

Hotfoot-14
Interview with Merv Stauffer
November 4, 1981

KF So let's, so, we'll put Ralph, what's his second name?

MLS Boulware.

KF Ba . .

MLS Boul. . .

KF Boulware.

MLS Right..

KF He's in Istanbul already. So on this, this team that leaves Washington.
. . .

MLS Well, it leaves Washington. Add to that, that's all EDS'ers, add Kanach.
. . .

KF Julian Ka . . .

MLS Canauch. And Dick Douglas.

KF Dick Douglas. That's the Turkish rescue team.

MLS Yeah, that's it.

KF Okay. And, they leave on the night of the 12th.

MLS Monday. Let's see if that's right. Yep, Monday.

KF That's pretty good going. That's 24 hours to put that together.

MLS See, when they leave Washington, none of us had had any sleep since Sunday morning. And, Ross said to me and there may have been others in the room too, but I remember he told me, he said, "Now, I want you guys to work in shifts and get some sleep. I don't need to talk to a bunch of zombies back there."

KF About this time, Colonel Simons asked you to move Glen Jackson, who was in Kuwait . . .

MLS Right.

KF . . . checking out the Persian Gulf escape xx, to Amman, Jordan. .

MLS Right. See, Glen's report had been pretty grim in terms of the boats coming across the gulf and, you know, that sort of thing and so the Colonel, based upon the information I'd passed to him from Glen had decided that, apparently he decided that is not an option. So, yeah, he asked me to move him to Iran.

KF There, he was to link up with Arab Wings, the Jordian airline and try and at least make a contingency plan for a flight into Tehran.

MLS Right, right.

KF And, I gather the reason for that is that Arab Wings was in fact, able to get a few flights through to Tehran.

MLS No, Arab Wings was the organization that took Ross in on the charter lear.

KF Oh, yeah.

MLS Okay, so we had a little bit of an exposure to Arab Wings and Ross was pretty impressed with the gutsiness of that operation and obviously, the Colonel, in talking with Howell and Bob Young who also went in that same time, felt the same way because he said to have Glen link up with Arab Wings. He had somewhat of a confidence level in that organization, or he would not have said that.

KF He thought Glen might be able to talk them into flying into Tehran Airport, even if it was closed?

Good, okay, but that would have been a chartered lear?

MLS Yes. That's all the, that's all they operate.

KF I see. I thought it was a Jordanian airline.

MLS No, it's a subsidiary of Royal Jordanian Air.

KF I see. Okay.

MLS But it is strictly a charter outfit that scurries around the Persian Gulf area.

KF Okay. Back here in Dallas, on Tuesday, the 13th, you make a decision to move, to establish a command post in your office as opposed to Gayden's office.

MLS Actually, we did that Sunday night, the 11th.

KF Oh, Sunday, okay . . .

MLS Yeah.

KF Sunday night.

MLS The 11th.

KF Okay.

MLS There's a very simple explanation to that. In Gayden's area, it's all pretty much, it was out in the open, so there were a lot of people wandering and coming and going. And, we decided, we needed to kind of tighten this up a little because we still had a problem. And in my area, you know, we shut one door and it's all sealed off.

KF Okay, good. Ross and the team arrived in Istanbul. This must be the 13th, I guess.

MLS Must be.

KF This must be Tuesday, the 13th. You can talk to the Colonel and Ross can talk to you, but they can't talk to each other directly. Or, can they be patched through?

MLS I could have patched them through, but I never did.

KF Okay. Was that for security?

MLS No. I think that's, well . . .

KF Or was it just the logistics of the whole thing.

MLS The phone connections were not always the greatest . . .

KF Okay.

MLS . . . and we just decided, you know, it, we just didn't do it.

KF All right. Now, Ross is still asking for stuff. Ross is doing two things. He's coming up with ideas for you to pass to the Colonel.

MLS Yeah.

KF But, that which is not pressing; they're just ideas. But, he's talking to you and asking things, and these aren't suggestions; these are demands. I have the details of this short take off aircraft. Do you remember the make and the company?

MLS No, I don't. I'll see if I can dig that out of the files somewhere.

KF Okay. It turned out that you could buy one but it was going to cost a quarter of a million dollars, so Ross decided it wasn't worth a quarter of a million dollars for something they probably weren't going to use, I guess.

MLS Well, now you ought to check this with Ross. I believe what happened was he discussed it with Douglas and Douglas said, I'll get one.

KF Okay.

MLS And Ross said, "How?," he said, "Don't ask." I think that's what happened.

KF Now, about this time, and I have the date in my interview with Jay, I think. Wait a minute, the 11th, the 11th is a Sunday, they get out. Then Monday, the 12th, they're all in the safe house. It's, they're there all day Tuesday, the 13th. So, it's the morning of Wednesday, the 14th that the teams split. The morning of Wednesday, the 14th. The Colonel goes, the Colonel and the dirty team go off in the Range Rovers. And, at that point you lose contact because all phone lines to Tehran are out.

MLS When they left. When they left for the border.

KF Yeah.

MLS That's when we lost contact.

KF That's when you lost contact. Now, let's talk about the dirty team. They could not contact you. You had a system set up whereby Jay would call

Gholam

Majid

█, █ couldn't call Jay, but you could call █. So that was the, that was the link.

Majid

Gholam

MLS It wasn't █, it was █.

Gholam

KF █, okay.

MLS Yeah.

Gholam

Gholam

KF Okay. Because █, at that point, had decided xx. Okay, it was █. Now, you were hoping for an ok, a coded ok message from Jay. It didn't come. He didn't send it, but you didn't know he hadn't sent it.

MLS Didn't know he hadn't sent it.

KF Because you had no connection.

MLS That's right.

KF All right. What was the feeling here at that point?

MLS Very apprehensive. We, let me back up. The last conversation I had with Jay was a very, very long conversation, because it was in that conversation that he was giving us the routing out.

KF Yeah, in code.

MLS And, it was in code, and we didn't have code names for those towns; he had to spell each one out and, you know, to do that required, you know, using a code for each letter. So that was a very lengthy thing. When that was done, I also, at Ross' suggestion, discussed with him, marking the tops of the Rovers so that if they had to abandon one, we could see it from the air with, you know, a big A painted or taped on top, or, you see, that sort of thing. What I didn't know, was the Colonel was very antsy because he was ready to go. It was in that conversation also that Jay told us about the contact he had established. And, you know, it's one of those things, the emotion of the moment from

my point of view was, I really hated to see him hang up. Not because we were going to lose phone connections, cause I didn't know that, but because this was the last time I was going to talk to him until he was in Turkey. And it was just kind of an emotional thing. And, you know, when the time came and I wished him good luck and said, "Take care of yourself; keep your head down." You know, those kinds of things, and we hung up. But, while that was going on, Marquez or Walter one, was decoding the message and the other was marking in yellow marks a lot on the map on the wall the routes, so by the time we hung up, we knew exactly where they were going. And, Tom Walter, being the analytical type that he is, was already starting to mark, well, let's see, it'll take them so many hours to go here, that's you know, eleven o'clock. He marked it like every four hours or some such thing, so that we could project when they'd get out. So, we felt pretty comfortable that we knew where they were going and the approximate timing, but we knew we'd get a comfort level as Jay checked in and we'd call [REDACTED] ^{Gholam} for the message. Well, it was, you know, minutes, thirty minutes or an hour or some very short period of time after we hung up that morning when they left, and the phone rang. So, we got very antsy. Not because we knew they were in trouble or anything like that. Just because we couldn't confirm that they were. And really though, did not have a terrible feeling until they did not arrive at the border at the time that Tom Walter had projected they should be there. Then we really got concerned.

KF Okay. Now, while they are travelling and you don't know exactly where they are, what is the game plan, assuming that they arrive at the border on time, is what?

MLS The game plan was that these fellows, the Turkish rescue team, would meet them at the border, get them back to Istanbul. In the meantime

KF How would that be done?

MLS I don't think I knew at the time. Now, how ultimately it was done, was bus from the border to Van and plane from Van to Ankara. From there

to Istanbul. But, I don't think I knew that yet. Because that was something they took care of over there. What we were working on, in the meantime was how to get the clean group out of Tehran.

KF Right, okay. But, before we get to them, did you have any idea what the contingency plans of the Turkish rescue team were?

MLS Yeah. I had an idea.

KF But you didn't know the details.

MLS Didn't know the details.

KF Okay.

MLS And the reason I had an idea was because of conversations with Ross about well, if one of the land rovers breaks down, mark the top with an "A", and we'll know they abandoned, you know, we could see that from the air. If, and I forget, Jay would have those details, but, you know, it was that kind of message that I passed from Ross to Jay that told me that had a plan and I could speculate what that was.

KF I see. Okay. I have probably, I must talk to Ralph about that. Basically, he was in Istanbul and these alternatives must have been discussed between Ross and probably Schwebach, Sculley and Davis.

MLS Yeah, I would think that that's right. They probably just, I would think they probably discussed, you can confirm this with Ross, I would think they probably started discussing those things in route.

KF Yeah, okay. I'll question Ross then about those alternative plans. Now, but at this point, during this period of two days, it's two days, they hoped anyway to, they planned, it was supposed to take them two days to get to the border. They didn't get there till, it actually took them a full 36 hours; they hoped to do it in about 24 really.

MLS I believe that's right.

KF Okay, but during this period of time, you're working on the clean team.

MLS Yeah.

KF Now, what were you trying to put together there?

MLS Well, the decision had been made they'd come out. They were at the, they were at Lou Goelz' house, because the Embassy didn't have room for them, which just blew my mind. I could not believe that. But, it was nice of Lou to let them use his house. We had decided they'd come out on the first commercial air. Lou had, Lou or someone had told them he would get them on the first commercial air. But, we weren't sure how long that'd be, no one knew. So, we said, if we can slip Jackson in on Arab Wings, he can go down, you know, as a crew member he could go through customs, right on down there, check on them, see if they'd want to try to come out xx. So, it was that exercise that we were running every so often. You can talk with Glen, but I know Glen would go with the chartered lear to the point that they'd met by Iranian fighters and then they'd turn around and go back. And they'd try that every day.

KF Okay. Where is Glen Jackson now?

MLS He's here in xx.

KF So there were two plans for the clean team. There was a commercial, first commercial flight and there was the Arab Wings chartered lear. Must have chartered that lear for two days.

MLS As I recall, we paid for one trip to Iran.

KF I see. Okay.

MLS Yeah. See, there were other things that were discussed. Ross would, well, let me back up. I was asleep in the boardroom when they came and woke me up and told me the Embassy had been overrun. In which, at that moment, that was the first good feel I had about the fact that they weren't at the Embassy. I was so glad they weren't.

KF What day would that have been?

MLS So, then, at that point, you know, we had other ideas that we were starting to try and think about now. Like, you know, the Marine that was injured. Ross was thinking, well, we'll take, we'll take the 707 in, we'll get the Marine and we'll also pick up the clean group while we're there. You know, they'd be the stretcher bearers or what have you. So, we were trying to formulate other ideas. Could not bounce these off the Colonel, because they are now in route. But they were kind of contingency, you know, what happens if, could we do, you know. But when everything had gone full circle, the thing that was still the best bet was what the Colonel had intended, which was to have them come out as part of a crowd on the first commercial flight. Can you imagine what it would have been like trying to have them come out on an Arab Wings flight, kind of searching . . .

KF Yeah.

MLS . . . so see, the Colonel was right.

KF Yeah.

MLS Just like, we kept feeding things to him, you know, why aren't you leaving? Did Jay tell you the Admiral Moorer story?

KF No.

MLS Ross had talked with Admiral Moorer and I guess the Admiral had said to Ross, "You know, the Colonel really ought to get out of there." You know, his information was that things were going to get worse. So Ross said, "Tell the Colonel that Admiral Moorer says you really ought to

leave, because his information says things are going to get worse. So, I talked to Jay, and I said, "Jay, you know, Ross says," and I told him. And Jay said, "Just a minute." He came back and he said, "We understand the message." But, that was all.

KF All that was in code, of course.

MLS Yeah. What I didn't know, and Jay told me when he got back is, he told Colonel Simons, Admiral Moorer said that we really ought to leave because things are going to get worse. And, Colonel Simons said, "Tell Moorer that the closest water is the kitchen sink. I looked out the window and I don't see any ships." You know, I mean, his . . . so, you know, it was very clear that the Colonel was still in control. He would decide when they would leave, and, you know, he was right.

KF This was during that two day period?

MLS So, it was those kinds of things that we kept, but always say, it's the Colonel's decision. And you know, Ross is a very dynamic leader, and he is a leader, but I'll give him credit. When it came to the tough decisions that had to be made inside the country, he'd always let it up to the Colonel; he'd give him his best advice, but he'd always say, "It's the Colonel's decision." And you know, I'm sure that wasn't easy for Ross, but he always did that.

KF Good. Finally, they get to the border. Now, at this point, Ralph is close to the border. Do you know who was with Ralph? Would it be the whole of that team, other than Ross?

MLS It is my belief that it is everybody except Ross.

KF Okay. And, they, this plane is in Istanbul . . .

MLS Yeah.

KF . . . do you have a helicopter at this point?

MLS I don't know.

KF Okay.

MLS I don't, I really don't know the details of that.

KF Okay. Ralph, they came across the border, actually, on the day they were supposed to, which is, wait, 11, 12, 13, 14, which is later on the 15th, no wait, yeah, late on the 15th their time.

MLS Yeah.

KF On the morning of the 16th, Ralph goes again to the border and they're there. Who called who?

MLS Ross told us.

KF Where were you?

MLS In my office.

KF You were in your office. What time of day would that have been here?

MLS Well, I'm going to, I'm going to theorize at least, that it was about midnight Thursday, the 15th. Because if they got, you know, that's probably right, it was . . .

KF Because midnight Thursday here, would have been the morning Friday . . .

MLS Yeah, 9:30 in the morning . . .

KF In Tehran. You're in your office, Ross calls.

MLS We call him. We're checking in every so often.

14/12

KF You check in with Ross at midnight.

MLS He said, "Call back in two hours, call back in three hours."

KF Okay.

MLS And so, on one of our check, you know, checking back, he said, you know, I have heard from Sculley, I don't know; I've heard from somebody, I think it was Sculley. "They're at the border." And, you know, then well what's going to happen Ross. "Well, they've got to go to Van and they've got to go, and then we've got to wait there on an airplane." So, all this takes time and we keep saying, "Gosh, we'll sure feel better when you've looked them in the eye," and he keeps saying, "So will I," you know. But, all we're getting is, from you know, from Ross now, a progress report as to where they are.

KF Okay. Do you know who would have been Ross' second in command in that team? It's got to be Schwebach, Sculley or Davis.

MLS I would think Sculley, but I don't know that. That's something you'd have to ask Ross.

KF Whoever it is, is probably the person I should to most about the Turkish rescue team.

MLS Yeah. I'm not sure who it would be. I'll find out.

KF We're now into the early hours of the morning, Friday, the 16th. The next question that comes up is, where are the clean group going to fly to? You learn that there would be a flight to Rome and a flight to Frankfurt. How did you learn that?

MLS I think we found that out through Pan Am, I believe.

KF Okay. So, you were calling Pan Am and saying what's the situation in Tehran?

14/14

MLS You know, we understand there are, you've got two flights that are going in when the airport reopens; where are they going to end up?

KF And their planes weren't on the ground then in Tehran?

MLS No, they weren't. No.

KF Finally, they told you, or who, it must be Lou Goelz told you that the clean group would be on the first flight and would go to Frankfurt.

MLS Let me just think. We managed to get two phone calls through Iran during that time when the phone lines were down. Because the Government, our understanding is that the Government latched on to all the remaining lines and there weren't that many. And, we were fortunate enough to get two through.

KF You had somebody trying all the time?

MLS How did we manage to do that? I had talked to somebody at AT & T, and I can't remember who it was, and they got it through.

KF This is another contact, somebody you know? Do you do business with AT & T?

MLS Oh, yeah. We do a lot of business with AT & T because of our computer system. Anyhow, the two calls that we got through, one was to ^{Gholam} [redacted] he had no message. That was very, very late, just before they crossed the border. The other was to Lou Goelz' house; we talked to Joe. It was a very, very short conversation; we couldn't stay on the phone that long. In fact, I think Tom Walter talked to him, I think that call was completed while I was sleeping. I make it sound like I slept all the time. Not quite true.

KF But, Joe Poche at that point said, "We're on the first flight" . . .

MLS Yeah, the first flight.

Adrian [unclear]

KF . . . it's going to Frankfurt. . .

MLS I don't think he knew that. No, he didn't know where, but he knew that they'd be on the first flight.

KF He presumably didn't know when.

MLS No, did not know when. Of course, you know, we kept talking to anybody who would listen to us from the State Department, to Pan Am, to whoever, about when are they going to open the airport? Because that was the big question.

KF Yeah.

MLS I think it was though, through Pan Am though, we found out that the first flight would go to Frankfurt and the second would go to Rome.

KF Okay.

MLS But, we didn't know that until very near departure time. Because one of the ideas we had was to have the pilot of Ross' plane, the 707, get in the plane and monitor the air waves so that when the Pan Am flight took off, he could find out where they were going and they could meet them at the airport, join them. You know, that was one I didn't, we found out before that took place.

KF Okay, let's back track a little because you told me a couple of things there that we had missed out before. We're still in the two day period. The other call that you managed to get through to Iran is to [REDACTED]^{Gholam}. This is on the night of the second day of the trip. This is when they are supposed to be at the border. Now, you had, that is a second warning signal, you must have had a first warning signal because Ralph was at the border when they were supposed to be there, and they weren't there. But he saw [REDACTED]^{Rashid}. Ralph must have called Ross, and said they were there today. Ross must have called you. Then, about the same

time, you get a call through to Riaz and he says they haven't call in. Now, this must have been panic time.

MLS Yeah, I don't recall the first part of it, well that may have taken place, I'm sure, but, yeah, it concerned us. And see, the mechanism was Jay would call ██████^{Gholam} and either have a message or not have a message for Jim Nyfeler. Jim Nyfeler, John Smith, I don't know, but somebody. Somebody that ██████^{Gholam} knew. Then we'd call ██████ and say, do you have a, let's say it was Ken Follett, do you have a message for Ken Follett? No, he doesn't have one. That means Jay hasn't talked to him. If he'd have said yes, then we'd have a message which would mean something to us but not to ██████^{Gholam}, it was something that Jay would have left. And, when we finally got through to him and he said, no I have no message, that caused us concern.

KF But then, within hours after that, they got across the border.

MLS Yeah.

KF Okay. We're now I think, on Friday, February 16th. You know that the clean team is going to go to Frankfurt and, in fact, a few minutes or not long after that, they leave, no?

MLS It wasn't long before they left that we knew . . .

KF That they were going to Frankfurt.

MLS . . . they were going to Frankfurt.

KF They were going to Frankfurt. You then, couldn't have known anything about the hassle on the runway.

MLS Yeah, we knew. How did we know. Talk to Tom Walter, that's a question that Tom Walter can answer. We knew that they were having a problem and I don't remember how we knew.

14/12

KF Finally, you learn that they do take off, somehow. So you told Ross, and Ross takes off.

MLS I think he took off before they did because we knew they were going to Frankfurt.

KF I see.

MLS It was always a chance that that'd end up, you know, another way, but, we reached a point where we had to make arrangements for food for the airplane, make arrangements for docking, ground handling for the airplane. So we decided, and I think this was a decision Ross made, "I will take a chance that they'll come to Frankfurt. So go ahead and make arrangements to have us met, food put on board, ground handling and all that."

KF At Frankfurt.

MLS And that was done before they took off.

KF Okay. Why did the two teams want to meet at all? Why not just have . .

MLS I don't think it every crossed my mind they wouldn't all come home together. And I suspect, although I never asked, I suspect that that was true of Ross too. That they all come back together.

KF Bit of, bit of show business here. In fact, now. I mean, Ross must now be thinking, must now be thinking ahead to the big return home.

MLS I don't think so. I mean, Ross can speak for himself. From my perspective, you know, we went over to get them and we're going to bring them all home and, in fact, we all felt pretty darn bad that we didn't go, couldn't go get Glen. Because Glen is still down in Amman.

KF Yeah.

MLS But it just didn't make a whole lot of sense to go from Frankfurt all the way back to Amman, Jordan, to pick up Glen and then come home.

KF Okay.

MLS And I'm not, I don't know that I agree, at least from my point of view, I would not agree it was showbiz time; I think it was just a practical thing, run over to get them and now we're all going to come home together.

KF Well, I suppose you might now have felt easy in your minds, I mean, bringing half the team home, you're still worried, right. So, let's wrap it up in Europe.

MLS Yeah.

KF Okay.

MLS Yeah.

KF Good. What did you, you made the technical arrangements for Frankfurt, docking, maintenance, refueling. Now, what did you order to have put on board?

MLS Oh, gosh. I've got that list. If you want that list, I'll get it for you. It's, you know, it's got all the food and the booze and everything.

KF Okay.

MLS It's a heck of a list.

KF By the time that they take off from Frankfurt, it must be Saturday, February 17th.

MLS Let me back up.

KF Okay.

MLS One thing that I didn't put there that I remember. When Poche and his group were on the Pan Am flight between Tehran and Frankfurt, Pan Am in Frankfurt called me out of the blue. I'd just, you know, had this phone call from Frankfurt and it was Pan Am operations officer of some such type. Poche had been able, through the pilot, to get a message to Frankfurt to call me and tell me they were on that first plane.

KF Okay.

MLS Very good move on Poche's part. Because at that point then, I was able to confirm to Ross they are definitely on that airplane.

KF Okay.

MLS Which meant that he didn't have to worry about taking off for Rome. He knew then too, that now, now we know they're coming.

KF Okay, good. Saturday, February 17th, the group has taken off from, the whole group has taken off from Frankfurt. You went home to bed.

MLS At long last.

KF What had you had here. Had you been able to shower here in the office?

MLS Oh, yeah.

KF You'd had your shower.

MLS Every day, my wife brought me clothes and I'd, you know, shower and shave just, you know, and I slept like several people, just slept in those, on the couch in the boardroom.

KF Did your wife know, at this point know what had happened in Iran?

MLS At this point, yeah. I told her what had happened. She didn't know before then, but once she started bringing clothes and I was here and not coming home at night . . .

KF You said Paul and Bill are out of jail. But you must have told her not to tell anyone.

MLS Oh yeah.

KF Okay. Now, tell me, you went home. What arrangements had you made for the thing at Dallas, meeting at Dallas. Did you organize that whole reception?

MLS Well, there were two or three of us worked on it. Snyder was very much involved in actually getting it done. Marquez and Walter and I first met with the officers and Walter talked to them, told them they were coming back, that they'd, you know, all the good news.

KF You said the officers?

MLS Yeah.

KF Who do you mean?

MLS The other vice presidents of the corporation.

KF Okay.

MLS Because in the meantime, they're carrying on EDS business.

KF Yeah.

MLS Then Snyder, we called Snyder and he got a bunch of people together and they had set up a phone bank to contact all the EDS people in Dallas and tell them, you know, that Bill and Paul would be arriving, and I had made arrangements to have the plane land and be serviced at Braniff's hangar at Love Field, and we could have a little private, you

know, private gathering inside the hangar. Because, believe it or not, we were having another snow. We don't have snow that often in Dallas, but we were having another snow storm, and, so we were going to have to be able to get everybody inside. And all of that arrangement was made so that, that's where people would go, and that took place Saturday afternoon before I went home.

KF Okay. You went home to bed. You were woken up, they had made an emergency landing at Heathrow.

MLS Could not believe it. The last thing that happened before I went home was, Tom Walter and I, I think T.J. I think, had already gone home. Tom Walter and I kind of looked at each other and you know, with a kind of a sign of relief and said, well it's over. I think I said, the only thing that can go wrong now is if the plane went down. Just a passing comment like that, to which Tom I remember said, Gosh, I hope that doesn't happen, because I don't want to have to organize a sea rescue operation. And we had a big laugh. And, you know, that was it. So, when I got the phone call that said they had an emergency landing, I could not believe it..

KF So, you're back to work. You contact Braniff, is this that vice president that you know?

MLS Yeah, Harry McKillop.

KF What's his name?

MLS Harry McKillop.

KF McKillop.

MLS Yeah. Harry is in country. Because of the snow storm, he stayed at the Holiday Inn out at the airport.

KF At D/FW?

4/24
MLS Yeah. He didn't go home that night because the roads were too bad.

KF Okay.

MLS So I woke him up at the, at his hotel room.

KF And, he arranged for the next non-stop to Gatwick to Dallas, for the whole band to be on that.

MLS Yeah, it was a routine flight. He arranged to make sure they got on.

KF You, it must have been the morning of Sunday, the 18th, you must have called everybody who was going to go to Love Field.

MLS Yeah, I got hold of Snyder, said we've got a change in plans now. And, we didn't have near the situation we had at Love Field, because there's not a big room, you know, there's a pretty good sized room, but I knew we would pack it to overflow because everybody would come. It was an exciting time for people.

KF Yeah.

MLS And, I don't remember how many gates there are at Braniff, but, you know, out there it's like this and they were coming in at the international gate and this room was down here. And there was a lot of press interest in what's going on at this point. And I didn't want them to have to deal with the press that day. So, what I did is, I arranged the world's shortest bus charter and I had two buses parked right here. And it was to take them from this part of the airport to this part, let them out so they could walk in there. It was a matter of a quarter of a mile or something like that.

KF You also arranged for one person to be with, each person on that flight had an EDS employee assigned to him who would take him to the bus where his family was waiting. Were there only two buses?

MLS Yeah.

KF Jay has the impression there were about seven.

MLS No, there were two buses. It was kind of a blur, you now how that goes?

KF Yeah. Those employees, who were like chapparones, also had, in a packet, the personal, some personal possessions these people had left behind. In Jay's case, it was his wedding ring.

MLS Yeah, Jay left his wedding ring with me. Jackson had left some things like his wedding ring and a couple of other things with me. I don't remember anybody else having. But, I remember, when I saw Jay come through customs, I had his ring in my hand and I shook hands with him, welcome him home and he felt it and slipped it on. And later told me that was very meaningful to him.

KF Yeah, he told me that too.

MLS And see, there were people getting off that plane that I didn't know, because I had never met, although Marquez and some others had, I had never met Canauch, I had never met Douglas. I had never met the crew, you know, the 707 pilot, co-pilot, engineer, the two stewardesses; I'd never met any of those folks and they got off that plane, I mean, they came through customs like everybody else that got off that plane and I started pushing them aside, said, no you don't belong here on this bus. And so, you know, it was kind of embarrassing to me because there were people that I don't know that also part of our group. And so, we got it worked out but it was a little bit embarrassing for me.

KF Now, you also had, no wait a minute. By this time, Paul and Bill had got legitimate papers from the U.S. Embassy in . . .

MLS Ankara.

KF Ankara. [redacted] has no papers.

MLS Passport, but no visa.

KF He's got no visa.

MLS Yeah.

KF How'd you get him in?

MLS Okay. Let's stop just a minute, let me run to the men's room and I'll be right back.

MLS When Ross, let me go back in time. When Ross called, one of our conversations with Ross in Istanbul, we first learned about [redacted]^{Rashid}. We didn't know about [redacted]^{Rashid}. And, he indicated that he's coming along and that we needed to get a visa. So, I started, at that time, thinking that the 707 would land in Washington, D.C. and be refueled, go through customs and on to Dallas. Got ahold of Fernandes and explained the problem to him, had all the details, his name, his passport number, his age, his you know, where he went to

KF He didn't have . . .

MLS All those good thing. I had all that information which had been given to me. So, Fernandes was prepared to go to the airport and do whatever it took, and I'm not sure what that meant, to get him through customs there. And I felt good about the fact that that was happening in Washington since I was in Dallas. And that that was something I could just rely on Gary to take care of. Well then, as it turned out, they didn't stop you know, in Washington, the first stop was Dallas, they'd come through customs here. So, I talked with Harry about the problem and explained to him . . .

KF This is Harry. . . .

MLS McKillop. The Braniff . . .

KF Who is the Braniff vice president.

MLS Explained to him what our situation was. When the plane landed, he got me into customs where I could talk to Ross and that was kind of a good feel because it was the first chance I'd had to see Ross now, since, you know, he left a week before, and that was kind of, well, it was a just a good, good experience. And I explained to him that, you know, we really weren't sure what kind of a problem [redacted] was going to have because, you know, we didn't know how to go about getting a visa here in Dallas to get him through customs.

KF Are all visas issued in Washington?

MLS No, they'd at, in foreign countries they're issued at the Embassy, and here they'd be issued at passport offices.

KF Is there a possible office in Dallas.

MLS No, there's one in Houston.

KF Okay. So basically, you hadn't had time.

MLS No. Didn't have time and didn't have the passport, so we couldn't do it. To be very, very candid, I went out from customs and our people started through and I'm waiting, I getting you know, as they come through, I'm getting them on the bus, you know, right outside the door there and all of a sudden [redacted] ^{Rashid} came through. And, of course, I didn't know what [redacted] ^{Rashid} looked like; I'd never met [redacted] ^{Rashid}. But [redacted] ^{Rashid} came through and it was very obvious to me because Harry had him by the elbow and.

END OF TAPE #14, SIDE A

MLS . . . to this day, I don't know how he got through customs.

KF Well, it looks to me as if Ross finessed it with the help of Harry.

MLS Ross and Harry got it. And I really, you know, I really don't know, but I was glad when Harry kept saying, this is him, you know.

KF Ross must have finessed it in London as well because you are not allowed to board a plane. The airlines won't let you board a plane for the United States if you haven't got a visa. So, something was done there as well. Okay. And now, I think that brings us home.

MLS Okay. So, we got there, took the buses down, had the giant welcoming party, the room was packed. We've got, that we've got some pictures around. We don't have many pictures, but that . . . a good feel. Now, you know, a couple of things that I thought about that we missed that I want to tell you about.

KF Good.

MLS When you talked with Jay, did he talk to you about the gun training?

KF He told me some, a bit about it.

MLS About how terribly, terribly cold it was.

KF Yeah.

MLS And there was this little hut where they'd warm up, but the Colonel never went in where it was warm.

KF Yeah.

MLS I wanted you to know that, because I think that says a great deal about him. He stayed out there through the whole cold thing and just cycled the guys in and out. And that's what I thought was very important; I wanted to make sure you knew that.

KF Okay.

MLS And I wanted you to know about that. Okay. Now, one of the things I put together, and I just wanted, this is kind of the reaction of people when we first started talking about a rescue team. And I thought, these thoughts may be helpful to you in knowing how people kind of reacted when we first started talking about it.

KF Okay. Yeah, Ross has said that to me too.

MLS Yeah. I've heard that so much in the 17 years or whatever it is that, 15 I guess, I've been around with him. That's so typical of him. Okay.

KF Now then. I want to ask you a little about yourself and your life story. Will the typist please start a new page.

14/29

KF Tell me exactly when and where you were born.

MLS I was born in Milford, Nebraska, July 13, '38.

KF Tell me who your parents were?

MLS My father's name is Wilton, my mother's name is Cora, and they were farmers.

KF Farmers. Big farm?

MLS 80 acres.

KF 80 acres. So, they didn't have much money?

MLS No, that's right.

KF Nebraska, where's that?

MLS Nebraska is next to Iowa.

KF Another cold . . .

MLS It's north, it's another cold state. You go north, it's Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska, straight north.

KF Okay. What do you remember about your childhood?

MLS Well, I grew up on a farm, moved into a very small town, small village, 750 population. You know, I look back on that with a lot of fond memories. I had a good childhood. We did not have, you hit the nail on the head, we did not have much money, that's for sure. But, everybody was in the same boat so it wasn't, you know, it was just, it was just a natural thing. Started working at a very early age, age 9. Which, most of the other boys did too, so that was, you know, something we did.

KF What did you work at?

MLS First job was shining shoes on Saturday night at a shoe store. I just had, you know, that's a hard question to answer. I had a very good, you know, very good childhood; I look back on with a lot of fond memories.

KF Were you the eldest child?

MLS Yes.

KF And, what brothers and sisters do you have?

MLS Two brothers.

KF If you went to work at the age of nine shining shoes, presumably you'd left the farm by then.

MLS Yes, we had moved off the farm when I was 7.

KF And what was your father doing then?

MLS He was working at the local grain elevator, called a grain elevator.

KF Okay. You went to school there in Nebraska?

MLS There in Milford, through high school.

KF Where did you go to college?

MLS Took two years at a junior college in Heston, Kansas. And then, I have my BA at a college in North Newton, Kansas.

KF What was your major?

MLS Economics and business administration.

KF Okay. What was your first job?

MLS My first job.

KF Now wait a minute, you got in the service when you graduated, after you graduated?

MLS No, did not go into the service. I worked my way through school, so I'm not sure where my first job comes in.

KF Okay. I meant your first job after you graduated.

MLS After graduation? It was a company called Wilson Machine Company in Hutchinson, Kansas, and I stayed there, well, actually I was working there when I got out of school. I'd been working there about a year and a half before I graduated and then I worked there about a year after I graduated before I moved to Texas.

KF Doing what?

MLS It was a small machine company and my title was office manager, but there were only two of us in the office, so that's kind of a misnomer. You know, I ordered all the, all this, you know, the material that the shop needed, the payroll, paid the bills, all the accounts receivable billings.

KF Run me briefly through your career until you joined EDS.

MLS Well, from Wilson Machine Company, I came to Dallas, found a job with Texas Blue Cross Blue Shield. That was in August, '62. May, '67, I left Blue Cross Blue Shield to join EDS.

KF Was EDS working for Blue Cross in that period? Is that how you came to know them?

MLS The answer to your question is yes, EDS was working at Blue Cross, just at that time frame, but, more importantly, I had learned to know Ross, and that EDS was housed in Blue Cross' building, so I saw EDS growing. And after a few years of that, I decided I needed a piece of that action; that's when I joined EDS.

KF EDS has always been an aggressive recruiter. But it sounds to me as if you went to Ross and asked for a job.

MLS That's right.

KF Okay. What were you doing, you were still office administration, that was still your thing?

MLS Well, at Blue Cross, when I joined, they had a program called the administrative training program and I was in that program for a couple of years and then worked in data processing at Blue Cross for some period of time. And, about a year before I left, I was running one piece of their claims department.

KF What was your first job at EDS?

MLS First job at EDS was a short job. It was getting EDS out of Blue Cross physically, out of the Blue Cross building, out of two other buildings that EDS was located in and into one building at Exchange Park. And, that was not only offices, but that was computers as well. I think that was my three month job because, well, that's how long it took.

KF Okay. At what point did you get married.

MLS '62. August. I had met my bride to be when we were in school together, but she finished nurses training before we got married. That took a year after I graduated.

KF Okay. How many children?

MLS Two girls.

KF Age?

MLS 13 and 15.

KF And their names?

MLS 13 year old is Denise and the 15 is Kristen.

KF Your career obviously progressed rather well at EDS.

MLS I've been very fortunate.

KF And you are now? This is a difficult question, I know.

MLS This is a hard question. I don't have a title which is what makes it difficult. Actually I work, I report to Ross in whatever he wants me into. And so, alot of times I'll be working things where his interest or attention is drawn at that moment. Which is one reason I worked on this, because obviously he was very much a part. And I like that because Ross has a wide range of interests which gives me a lot of xx.

KF You obviously take care of alot of details for Ross.

MLS Correct.

KF You obviously have a very different kind of mind from his.

MLS Okay. I'm not going to comment on that.

KF Okay. Well, I'll put my own judgement on that.

MLS Okay.

KF Think we've covered everything?

MLS I think so. Now, you may want to stop that while I ask you a couple of questions.

KF Will the typist please start a new page.

KF Colonel Simons. He has first of all, his outer layer is the Bull.

MLS Right.

KF Do you agree with that? This is, he's a big man, he's a fit man, he's a man with a very . . . he's Lee Marvin.

MLS Right.

Gravely [Gravely]

KF Grapply voice. He has strong language, talks about how he would say to one of his soldiers, "If you don't do this, I'll cut your bloody head off." And then the soldier went and did it. That's one layer. It doesn't take people long to get underneath that. Everybody here says, "But that wasn't what he was really like."

MLS That's right.

KF So, it doesn't take long to get underneath that and find the man who is good with children, reads history, knows about revolutions, very fond about some animals that he has. He a rather skilled metal worker. Worked as a journalist.

MLS That was his major.

KF So now we see another layer. The tough guy, the Bull, is not fake, but this is not his habitat. Now there's this other layer, which shows you something else. Now, I would like if I can, to get underneath that one because that's still an image. It's the real man, but the man has a personal life that's beyond that. So now we get down to, and this is what I really want to know about, how he felt about various people. Now, he was very fond of his wife.

MLS Very much so.

KF They were married for . . .

14/75

MLS I don't know how long.

KF But it was the only marriage for both of them.

MLS As far as I know, that's true. I know of no other marriage for either one. That's right.

KF Did you ever see him with her?

MLS Yes, once in California. The Son Tay reunion, the party. That's the only time I saw them together.

KF What situation were they in?

MLS Well, they were in public. And he appeared to be the dominant of the two in that situation. I'm not sure that was really true, but in that situation, that was the appearance you got. I really, that's the only situation I saw them together.

KF How did they seem, did they touch each other?

MLS I don't recall. No.

KF Did you see them talking to each other?

MLS Yeah.

KF Hear them?

MLS No.

KF Did he ever talk to you about her?

MLS Yes.

KF What did he say?

MLS Never talked to me about Lucille when she was alive, but several times before, you know, in that time period before the team went to Tehran, and when he was in the hospital, he talked about her. I can't give you, you know, exact quotations, but the essence of what he was saying was that he never really realize what death was until she died. He had been around death his entire military career, but that was very impersonal, and her death was very personal. And, it affected, in his words, it affected him very greatly. Because what he said was, after he buried her, he went home with the idea that he was going to burn down the place at Red Bay. Didn't want to have anything around that reminded him of her. But, he said, I knew that was irrational and I made a commitment to myself to wait one year before I did anything. And the year wasn't up yet. In fact, the year was up when he was in the hospital. The way he talked about her, it was very obvious that he loved her a great deal and you don't think of Simons, necessarily the outer, particularly layer that you described which is very true, you don't think of him as being a very loving person. And yet, he really was. You could see that in how he talked to Paul Walker about his dogs, you could see that in how he talked about Lucille. You could see that in how he talked about Harry. When Harry had, you know, like any human being, Harry's got problems. And like a good father, he recognizes his son has problems but there was still a lot of love there between he and his son. You could, you know, you could feel that as he talked about him. Lucille's death probably took a greater toll on him than any, you know, physically and mentally, than anything else in his lifetime.

KF Did you ever get any clues as to why he felt so strongly about her? Whether it many ways in which he depended on her, what he got from his relationship with her?

MLS No, you never, I can't recall him talking about anything.

KF Did you ever talk to him, he did talk to you about Harry's problems?

MLS Yeah.

KF What did he say?

MLS Basically, Harry grew up without a father, because he was gone a great deal. The thing that concerned him was whether or not Harry would be responsible and I guess there had been times when Harry was not too responsible. But, Harry had this job on this boat that was servicing the oil dereks in the gulf, and he was very pleased about the fact that Harry was doing well in that job because it seemed to demonstrate, at least to him and I think this is true, that Harry accepted that job in a responsible manner.

KF Had he talked to you about his other son?

MLS Never talked about him. Never talked about him.

KF Is the other son older or younger than Harry?

MLS Older.

KF What's his name?

MLS Bruce.

KF Never talked about Bruce?

MLS Never talked about Bruce.

KF Now, Bruce, I gather, is in Alaska.

MLS Yukon Territory.

KF Okay. And he's a bit of a black sheep I gather.

MLS There was a problem between he and his father. I don't know if he was a black sheep or what. I just know that the Colonel never talked about Bruce to me. Only Harry talked to me about Bruce.

KF What did Harry tell you?

MLS In fact, if I would not have, if Harry would not have mentioned Bruce to me, I would not have known there was a second son.

KF What did Harry tell you about Bruce?

MLS That Bruce and his father did not get along. That Bruce was a very, well in Harry's words, he's a "religious nut." Which is not a very complimentary thing, but that's Harry's way of saying that he takes his religion very seriously and that's a very big part of his life.

KF What kind of religion?

MLS I think he is a non-denominational type in a Christian sense. And I say that, because I've talked with Bruce and he runs a school in the little town where he's located. When I asked him, you know, he said, "I run a Christian school." I said, "What kind of, you know, what kind of school -- denomination?" He says, "Non-denomination." So, that's why I answer you that way. No one other than Bruce has given me that information. Harry really didn't like to talk about Bruce until his father died. And it may be the fact that that point in Harry's life, his mother gone, his father gone, now he has a brother and that's it. And maybe that's why he talked about him.

KF Will you check for me the dates that Lucille died, and Colonel Simons died?

MLS I know that it was the year's anniversary of her death when he was in intensive care. That was a very tough day.

KF Did the Colonel ever talk to you about his parents?

MLS No. I don't remember him ever mentioning his mother and father. His brother, yes, but not his mother and father?

14/11

KF What did he say to you about his brother? What's his brother's name?

MLS Stanley. He spoke about his brother with a great deal of affection. He admired his brother.

KF His brother was older.

MLS I believe that's correct. Although he didn't tell me that; I got that indication from Stanley. He had a very high regard for Stanley. When he was in the hospital and it was obvious that he could die, he told me to count on Stanley. That Stanley could be counted on if I had any problems. With the funeral or whatever he said you could count on Stanley. As it turns out, that was very true. He did not speak of his sister.

KF Oh, there's a sister?

MLS He did not talk about her.

KF Well now this is interesting. We began by your saying that you felt very close to him in the period after the raid. But you know nothing of his parents, nothing of his sister, he told you nothing of his eldest son.

MLS He just didn't talk about it.

KF Did he ever talk to you about your family, your parents, your wife and children, brothers?

MLS Yeah, he'd ask about them. In conversation, he'd ask questions.

KF Idle questions?

MLS No, I don't think the Colonel ever asked any idle questions. I say that not to be funny; I really believe that. He always had something in his mind when he was talking. But he wanted to know about me; where I grew up, my background.

KF Did he react to any of that with any comments? Did he say you were luck with this or that in your life?

MLS No, I don't think so. It was a question and then I'll listen to your answer type. I don't think he ever gave reactions.

KF This man didn't want me to know what's in his heart; that's the truth of the matter.

MLS He was a very practical person. I can't overemphasize that. Having known him has helped me in my own life.

KF How?

MLS When he was put in intensive care. We got him back from Vail and we got him into intensive care. About an hour or two later I went in to see him. He was awake. I said to him, "Colonel, how are you?" To which he said something along this line, "Merv, I don't have anything to worry about. If I worry and I die, I have wasted energy. If I worry and I don't die, it didn't make any difference." No, I had that reversed. If I worry and die, it didn't make any difference. If I worry and I don't die, I wasted energy. So I don't have anything to worry about. And that's a very practical statement. A lot of times I'll encounter something and I'll say "How will I ever get this through? Don't worry about it, just do it". Having known him and having heard him say that several times in that course of the time he was on death's door, became very meaningful to me. I would dare say that perhaps Jay or Gaylord or Chiapparone or one of those fellows when they were in the midst of a crisis coming out, the Colonel having displayed cool, even practical look at things, would have learned the same thing.

KF Have you got in idea what he wanted in life?

MLS I don't know how to answer that. I think I know what he enjoyed doing, but to say that's what he wanted in life, I'm not sure that's true. It's not the same thing. He enjoyed keeping his mind busy. That's why he learned to weld; that's why he learned to be a gunsmith; that's why he

learned how to raise pigs; all of those things he learned by reading or asking questions of somebody that knew. To be able to do it and to understand it made him very happy. Now that's not necessarily the answer to your question.

KF But let me take up what you've just said. Did he know how to relax?

MLS Seemed to be difficult for him to relax.

KF Ever see him have fun? Ever see him horse around?

MLS No, not in the sense that I think of kidding or horsing around. No, I don't think so. Did he have fun? Yeah. I'll tell you a time I saw him he was really having fun. I saw him with Katherine, Ross' youngest. He was talking to her and asking her questions. He was really enjoying himself. And she was having a good time. He was really making her feel...he wasn't doing that to make her feel good; he was doing that because he was feeling good. Kids and animals really get to him. My youngest at that time would have been 10 or 11. She just thought that he hung the moon, the stars and everything else. And I don't think she spent 30 minutes total with him. He just captivated her. And he seemed to enjoy her in that very short period of time they were together.

KF He captivated most people. Let's go at it another way. He said that he was a very different kind of person from Ross. Ross says the same thing. It seems to me that they are very alike.

MLS In a lot of ways, I think they are alike.

KF And I think that's why they liked each other so much. There were things, it seems to me that each admired about the other because he does something that I don't do. I think Ross admired the Colonel's military career. I think a part of Ross might have quite liked to have a great military career. Of course Ross is not the type to go in for all that army politics. The Colonel, I suspect, admired Ross' way of doing business. He probably liked the setup here.

MLS In a lot of ways, they are alike. They are both doers. Neither one can stand bureaucratic red tape; it drives them both crazy. Both of them, if there is a problem, there is a solution, let's find out what it is; let's do it. Both of them, the way the outgrade held, with Simons in the military and Ross in business is identify the best people and motivate them, but let them to their thing. Don't hamper. So in a lot of ways they are alike; you're absolutely right.

KF Okay, here's a difference. Ross seems to feel that Simons' talents should have taken him to the very top of the military except that he couldn't do that politics. Simons had a good career and was a very highly respected man. He didn't make it to the top. Ross made it to the top. Now I don't know what would have happened if Ross had stayed in IBM, but maybe IBM would have been too bureaucratic, too claustrophobic for him. By now, it's a big organization. In any event he wouldn't have got so rich so fast. So Ross made it right to the top; the Colonel did not. Is there a difference in their characters to account for that?

MLS I don't think there's a difference in character; I think there's a difference by chance. The chance being that each of them chose a vocation where in Ross' case, it allowed him to succeed and go to the top, as you put it. While in the Colonel's case, he chose a vocation where because of his low tolerance level for certain things, did not allow him to go to the top. But I think that's a chance by choice as opposed to a difference in character.

KF But something made Ross get out of the military. And get out of IBM. The Colonel stayed in it.

MLS Putting it that way, I would only theorize that Ross recognized the limitation, that he had to change. He recognized and did something about it to change, whereas the Colonel may or may not have recognized it; probably did, but chose to stay in the military because that's where he wanted to be. There is no doubt in my mind the fact that he made it, of his life, a career in the military, that was by choice. There is no doubt about it.

KF Let's look at another difference. As well as his business success, Ross has a very good home and apparently deliriously happy family. The Colonel didn't have that, from what I've learned so far. Now I wonder why that was? Given that the Colonel was so good with people. He was so good with his men. Everybody I've ever come across who's met him tells me that he's one of the finest men they ever met. Everybody is enchanted with him. Ross' kids are in love with him; your kids are in love with him. But he didn't have a happy family.

MLS About the only thing I can say there is that in one of our conversations, we were talking about Harry. He talked about the fact that Harry had spent a great deal of his time growing up without a father. The reason for that is obvious. His career took him away from his family for extended periods of time. I think in that one conversation I got the impression he felt that had taken his toll on his family. Which is probably true.

END OF SIDE TWO