

Edward Wood
Interviewed by Aaron Keegan
March 7, 1998
At the Wood residence in Hopkington, Rhode Island

Aaron Keegan : Alright, the date is Saturday, March 7, 1998. My name is Aaron Keegan and I'm interviewing Mr. Ed Wood about his memories and experiences in 1968. Alright, so where were you born?

Edward Wood: Oh, I was actually born in 1941, in Sault-Sainte Marie Ontario, in Canada, and I moved the United States when I was ten years old, in, around the Detroit area. Up until 1968 was sort of a Michigan resident.

AK: Briefly describe your family, and your neighborhood?

EW: Well, at that, you mean in 1968, or sort of growing up?

AK: The Sixties in general.

EW: Yeah. Sixties in general, we, I mean, I grew up in a suburb of Detroit named Garden City, I'd lived there from the time I was 10 years old and my, and my parents lived there 'til probably the nineteen, the early, or late 1970's. So, it was a real sort of after the war suburb when we first moved there, there was hardly anybody there, then a lot of tract housing went up. It was an interesting place, it was an all, all white suburb, no black people lived there. Right next to an all black suburb, Ingster, Michigan where virtually no white people lived. So it was an interesting place looking back on it, but at the time, didn't really think much about the fact that it was a, almost a segregated community. And my family, I have a brother that's two years older than me. And mother and father, my father worked as a civil engineer for the Wayne County and Detroit and sort of had a lot to do with building all the freeways around Detroit as everybody moved to the suburbs in the, in the Sixties, Fifties and Sixties.

AK: Did your mother work outside the home?

EW: No, my mother never worked her whole life, like most women in those days.

AK: How were the household chores and duties divided up?

EW: Well, you know, since my mother was home all the time there really wasn't much for, it wasn't much of an effort to make the kids do many chores that I remember. My brother and I were both very active in school activities and you know, played football and ran on the track team and was on the student council and all that sort of stuff, so we were very busy at school. And we usually, we always had summer jobs, I worked on a nearby truck farm picking tomatoes and cucumbers and stuff like that all summer, for fifty cents an hour was the original pay and then it went up to seventy-five, and then one year he paid us a dollar for about a half the year and then said that times were rough so he cut us back to seventy five cents an hour.

AK: What were your parents political views?

EW: Pretty sort of conservative I think. No, they weren't very politically oriented. They, I mean, I think my father was a very big supporter of Eisenhower, who was President soon after we moved to the States and stayed President for eight years. Interesting though, my Grandfather who was a Canadian, never moved to the US, was a huge supporter of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, he thought Harry Truman was one of the greatest men who ever lived. And I sort of, he used to argue with my father I think, who was more conservative, but at a very young age I sort of identified with my grandfather, and became pretty much a life long Democrat after John Kennedy was elected, like a lot of people I think.

AK: What did you think you wanted to do when you were growing up?

EW: Well I grew up during, I was in high school during the, when the what we called the Sputnik era I guess, when the Russians put space, put men in space before the US did and there was suddenly a great deal of interest and fear that the US was falling behind Russia in terms of space and science and weaponry. And so like a lot of people, suddenly I thought I wanted to be an engineer, although I think I wasn't very well suited to be an engineer, for a short period in high school until I took physics and got a C and it was the only C I ever got in my high school career. And then suddenly I decided I don't think I could be an engineer and I always wanted to be a lawyer I guess, from an early age.

AK: Where you aware of any discrimination in people in your neighborhood?

EW: Well, like I said, I grew up in a really, an all white neighborhood but I was always fascinated by the black community that we lived next to. Were very, course they were very good athletes, very good basketball teams, they'd always beat us by about fifty or sixty points, I think. And, not such good football teams, but fairly, some years they'd, they'd be pretty good. So, I was always sort of fascinated by the fact that our community was all white and the community next to us was black and it was really an interesting community, one of the first probably, communities in the north, and anyplace which had black leadership, a black Mayor and black City Council. It was a suburb which was pretty unusual, in those days most of the blacks lived in the inner city. So it really wasn't, I didn't think so much about discrimination in growing up until I got to college and then I think I became much more aware of it as the sit-ins in the South started and I became very interested in the whole legal struggle, because I had planned to become a lawyer and I took constitutional law in college and did special, special papers on Brown vs. Board of Education and how all of that, how, the whole series of cases which led up to Brown vs. Board of Education. And so I was you know, I was a great, I was very interested in it but I never was very close to it because I never, we had no minorities in our high school or close by growing up in the neighborhoods or anything.

AK : Okay, alright, (adjusting microphone) ...Can you describe your wardrobe at the time?

EW: Wardrobe? In '68? Well, I don't know, so yeah, I had been in the Military for a long while and didn't much pay much attention to wardrobe in those days, I don't think. But probably, yeah, I think that was the era of sort of bell bottoms stuff, pretty ugly stuff if I recall. I never did have any of those narrow suits or anything like that. I was pretty, pretty mainstream. My, I don't think my wardrobe changed much from the Fifties through the Eighties.

AK: How did you feel about the use of drugs by most young people?

EW: Well, it's sort of interesting, again the timing of when I was in the Military meant that I sort of missed the beginnings of when drugs were used a lot, and didn't really become aware of it very much, it was sort of interesting when I came back from, I was in Vietnam in '65 and '66 when I got back, you started seeing stories sort of starting in '68 and probably '69 about rampant drug use by soldiers in Vietnam and people would ask me if I, what I knew about it and I really didn't know anything about it. But, sort of looking back I, you know, it seemed like probably some of the younger Marines that, I was again, I was out of college and an officer, so a little, you know, a little removed from the younger Marines, but they probably were using some drugs that, and we were sort of, it was you know, drugs were never a part of life in the Fifties. So us people, you know officers who were older, I mean we were only twenty-four, twenty-five, but we were still, we didn't recognize I think at the time that they were using drugs. But, I think it had just started in Vietnam. Then when we got home, went to graduate school, suddenly we would, we'd go to parties where people'd be smoking marijuana and it was kind of shocking, to us who had been removed from it for a long time. I mean, sort of removed from that era.

AK: What was your favorite musical groups at the time?

EW: I was a real jazz fan in college so it was more jazz rather than any of the mainstream. We liked some, I can remember once at the University of Michigan walking across the diag, what they, you know, in the, in 1961 or '62 probably, and Peter, Paul, and Mary were giving a free concert. They later became very famous. So we used to like things like the Kingston Trio, and Peter, Paul, and Mary, that sort of thing when I was in college. Probably, when we came back, from when I came back from Vietnam I went back to college, back to Ann Arbor, course the Beatles were popular and groups like that and we, and again, I was sort of removed and didn't know much about them but I remember when the, in either '67 or '68 when the Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band Beatles record came out we really liked that and we became Beatles fans after that. Was that in 1968, do you know? (*AK: Yeah. About that time.*) I can really remember that being featured on the public radio station in Ann Arbor on the day it came, the first day it came out the guy played it about three times and I was home studying and listened to it over and over, and I went out and bought a copy of it at the. Thought I'd never like the Beatles but after that I really sort of recognized what great musicians they were.

AK: Do you remember any instructor or course in college in particular, that really made an impact on you?

EW: Yeah, there were several. I guess an early impact was a professor named Peak, taught the introductory Political Science course when I was at, I took that my first semester of college and he was sort of an FDR Democrat liberal, but a very good instructor, very good lecturer and really got me interested in Political Science, and I eventually majored in Political Science so I think he had a big impact on me. I often say, I think the courses in college that most changed my life for the long term though, were two art history courses I took. I had never been aware of art history before I took those courses and I'm not even sure why I took them but they were terrific and that sort of, you know, gave me a life long interest in art, art history which I've never, you know, never used professionally but I think it's really, makes you look at the world a lot differently. So that was, had a very big impact on me. Then I had a constitutional law professor named Callenback who, it was a political science course, but I, he made me really, really think I'd like to be a lawyer. I later, later did not become a lawyer but I you know, if I had become a lawyer I would have said he had a huge impact on me, 'cause of the courses he taught.

AK: So at the time, when you were in college, were you, did you closely follow political issues, social issues?

EW: Yeah, you know when I was in college, the first time in undergraduate was when Kennedy was elected, I remember staying up 'til one or two o'clock in the morning when Kennedy was gonna come to campus to give a speech and he was supposed to be there like at ten o'clock and I guess the way it always was, he always was, he was very late. And I think he came, certainly after midnight, one o'clock, two o'clock or something, and we stayed up 'til he came and heard his speech and it was actually a very, became a very famous speech in which he announced his plans to create the Peace Corps. And so if you, and if you go back now to the student union building at the University of Michigan there's a big plaque on the sidewalk that says, you know, 'Here is the place that John Kennedy stood in whenever it was, 1960 I guess, and announced his plans to create the Peace Corps at two am in the morning' or something. So, whenever I go back to Michigan I always look at that plaque, remember I was there.

AK: So, what were the reasons that you joined the ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps]?

EW: Well, I really made the decision when I was a senior in high school, I was pretty young I was seventeen years old in 1958. It was at a time when there was a draft so you sort of look forward that you had to go in, most everybody thought they would go in the Military for at least two years. I had planned to go to college and it seemed to make sense if you were gonna go into the Military for at least two years then it might be better to go in for longer and be an officer rather than an enlisted man, you'd have a much better life, more money, more responsibility.

And also, you know I took the, so when I sort of made that decision that I probably would be in ROTC, ROTC when I was in college anyway, I took these exams to become, to win what they call the Hallaway, Hallaway Plan Scholarship in order to attend, and have them, and they you know, they paid your tuition, they paid you I think seventy-five dollars a month and bought all your books. So, you know I sort of felt like I could be self sufficient if I won that, so, and I happened to win it. And, so, you know it wasn't that I gave it a whole lot of thought, I had never thought of much being a career Military person but it was much different than today, because you sort of felt you were gonna get drafted anyway and so you sort of planned as to how you would serve, not whether, whether you would serve or not.

AK: Were there any kind of rallies or demonstrations at your college while you were there?

EW: Well, you know University of Michigan was a, became during the Sixties the sort of center for, you know, for student unrest so,

when I, when I was an undergrad it wasn't, there wasn't too much going on although it was the start of the teach-ins then. But I remember I was the class of 1962, a political science major as I mentioned, and Tom Haden, the famous Tom Haden was also class of '62 at the University of Michigan, was a political science major and I had him in several, I was in several classes with him my junior and senior year. Didn't really get to know him because it was kind of a big place but, but he was a stand-out then, at that point he was editor of the student newspaper, and very well known. It was interesting, he, and he was one of the first, the first person I ever met as an undergraduate in those days who would sorta openly challenge professors in class and get into very passionate arguments with them. In those days, undergraduates just didn't do that kind of thing, but he was always like that from the beginning. And then I guess he founded the Students for a Democratic Society at the University of Michigan probably in '64 or '65, it was a couple years after I left, after I had graduated and he stayed on in Ann Arbor, so.

And then I came back to Ann Arbor in 1966 I guess, after I got out of the Marine Corps, and there were just demonstrations all the time at that point. And I can remember probably not a demonstration, but the biggest sort of gatherings I ever saw was the night that Lyndon Johnson announced that he wasn't gonna run any, that he wasn't gonna run for re-election in 1968. And I can remember coming home, it happened while I was in the library, studying. And then I was, came out of the library just around the time he made the announcement. And there were just people sort of pouring out of every building on campus, and all the dormitories and all the fraternity houses and their apartments, and running around the streets cheering, they were all so happy - as if the fact that he wasn't going to run somehow was gonna end the war in Vietnam, and everybody felt the war would be a lot different, but you know as it turned out probably, might have been better if he had run. But, that was a night of a lot of celebration and sort of spontaneous demonstrations. Other than that there were just, at the University of Michigan everyday there were demonstrations, I mean there'd be small groups of people sitting in classrooms, or you know sitting on the steps of the library with people giving speeches. You just sort of got used to it, it was just the sort of way of, way of life.

AK: How did you feel about Lyndon Johnson at the time?

EW: Well, in particularly 1968, Sixty..., was a real point of change in my life, I guess. You know, I had been in the Military, I had been to Vietnam, and so I generally had an unthinking really support for the government. And I had grown up sort of thinking that you know, you supported your government, whatever they did. Didn't think much about it in the Military, whether it was right to be in Vietnam or not. It was just something you had to do and went and did it. But in 1968 I began to, my whole attitude began to change, and at the point when Johnson announced he wasn't going to run, I think was I still a supporter of his, and his policies. And, you know, was not sort of particularly happy that he wasn't going to run, but thinking that this would make some sort of change in the world. And then I became, really became a supporter of Robert Kennedy very quickly, and became, you know, during 1968 decided that the, that being in Vietnam was the wrong thing to do, that it was a waste of effort and that we ought to get out. So it was a real sort of watershed year in my life that way.

AK: Alright now we're going to talk about Military service. (EW: Okay.) So you were an officer, okay, was there any history of Military service in your family prior to you?

EW: Not, interesting, not even, you know, I had one uncle, both of my parents came from large, you know fairly large families by today's standards, five people in each family, I guess three, three men and two women in each family. And, only one, I only had one uncle who even served in the Second World War because of most of them had some kind of disability, which they wouldn't, weren't allowed to serve in the war. And this was in, they were all Canadian so not, I think the draft was not as severe in Canada as it was in the US. So very little history, although my brother also, was two years older, and he also went to the University of Michigan and he was in ROTC, in Air Force ROTC and became a pilot and went to Vietnam twice actually, and, and stayed in the Air Force for a career, I guess for about twenty-two, twenty-three years, got out as a Colonel. But, so the two of us sort of started the tradition of it, and at that not much of a tradition.

AK: How did you feel about people who avoided the draft?

EW: Well, at the time I couldn't really understand it. Sort of looking at it from today's perspective, I don't have any animosity towards people who avoided it. It seems to me, and particularly people who moved to Canada, changed their whole life, in a way they made pretty courageous decisions I think. Certainly the people who went to jail made very courageous decisions. And I have a sort of a, almost a respect for them. (coughs) Excuse me. As I mentioned it, you know fact that I went in the Military wasn't something that I made some conscious decision because I was a patriot or anything. And actually people who avoided the draft I think had a lot more soul searching to do, and made a tougher decision than I made going into the Military.

AK: At the time what did you understand that the American Military presence in South East Asia was?

EW: Well, I mean when we went I sort of bought into the domino type theory that if we allowed South Vietnam to fail, to fall to the communists that communists could sort of sweep throughout the peninsula of Southeast Asia and, and go into Japan or whatever. (coughs) Excuse me. And, so I sort of bought into that and thought that's you know, that's why we were there. I think even while I was in Vietnam you could tell that it was much more of a civil war type of situation than we thought of it as being, you know, before we arrived there. And had, had a lot of real respect for the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong and their sort of devotion to, to fighting. And you could tell they had a real cause they were fighting for. And it was pretty clear that the South Vietnamese had less of a cause, probably. And it made it more difficult I think to be there, knowing that. I had an interesting experience when I was to, became a Marine Corps officer. The first thing you do is go to Quantico, Virginia for six months of training. And for that entire six months my roommate was a Vietnamese Marine officer. So I sort of had a lot of background in thinking about Vietnam and what was going on there. He had been in the war for many years and then they had sent him to go to school and then he went back to the war, he was about four or five years older than I was. So we certainly talked a lot about Vietnam and what was going on. And he looked at himself as a sort of professional Military person, but I don't think had a very strong ideological reason for fighting North Vietnam. And when you certainly got over there you realized the North Vietnamese had very strong ideological commitment to what they were doing.

AK: How do you recall feeling as you left home?

EW: To go to?

AK: Vietnam.

EW: Yeah, we were, we never really knew what we were getting into, I guess. We, we, I was in the Marine Corps for three years before I went to Vietnam. And I had served in Virginia and a little bit in training in Texas. And we went to, and then I got married and we went to Hawaii, so I had been in Hawaii for two years. And in the spring of 1966, we began to plan for a sort of mock invasion of California, a big training exercise and we planned for two or three months as to how we would invade this area south of, south of Los Angeles, down near camp Pendleton near San Diego. And all the maps and we made all these big plans and we loaded everything on the ships to go do this training exercise and then suddenly they postponed it, they kept postponing it and postponing it. Stuff was loaded on the ships for, oh I think about a month and we would go down and sort of just hang around the ships all day, was our only job for a month or so. And then very suddenly without any warning they said that instead of going to California we'd be going to Okinawa and instead of going for, I think we had planned to go for three and a half weeks or so, that we should plan you know to be away for an extended period of time so we had to, you know, sort of change the stuff we were bringing with us and everything. But we only had about twenty-four hour notice. And it was a sort of very scary time, 'cause it was only, it was right after several things had happened in Vietnam, and we had started bombing them, so we pretty well knew that that's where we were going.

And then once the ships left port they, and we were sailing towards Okinawa, they brought out sort of new maps and replaced all the California maps with Vietnamese maps. And we, we were on the ship probably two weeks getting to Okinawa. And sort of planned for an invasion of a place in Vietnam instead of in California, it was sort of interesting. But, so we only, we only had that really overnight, they I think as I recall, they told us probably three or four o'clock in the afternoon that the ships were gonna sail at five o'clock in the morning. So you went home, you sort of had a last evening with your wife or whatever, and then, you know, I remember she drove me down to the ship. It was a very sort of emotional scene and nobody knew when, when we would be home or if we'd be home and we took off on the ships. I remember one of my best friends I was on the ship with as we sailed out he, his wife was very pregnant when she dropped him off. And we sailed out, and could see the hospital, you know, as you sailed by it up on the hillside and he said, "Well my wife will be going there to have a baby within the next couple of weeks." And then we found out about two hours later that she had, after she had dropped him off at the ship, she went, started labor, and went immediately up and as we were sailing by the hospital she was actually having the baby. And that guy, and then, his name was Bob, he didn't actually see his child for fourteen months I guess. All the time we were in Okinawa and Vietnam we never were able to you know, come home and see our families.

AK: Did you feel you were adequately prepared to go to Okinawa?

EW: Yeah pretty much, I think, you're never, never emotionally prepared enough I don't think. Certainly we had good enough training. We, the Marine Corps, I think, you know, is known for its training and its readiness so we didn't have any feeling that we weren't trained well enough to do it. But I think almost all of us had come into the Military in the you know, very early Sixties, at a time when, you know, the Korean War had been over for a while and the focus was really on geo-political type things, you know, ICBMs and nuclear war, nuclear war and everybody sort of thought "well you know, there's really not much place anymore for, for ground combat". And you know, so although we always went through this kind of training, I think we, nobody ever felt they'd actually use it in a war. You sort of felt either there'd be an exchange of nuclear warheads and you know we'd destroy half the world, or there won't be any more war. And then suddenly here we were going into Vietnam fighting a, you know, very much a ground war as it had been fought in the Second World War years before, you know. So we weren't too well prepared for that, and certainly weren't looking forward to it, but again we didn't have, didn't feel we had any choice, we just went.

AK: Yeah. What was the biggest adjustment you had to make once you got there?

EW: Well, we arrived very early in Vietnam. There was, there was a group of Army people that, that went into a place near the capitol of Vietnam, Saigon, about two weeks before we did. And then we went into the northern part of Vietnam, near Danang, about two weeks later in I guess April of 1966, ah 1965; so we really didn't know what to expect. There hadn't ever been large numbers of American soldiers in Vietnam before we arrived. And we lived under very primitive conditions for a long time; where later in the war, people who went had you know, good food to eat and showers and they had swimming pools and all this kind of stuff. When we got there we just landed on a beach with what we brought with us, you know, set up tents and we ate, for several months we ate what's called C-rations, I mean for the first couple weeks we ate C-rations, which was just little boxes of food they gave you that's cold. And then, then we started eating K-rations, I guess they're called, which they had cooks cook for us, but still not very, not very good food.

So the whole time we were there the food wasn't very good, and we lived in tents on this big sandy area so, you know it was very rugged living conditions. But on the other hand it was you know, until the Tet Offensive really in 1968, the Vietnamese you know spent the whole two or three year period I think sort of getting ready for massive fighting. And we you know, although we saw some action I had, I guess, three or four people that I knew fairly well get killed. It wasn't like later in the war when there were, well.... So we were lucky in that respect to go early, but unlucky in the fact that the living conditions weren't as good. And later on they arranged for people to have one or two R&Rs where you could actually go and meet your family in Hawaii, and this kind of stuff which we didn't have while we were there, you know. So, we were completely isolated for thirteen months. And that was really the biggest adjustment to make was you know being away from family, for that long a period.

AK: So you weren't engaged in much combat?

EW: Not, I mean there was lots of bombing going on and there would periodically be, I guess, the big difference from later is that we were pushing, at that point we were pushing all the combat so we would, you know we, and I was in the artillery so I wasn't sort of on the front lines, but our units would go out and sort of look for the Vietcong and every once in a while they'd find them and there'd be, there'd be a battle. But there was very few attacks by, from the North Vietnamese or the Vietcong attacking the US positions until a couple years later in the war. And you know, after the Tet Offensive, it was just huge. But before that it was sort of us trying to find people to fight and you know, there was, you would find them and there would be; our headquarters was right near the hospital, so you would see you know suddenly there'd be, you'd be, sirens go off, and you'd know there'd be a, there'd been a battle someplace. And then all these helicopters start coming in, dropping bodies and wounded people off. You know, and that would happen every three or

four weeks but there might be a period between them where there was very little activity.

AK: So what was your relationship like with fellow soldiers, were you friendly with most of them or was it mostly a professional relationship?

EW: Well, it's interesting, we, I mean I had decided long before I went to Vietnam, that I wasn't going to be a career Marine. So, there was a real, among the officers there was a real sort of break between people that were career Marines and those Marines that were gonna be in for three or four or five years and then get out. And we actually, you know, lived in these large tents with about eight or nine people in a tent and we sort of gravitated towards a group of us in one tent that were all non-career Marines, that was sort of next door to a tent of all career Marines. And the non-career Marines had a real camaraderie built up among them. And I made you know, the closest friendships I've ever had in my life I think and still, we're still good friends. And we get, we've started having reunions every other year now. So, five, I guess it's yeah, six of us that have kept in touch and our, our wives are good friends. So we, we get together every couple of years.

AK: The non-career Marines.

EW: Right.

AK: Do you remember any female officers being there?

EW: I don't think I ever, I don't ever remember seeing a female. I mean you hear now about, that there were a lot of females, females in the Military in Vietnam that aren't recognized as much. I think most of them were in the Army or the Air Force, there weren't any, Marines wouldn't let the females near a battlefield. But there were a lot of nurses and things I think down in the southern part of Vietnam. I don't ever remember seeing one the whole thirteen months I was there, a female in uniform.

AK: How about any black soldiers?

EW: Oh, lots of black soldiers, not many officers in the Marine Corps. I don't remember any black officers in Vietnam in the Marine Corps. But you know, a lot of the soldiers were blacks. But in the Marine Corps not, not very much racial problems at that time. Marine Corps is a special kind of Military force, I think, in which they build up a tremendous pride in being a Marine and try to break down all other sort of structure. So they try to make you feel the most important thing in the world is to be a Marine and you know, less important to think about what race you are, and that sort of thing. When we first got to Hawaii there was an incident which you know, some people interpreted as being racial and other people didn't; where a Marine who was actually in my outfit, a young very tough Marine from Chicago, a black, black man, had killed another Marine in a fight, you know sort of accidentally. And he had been, so he was, when I first got there he was actually charged with murder, and was then found, was found innocent and because as I said, the other guy had sort of started the fight. But this black Marine was a very tough guy and, and hit him so hard that he fell back and hit his head on cement or something and died pretty instantly. And that had caused a little bit of racial tension but, but it seemed to go away as soon as, when he was found innocent.

AK: So there were no conflicts between people in your unit?

EW: Not, again, not that I was aware of. There, you know, we had several black Marine non-commissioned officers, which was, you know I think good, because then people had role models. And they you know, I mean they were very competent people. So everybody looked to them as, as competent people, and we didn't, it didn't seem to be much of a problem. I guess maybe there was again, later on, and there probably was a lot more in the Army and a lot more in the Marine Corps. As Vietnam went along, you didn't get the kind of training you did earlier, you know, as I say, when I went in the Marine Corps I went for six months, after I was a commissioned officer, of training. By the time Vietnam was over, that, they had cut that back to three months. And you know, and other enlisted Marines would go to boot camp for, I forget how many weeks, but I know, you know as they needed more and more people they would cut that back so they didn't have as much training and then after that they would go to some specialty school, like artillery or, for three or four or five months and that got cut back to two months. And so, you know, they just didn't, they didn't have the training, they were, and they were sort of a different kind of person later in the war. And I think that's maybe what caused some of the problems which came up later, both the drug problems and the racial problems.

AK: So you said you had several friends that died in action?

EW: Yeah, not, you know, one of them I was pretty close to as a young officer who came over as a, and he was a forward, called a forward observer in the artillery which meant he was attached to the, attached to the infantry and would go out and he'd have a radio man with him and he would call in artillery, tell the guns where to fire, essentially. And he went, he went with some, by helicopter with some Marine reconnaissance, what we called 'recon' people who go out way in front of the front lines and they got ambushed and he disappeared and was never found. And so I, and then it was my job whenever they would find unidentified Marine bodies, you know, they would bring them back, or not necessarily even Marine bodies, they wouldn't know what they were; and I would go down and have to look at all these bodies to see whether it was, because I was you know very familiar with this one Marine officer who was missing, to see whether they had found him or not, but no, they never did, never.

AK: So do you, do you remember feeling scared or, how, when he was dead. . . ?

EW: Yeah, some, well, I mean I think you fear, fear changes, it changes from fear to anger very quickly. I mean when you, I remember going on the ship to Vietnam, you were sort of I don't know, you more afraid of being afraid than anything else. I mean you were wondering how you would react if someone shot at you and you know, didn't want to, didn't want to show fear, you wanted to be brave. And then the first time it happened, you know when people, in the night particularly, usually they would come up near our camp and sort of fire, fire into it, or fire over our heads and you'd hear bullets whizzing by and, you know, its sort of a real eye opener to think that somebody you didn't even know was trying to kill you, you know. And so at first it's sort of wonderment and then you, you know, then you get very angry at it. So it's more a feeling of anger rather than fear, I think is what I felt.

AK: *And you were never injured during the war?*

EW: No.

AK: *So did you frequently write letters home?*

EW: Yeah, I think practically everyday, I don't know, seemed like we wrote everyday. I was thinking the other day, if we had the Internet in those days it would have been much nicer, you know. But there was long, long periods between the, when you write a letter and then you get an answer to it, probably a month. And the mail came through in batches so you wouldn't have any letters for ten days and then suddenly you'd get ten letters in one day, you know.

AK: *So while you were there or afterwards did you disapprove of any Military tactics that were used?*

EW: No, not that I, you know we weren't aware of, well, I shouldn't say that, there was one situation, I became, after I was in Vietnam for a short period I became the, for this very large artillery group we called it, I became the administrative officer, which meant I was the legal officer, and the postal officer, in charge of personnel and all this sort of thing, working for the Colonel who, directly for the Colonel who ran the group. So I got involved in a lot of interesting sort of things that would go on and on one of our, we had a young Marine come in from, who was again one of these forward observers and he went to some outpost with a bunch of South Vietnamese Marines and they captured some people and were torturing them I guess. And this Marine officer was alleged that he joined in the torture, by actually some enlisted men who were with him who came back and told people about it. And so we did an investigation and essentially, you know I had to conduct the investigation and then send him, we sent him back to the, to the States and sort of threw him out of the Marine Corps. We never charged him with actually a crime but forced him to resign from the Marine Corps. So that sort of thing we took very, you know and again this was early in the war. Things may have changed later, but we wouldn't put up with things like you know, I all ready brought up My Lai, or that, and you know with the Marines I was with, so.

AK: *Do you think that the Military should have been more or less aggressive in anyway?*

EW: I don't know, I mean you hear that, that you know, if they had let the Military fight the war the way they wanted to we would have done better. I can't imagine what it was that you know, I mean we did everything. I never, we never felt we were prevented from doing anything by the rules or anything, we were prevented by you couldn't, you couldn't find the enemy to engage them, when you did find them they, I mean they didn't, you know, quote "fight fair" or whatever, they were very good guerrilla warfare people and they would just, it was hard to find them and pin them down and fight them. And sort of, we kept escalating it, we used B-52 bombers and all this, I don't know what, you know I can't imagine anything else that we could have authorized, been authorized to do that would have made a difference. I think we were just fighting an enemy who was willing to fight for fifty or a hundred years if they needed to. And it was a way of life to them, they'd been doing it for so long that they had a real, you know, a real ideological reason they thought to fight, you know, we didn't and we didn't have the patience to stay there as long as it would have taken. And as it turns out, probably we were on the wrong side of things to begin with.

AK: *Did you ever have any experience with Agent Orange?*

EW: No, never heard of it. I think that came out later in the war too.

AK: *So what was your homecoming like?*

EW: Well, it was very, you know as I'd mentioned earlier I always wanted, it's interesting in a number of different ways, I'd always wanted to be a, a lawyer before I went in the Marine Corps and while I, actually while I was in Vietnam I filled out applications to lots of law schools and that's what I was gonna do, that's what Linda, my wife thought we were gonna do and that's what I thought I was gonna do and then I'll never forget just flying home on the airplane from Japan to, to Hawaii where my wife was, I sat up all night and somehow it came to me that I, you know, I did not want that kind of structure in my life. I didn't know what I wanted to do when I got home and you know, but I knew, I knew that I couldn't just go to law school so when I got off the plane I had decided that I wasn't going to do that, without knowing what I was going to do. So homecoming was, in my own mind was kind of strange 'cause for the first time you know, first time in my life from you know the time I was in junior high school probably, I didn't have any sort of plan, you know. When I was in high school, I always knew I was gonna go to college, when I was in college I knew I was gonna go in the Military, the whole time I was in the Military I knew I was gonna go to law school when I got out. And suddenly you know, I had spent thirteen months in Vietnam and landed and had no idea what I was gonna do or how I was gonna do it. And that was a very strange feeling.

The adjustment, you had mentioned earlier that you know, you have trouble adjusting to being in Vietnam which I hadn't really thought of it that way but the adjustment to being in Vietnam was, was much easier than the adjustment to leaving Vietnam. I don't know quite why, but I just, you know I didn't, I felt estranged from people. It wasn't like, like you hear, I mean I didn't feel people being negative towards me 'cause I had been in Vietnam, I just felt, you know we had spent this thirteen months in very close relationships with a small number of people that you lived with. You know, even though we weren't all day and night in fighting, you were totally focused on what you were doing all the time and you spent the whole thirteen months looking forward to leaving, and then suddenly you left and you didn't know, you really weren't sure why you had, there wasn't anything you were leaving for, you just knew you wanted to get out but it wasn't, you didn't know why. And you lost all these very close relationships I think, and you landed back, and you didn't have, you didn't feel like you had anything in common with anybody who hadn't been there. So you felt very sort of isolated and it took me many months.

I mean I think I was very lucky, I was, we were in Hawaii, you know I decided sort of fairly quickly without giving much thought to it again after I had spent a few weeks in Vietnam and then I had to fly back to California to get out of the Marine Corps but we decided we would spend that summer, Linda had a job teaching in Hawaii for the summer, so we decided we'd stay in Hawaii for a summer. But anyway I flew back in May probably to get out of the Marine Corps in California, and again reading the book on the airplane, I picked up a book called *The US and Japan* by Riechower who was a professor at Harvard, and read it and decided I wanted to study Japanese. You know, just another one of these, you know, instantly, about two weeks earlier I decided I didn't want to be a lawyer after

thinking for ten years I did. And then instantly I decided I would study Japanese cause I really had, I mean I really felt that Asia was a very interesting place the whole time I was over there and I wanted to know more about it, so. So then I went on back to Hawaii, I enrolled in a summer school to study Japanese. And then we flirted with the idea of staying in Hawaii but finally decided that we were just kind of too far from family so I applied to the University of Michigan School of Japanese Studies, and we went back to the University of Michigan and I studied Japanese at the University of Michigan. Again, without having much of an idea why, but it, but that whole summer I just remember being very isolated from people. And I went to this course of all these younger people studying Japanese with me, and we all were sort of working hard and you'd think I would have made friends but I just didn't want anything to do with anybody else, and so I felt very isolated.

AK: So the kids, you felt that way because the kids in your course hadn't been to Vietnam?

EW: I guess, yeah. And it wasn't that I held that against them or anything. It was just that I felt like I had nothing in common with them. And many of them wanted, you know people would want to talk about Vietnam but I had no desire to talk about Vietnam. I mean, it was many years before I wanted to talk about it at all. So, you know, it was a strange period in my life.

AK: So when you got back, you went to the University of Michigan. And by that time did you feel more comfortable with students?

EW: Yeah, well I began to. Again, I, yeah I made some good friends I think, that I studied Japanese with. Again, most of them were busy trying to stay out of the Military and you know, I had already been in the Military. So it felt a little strange, I can remember when I, when I went to the University of Michigan, I sort of thought I might become a student and get a Ph.D. in Japanese politics or history or something, and I applied for, after the first year I applied for a lot of scholarships which were available called, they were called National Defense Language Scholarships or something that were very good, and I didn't get any of them. And I remember going to the professors who, there were two professors in charge of awarding them and asking why I didn't get anything, it seemed like I was doing as well as other people, and they mentioned that a big part of their, you know, reasoning was whether you needed it or not and I had, I was getting the, what they called the GI bill at the time, I was getting some support from it and so they felt that I didn't need it as much as these other people who had gotten it, who in my mind were people that were mainly you know, wanted to stay in graduate school so they wouldn't have to go in the Military. It seemed very ironic to me that this was called National Defense Scholarship and the only person that had been in the Military couldn't get one and all the other people did get one.

And the other thing I was fighting sort of the professors that I had who were great people but they had all been in the Second World War and then had come back and gone to graduate school under the GI, what's called the GI Bill, and at that time you know, it paid for everything and they sort of assumed that I was getting paid for everything, but it really wasn't enough money to, it was barely, you know you paid your tuition and about a half your rent and that was about it. And, but they sort of had the idea that it was as good as when they got it and it, you know, just really wasn't. So, so they, so I sort of got mad at the whole academic type of thing and decided I wouldn't get a Ph.D., which was a good decision I think. And decided I would become a newspaper reporter instead, so that's what I went on and did.

AK: After the Japanese Studies?

EW: Right, mmm hmm.

AK: So, you said you weren't too familiar with people feeling animosity towards Vietnam vets when you came back?

EW: I never really felt that, I mean, a lot of people felt animosity towards the war you know, and the fact that we were in the war but and maybe it was just 'cause I wasn't smart enough to realize, but you know, several people that I studied with were very anti-war and very angry about the war but I never felt they were angry at me. I mean we had, you know as I say, that first year I was back I was still a supporter and we'd have very sort of violent emotional arguments about things but I never felt personally attacked or anything. I, I mean I just, and you know even later, I think that's overplayed, I think people, I just saw very few if any, in my whole lifetime any sort of real animosity towards Vietnam vets, I think that's, I mean I think people, that's more, that's more vets feeling sorry for themselves than looking for, you know, I could be wrong maybe some places they did feel it, but I never saw it, and you know I never felt it.

AK: So when you came back from war and there were people who were against it, did you find yourself defending the government, I mean if you had just....?

EW: For about the first year I did and that was sort of difficult and then in 1968 you know, sort of after Martin Luther King's death, and Robert Kennedy's, I mean, during that whole period my whole mind, I could feel my mind changing and realizing that there were so many more important things that America should be spending it's time trying to, trying to work out, you know racism and poverty and these kind of things and that, you know, all this effort we were spending in Southeast Asia was a huge waste of time and life and money. And it just seemed ridiculous to me, you know over that period in 1968 and I, you know, changed my whole attitude.

AK: Alright so let's discuss events in 1968 in particular. Now let's go back to the assassination of Martin Luther King, do you remember where you were, or when you heard, or how you felt?

EW: You know isn't that strange, I don't remember exactly where I heard that. I mean I can remember other events like that, certainly Robert Kennedy's death I remember, but I can't remember exactly when I heard it, I was still, when I was still in school then and studying quite a bit and we had a young child. I remember very much the sort of aftermath, I remember feeling that, I mean it affected us greatly once I did hear it, and I remember particularly we were still in Ann Arbor and, but were in the process of leaving. School might have been over I guess, or it was pretty close to being over. When, is it April he was killed, right? (*AK: Right.*) And we were in the process of moving to Indianapolis. And I can remember that they closed down everything in Detroit; afraid of, and everything around Detroit, afraid of riots. And I remember that lots of people were suddenly, Ann Arbor was the first place that things were open so you'd run into lots of people the weekend following who wanted to go out to dinner or something and all the restaurants were closed in all the, in Detroit and all the suburbs, and they had to drive all the way to Ann Arbor, so Ann Arbor was sort of full of people looking for movies to go to or restaurants and that sort of thing.

AK: Now was it around this time that you began to reverse roles, or reverse mindsets on the war?

EW: Yeah I would say around that time. You know, it was very eye-opening when Martin Luther King came out against the war. And the first reaction was that, you know, he didn't have any business doing that, I mean his, he was a great rac..., leader on race relations, what did he have to do with the war, why should he be against it. But, you know when he, when he was assassinated it just seemed like, you know, it all started to come together that the war was so interrelated things that were wrong with America and that it was causing us not to focus on other things that were wrong.

AK : So did you join sides with any kind of anti-war groups or protests, or you know?

EW: No, again, I was, I mean I was just, the other thing, I was just starting my career as a journalist and so suddenly, you know you felt like you couldn't be involved, and you had to try to remain somewhat detached from actual demonstrations and that kind of stuff, so it didn't seem like the right thing to do. But, in my own mind, my own views were changing, but it didn't really change my actions very much.

AK: What do you remember, how do you remember feeling about; now you said you really, you liked John Kennedy, so how did you feel when Robert Kennedy was assassinated?

EW: Well, that was, you know, that was really, that was really more of an emotional blow to me than John Kennedy being killed or Martin Luther King I think, it was, because we had had, when I left the University of Michigan, and went to Indianapolis to work for the Associated Press and arrived there right in the middle of the primary election in which, it was the first primary election RFK entered in which he was running against Eugene McCarthy, so there was a huge attention to what was gonna happen in this Indiana Primary election, and it was very exciting to be you know, sort of a brand new reporter covering a number of things. And we saw, I saw Robert Kennedy many times, and actually covered speeches that he made and that sort of thing.

And there's an interesting tie that tied all that together in that Robert Kennedy went to Indianapolis to announce and officially file for this primary election on the day that Martin Luther King was killed and then there were, this was just before I went to Indianapolis but it was still, people were still talking about it. And a sort of a riot started in the black areas of Indianapolis and Robert Kennedy went to the area and made a very, a speech which became very famous about race relations and, from the, sort of standing up in the backseat of a convertible car, just from his mind, no notes or anything. And it was actually the speech that Senator Edward Kennedy read at Robert Kennedy's funeral, so that sort of tied, I mean in my mind it's always tied together Indianapolis, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King and that was the place where you know, we lived; right between the two assassinations we moved there.

AK : So as a journalist were you very politically aware? You must have been.

EW: Yeah, well yeah, very much aware and you know, that was a very exciting time, 1968-1969, to be a journalist. And Indianapolis, was a you know not a, we didn't like living there, but it was a very good place to be a journalist, a lot of things went on. You know, it was sort of, I got to, got to go see George Wallace campaign and Hubert Humphrey and Nixon, all of 'em came through Indianapolis and I would go as a reporter. And then when the Chicago Convention later in the year came along I didn't go, but I probably would have had an opportunity to go and cover that as a reporter. I forget why I didn't, I think I was working on some other stuff, but several people from our office since Indianapolis was close, as things started to happen up there, I know our photographer went up and two or three of our reporters went up to help out, and so you sort of you know, felt very much a part of all those things.

AK: Do you remember which candidate you leaned towards in that year?

EW: Well, I was always a Democrat so I started out leaning towards Robert Kennedy and then Hubert Humphrey. Never was much of a McCarthy person for some reason.

AK: Do you, what exactly do you remember about the convention in Chicago? Did you ever write about it in, or...?

EW: No, well I remember people, I wrote about people who went, you know there were people from Indianapolis who went and then when they came back we would interview them and this sort of thing. And yeah, I just you know, remember being sort of glued to the television and at that time the news wires really told us stuff that was happening. Just seemed like, a real again turning point in our country's history when you were there. I mean I remember our photographer coming back and he had been, you know, he had been involved in several situations where he had been you know tear gassed by the police and pushed around and this kind of stuff, just trying to do his job. So we were, you know I think my reaction was very much sort of anti-police at the time and anti-Daley, you know very angry at them and the types of things they did. And feeling that, you know, and feeling that the things that were happening were going to insure the election of Nixon which I felt would not be good for the country, you know and so I felt, you know a lot of anger not only at the police but also anger at the demonstrators because it seemed to me they, you know, that what they were doing, I'm sure they felt you know, was important, trying to slow down the war but they were sort of insuring that the Republicans would be elected who were less likely to end the war I always thought, so.

AK: So you think that that made the Democrats look bad?

EW: Oh yeah, I mean I, we just thought at the time that it would be a blowout, that there wouldn't be any contest. I mean, the amazing thing was that Humphrey came back and you know came very close to winning the election. And in the last few weeks you know, a lot of people said if the election, if there had been two more weeks he probably would have won it. And certainly if, you know if Chicago had not have happened he probably, probably would have won it, because you know that turned so many people against, against Democrats that probably would have made the difference in the end.

AK: You said earlier that you were glued to the television, is that where you got most of your information, through television?

EW: Well actually, I probably, thinking about it, got more information from, because I worked ten hours a day in the Associated Press Office, so you would read, you know at those times they had these ticker tape machines, or whatever. And you'd read all this stuff

coming off the wire, so constantly reading. So most of the information I probably got from that. And then you'd go home at night to sort of see the pictures but you already knew what was happening.

AK: *So when Nixon did get elected, were you disappointed, or?*

EW: Yeah I really you know, I mean I was one of those people that just never thought much of him. I was really afraid of what he would do. You know, it turned out probably his first two or three years that he was in it was sort of a relief that he was acting more, certainly on, on domestic issues, he was you know doing some good things, so you sort of felt a little bit of relief that he wasn't you know overturning a lot of the "Great Society" stuff and this sort of thing, he was actually extending some of it.

AK: *In 1968 do you remember any strong women's lib demonstrations? At the Miss America Pageant?*

EW: Have you read about or talked about the famous book *Feminine Mystique* ? Did that come up in your studies?

AK: *No.*

EW: That book that, you know, sort of changed my whole view of feminism, I guess, or made me aware of feminism. I mean, I read, I didn't even read the whole book but, it's funny people sometimes, you know, people will, it's a good sort of conversation gambit to ask people "Did you ever read a book that changed your life?" and I always say that *Feminine Mystique* changed my life, although I never read it. But I mean I had a copy of it and sort of leafed through it and read half of it probably, it was a very difficult book to read. But that was the book which sort of kicked off the whole feminism movement, I think changed a lot of people's lives. But I can't remember when, it was around 1968 probably it was published, but I'm not sure when. So, you know, certainly became aware, that book and the resulting more emphasis on you know, the way we treated women and kept them from advancing in the world made a big difference and that would be around 1968.

AK: *So that book kind of opened your eyes to women's lib?*

EW: Right, yeah.

AK : *Do you remember (inaudible) the Olympic games that year and the black athletes who were?*

EW: Yeah I can remember the pictures of them, again I don't remember following it too much. Again it was a sort of confusing sort of reaction you had to it, you sort of felt, you know your first reaction, in those days at least, was 'what a horrible thing, you know this is supposed to be, they're supposed to be supporting their country, they're supposed to be, you know, this is supposed to be sport not politics'. And then, you know, when you stop to think about it, it was such a courageous thing for them to do. That it made you think wow, I mean there really is something to this whole problem between the races in this country that we gotta pay attention to. But I think between them, and I guess Muhammed Ali around the same time, making people aware of you know black pride, and you know he changed his name from Cassius Clay to Muhammed Ali and you know white people getting angry because he changed his name, you know, I mean it's, they took it sort of personally, it's a crazy thing, you know. It certainly made you aware that there were big problems, you know.

AK: *Did you write about civil rights?*

EW: Yeah, I sort of became the civil rights writer, for one summer. We had a summer which I guess was probably the summer of '69, not '68. I'm trying to think, yeah it was the summer of '69, which there were a series of race riots across in a lot of small towns in Indiana. And it just sort of seemed every weekend there was another one and I can remember, weekend after weekend, I would run to Munsie, Indiana and Anderson, Indiana and Tarahode, Indiana; these fairly small, small cities I guess, very large towns or small cities. That had, they all had a you know, a small black population but they would sort of blow up one after another and then near the end of the, and I, you know I was, sort of became the expert on how to run up and cover them. So you know, did I write seriously about civil rights? I tried, it was mainly breaking news cause it was the Associated Press; but I can remember then, then it sort of ended, the summer ended with a big riot in Indianapolis, which I covered.

And then in the fall I tried to, tried to make sense of it all by, you know, I found some people who tried to work with inner city kids and things and they introduced me to people who had, young black men who had started, really started the riot in Indianapolis, they said. And they tried to, I remember going and having meetings with them, it was kind of scary 'cause I, you know I wasn't used to going into these all black areas and a lot of really angry people, but I'd have meetings with 'em and interview 'em, and try to. And then I wrote this big article about their story without using their names and things and the Associated, then the Associated Press wouldn't run it, I remember. And probably one of the reasons I left and came to Rhode Island. Made me sort of, you know, it caused a lot of bad feelings that they wouldn't run it. Although, looking back it was probably sort of a naive story but I think it was, could have been saved, but there was no interest among the editors in trying to help me write it better you know, so it was just they didn't want to run it. They didn't think it was their business to sort of report on the black person's view of things, I think. So that was very disappointing to me.

AK: *Were you ever at anytime afraid to support black rights in your writing? No? Afraid of the reaction?*

EW: No, not really afraid. Well, it's very hard to cover these situations. I was, I mean I think I was probably more afraid during some of those times than I ever was in Vietnam, of actually being injured. Because you'd go into these small towns and you weren't sure, you know, you'd sorta see policemen everywhere and the National Guard would be there, and you know, you'd be running around trying to find the, what's really going on and sometimes you'd stumble in an, in an area where you know, you were the only white person and you wanted to get out pretty fast.

AK: *Do you remember anything about the space program and the race, space race between Russia and the US?*

EW: Yeah, well you know I remember that more probably as I said earlier when I was in high school way back in the Fifties, that's being aware, being real interested in the space race but then, 'course when the US finally landed a man on the; I remember really two

big incidents- one when I was still an undergraduate I guess when John Glenn circled the globe. That was a really fascinating day when everybody at the University just, you know we sort of gathered around, seemed like radios more than TV in those days listening to it, and you know, the fact that he went around and then landed, you know, which seems like nothing today, but it was such a huge deal. And then in the next, and then of course when people landed on the moon, everybody stayed up all night long to watch it, it was very, I mean it was a sort of amazing time. But when was that? Nineteen....?.

AK: '69.

EW: Nine? Was the year, yeah, '69 I guess, yeah.

AK: *Alright, now we're gonna sum up, summing up looking back from the Nineties on the Sixties.*

So overall how would you say that the Sixties affected the US in general? You think it was a big turning point in the country ?

EW: Well it was, I think it quite obviously was in terms of the government. I mean I'm, you know, because Linda's been working on this program, I've been following it and I'm very aware of it. But I mean if you just asked me that out of the blue a year ago I would have had to stop and think, but you know, but I would have said things like Martin Luther King being killed, and RFK [Robert Kennedy] being killed, Nixon's election, you know, the change in the war in Vietnam to where you know, the Vietcong were really active, were things that really changed the country a lot, without realizing they all happened in one year. And its sort of amazing looking back, to look at a timeline from that year and see, I mean it seems like compared to that, life is pretty boring now, you know, we have things like this, you know, the Monica Lewinsky thing that just seems to drag on forever.

And when you think back in those days, Martin Luther King being killed in April and RFK [Robert Kennedy] being killed in June and then the Chicago Convention in August or September; I mean it just, you wonder how you ever sorta, how the country ever stood all that emotion so close together. And I can't, you know I don't think there's ever been a year like that in our country's history. And again, you know, to me its very personalized because also I think it was just in that same year and probably a little bit in '67, '68, you know my whole attitude towards the country was changing very much too, which I guess a lot of other people's were. But we were, we were of, I think I was in an interesting generation in that I was a little to old to be part of the Sixties revolution and yet somewhat young enough so that it could still affect me more than, you know, quickly, than people that were just a few years older than me so that, even though I didn't feel part of the Sixties revolution, particularly because I was in the Military for the real years when it took place, I began to identify much more with them than with people that were a few years older than me.

AK: *You could still relate to it.*

EW: Right, yeah.

AK: *Do you think that the change in women's rights has been positive for society?*

EW: Oh yeah. I mean I think it's, I mean I think it's the you know, in my life time probably the single biggest most positive change in our society. You know, I mean I think you would hope that the change in race relations would be more important but it hasn't, you know, I don't think it's been nearly as accepted or as successful, so. The change in, you know, in our, the change in race relations is you know, certainly very good for large numbers of minority people who've been able to advance much more than they would've before Brown vs. Board of Education, and the things that happened in the Fifties and Sixties. On the other hand, but it's still I think, a minority of the minorities, who are able to really take part in it; you know 'cause we still have a tremendous amount of racial prejudice in the country. But in terms of, but the feminist revolution you know, I think has been much more accepted and much more widespread and I think practically every women has a much greater chance to advance than, than they did before it happened.

AK: *Have you visited the war memorial in DC?*

EW: Yup, we visited it, this group of Marines visited it together.

AK: *What was your....?*

EW: Very, very emotional.

AK: *Are you still concerned about the POW issue?*

EW: No, I don't, I mean I think that's one of the silliest issues around. I mean I always think of, I mean somehow Americans are so arrogant in some ways, you know. We feel that the Vietnamese have some responsibility to account for all of our people that we sent over there, and bombed them and then they got shot down in, you know, over their country and, you know we feel well, you know they have, you know, we have this outrage that they won't tell us what happened to them, or won't spend all this money to find them. And I'm, I mean I think of North, Northern Vietnamese people that we killed. And you know, I can remember seeing their bodies and we would just, you know, we'd dig a whole and throw 'em in it, you know? I mean we didn't, I mean their family has no idea where they are and do we have any responsibility to go back and, you know. I mean that's war and it's, to me it's just stupid arrogance that we hold that against the Vietnamese. I mean and I can't imagine that, I mean this whole, I think you know most reasonable people no longer think that for some reason they would keep POWs there you know against their will. Doesn't make any sense, I don't know why they'd want to do that, any more than wanted to and when we made the arrangement to trade them I think they just wanted to get rid of them and we wanted to get rid of you know, the North Vietnamese we had, and that was the end of it. But you know, I mean the kind of warfare we practiced insured that there were gonna be missing people. There will always be missing people in war but the kind of war we practiced there involving, you know focusing on bombing areas in North Vietnam; and when a pilot, you know, the pilots who got shot down it's sort of a, you shouldn't have a expectation that you're going to be able to follow what happened to them.

AK: *How do you feel about young people like our class that's striving to answer questions about the Sixties and Vietnam and stuff like that?*

EW: I'm sorry, I didn't hear the beginning.

AK: How do you feel about younger people like myself who are studying this time era and so forth?

EW: Yeah, well, I think it's terrific 'cause it was such an exciting, important era in the country when people, when people really passionately you know, engaged the events, which doesn't seem to happen very much anymore. Again you know, you think of just what's happening now in the country with this sort of tedious special prosecutor investigation, I mean, you know, and it becomes this huge media focus upon it, but if you think back to sort of things that were happening in the Sixties which weren't focused upon nearly as much, you can see, you know I think it's really important for young people to try to look back and see when the country really had big issues that everybody felt passionately about. And you know, now certainly race relations is a huge problem in this country still, and there are very few people who feel passionately about it like we did in those days.

AK: Do you have any advice for kids our age?

EW: Oh, I don't know, no I think you, I mean in many ways you, you're much better educated and have much more better opportunities than we did in those days. But, you know I think you seem much more removed from the sort of political things that are going on in the country. And you know it would be nice to see kids more politically involved, and you do, you do meet some and you feel, but they seem to be the you know, real minority now and where in those days the majority of college students and even high school students were really involved in, in what was going on in the country.

AK: So do you think that the Nineties are more focused on the individual rather than..?

EW: Yeah, it seems to be a throwback more to the Fifties you know, where we sort of were selfish about things, greedy, or what, I don't know. I mean everybody seems to want to have a, find a way to have a nice soft life for themselves and not to worried about people who aren't doing as well.

AK: Alright, well, that'll do it.

EW: Did we get through it?

AK: Yes, we are.