight years and for Mr. [William Pierce] Rogers and for Mr. [Christian Archibald] Herter and part of Mr. [John Foster] Dullesttime. He said, "How do you compare me to Dean Rusk?" And he kind of caught me off-guard, but he made me mad. And I said, "He, too, is a scholar, but he is a gentleman." Only because I was mad, just like that I said that. And I kind of rocked him. He never got over it. Any time he sees me in a group he will say, "But she will always compare me to Dean Rusk and I can't compete." And he was absolutely right.

PELEUSES: My one contact with him is quite a story. I was the administrative officer in Jamaica when Henry decided to make the trip down there over the Christmas holidays between Christmas and New Year's.

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, if I use that thing about Kissinger, if I use it, does it bother you?

MOSSELLEM: Not at all.

PELEUSES: No, it doesn't bother me either. He went to a little town on the north coast of Jamaica. The embassy was on the south coast of Jamaica. We went out there and did security advance for the secret service. He had secret service--State Department security wasn't good enough for him. I guess maybe I shouldn't have said that, but what the hell. Anyhow, I went up there, and they brought the damn dog with them. Jamaica has very strict quarantine laws.

RICHARD RUSK: This is Kissinger's dog?

MOSSELLEM: Tyler is a yellow lab.

PELEUSES: What we did is, he came in on a Jet Star and we brought the nose of the other plane up like this so that they could get off from one plane directly onto the other plane so that the newsies wouldn't see the damn dog. The Jamaican government was sort of turning away and pretending it wasn't happening. So here I am, wrestling this goddamn dog that weighed more than I did into the other plane. And that dog has to be one of the dumbest animals I ever met. It just sort of would stand around and drool.

RICHARD RUSK: Did it come down to the Department at all?

MOSSELLEM: Often. I could tell you lots of stories.

PELEUSES: So, I wrestle this dog into the plane and they fly to Ocho Rios. It's between Christmas and New Year's. I left Christmas day to go take care of them. I left the family behind. So, the Secretary of the Treasury came down, too, the guy with the glasses and the natty suits, the New York

suits--I can't think of his name. They stayed half a mile apart and they weren't talking to each other. This was happening with the Nixon Administration. And so, they each had their own communications set-up; they each had their own security set-up; and there it was.

MOSSELLEM: Simon, Bill [William Edward] Simon.

PELEUSES: Yeah. So, the trip is finished. I'm at Mobay [Montego Bay] from Ocho Rios. And again we did that bit with the planes nose to nose. I wrestle this stupid animal out of this small plane into the Jet Star. Henry is over at the fence talking to the newsies. And Nancy [Sharon Kissinger] says to me, "Doctor, I really appreciate what you've done for us." And my reaction was to look over my shoulder and see who she's talking to. Then I realize she's talking to me and I couldn't understand why she's calling me doctor. And she said it a couple of times. And I finally realized she thought I was a vet because I was messing around with this damn dog. And I said, "Mrs. Kissinger, I'm not a doctor. I'm the administrative officer in the embassy in Kingston." And she turned around and she said, "Oh, Henry, he's not a doctor at all. He's only the administrative officer." And I thought, "Well, so much for me. That puts me in my place." That was my only meeting with them, but, boy, they'll put you down where you belong.

MOSSELLEM: Speaking of dogs, let me just tell you. My husband, Tom, was chief steward on Air Force One. He was flying up to Hyannis with President Kennedy and Bobby [Robert Francis] Kennedy and his black lab. Do you remember that dog? He came in the office whenever Bobby Kennedy would come. Huge dog. On whatever occasion it was, Fourth of July or something, they had the dog on board, but they had a big affair at the airport there in Hyannis. The President got off and his family and Bobby and his family were there. As soon as the President stepped off the plane, Tom had to hold the dog in the back because they didn't want the dog coming off the plane until after this fanfare. As soon as the President stepped off, the band started playing "Hail to the Chief." Well, the sound got to the dog and spooked him and he went crazy. Tom had to get on top of him, put a blanket over his head. Tom, after he's had several drinks, has to tell you this story, not me. He starts howling like the dog. Finally, they had to shut the door of the plane and still keep him muffled with pillows and blankets. But the dogs could take their toll.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember when I raised all those guinea pigs at the house.

MOSSELLEM: Oh yes, I do. Indeed, your mother brought some of them in to the office and I remember giving a couple of them to my nephews. My brother has never forgiven me.

RICHARD RUSK: I'd heard that's how we got rid of them. I started out with two and we ended up with about forty of them. I had built a big one-layer cage and I had to put a second layer on there.

END OF SIDE 1

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