

# ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

ELIZABETH SAFLY

AUGUST 15 & 16, 1990

INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

INTERVIEWED BY JIM WILLIAMS

ORAL HISTORY #1990-2

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HARRY S TRUMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



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## ABSTRACT

Elizabeth Safly began working at the Harry S. Truman Library in 1962. In her position as research room librarian, she witnessed the development of the Truman Library and Museum. In this interview she discusses the Truman library and focuses particularly on the inventory of the Truman home that she helped compile in 1981-1982.

Persons mentioned: Harry S Truman, Bess W. Truman, Margaret Truman Daniel, John R. Fuchs, Philip C. Brooks, Al Hirt, John T. Curry, Greta Kempton, Frank John, Francis White Hair, Rose Conway, Mary Jo Colley, Francis Myers Schlichenmaier, Ann Smith, Charlie Murphy, Benedict K. Zobrist, Robert E. Lockwood, Diane Seerfaus, Pat Kerr Dorsey, Valeria LaMere, Ardis Haukenberry, May Wallace, E. Clifton Daniel, Jr., James Watt, Harry Clark, George Porterfield Gates, Madge Gates Wallace, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, Queen Beatrice of the Netherlands, Edward Hobby, Mike Cecil, Thomas P. Richter, David McCullough, F. A. "Andy" Ketterman, Jr., Wallace H. Graham, Doris Miller, Andrew Gray, Georgia Neese Clark Gray, Barbara Potts, Tom Eagleton, Michael Beschloss, Millie Carol, Winston Churchill, Grandma Moses, Samuel Gallu, Donald H. Chisolm, Arthur Mag, Samuel Rosenman, David Campbell, William Wallace Daniel, Harrison Gates Daniel, Roberta Vinson, Sir Walter Scott, Henry J. Talge, George Porterfield Wallace, Jimmy Carter, Dean Acheson, Alice Acheson, Natalie Ott Wallace, Frank Gates Wallace, Christine Meyer Wallace, Richard M. Nixon, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Frank Glenn, Robert Ferrell, William McMichael, Ed Pauley, Milton Kronheim, Rufus Burrus, and David Frederick Wallace, Jr.

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HSTR INTERVIEW #1990-2

JIM WILLIAMS: We're in the living room of the Truman home at 219 North Delaware Street in Independence, conducting an oral history interview with Elizabeth Safly. The interviewer is Jim Williams, a park ranger at Harry S Truman National Historic Site. Also present is Andrew Dunar, a professor of history at the University of Alabama, Huntsville. Is that right?

ANDREW DUNAR: Yes.

WILLIAMS: And Michael Shaver, museum aide at Harry S Truman National Historic Site. Well, if you're ready to begin, I'll ask you, first of all, that I got your name correctly?

ELIZABETH SAFLY: That's right, you did.

WILLIAMS: How long have you lived in Independence?

SAFLY: [chuckling] Well, I was born in Independence in 1933, and so basically all my life, except when I went away to college, and I worked in New York for a couple years and lived in Germany for a couple years and lived in California for two and a half years, and the rest of the time has been spent in Independence.

WILLIAMS: Where are you currently employed?

SAFLY: I am currently employed at the Harry S. Truman Library, just down the street.

WILLIAMS: And in what position?

SAFLY: I guess I'm a librarian.

WILLIAMS: And how long have you worked at the Truman Library?

SAFLY: It was twenty-eight years in April. I came in 1962.

WILLIAMS: Have you always been a librarian?

SAFLY: I've always done library work.

WILLIAMS: In the research room?

SAFLY: Oh, no, I worked in the oral history project for ten years before I started. I thought you were talking about prior to going to work for the library. I worked on the oral history project, worked for J. R. Fuchs, whom you may know, who was the first oral historian that started the project.

WILLIAMS: How well did you know Harry Truman?

SAFLY: Not at all. [chuckling] Oh, he was at the library, I guess, the first four, four and a half years that I was there, and he was at the office almost every day unless he was traveling. He used to walk through and speak to everybody. I was always impressed with how friendly he was. The first time I met him I was working on the sales desk. We had a very small staff at that point, and so everybody that worked at the library had to learn every job. So you worked on the sales desk for a couple of hours, or relieved somebody for lunch, and then you'd go back and take dictation from Dr. Brooks or answer the phone. But I was working on the sales desk, and Mr. Truman brought Al Hirt, the trumpeter—who I always connect with New Orleans—I guess that's where he's from—up in the museum, and brought him over

and introduced him. I mean, he didn't know my name, he just said, "This young lady would, I'm sure, love to meet Al Hirt." And I thought, "Gee, I'm pretty impressed with meeting a former President of the United States." I didn't care too much for Al Hirt. [laughter] Anyway, I do remember that because that's the first time I remember actually having a conversation with him.

WILLIAMS: So you didn't have day-to-day contact with him?

SAFLY: I certainly did not, no.

WILLIAMS: Although his office was fairly close to where you were working in the library?

SAFLY: Well, yes, I was down the hall from where I am now in what used to be J. R.'s office. It would now be John Curry's office. Actually, those were very interesting times, because he used to have well-known, famous visitors all the time, and he would often take them on a tour. And he usually stopped in J. R.'s office because there was a large painting of . . . that Greta Kempton painting of Chief Frank John. I don't know if you've seen it. We've had it on exhibit. And every time he would bring people in, he would tell them that it was a different Indian chief, and so for a long time I didn't know which Indian chief it was. Sometimes he'd say, "This was the father of Francis White Hair who I appointed as chief of the Bureau of Indian Affairs," or whatever the person's title is, you know. Then sometimes he'd say who it really was, and then sometimes it would be somebody else.

WILLIAMS: How would you describe Mr. Truman?

SAFLY: Well, certainly much different than I guess I thought an ex-president or former president would be. He seemed very normal and very friendly—a well-adjusted person, I'd say. He liked everybody at the library. He liked to visit with everybody, from the yard crew to somebody who was making coffee. He was, how would you describe? down-to-earth, I guess, and I think very happy to be back in Independence.

WILLIAMS: So his staff was separate from the Truman Library?

SAFLY: Very separate. Very separate. That door that leads into what was Mr. Truman's wing was always locked and could only be opened by a button that was on the guard's desk, and so it always seemed to me like a big deal if you ever got behind that door.

WILLIAMS: So you never were called in to do office work for him or anything like that?

SAFLY: No. He had a pretty good-sized staff at that point.

WILLIAMS: How well did you know Mrs. Truman?

SAFLY: You know, I don't believe I ever met Mrs. Truman, except once. My father was a big Democrat and brought me to a lawn party here at the Truman home when I was a little kid. The problem is I don't remember the date. It couldn't have been the '34 campaign or I wouldn't remember, so it must have been 1940, which I would have been about six or seven, and it was some kind of Democratic rally or gathering or something, and I don't remember meeting Mrs. Truman—I remember seeing her, but I don't remember meeting her. My dad introduced me to Mr. Truman, and Mr.

Truman said, “Well, I want you to meet *my* little girl,” who of course was Margaret. And I remember thinking, “She’s not so little,” because she was older than I was. [laughter]

WILLIAMS: And that was here in the . . . She was about sixteen then.

SAFLY: Well, I hadn’t thought about it, but, yes, she would have been. Well, would that have been the summer of ’39? No, the election would have been in ’40, right? So I assume it was the summer of ’40. I just remember it was very hot, and they had Japanese lanterns strung around the yard.

WILLIAMS: This was on the lawn of the Truman home?

SAFLY: Right outside here.

WILLIAMS: I never heard that before, that they had Democratic gatherings. So a big turnout?

SAFLY: Well, I remember that one. Very big, yes, as I recall. Of course, things look different when you’re a child, and it seemed like there were more people than there probably really were. I remember Mr. Truman had a white suit on, but I think he usually did in the summers or a Palm Beach suit. What would you call it? We found several in the attic, I remember.

WILLIAMS: If you never actually met Mrs. Truman, did you ever speak with her on the phone or anything like that?

SAFLY: No, I never did. Dr. Brooks, the first director, was always very protective. That was just something you wouldn’t do. You always went to the director, and he took care of whatever it was, and it’s been pretty much that way.

WILLIAMS: When Mr. Truman didn’t go to the library anymore, his staff would come

here to the home? Is that right?

SAFLY: Well, I think Miss Conway was the only one. I think Mike Westwood would usually . . . or somebody from the Secret Service would drive Miss Conway down here, and they'd take care of the mail or whatever. He was still doing some autographing in those days. We have a few examples, I think.

WILLIAMS: After he died, was there the clear separation between the staff helping Mrs. Truman, of the regular library staff?

SAFLY: Well, I'm not sure. Miss Conway stayed on. Shortly after President Truman died, Mary Jo transferred to our staff, Francis Schlichenmeier retired, Ann Smith retired, and I guess that was it. And Miss Rose stayed on for a while until her health deteriorated. I can't remember when she left, but she stayed until after . . . oh, it must have been the probate period. I remember Margaret Truman Daniel coming out and going through what would have been the post-presidential papers, and Charlie Murphy was along, and J. R. and Phil worked back there with them. There was a lot of stuff to be shifted. [chuckling]

WILLIAMS: In those roughly ten years between Mr. Truman's death and Mrs. Truman's death, how much contact did the library have with her, that you are aware of?

SAFLY: Oh, well, I can't really speak for Dr. Zobrist. I'm sure he'll tell you. I don't really know. I didn't have any, except that on, oh, I would say a couple of times a year Bob Lockwood or somebody from the Secret Service

would call up and say, “Mrs. Truman has a load of books she wants to get rid of that we don’t have room for,” and he’d come bring them over. I think it was usually the stuff that had been piled on the floor in the study.

WILLIAMS: And that was once or twice a year?

SAFLY: Oh, well, maybe that’s a little too often. I remember it happening several times. Maybe once or twice a year is too often.

WILLIAMS: You told me a story once about a dog trainer.

SAFLY: Oh. [chuckling] Yes, we had a call one time—and I don’t know how I got the call, it’s not the kind I usually take—from a lady who said she had a little trained dog that danced and did some other tricks. I can’t remember what the dog’s name was, and this lady went on and on and on and said she didn’t want to bother Mrs. Truman, but she would like to just have the dog perform on the porch, and Mrs. Truman could look out the window. Dr. Zobrist must have been gone. But anyway, I said, well, that I’d have to call the Secret Service. And so I called Bob Lockwood, and he, of course, snickered and laughed and carried on. He said, “You call that lady and tell her I know a little old lady [Mrs. Truman] who’ll take a broom and knock that dog off the porch if she tries to come over here.” [chuckling]

I remember once we had a couple, a professor from Brigham Young University who came out with his wife, and he was working on some project in the research room. This was while Mrs. Truman was alive. They walked or came up to the Truman house, and there must have been a new Secret Service man, and they told him how much they’d love to meet Mrs.

Truman. Well, it ended up the professor and his wife got into the house, sat down and visited with Mrs. Truman for who knows how long, you know. And I think Bob Lockwood was appalled when he found out what happened. The guy probably got fired or sent off to some god-awful duty where they shoot at you or something. It was kind of loose security, I would say, during that time.

WILLIAMS: Well, as almost a lifelong resident of Independence, speaking from that perspective . . .

SAFLY: [chuckling] Yes?

WILLIAMS: Did you live here thinking that there was some kind of mystique about the Truman home, even though you had fairly regular contact with . . .

SAFLY: You mean when I was growing up?

WILLIAMS: Growing up or when you were . . . Until recently even. How does the Independence resident picture them?

SAFLY: How do we view the Trumans? Well, it's interesting, you know, I went to high school, graduated from high school from William Chrisman, which was then just, what, a block and a half over? And I can remember when he became president the big deal was to walk down here on the lunch hour. There was no fence then, but there was an electric eye on the flagpole, so if you walked across the yard it set off an alarm. And the big deal was to come down and watch those who had the nerve run from one sidewalk and set that alarm off. There was a Secret Service shed in the back, and we'd watch all those agents run out.

I'm not sure we even took it seriously or thought very much about it. He was kind of a . . . just a hometown boy. I don't think people made too big a deal out of it. Maybe later when the library was built. Maybe when Mr. Truman began to look better in certain people's eyes. He had lots of people in Independence who didn't like him, lots of Republicans.

I can remember some friends of my parents who went to Europe. He was a doctor here in Independence, and a Republican—I don't know that all doctors are Republicans, but it seems to work out that way—and they were telling my parents that when they were in Europe they just told people they were from Kansas City because they were too embarrassed. You know, it just caused too much of a hassle if they said they were from Independence, Harry Truman's hometown. This would have been in the mid '50s or the late '50s. But there were lots of people who did like him.

WILLIAMS: When was the first time you were actually in the Truman home?

SAFLY: [chuckling] You know, I tried to figure out the date, and I did not save my calendar. It would have been sometime in early June, probably the 3rd or 4th of June of 1981.

WILLIAMS: And why were you here on that occasion?

SAFLY: On that occasion?

WILLIAMS: Mrs. Truman was still alive.

SAFLY: Mrs. Truman was still very much alive. She was not here, however. I think it was on May the 6th that Mrs. Truman fell out of bed and broke her hip, and Margaret was scheduled to come to Independence anyway, and she

flew in on the 7th. I did look this up. Margaret was in town until the 11th while Mrs. Truman was having hip replacement surgery. Sometime during that time, Margaret must have figured out that Mrs. Truman, if she came home, was going to have to have round-the-clock nursing care, and she was concerned and told Dr. Zobrist about some object in the house that had been moved or that she couldn't find, something on the ground floor. And I've thought and thought and I can't remember. It seems to me it was an ashtray. Margaret was concerned, with all these people going in and out of the house, that things would begin to disappear, so she wanted somebody to take an inventory. She wanted library staff to come down here and inventory everything. She did not want us getting in drawers or closets. She just wanted everything you could see, a list with descriptions.

WILLIAMS: So the inventory that you eventually prepared, with Pat Kerr?

SAFLY: And there was one other person, Diane Seerfaus, who had just graduated with a degree in art history, that spring from KU and had been hired as a museum aide at the library. She was really good because she knew about porcelain and art and glass. I had to write down "blue thing," you know, "green thing, may be jade," you know? That's not my deal. [chuckling] So she was a big help to us.

WILLIAMS: So it was done at Margaret's request for security?

SAFLY: It was done at Margaret's request.

WILLIAMS: So, before Mrs. Truman broke her hip, she did not have round-the-clock nurses?

SAFLY: No, before she broke her hip, she had Valeria LaMere, who was the housekeeper and companion came from 7:00 to 6:00. There was also a part-time cook, a lady who came in and cooked usually a big meal at lunchtime, and there was somebody who came and did laundry. Mrs. Miller came and did Mrs. Truman's hair. The Secret Service was across the street, and a Secret Service man stayed in the house every night. He was the one who heard Mrs. Truman's fall and found her.

WILLIAMS: Do you know why you were chosen to do this inventory?

SAFLY: I have no idea. I don't know.

WILLIAMS: But it was directly from Dr. Zobrist?

SAFLY: Yes. I assumed Pat and Diane were here because of their museum training, and I never quite figured out why they chose me. I was grateful because we had a great, great time. [laughter]

WILLIAMS: Well, you're such an exemplary employee, trustworthy.

SAFLY: [chuckling] I don't know.

WILLIAMS: Did you ever think it was odd that the Truman Library staff was doing this in a private citizen's home?

SAFLY: Oh, I thought it was very odd. I think we all felt like intruders. We felt like we were invading her privacy. And especially since we knew how the Trumans felt about their privacy. The other thing I did not mention is that Margaret did not want her mother to know we were here, which caused some interesting situations later on.

WILLIAMS: So Mrs. Truman never found out that you were here?

SAFLY: Well, not to my knowledge, no. We had a couple of occasions where . . . You know, this house has a lot of ins and outs, and the nurses knew we were here and knew that she was not supposed to see us or know we were here, but there was one occasion when Pat and I were [chuckling] coming down the stairs, going to lunch or something, and the nurse brought Mrs. Truman through the music room or whatever you call it, right about middle way in the entryway or hallway. And I was frozen, and all I could think to do was to sit down on the stairs. That particular nurse's name was Karen, and she was a very nice girl, and she said, "Let's look at the piano, Mrs. Truman," and swirled her around real fast. [laughter] She said, "I don't think you've looked at your piano lately," and took her over there and shoved her—poor Mrs. Truman—shoved her in the corner while we got out of the house. [laughter]

WILLIAMS: We do similar type things to avoid tourists.

SAFLY: I thought it was pretty awful myself.

WILLIAMS: So Dr. Zobrist never really explained to you, other than that this was for security, why the inventory was being done? Did he ever let on that he knew that the house was being left to the National Archives?

SAFLY: Oh, no, because I'm not sure he knew then. I don't think so. I think we assumed or perhaps thought that she would leave it to the government. None of us could imagine Margaret coming back to Independence to live. I don't think it really had anything to do with what was going to happen later; I think it just had to do with Margaret's request, really.

WILLIAMS: So mostly as a courtesy for her?

SAFLY: I think so.

WILLIAMS: And the family.

SAFLY: I think so.

WILLIAMS: Well, once you started coming in June of '81, you said?

SAFLY: Eighty-one, yes.

WILLIAMS: How often were you here?

SAFLY: Each of us came three days a week, and we had a schedule we set up so we worked with a different person . . . Well, obviously we'd have to work with the same person a couple of days a week. I do remember we began working three days a week.

WILLIAMS: So you spent the whole day here instead of working at the library.

SAFLY: The whole day. The whole day, yes. Pat and I would meet, come in our own cars, one of us would drive up here. We usually parked in the back. The Secret Service knew. Dr. Zobrist had called Mrs. Wallace so she wouldn't be alarmed, and had called Mrs. Haukenberry to tell her what we were doing. But occasionally we would run into tourists and stuff. Or tourists would ask, "Do you work at the Truman home?" I mean, we'd be coming outside, coming out of the door, and we'd run into the tourists and say, "Yes, we're housekeepers." [laughter] By this point we'd usually be covered with dirt and dead tired. It sounded pretty good to me. They bought it. "Why this is a housekeeper for the Trumans!" [chuckling] "Shake her hand!" I'm kidding.

WILLIAMS: Did you have any particular process that you had to go through each time with the Secret Service?

SAFLY: No.

WILLIAMS: They just knew your car?

SAFLY: It was pretty loose, a pretty loose operation. We had some problems getting adjusted to May Wallace. She was still driving then, you know, and without sounding unkind, she was a dangerous driver. [laughter]

WILLIAMS: And it's a treacherous driveway.

SAFLY: Well, it's not the best driveway, you're absolutely right. But we would park there in the bushes. I remember one day she came in the house. She had come home, and I guess one of us had parked too close to the garage, and she couldn't make the turn, and she was clear up here, I swear to God, in the yard. She'd been trying to turn around in the yard and get back. It was crazy. So we got it straightened out.

WILLIAMS: Were the doors to the home locked? Did you have to get in some way?

SAFLY: I don't remember that we were. No, we usually came in the kitchen door, the back door, and Valeria was usually here. Well, Valeria watched TV a lot, and if Mrs. Truman was here they watched TV together, so she seemed to always be here. It seems odd now the way the house is, but we would come down at 10:00 or something or when we felt like it, and put on a pot of tea or get out ice cubes, you know, and make ourselves at home. Not the way you guys do it now, is it?

MICHAEL SHAVER: It's really basically the way we do it now.

SAFLY: If you're lucky. [chuckling]

WILLIAMS: So did you get to know the nurses at all?

SAFLY: We did. We did, and they were kind of our allies. Well, I should mention that I did look this up, too. Mrs. Truman, going back a little bit, and I should have told this in sequence. Margaret left on the 11th and went home because her husband, Clifton, had had what I believe was gall bladder surgery that year, and she went home to be with him. And the day after she left, Mrs. Truman got pneumonia, then she went into kidney failure. To make a long story short, she was in critical condition and in intensive care for a long time, so we really had free run of the house until she came home on June 22nd, and then things changed a little bit. And then the nurses came. Before that we were able to get quite a bit done.

WILLIAMS: So you had between two and three weeks there at the very beginning.

SAFLY: Right.

WILLIAMS: How much do you think you got done in that first period?

SAFLY: Oh, I think we got a lot done. I think most of the study was done. I listed every book and every record.

WILLIAMS: That's a lot of things.

SAFLY: I even listed all that stuff piled on top of that old phonograph or whatever you call it.

WILLIAMS: When was the inventory finished?

SAFLY: Well, we never finished, not really. We did get through every room downstairs before Mrs. Truman came home. But when she did come home,

we realized that it was not going to be as easy, so we moved upstairs. I think the first place we went to work was in the storeroom above the kitchen. And, of course, that was midsummer. The windows were painted shut in that room. Did any of you see it? I don't know what it looks like today, but you had to crawl—I mean, step on stuff—to get into the room, and stuff had started coming down the stairs, you know, it was piled on the stairs because there was no more room in the storeroom. I'm not sure when we began to just list gifts of state and the stuff that was in that storeroom. I think that's when we began to find boxes of letters. The first batch we found up there were letters that Mr. Truman had written to Mrs. Truman during the senate period, in a giant Harzfeld's box. Everything was in a Harzfeld's box. Harzfeld's was a nice ladies' store in Kansas City for many years, and they evidently bought quite a bit of stuff there and saved all the boxes and used them for storage. We realized too that there were a good many leaks in this house, and it was pretty obvious that, if a fire ever occurred, the house would go up. So in very short order Dr. Zobrist called Margaret and asked her if she would approve of us bringing some of the manuscript material to the library for safekeeping. And so we began the haul. [chuckling] We began.

SHAVER: So you conveyed this to Dr. Zobrist about your finds?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: And originally it was mostly manuscript material?

SAFLY: Well, boxes of letters that had been opened and put back in the envelope.

Everything imaginable. Well, most of those letters are now published in Dr. Ferrell's *Dear Bess*, and they were obviously things that seemed pretty important to us. [chuckling] I'd never seen anything like that before! Margaret had just published that book called *Truman Family Letters*.

SHAVER: Or *Letters from Home* or something.

WILLIAMS: *Letters from Father*.

SAFLY: Something like that. It didn't sell very well. We have a copy of it at the library. The letters that Margaret has were haphazardly arranged with letters from Aunt May and letters from her mother. Margaret had said that there were no more existing letters that her father had written. And she also said that her father had not ever written her a letter until she was seventeen. Well, there was a small child's roll-top desk in that storeroom and there were five or six letters that he had written to Margaret when she was four, five, or six. I don't remember the ages, but obviously there was some stuff here that she didn't know about.

WILLIAMS: So you didn't start the inventory with the idea of removing things?

SAFLY: Not at all, no. Of course not, no. It never occurred to us. But Margaret agreed to it. I don't know what she thought. Dr. Zobrist, I know, thought it was a good idea.

DUNAR: What kind of contact did you have with Margaret as this was all unfolding?

SAFLY: We had none.

DUNAR: Did Dr. Zobrist . . . ?

SAFLY: Oh, Dr. Zobrist was calling her.

DUNAR: Do you know anything about her reaction to all of this as it was unfolding?

SAFLY: Well . . .

SHAVER: Take a break and think about it.

[End #4110; Begin #4111]

SAFLY: I think we just assumed, that she'd want this material. I think I certainly assumed that. Why wouldn't she? I would have.

DUNAR: How did she eventually release all of this, give a final release to the library? Did she show interest in using it and publishing from it at all?

SAFLY: I was around her a couple of times. I'm getting this out of chronological order. At some point Margaret asked us to bring her mother's engagement ring—and she told us where it was in the dresser—to the library. She was worried about it. And I think when we got into the jewelry there was pretty obviously a couple of other things that we thought should go, too. So Pat and I were with Dr. Zobrist when Margaret went into the vault and saw the jewelry and letters. I think this was before her mother died, and Margaret said she had no interest in the things we'd brought to the library from the house. And you could have knocked me over because I thought, gee, you know . . . Well.

DUNAR: Wasn't she doing some work on her biography of her mother at that point?

SAFLY: No.

DUNAR: I remember one time her being in the research room spending a good day. It was when we were downstairs.

SAFLY: Oh, downstairs. Yeah, well, that was with a ghostwriter who was going to

do a biography of her mother, and I don't know what happened to that project. It didn't pan out.

DUNAR: What was your impression of Margaret in the times when you had contact with her over at the library and . . .

WILLIAMS: She won't hear this. [chuckling]

SAFLY: What about Dr. Zobrist? Well Margaret seems totally different from her folks. I didn't know her mother, but from what I've heard or read, what her friends have said or heard from her friends, Mrs. Truman seemed to be a very warm and funny person. Margaret has always kind of acted like those of us who worked at the library were hired help. You know, she doesn't speak to us or go out of her way to be nice. She's just different in that respect, so I don't feel like I know her at all.

WILLIAMS: It was your decision then what was removed from the home?

SAFLY: Afraid so. [laughter]

WILLIAMS: I mean, Dr. Zobrist didn't set up any kind of guidelines?

SAFLY: Well, obviously we were not going to come in here and move out a piece of furniture in front of Mrs. Truman. But the other thing you have to remember is that Mrs. Truman was in and out of the hospital. I think the next time she went in it was September with an ulcer, that would be September of '81, and she was in several times after that. So we would do as much as we could while she was away.

DUNAR: Did the Secret Service get involved in the process of removal at all? Did they help you take anything?

SAFLY: No, they never helped at all. We sure could have used some help. We carried some heavy stuff out of this house, I want to tell you.

DUNAR: They didn't show any . . . for security purposes and checking what was going out or anything?

SAFLY: No. No. Bob Lockwood, when we would be in the attic, used to wander up there and say, "Before I retire, I'm going to take some of this Prohibition booze. I'm going to take a couple of these bottles."

WILLIAMS: From June of '81, did you just continue working all the way up until Mrs. Truman's death?

SAFLY: We continued until Mrs. Truman's death, yes.

WILLIAMS: And still then you had more to do?

SAFLY: Well, I think we pretty much . . . We had long since given up on the basement. We had looked around in the basement when we had a chance. We had done this floor, had done the second floor, and had begun in the attic. When we got down in the basement, there were those old fabric-covered wires with the porcelain doodads hanging down, and the floor was wet, and I thought, "Gee, I like my job, but I'm not too interested in being electrocuted down here." Because it looked to me like a real good possibility! So we didn't spend too much time after that in the basement. I think probably after we got through the things in the storeroom is when we started in the attic. And you have to believe me, every time it rained, buckets were running in this corner of the attic.

WILLIAMS: Above the master bedroom.

SAFLY: You want to talk about the master bedroom?

WILLIAMS: No, you're saying in the attic above the master bedroom.

SHAVER: Just south of it.

SAFLY: Okay. Yeah, right.

SHAVER: South of the gable.

SAFLY: Where there's a tiny little flash-glass window that opens out. It looked, I swear to God, as if Mr. Truman had come home, had married Mrs. Truman, had moved his worldly possessions and his stuff from World War I in a trunk and in various boxes, and had put it in that corner, and it had been there unmoved, untouched, until we got there. It was in that location that we found, very neatly stacked and arranged, his entire World War I correspondence, which was all in chronological order, with little ribbons around the various months.

WILLIAMS: So gradually you got to the point where you were taking a box full of things each day from what you had done that day?

SAFLY: Well, we just kept finding more letters. The other thing, we found letters in the study, and that may have been the first clue that there were things stuck all over this house. There would be letters stuffed in a book, used for bookmarks. There was also money. I can't tell you exactly how much money we came up with. I remember several twenty-dollar bills.

DUNAR: Did you look through all the books as you inventoried them?

SAFLY: Oh, yes, looked through every one. We found quite a bit of money, which Dr. Zobrist of course gave to Margaret, or we kept in the vault until she

came.

WILLIAMS: But you really didn't remove things from the first floor?

SAFLY: No, we did not. Not at that point.

WILLIAMS: Was that because you thought Mrs. Truman would notice?

SAFLY: Oh, of course, yes.

WILLIAMS: By that time she was never anyplace else but the first floor?

SAFLY: Well, by that time she had had a stroke, and we didn't see her very often.

We could hear what the nurses were saying to her and so on, but there was quite a deterioration in her condition. She was either in a wheelchair or in that bed, and more and more of her time was spent in bed. They tried to take her out on the porch for lunch every day.

WILLIAMS: It was more with her in mind and not the idea that someday tours would be going through here?

SAFLY: Oh, that never occurred to me. I never thought about it. Should I have thought about it? You want some stuff back, don't you?

DUNAR: What impressions did you get of Truman's reading habits by having inventoried all the books and looked through them and seen where he left marks and things like that? What general impressions did you have?

SAFLY: Oh, well, I think probably the impression that I'd had all along, that he was very widely read, lots of subjects. I think probably the most interesting were the books that were piled by that chair that he had sat in, many of which were still there in giant piles around that chair. I had the distinct impression that he wasn't able to get as far in the book as he had at one

time. He was doing a lot more scanning. Maybe he was getting things that weren't of any interest to him. There are wonderful books in this house.

But I think you can say that it was not only Mr. Truman, but as we got into the books, you discovered that David Wallace had a wonderful collection of books. I don't feel that way about Madge [Gates Wallace], but Mrs. Truman certainly had had somewhat of a classical education, in the old sense, in what she read, and her brothers. It certainly gives you an idea of how different a high school education is today than it was in those days. They read mighty good stuff. But of all of them, I was most impressed with David Wallace's. He was a collector, I'd say, and a reader of really fine stuff, and a collector of books that had wonderful illustrations.

SHAVER: Mr. Truman's collections of books, comparing what you saw when you were going through his collection in the office and here, did you notice any differences in them?

SAFLY: No, there were many of the same things. Surely there's a collection of *Plutarch's Lives* in this house?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SAFLY: And a complete collection of Shakespeare. I know that's on that top shelf in the study published in those little editions. Also, I think I should say the Gateses were readers too, and there are books going back to 1850 in this house.

WILLIAMS: In the attic.

SAFLY: And they were all readers.

WILLIAMS: Well, how were these items that you removed for safekeeping to the Truman Library taken over there?

SAFLY: Well . . .

SHAVER: The trunk of your car, wasn't it?

SAFLY: The trunk of my car. And Pat's car.

WILLIAMS: Was any particular care taken to wrapping the objects or . . . ?

SAFLY: Probably not. Well, sure, you know, I didn't just open the trunk door and throw stuff in there and say, "By the way, here's Harry Truman's World War I letters we found over at the house there today." I've thought back on what if one of us had had a wreck. Sometimes one of us would load the car—I don't know if I should tell you this—would load stuff in the morning, and then we'd take the car and go to the Englewood Cafe or someplace and eat lunch, and all that stuff would be in there. But it seemed to work out okay.

WILLIAMS: What happened when Mrs. Truman died?

SAFLY: What happened when Mrs. Truman died?

WILLIAMS: Did you know then that the inventory was finished?

SAFLY: Yes, I think so. Everything just stopped, of course, for the funeral preparations and all that. Margaret flew in, and she and Clifton and the boys all stayed here at the house. Valeria loaded in the supplies and people brought food, you know, just like an old-time funeral in Independence. Pat cooked something. I cooked a brisket. To my knowledge, at that point we were still up in the air. I think Dr. Zobrist came down for the reading of the

will sometime before Clifton and Margaret left town.

WILLIAMS: And that was here in the house?

SAFLY: That was here in the house, and probably the first concrete knowledge he had that the house had been left to the government. Or was it left to the archivist of the United States? I forget. Or to the National Archives?

WILLIAMS: Well, to the government with the supervision or something of the archivist.

SAFLY: Right.

WILLIAMS: Were you here at all that week of the funeral?

SAFLY: No, I was not. I know Dr. Zobrist took Clifton and Margaret to the airport, and he said the only thing she came out of the house with was a Baccarat paperweight. And I can't even remember where that had been, maybe in here someplace, a very lovely paperweight, but I thought, boy, that's not much.

WILLIAMS: Did that have Truman's profile or something on it?

SAFLY: No, it was just a regular paperweight.

WILLIAMS: Plain?

SAFLY: Plain old three-thousand-dollar paperweight. No! [laughter]

WILLIAMS: So were you ever in the house from the time Mrs. Truman died until it opened to the public?

SAFLY: Oh, yes, on several occasions. Margaret . . . and here again I'm not real clear because it was a confusing time and we we're getting kind of mixed messages. Margaret had given instructions to Valeria to get rid of her mother's clothes. Whatever she had to do, she was to get rid of them.

Well, I think Dr. Zobrist got wind of this and called Margaret and said perhaps it would be better if Pat and me came down to the house and went through them. She had a lot of things that had her name in them. It didn't seem very appropriate to haul those off to the Goodwill or Salvation Army or whatever. So I'm not sure if Dr. Zobrist called Valeria, he probably did, and said we would be coming down to help with the clothes. Well, Valeria had already been giving Mrs. Truman's clothes away.

WILLIAMS: Hard at work.

SAFLY: Hard at work sorting, and actually she was giving quite a few things away. She had planned to take some things, and she had given some things to Reverend Hobby, who was the black gentleman who took care of the yard and put up the storm windows and all that stuff. We did take charge of the rest of the clothes, and went through them all and took the things that seemed important, like her inaugural gown and a few things. . .

WILLIAMS: Of historic value.

SAFLY: Yes, a few things like that, or things that had her name in them, or the dress she wore to Margaret's wedding. We knew the clothes from the photographs, and we took those things to the library. Interestingly enough, Valeria, on one of these occasions, said that Margaret had told her that she could have Mrs. Truman's jewelry. But in the meantime, Margaret had called Dr. Zobrist and said she was looking for a blue butterfly cloisonne pin. It was a Chinese lacquer pin, a butterfly, a pin that Margaret had given her mother, and she wanted it as a keepsake. So Valeria kindly brought

back the jewelry she had already taken home. And among those things, was like an engraved watch that said “To Mom from Harry and Margy, Christmas 1948.” Well, that seemed to be something that we thought maybe we should have. And there were a few other things: some good pearls and some gifts of state, a bracelet that a Hadassah group had given her, with various Jewish symbols on it. We found out later that it was twenty-four karat gold, and it was a very heavy and would also make a nice display item. I think at this point we were beginning to think that maybe we’d better get what we can. They were still fighting in Congress about the house, and with that wonderful Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, who said, “It’s just another old house. Do we need it?”

WILLIAMS: So did Valeria eventually get some of the jewelry?

SAFLY: Oh, not anything of real value. I’m sure Margaret told her to take what she wanted. She probably did. But later when we had the jewelry up at the library and I sat in when the appraiser came. That strand of pearls I mentioned earlier. The pearls had an oblong clasp—what I assumed was a rhinestone. If they were my pearls, the clasp would have been a rhinestone. When the appraiser looked at the pearls, the pearls were appraised at \$18,000, and the clasp I thought was a rhinestone was a diamond, seven karats or something. And the necklace was worth, just an incredible amount of money. So some of these things that I assumed, because the Trumans were such unassuming people, that it was just costume jewelry, turned out not to be costume. That’s the most notable, I think. But then

some of the other things. She had a big, heavy, gold bracelet that was solid gold and, oh, just a few other things. She certainly didn't have a collection of jewelry like Jackie Onassis or somebody would, but she had several nice pieces, and I was glad we were able to do something with them.

WILLIAMS: Most of that is still at the Truman Library?

SAFLY: Most of that's at the Truman Library.

WILLIAMS: So Margaret didn't take it?

SAFLY: Margaret took a good deal of it. Well, after the appraiser came, then Margaret came out to take care of some other business. I can't remember, but this would probably have been sometime in '83, I guess, spring of '83 maybe. Let me go back. I'm sorry, I keep telling stuff out of sequence. In the meantime, in this period after Mrs. Truman died and Dr. Zobrist may have mentioned something about the jewelry that we had brought to the library, he probably said something to Marg about "Should we do something about the silver?" Because the house was basically just kind of open. It was locked up at night, and the police would drive through the driveway to check on things.

DUNAR: Was the library kind of supervising it then, if anybody was?

SAFLY: Well, yes, because there wasn't anybody else to do it, and I think we did have one of our guards coming up here at night. But anyway, Margaret, she thought it would be a good idea to take the silver to the library. So we unloaded the drawers, and Margaret said she might want some of it, which seems perfectly natural to me. So we began to make that a priority, trying

to get some of that stuff out, and Dr. Curtis and Harry Clark wore their old clothes one day and helped us clean out drawers. Silverware is heavy. That's the day we went in the attic above the garage, always thinking there could be some wonderful, undiscovered treasure. It turned out to be filled with empty boxes. But when Margaret made this trip to Independence, we had all the silver. We had made an inventory of all of the stuff, the appraiser had been there, and she took everything that she wanted. Not a lot. She took the pearls and other things. We did find her mother's butterfly, the enamel pin that she wanted, and she took a ruby ring. She looked pretty interesting, actually, when she left because she left directly from the library to go to the airport, and she had about six necklaces on and about fourteen rings. Ah, the gypsy has arrived! Very nice. Clank, clank. Here she comes. But I don't blame her. I would have taken a lot more. Believe you me, I would have taken much, much more. There was a gold watch that had belonged to George Porterfield Gates, a beautiful watch with a painted scene behind the dials, and Margaret didn't seem to be interested in it. There were a couple of beautiful cameos. She couldn't remember if they belonged to her Gates grandmother or the Wallace side.

WILLIAMS: Does it seem odd that her attitude kind of changed about the jewelry? First it was like "I don't want it," and then she did want it?

SAFLY: No, it never seemed odd to me because, you know, after my mother died, I had a sale of some of her stuff, and I can remember I couldn't wait to get rid of some of it. Yet, as it was going down the driveway when somebody had

bought it, I kept thinking, “Geez, my grandmother died in that bed! My mother was born in that bed!” I just think it takes a while to sink in, and you think, “Yes, I would like to have that.” And she did do that. As I’m sure you know, over a period of time she got several things. She would call Dr. Zobrist and tell him that she wanted something out of the house. We had the blue vases for a while, because I packed them, and they were a gift of Queen Wilhelmina? Queen Beatrice.

SHAVER: Beatrice.

SAFLY: Beatrice, okay. Wilhelmina was before Beatrice?

WILLIAMS: Of the Netherlands.

SAFLY: Of the Netherlands, yeah.

SHAVER: You talked about jewelry. You talked about the jewelry you found under the bed in the master bedroom.

SAFLY: That’s right, and that was the old stuff. The old stuff. There were a couple of cameos. Who is going to hear this?

WILLIAMS: Anyone who wants to, as far as I know.

SAFLY: Anyone who wants to?

SHAVER: We can edit out what needs to be edited out.

SAFLY: Well, I was just going to add one other interesting note. I think it was probably in one of the bedroom closets, probably the little bedroom that was Mrs. Wallace’s that connected with the little hallway from the sleeping porch?

SHAVER: This one over here by the dining room?

SAFLY: No, see, I'm all turned around.

WILLIAMS: Where the closets are?

SAFLY: Yeah. There were seven or eight bottles of Christian Dior perfume. These were quart size, and there'd be a note attached, to Mrs. Truman or to Margaret from the president of Christian Dior in Paris, and he'd been sending this stuff. And these were collector bottles—maybe baccarat. Well, anyway, Margaret, I thought, in a very nice gesture at the end of all this stuff when she picked out the jewelry and stuff, gave Pat and me and maybe Dr. Zobrist, each of us, one of those Christian Dior bottles. You wouldn't want to wear the perfume, obviously. It's about forty years old. You might want to drink it but . . . Anyway, it was nice of her to do that. That was our memento from the Truman home, I guess.

WILLIAMS: You said you were in here several times between the funeral and the dedication.

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: You've talked about getting jewelry. Were there other occasions?

SAFLY: Well, you know, the first thing we did it just occurred to me. Are there twin beds in there now?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SAFLY: Okay. Those were upstairs.

SHAVER: Where upstairs? Were they broken down?

SAFLY: They were broken down. Reverend Hobby and Pat and I took them apart and hauled them up to the attic when Mrs. Truman came home from her

broken hip and was obviously going to be in a hospital bed, and they were just stacked along the walls in the attic, you know, the mattress and the box springs. But when Mrs. Truman died, it seemed that it would be depressing for Margaret and her family to walk in and see that god-awful hospital bed, and so that's what we did that first day, I remember, and it took us just about all day. The Secret Service did come and help us do that. The rental people came and got the hospital bed, and then we got the twin beds, so the room looked more normal.

SHAVER: Did you reassemble the same beds that you broke down?

SAFLY: Yes.

SHAVER: Okay. Because we've seen pictures of—

SAFLY: Yes.

SHAVER: Well, Mike Cecil had taken some pictures of Mr. Truman visiting some folks here, and this door was open. You could see the knobs of the beds, but they were the beds upstairs that were down here.

SAFLY: Isn't that strange?

SHAVER: And these beds, I assume, were upstairs. So we could never figure—

SAFLY: Well, I think Mr. Truman slept down here, but do we know if he slept by himself? Did Mrs. Truman sleep down here in this room with him, or did she go upstairs?

SHAVER: I don't think we know anything about that, but we could never figure out which beds belonged in that bedroom. But nobody ever knew how they got broken down and moved or what the situation was, so you've put another

little piece of the puzzle together.

SAFLY: Well, I do remember doing that. It was a lot of work, but I thought it was a good idea. And they had oxygen tanks and several other things that are not very pleasant to look at when somebody has died.

WILLIAMS: We were told that the Secret Service was gone within a few days. Were they busy around the house, clearing out, or did you notice?

SAFLY: No, they were kind of in a state of chaos. They were unclear as to what their last day was to be. We were in turmoil. We were just wondering what we were supposed to do. Nobody quite knew.

WILLIAMS: But this whole cleaning up of this bedroom episode was basically initiated by the library. Is that correct?

SAFLY: Yes. In fact, I think it was Pat's idea. Her mother had died shortly before that, and we thought it was probably a good idea. Psychologically, it's really depressing if you've lost somebody and you walk into your family home and there's a hospital bed, for God's sakes, and an oxygen tent and all this stuff sitting around. Anyway, it looked fairly normal when she came.

WILLIAMS: So, those things were gone within a day or two?

SAFLY: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Well, Margaret was in London when her mother died and I think flew into New York. Her mother died on Tuesday morning? Monday morning?

WILLIAMS: October 18<sup>th</sup>.

SAFLY: I'd have to look. I know the funeral was on Thursday and Margaret got

here, maybe Tuesday evening, or something, it was pretty close.

WILLIAMS: Were there other occasions you were changing the beds, taking jewelry?

[End #4111; Begin #4112]

SAFLY: . . . and had no other way to communicate it. I just thought of one interesting, strange, and kind of funny thing that happened one day. Mrs. Truman was sitting in her wheelchair somewhere in here, and I don't know where we were—upstairs maybe—but we heard all this commotion. In a couple of minutes, here was the ambulance and people were rushing through the house. The nurse could not get Mrs. Truman's pulse. So I remember the guy with the ambulance saying, "She's sitting up. Her eyes are open." So, you know, he didn't say, "It's pretty obvious she's still with us . . ." Isn't that awful? Gosh, none of us want to do that. I know she didn't either.

DUNAR: How much were Mrs. Haukenberry and May Wallace involved during the time that you were here?

SAFLY: Oh, well, Mrs. Haukenberry was in good shape, and maybe Pat will be able to remember why on occasion we parked in front of the house and then we'd have to stand out there waiting for the Secret Service to buzz us out. We'd have to talk in the little box, and there'd usually be tourists and stuff standing out there, and we'd have to mumble something in the box. But Mrs. Haukenberry would be over there saying, [speaking in a high-pitched voice] "Hi, Elizabeth! How are you? How's Peggy and the grandchildren?" I didn't have grandchildren then, but, you know, it was

pretty interesting.

And Mrs. Wallace, for probably one year before Mrs. Truman died, would come over here periodically and say that Bess had borrowed her fruit plates and used them for the bridge club and May never got them back. Oh, I beg your pardon, this was after Mrs. Truman was dead. She was over here in a flash for her fruit plates. By this time, we had inventoried all the Wedgewood and all that Haviland china. And she'd say, "It was a gift from Mother Wallace, and I would like to have those back." So we would look, and we would look, and we would look, and we never did find them. But somebody, and I can't remember who it was, maybe it was somebody from the park service, maybe it was Tom Richter, finally found the fruit plates, and May got them back. And every time she'd describe them: "Now, there was a banana across the top and an orange here . . ." But anyway, Aunt May, God love her, eventually got her fruit plates back.

WILLIAMS: What was your reaction when you found out that the National Park Service would be taking over perpetual care of the home?

SAFLY: I thought it was wonderful. Wonderful, great. I thought, "Somebody will be there." Because while we were here doing what we were doing, we had no idea *what* we were doing. I felt it worked out *exactly* the way it should have.

WILLIAMS: Was there a sense of relief on your part then?

SAFLY: Oh, yes, sure, because Tom Richter arrived in short shrift, and there were guards, and the house was secure. I'll tell you one thing the park service

did that was nice. After Tom arrived, but before other park service people arrived, somebody made arrangements for Pat and me to bring everybody from the staff at the Truman Library down to the house, and Pat and I gave tours up to the attic, the basement, the whole thing, and talked about what we knew about the house. That was a really nice thing. I think it made the library feel like they had been part of it.

WILLIAMS: So you didn't sense any resentment at the Truman Library that this was being passed along to another agency?

SAFLY: I don't think so. If there was, they kept it to themselves. Because I thought it was terrific. I still do.

WILLIAMS: After Andy Ketterson and Tom Richter arrived, were you in the home at all after that?

SAFLY: Yes. In the spring of '83, a Kansas City television crew was coming in the house, and Tom didn't have any help, and he was afraid he couldn't keep track of everything, so we came down and spent the day that day.

WILLIAMS: "We," meaning . . . ?

SAFLY: Pat and I. And I was in the house at least one other time after that. David McCullough filmed with Margaret and asked me to come down, and I think Norm was here by then and just asked me to come down and talk about the house for a little while before he talked to Margaret.

SHAVER: Oh, so he got his initial impressions of the house from you. Is that . . . ?

SAFLY: Well, I think so. Oh, I don't know about that. I think he formed his own impressions. He's pretty perceptive, you know.

SHAVER: What was his reaction to it?

SAFLY: Oh, he thinks this is a *great* place, a terrific house.

SHAVER: Do you recall anything that he was particularly taken with?

SAFLY: No, I don't. In fact, I think he asked Margaret some pretty leading questions, about how people sat around the dining room table, for the *Smithsonian World* program that he did with her. I think he thought the house was very reflective of the Trumans, and said a lot just by being what it was. It still does, doesn't it?

SHAVER: Sure.

WILLIAMS: After Mrs. Truman died, was there any effort to clean up the house or straighten things out?

SAFLY: After Mrs. Truman died?

WILLIAMS: Before the family arrived, or even after the funeral?

SAFLY: Oh, I think Valeria ran the sweeper.

WILLIAMS: You weren't involved in any kind of straightening up?

SAFLY: Now, here we go again, out of sequence. It had to be the summer of '81 that at some point we went to the attic, and it was such a horror that I think Dr. Zobrist kind of made a deal with Margaret that Pat and I would clean up the attic. You know about the raccoons, and that the raccoon in the attic had eaten pigeons and left the bones and the feathers. The raccoons had turned over about twelve jars of brandied peaches, had just punctured holes with his teeth down through the top and then turned them over, and the sticky juice had spilled out all over. There was feathers and bones, all stuck

in the juice and your feet stuck to the floor. It was great up there, really great. I loved it. It was amazing. Absolutely amazing. And Reverend Hobby would wander up every once in a while and say, “Mrs. Truman and I always said we were going to come up here and clean this place out.” “Well, we certainly wish you had gotten to that! Why didn’t you do that?” Oh, golly, he was a character. Did you interview him at all?

DUNAR: We couldn’t.

SAFLY: Couldn’t catch him?

DUNAR: Well, he turned us down, in fact. When we talked to him, he turned us down.

SAFLY: He was the great saver. Well, I told Andy this, and I’ve told both Mike and Jim. There was a layer of dust in the attic, and I brought my old shop vac from home, one of those giant canister things from Sears, and we were looking for an extension cord. I brought an extension cord, and it didn’t work, so I put it in the trash as I left one day. Well, by the next day he had it in there on the kitchen table. He was putting that ancient extension cord back together. Lots of times we would throw out a fruitcake that had been in the attic for years, and he’d go get it out of the trash, and I don’t even want to think what he did with it.

SHAVER: A Christmas tree. You said he kept or planted little trees out here in the . . .

SAFLY: Well, yes. I don’t know if those trees are still there. I’d like to know.

SHAVER: What’s the story behind them?

SAFLY: Well, you know those forsythia bushes out here behind the back door?

There were little evergreen trees in there. And I'd say, "Why are those trees planted right up next to the bush?" And Rev. Hobby would say, "Mr. Truman told me to plant those there." It's a dumb, dumb place to plant trees.

WILLIAMS: So he was around a lot when you were here?

SAFLY: While Mrs. Truman was here, yes. He ran the sweeper, he polished silver, he did major cleaning. He put the storm windows on, he took the storm windows off, that kind of thing.

DUNAR: Did he take direction from Valeria?

SAFLY: Oh, yes, Valeria was in charge.

DUNAR: She ran everything pretty much?

SAFLY: Yes, and there was always a constant battle because Bob Lockwood, who was chief of the Secret Service unit, was actually in charge, but he's not the kind of person to throw his weight around. But on occasions, Valeria would show her authority, and she and Bob would get into it. And he'd usually just tell her, "No, we're going to do it so and so," and then she'd stomp around the house for two or three days: "They just think they're so smart over there. Smart college boys!" [laughter] "These college boys!" God. So we had some interesting intrigues that would go on from time to time.

DUNAR: Reverend Hobby had been here for a long time.

SAFLY: Yes, I think since the Trumans came home from the White House or thereabouts, sometime in the '50s.

DUNAR: Did he ever tell you any old stories in relation to the family?

SAFLY: No, only when we'd be in the basement or something or out in the garage. I remember one time we asked him why there were two or three stoves sitting in the garage, and he said that he had asked Mrs. Truman if he could have the old stove when she got a new stove, and she always told him no. But he kept coming over here to work.

WILLIAMS: I forgot to ask you earlier. You mentioned the nurses that were here. You mentioned somebody named Karen. Do you remember other names?

SAFLY: Karen. You know, I don't. There was one of the nurses who was interviewed by the newspaper after Mrs. Truman died. It offended me, about how she communicated with Mrs. Truman, and Mrs. Truman used to say things to her. I thought it was in rather poor taste when you're taking care of somebody who's dying, because I felt most of what she told the paper was not true. They were from a nursing agency out of Research Hospital, and Dr. Graham arranged for them. There was a lot of trouble, a lot of conflict between Valeria and the nurses, too, you know. Valeria felt that Mrs. Truman was her charge, her responsibility, and she had been there a while and had spent a lot of time with her, and she resented the nurses.

DUNAR: And she wasn't with that nursing agency?

SAFLY: No, she was just a lady that Mrs. Truman had hired. I guess Margaret decided that her mother should have someone come and stay with her part of the time.

DUNAR: Was she a nurse, Valeria?

SAFLY: No, I think she had worked in a nursing home. No, she didn't do any of the nursing chores.

WILLIAMS: She'd pay the bills.

SAFLY: She fixed lunch, paid the bills, got the groceries, took Mrs. Truman out to lunch occasionally, and just kind of saw that things kept running and that Mrs. Truman had what she needed.

SHAVER: Did you have any encounters with Dr. Graham, or did you see him in the house very often?

SAFLY: I never saw Dr. Graham here, no. No, Valeria didn't like him either, which wouldn't have made any difference. You know, he was seeing her in the hospital quite a bit, and I'm not sure if he ever, in the time that I was around, came out here to see her.

WILLIAMS: In that last year and a half or so, was the house kind of bustling, or was it very calm? Were there people in and out all the time, or just . . . ?

SAFLY: Oh, people walked in and out, yes. The Secret Service came over occasionally and there were people doing laundry and other chores. There was a girl, I think it was Mrs. Miller, the hairdresser's daughter, that did the laundry. I guess she did it over here. And before Mrs. Truman had her stroke and could no longer eat, there was a cook here, a lady who came and cooked. And she used to make peach cobbler and apple cobbler and blueberry cobbler. So, quite often in the afternoon we'd get invited down for cobbler. Mrs. Truman liked cobbler and pie and things like that when she could still eat. Boy, all those smells would drift upstairs, and it was

great. So we'd come down and have cobbler or pie or whatever they'd give us.

DUNAR: Were there any visitors who came to see her?

SAFLY: I only remember being here one time when Andy and Mrs. [Georgia Neese Clark] Gray came. But we stayed out of their way, didn't think we should let them know we were here.

WILLIAMS: And Margaret was only here a few times?

SAFLY: Well, Margaret was here one day after her mother broke her hip. She may have come back the next year, the next May, but I don't remember. That would have been May of '82, but I'd have to look and see if she did. I think she probably did. I remember one time Valeria telling me a story about Margaret making chili for her mother, and she said, "Mother loves my chili."

WILLIAMS: When she was ninety-six or seven.

SAFLY: Well, I mean, it was pretty obvious Mrs. Truman was beyond . . .

WILLIAMS: Hot, spicy food. [chuckling]

SAFLY: She was probably not in this life going to be eating chili anymore.

WILLIAMS: Did you ever know how often Mrs. Truman talked to Margaret?

SAFLY: No, other than just what I've read.

WILLIAMS: Or if Valeria talked to Margaret?

SAFLY: No, I don't know. I really don't. When Mrs. Truman would be in the hospital, I assume Margaret talked to Dr. Graham or somebody at Research. No, I really don't have any good picture of that.

DUNAR: Did May Wallace have anything at all to do with running the household, or did she just kind of stay out of the picture?

SAFLY: No, not really.

WILLIAMS: Did she ever come over to visit or sit with Mrs. Truman? Do you know?

SAFLY: I don't remember her ever doing that. She may have when she first came home after she broke her hip, because I think Mrs. Truman was still in pretty good shape mentally. I don't know. I don't remember.

WILLIAMS: Before today, when was the last time you were in the house?

SAFLY: I brought a friend on a tour here last summer, the summer of '89.

WILLIAMS: And before that? Do you remember the last time before that?

SAFLY: Before that? Probably in '84, when David McCullough did that centennial interview.

WILLIAMS: So you weren't around for the dedication or any of the opening week ceremonies?

SAFLY: Of the house? I didn't come down here. I came down here the day that the house was finally accepted by the Department of the Interior, the park service, whatever, and there was a ceremony here in the yard, and Barbara Potts made a speech, and Tom Eagleton said some good words about Harry Truman. That's the only thing I remember. I think I was supposed to work or help Tom Richter do something, but I can't remember what that was, and I don't remember doing it.

WILLIAMS: So it was about five years between . . . from the time you were here in '84 to '89?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Do you remember last summer what your reaction was when you came in? On a tour? You were on a regular tour?

SAFLY: I was on a regular tour, yes. Oh, no, just that everything looked the same. Fewer dead plants. That was the interesting thing. You know, I didn't understand the park service, that nothing is moved, nothing is changed, everything stays the same. I didn't understand that concept. I think I understand it better now. Mrs. Truman had a fern. There was an asparagus fern that she had had out on the back porch, and I guess it got brought in the house. But when Tom got here, I talked him into letting me take that fern home. And I could see he didn't want me to take it, and I thought, "That's really odd." My intention was to bring the fern back to life. I, of course, killed it [chuckling]. I killed the fern.

WILLIAMS: Did you return the planter it was in?

SAFLY: I believe I did, as a matter of fact. I understood the principle of that. Also, in the early days, I brought a strange fellow to the home from the Museum of American History at the Smithsonian.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SAFLY: Yes, Michael Beschloss? Do you know him? He writes books.

DUNAR: He wrote a book on the U2.

SAFLY: He's very weird. And, there were a couple of people from the National Portrait Gallery here, too, from the Smithsonian, and they were down here with Tom, and I was supposed to take care of Beschloss. He was

wandering around upstairs and making me very nervous because he kept opening drawers and doing things. I kept saying, “I think we have to leave.”

WILLIAMS: So the park service used you as something of an assistant since you had been around?

SAFLY: Well, I think so. Yes, Pat and I. We knew where the plugs were.

SHAVER: You could set a table.

SAFLY: Well, I think so. Well, yeah. Oh, that’s why I was over here too before, for the filming.

WILLIAMS: To set the table.

SAFLY: Yeah, Millie and I came over here. Was Pat on maternity leave? I don’t know. Millie and I came over and washed the Haviland.

WILLIAMS: Millie . . . ?

SAFLY: Carol from the museum staff, I’m sorry. And we washed the dishes and set the table. We didn’t do it right, though.

WILLIAMS: I think I’ve seen pictures of you washing dishes or Millie washing dishes.

SAFLY: Yeah, there’s a picture of me standing at the sink.

WILLIAMS: So that was for that occasion, setting the table?

SAFLY: Right, getting ready for David McCullough and Margaret.

SHAVER: You mentioned that you didn’t do it right. How did you discover that?

SAFLY: Tom told me that Margaret said the table wasn’t set right. It had something to do with the salad. She said her parents always ate their salad European-style, after the meal to “cleanse your palate.” The Trumans ate salad just

like the rest of us folks, you know. You either eat it first or with your meal.

You had a plate of salad sitting up there. Can you believe that? So she has the table set as if the Trumans ate their salad following their meal.

WILLIAMS: Before we walk around room by room, is there anything else that comes to mind just about the general inventory?

SAFLY: No.

WILLIAMS: Events that . . . ?

SAFLY: Well, as you well know, in the months that followed Mrs. Truman's death, Margaret did think of some things that she wanted. [unintelligible phrase] She took the Churchill and the Grandma Moses.

WILLIAMS: Paintings.

SAFLY: Paintings, yes. And the icon she had for a while, I believe.

SHAVER: It seems like Samuel Gallu . . . Who's the man who that wrote the play, *Give 'Em Hell Harry*, Sam Gallu.

SAFLY: There is a story about that. Margaret had never thought about the icon, but in the Murrow *Person to Person* Mr. Truman says, "The Queen of Rumania gave me this icon, and it was made in 1107 or something, painted on barn boards."

SHAVER: She didn't give it a thought till he told her to.

SAFLY: That's right! And I can't remember who that was. Was it Sam Gallu? During that time, I gave tours to several people, and I think Gallu may have been on one of them. Either Mr. Truman said the icon was Hungarian and it's really Rumanian, or he said it was Rumanian and it's really Hungarian.

It obviously is a very valuable thing. So Sam called Margaret up and said, “Yeah, you’ve got an icon there that’s probably worth \$7 million or something.” I don’t know what he said, but then she took it home with her.

SHAVER: It’s rather unusual, if you watch the *Person to Person* episode, all the paintings that they point out are no longer here, the Churchill and the Grandma Moses.

SAFLY: Well, it’s not my fault.

SHAVER: And the icon.

SAFLY: We are left with the wonderful Stanley Woodward, that paint-by-number . . .

WILLIAMS: “Donkey at Key West.”

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Was any attempt made at all by the Truman Library staff to limit Margaret’s access?

SAFLY: I have no knowledge of any of that.

WILLIAMS: Or what she took?

SAFLY: I have no knowledge, no.

WILLIAMS: So you didn’t hide things from her or not tell her about things you found?

SAFLY: Oh, no, no, no. Of course not, no. No. In fact, I think we went out of our way to show her everything.

WILLIAMS: It sounds like it.

SAFLY: I think Dr. Zobrist was calling her on a regular basis, or writing her. We were sending her a copy of the inventory as we went along. I think we did

okay.

WILLIAMS: Did she ever ask for anything while Mrs. Truman was still alive?

SAFLY: Not that I recall, no.

WILLIAMS: Was the feeling on the library's part that she could have just anything she wanted, that it all sort of belonged to Margaret after Mrs. Truman died?

SAFLY: Oh, yes, I think so. Well, didn't it? I don't know.

WILLIAMS: I don't know legally.

SAFLY: I don't know what the legal thing is.

WILLIAMS: I'm just interested in if . . . there were certain things listed in the will, then it's rather vague about the rest of it, and "Margaret's possessions in the home."

DUNAR: Was it her feeling that Dr. Zobrist would be sort of in charge here while she was gone?

SAFLY: While she was gone?

DUNAR: While Margaret was gone. After Bess had died.

SAFLY: Oh, yes, I think so.

DUNAR: So she worked with him? Margaret worked through him?

SAFLY: Right. As I recall, it was GSA—when the archives was still part of GSA—who provided security and . . .

DUNAR: Was Margaret concerned with security in the house? It doesn't sound like there was too much.

SAFLY: Well, Delaware is a pretty quiet street. I don't know if she was or not.

DUNAR: Did the Independence Police Department get involved in it at all? Was

there any patrol or . . . ?

SAFLY: Oh, I think so. I think so.

DUNAR: But there was nothing formal?

SAFLY: Not that I recall.

SHAVER: The estate provided some security.

SAFLY: The estate did. There was a period of time that it was paid for out of the money from the estate, right?

SHAVER: Right, and then the park service had to reimburse the estate after they took over.

SAFLY: Oh, you did? So, in other words, you were reimbursing Margaret.

SHAVER: Well, we were reimbursing the estate for the costs incurred in security.

SAFLY: But I assume that would eventually have gone to Margaret.

SHAVER: I don't know. I don't know.

SAFLY: I don't know. Interesting.

SHAVER: Does the name Donald Chisolm ring a bell?

SAFLY: Yes, he was the executor.

SHAVER: Did you have any encounters with him?

SAFLY: No, very little. He comes to library functions. He's a lawyer with Stinson, Mag, & Fizzell. Arthur Mag was Mr. Truman's lawyer recommended by Sam Rosenman. Don Chisolm, I assume, was the senior partner in that law firm and took over the Trumans' affairs when Mag died. The day that the appraiser came and did the jewelry and the silver, we did have a young man from the bank present, Commerce Bank? I think his name was Campbell.

SHAVER: United Missouri?

SAFLY: I don't remember. I don't remember. And I'm not sure what his role was, maybe to oversee the whole thing.

WILLIAMS: Well, do we have any other questions before we want to move around? Would you like to stretch?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: I think we're near the end of this tape.

SAFLY: Are we going to do this all tonight?

WILLIAMS: It's up to you. I was going to ask you that. I don't even know what time it is.

SAFLY: It's 7:15.

WILLIAMS: Would you prefer to come back another evening?

SAFLY: Would you think that was awful if I did?

WILLIAMS: No, not at all. You know, I've been here since eight o'clock this morning. I realize it's taxing.

SAFLY: It is. It is. I'm telling you.

WILLIAMS: For someone your age.

SAFLY: Thanks, Jim. I'm just older than trees here.

WILLIAMS: If you're willing to come back.

SAFLY: Oh, I am. I'd love to walk through because I'd love to see . . . In fact, I'd love to walk up there now without . . . I won't say anything. May we do that?

DUNAR: Would it be possible to come back and do it tomorrow?

WILLIAMS: I don't know. I suppose that we can work it out.

DUNAR: You know, just for personal reasons.

SAFLY: Well, what the heck, let's do it now. I mean, how long is this going to take?

I don't even know what we're going to do in a walk-through.

SHAVER: Okay, we'll rewind the tape here.

WILLIAMS: Well, I need to get a drink. Would you like something downstairs?

SAFLY: Oh, yes. Am I supposed to come down there with you? Would you like a drink of water, Andy?

DUNAR: Sure.

WILLIAMS: Well, we probably shouldn't bring it up here.

SAFLY: Oh, no.

[End #4112; Begin #4113]

WILLIAMS: Okay, we're continuing with our walking tour now in the Truman home, starting in the living room. Is there anything in this room that you particularly notice that's different or, when you were doing the inventory, that was interesting to you then?

SAFLY: No, really, things look pretty much the same to me.

WILLIAMS: We have artificial plants now.

SAFLY: You have artificial plants, that's true, yes. The little angels, the tumbling angels, were on the mantelpiece.

WILLIAMS: Was that year-round?

SAFLY: Well, as I recall, yes.

WILLIAMS: Was there a story behind those, that you . . .

SAFLY: Just that they were a gift of the Grays, and I guess Margaret didn't like them, so she put them someplace where she told Valeria she'd never find them. But she did. She obviously didn't like them. No, really, I can't say too much because it looks the same. It really does.

WILLIAMS: How about the grandsons' pictures?

SAFLY: Well, those are more recent photographs, aren't they?

WILLIAMS: More recent than what?

SAFLY: Well, I mean more recent—

WILLIAMS: You mean Margaret put them in after Mrs. Truman died?

SAFLY: Well, now, this one was here. And these were taken at a wedding, as I recall. Somebody told me that. It must have been like the spring of '80 or '81, something like that. That's Clifton and William and Harrison. These three look familiar. This one does not look familiar to me. Sorry.

SHAVER: Margaret had asked Norm to replace them. She said, "There's a better picture of . . ."

SAFLY: Of Thomas?

SHAVER: Yeah, and she had brought one, and Norm said, "Well, why don't you autograph it and initial it or something on the back and say when you did it," and she went ahead and did it on the original.

SAFLY: Oh, he's a nice-looking young man, isn't he? He's the one who just got married a month ago. Are we moving on into the bedroom?

SHAVER: You show it to us.

WILLIAMS: We call this the Gates bedroom.

SAFLY: Is that the way you refer to it, “the Gates bedroom”?

WILLIAMS: This is where the hospital bed and everything was set up for Mrs. Truman?

SAFLY: Right.

WILLIAMS: Were you ever actually in here during the inventory, while she was so sick?

SAFLY: Oh, yes. Well, we came in here to get Mrs. Truman’s engagement ring. Actually, we inventoried the things in these storage cabinets.

WILLIAMS: Well, let’s go in there and open up the . . .

SAFLY: Oh, my gosh! You still . . . Do you still have this leak, or it’s just left the way it was?

WILLIAMS: I believe it’s been repaired up on the sleeping porch.

SHAVER: Did it look that way when you were here?

SAFLY: Yeah, pretty much, not quite that bad, but I know water came in here every time it rained. It was getting pretty bad.

SHAVER: Did the staff like have a drill, or did Valeria have all her buckets laid out for rain or something?

SAFLY: Well, you know, nobody got too concerned about it. It was pretty amazing. At least as I recall. There was also water that would come down the steps from the attic. You would get wet there. But I do remember going through these cabinets. I don’t think there was anything real exciting in here.

WILLIAMS: Do they look more or less cluttered?

SAFLY: Always cluttered. In fact, if I have any impression, it’s probably that the bedroom is much less cluttered. It seemed to me the dresser was a lot more cluttered on top, but you guys are neat.

WILLIAMS: We have . . . it looks like a hundred hangers in here. Were there things on these hangers?

SAFLY: I wish I could remember, and I don't. I do think that Valeria kept Mrs. Truman's robes and housecoats and things like that in here. She didn't get dressed much after I was over here, if at all.

WILLIAMS: Do you remember anything in particular in here that you found interesting?

SAFLY: No, I don't. Sorry. Did that light just come on?

SHAVER: Yeah.

SAFLY: Why does it do that?

SHAVER: A switch.

WILLIAMS: Mike turned it on.

SAFLY: Oh, I thought it was some magic secret.

SHAVER: I don't know where all the light switches are.

SAFLY: Do you let people come in here?

SHAVER: No.

WILLIAMS: Do you know anything about this furniture, the chest of drawers?

SAFLY: No, I don't. I'm sorry, I do not.

WILLIAMS: But it's not part of what you brought back down from the attic? It was just the beds that you brought down?

SAFLY: Oh, no.

SHAVER: No, this is the one that Shawsie [Mary Shaw Branton] supposedly she and Margaret had bought.

SAFLY: Oh, really? For the Trumans?

SHAVER: Yeah, for her mother when she moved her down here. That's per the *Life* magazine article.

SAFLY: Well, that's interesting. I had no idea.

SHAVER: A Harzfeld shopping bag tucked behind the dresser.

SAFLY: I'm not surprised. There was a phone in here. That's the only thing I see that seems different. I think it sat on that table. But, see, I can't remember if there was one bed or two beds in here. I guess there were two.

WILLIAMS: You didn't look in the drawers. You didn't inventory things in drawers, is that what you said?

SAFLY: No. We did not.

WILLIAMS: There's not much in the central hall these days.

SAFLY: No.

WILLIAMS: Was there anything more when you were here?

SAFLY: No, I don't remember anything. I believe you've had the table refinished?

WILLIAMS: Probably.

SAFLY: Probably. Yeah, it looks very nice.

WILLIAMS: How about over here in the hat and coat rack?

SAFLY: Well, I can remember sitting back here and looking at the outside of the phone book, because she had phone numbers written down on the outside cover. That was another thing that amazed me. They never threw a telephone book out. There are phone books in this house that go back to the early '50s, because they all had things written in them.

SHAVER: So you remember the telephone?

SAFLY: Well, I remember the telephone, and I remember she had telephone numbers on little pieces of paper around here. Like Margaret's number, and I don't remember who else.

WILLIAMS: Was it a modern phone or an old black one?

SAFLY: I think it was an old black phone. What would they need a modern phone for?

WILLIAMS: Anything up around the hat?

SAFLY: No, it seems like there was more stuff here. Were there more coats? I don't know. Is this Mr. Truman's raincoat?

WILLIAMS: We think so.

SAFLY: Well, is there another raincoat underneath?

SHAVER: It's a coat with a liner in it.

SAFLY: Oh, it has a liner, okay. Made at Kansas City Custom Garment. Basically it looks about the same.

WILLIAMS: Did you ever use this door over here?

SAFLY: No, I can't remember that I ever did.

WILLIAMS: Did anybody, do you know?

SAFLY: No, I can't remember.

WILLIAMS: So the kitchen door was [used] the most?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Let's walk to the music room.

SAFLY: We're now walking to the music room. I feel like I'm hooked up to an I.V. or something. Ah, yes, we still have water damage in the music room,

right?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SAFLY: This is the light fixture that had been a gas fixture?

SHAVER: It's never been converted.

SAFLY: It's never been converted, okay. I don't remember where that story came from, but I guess it's true. Interesting. Well, you already know this, but the Churchill painting was hung there.

WILLIAMS: So Churchill was on the north wall?

SHAVER: Northwest.

SAFLY: And Grandma Moses was there, but Grandma Moses it seems to me was on that wall. But I guess it couldn't have been. Who did this painting?

WILLIAMS: Corbett.

SAFLY: Oh, okay.

WILLIAMS: It's of Swan Creek.

SHAVER: It was in the bedroom right above us, above the bed.

SAFLY: And I always remember one of these vases had been broken on the bottom and was held together with Scotch tape.

WILLIAMS: One of the vases on the mantel?

SAFLY: Yeah. I think these are Korean, as I recall.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SAFLY: And very good vases, I believe, which amazed me. I mean, a gift of state, I suppose. And a live fern once was in front of this fireplace.

WILLIAMS: On the hearth.

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: What about the photos on the piano? Do you remember there being more or any different ones?

SAFLY: I remember them facing a different way.

WILLIAMS: I believe they faced this way.

SAFLY: I think they faced this way, yes.

WILLIAMS: Toward the study.

SAFLY: Well, I remember Roberta Vinson. It all looks the same. We have the Johnsons, and Drucie. God, the Johnsons were big on photographs, weren't they? Yes, they seem the same, except they went this way.

WILLIAMS: Did you get into the corner?

SAFLY: I did, yes.

WILLIAMS: You did?

SAFLY: Why?

WILLIAMS: Hutch, or whatever it's called?

SAFLY: I think maybe it was Sarah Olsen said that this probably was an original. You know, it was something that came from Vermont. This was very old.

SHAVER: It's vintage 1840s.

SAFLY: Yeah. It's very lovely, isn't it?

WILLIAMS: I believe the drawers have mostly linens in them.

SAFLY: Linens? Yes. Lots of playing cards all over.

WILLIAMS: Who do you think those belonged to?

SAFLY: The book set by Sir Walter Scott?

WILLIAMS: No, the playing cards.

SAFLY: Oh, the playing cards. I assume Mrs. Truman, of course. I think he went elsewhere probably to play poker or whatever. I think they probably belonged to her bridge club, don't you? But of course people gave them cards by the truckload.

WILLIAMS: The Churchill painting was autographed?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: I think the Walter Scotts are some of the Gates's books, or the Wallaces'.

SAFLY: Could very well be.

WILLIAMS: Well, let's see the study.

SAFLY: Okay.

DUNAR: These coins with the pictures?

SAFLY: I don't remember.

DUNAR: And do you know what that is?

SAFLY: What is it?

SHAVER: I guess it's a . . .

SAFLY: Commemorative thing?

SHAVER: Yeah, from the inauguration. The U.S. Mint always strikes a coin for the inauguration.

SAFLY: Well, they look like there's something wrong with them.

SHAVER: They're tarnished.

SAFLY: Sure they're not a Henry Talge special?

SHAVER: Or that could be a Henry Talge.

SAFLY: He's big on commemoratives.

WILLIAMS: Do you remember the TV being piled with books?

SAFLY: Yes, certainly. I don't remember this TV being on very much. There was a portable that was usually set up. Sometimes Valeria put it on top of this TV. I don't know whether this TV didn't work anymore. I'm not sure.

SHAVER: Where else did you see the portable set up?

SAFLY: Oh, in the study. The Secret Service used to watch it in the study at night. And Valeria and sometimes Mrs. Truman . . . Valeria watched the soaps in here. I don't know if she brought Mrs. Truman in to watch her stories.

WILLIAMS: You said earlier that she and Valeria would watch TV. Do you think that was just Valeria's choice?

SAFLY: Oh, I imagine so. It was a captive audience type of situation.

WILLIAMS: Well, what about the study looks different these days?

SAFLY: Well, when we first came over, of course, there were books piled all back in this corner, between the chair and the wall, up this high, and stacked all over here almost up to the ottoman.

WILLIAMS: About three to four feet high?

SAFLY: Yeah, three or four feet high.

WILLIAMS: What kinds of books were they?

SAFLY: Oh, I think they were mostly books that had been sent to the Trumans, I would say, in the last ten or twelve years. There was something written by Hubert Humphrey, I remember.

DUNAR: One of the people that we interviewed last year said that it was their

impression that he had unread books on one side of the chair, and those he had looked at on the other side. Was there any indication of that pattern to you?

SAFLY: Oh, it's a possibility. I don't remember. I don't know.

WILLIAMS: What happened to all of those books? There must have been a hundred or so.

SAFLY: Yes, and Mrs. Daniel wanted us to get rid of them, which we did.

WILLIAMS: How?

SAFLY: Well, things that were autographed and of some significance we took to the Truman Library, and still have, and others we went through carefully and took to the Salvation Army or Goodwill—took different places.

WILLIAMS: And were those just in this northwest part of the room, or did they go . . . were there stacks all the way around?

SAFLY: I just remember down here and here.

WILLIAMS: So, between the chair and the wall.

SAFLY: Stuck in here there was a box of condolence letters that had been sent to Mrs. Truman after Mr. Truman's death. Some of them, I think, had come from the library. I think they'd probably been sent to the library and then were sent down here, but she had evidently read them and . . . And I don't remember what they were in, but it seems to me they were in a box or something.

WILLIAMS: Did you take those back to the library?

SAFLY: Yes. Yes, I did.

WILLIAMS: Anything else?

SAFLY: No, it looks very nice. There were big piles of papers and, tax business, bank statements and stuff piled behind these chairs.

WILLIAMS: Along the east wall.

SAFLY: Yeah, up maybe a foot or so, big piles of papers, and there was a big mess of stuff piled on top of the phonograph, the record player.

WILLIAMS: More so than there is now stacked up?

SAFLY: Oh, much more. Oh, yes, yes.

WILLIAMS: What happened to that stuff, do you know, the tax records?

SAFLY: Well, I think that probably all that stuff went to the library for Margaret or Chisolm or something. I honestly don't remember.

WILLIAMS: You said before that some of the shelves had collapsed.

SAFLY: Yes! All in the corner, yes.

WILLIAMS: That would be the *F* shelves in the corner?

SAFLY: That's right.

WILLIAMS: That's what we call them, the *F* shelves, that section.

SAFLY: Why?

SHAVER: The southeast corner.

WILLIAMS: They're *A, B, C, D* . . .

SAFLY: Oh, the *F* shelves were definitely collapsed.

WILLIAMS: Was it just that corner?

SAFLY: Those are the only ones I remember.

DUNAR: Did those all hold records then, too?

SAFLY: I think they were just exactly the way they are now. We just basically straightened them up.

WILLIAMS: I think we've also used the inventory to do a little bit of rearranging.

SAFLY: Oh, really?

SHAVER: Yeah, I think so. Put everything back just the way you listed it.

WILLIAMS: Everything was stacked on the floor.

SAFLY: Are you kidding?

SHAVER: The Secret Service agents apparently pulled a lot of stuff out and read it. So, from the time that you were here and doing your inventory, there was several instances where books were out of order.

SAFLY: Well, the Secret Service and nurses used to read when they were over here.

WILLIAMS: Do you know anything about the kind of trinkets in the *B* corner over here?

SAFLY: I certainly don't. There's, I think, a Royal Doulton. I mean, it's a mixture of good things with some pretty awful stuff. Amazing. It seems to me there was a carving of Churchill or something? Ah, thank you.

WILLIAMS: He's on shelf 4.

SAFLY: I wonder why I remember that?

WILLIAMS: It's a wood carving.

SAFLY: It's a very nice little carving.

WILLIAMS: Here's some of the sets you were talking about: Dickens, Twain.

SAFLY: Yes. What set is that up there? I can't remember.

WILLIAMS: Hawthorne.

SAFLY: See, they had good stuff.

WILLIAMS: I think those were Wallace or Gates. There's Shakespeare.

SAFLY: There's *The Successful Practice of Dentistry*.

SHAVER: I like the *Report of the Presidential Amputees Commission*.

WILLIAMS: Did you look inside the phonograph at all?

SAFLY: No, I don't think I ever did.

WILLIAMS: Do you know what's inside?

SAFLY: No. Is it a bar?

WILLIAMS: Aren't there liquor . . .

SHAVER: There were liquor bottles in there.

SAFLY: Well, there were liquor bottles over a large part of the house.

SHAVER: There were some behind the door, too.

SAFLY: I remember there was liquor in there.

DUNAR: Were there any bottles behind books?

SAFLY: Oh, no. I don't think so. There were quite a few bottles of booze in that pantry. Ah, the dining room.

WILLIAMS: Any books in here, overflow from the study or anything?

SAFLY: No. Actually, as I recall, this room was always pretty neat. You've still got the high chair, and I assume that the chandelier has been anchored so it doesn't swing when you walk through? It used to go [makes swishing sound].

WILLIAMS: Thanks to Uncle George and Margaret.

SAFLY: Did he hang it?

WILLIAMS: That's the story we've been told.

SAFLY: I wouldn't doubt it. Margaret brought it as a gift from someplace?

WILLIAMS: New York or Europe.

SAFLY: It's really very nice.

SHAVER: And she said she helped hang every little prism on it.

SAFLY: Oh, my gosh.

WILLIAMS: Were there flowers around on the table ever?

SAFLY: No, the table was always just empty. I don't even remember having anything in the middle of the table. This, of course, was gray and tarnished, you know.

WILLIAMS: The epergne?

SAFLY: The epergne, right. It was right down to whatever is at the bottom of silver, I don't know. It's really an interesting thing.

WILLIAMS: Did you notice back then what was up in the top?

SAFLY: Oh, yes, there were hairpins, marbles, rubber bands, all that normal stuff. Someplace there was Mrs. Truman's driver's license. I don't remember. We took that with us, too.

WILLIAMS: Did you ever see meals taken in the dining room at all?

SAFLY: No, never.

WILLIAMS: So that was always in the kitchen or on the back porch?

SAFLY: In the summer on the back porch. But she quickly reached a point where she couldn't eat real food.

DUNAR: Didn't they have one holiday meal in here? Somebody told us that.

SHAVER: That's what one person claimed.

SAFLY: A holiday meal?

DUNAR: Yeah.

SHAVER: Thanksgiving.

DUNAR: Yeah, I think it was Thanksgiving.

SAFLY: Well, it could be. Valeria was big on parties. She always hung crepe paper and lit candles and stuff for Mrs. Truman's birthday, and Christmas.

SHAVER: The ninety-sixth birthday party.

SAFLY: Yeah. In fact, Jimmy Carter was here for one birthday. Was that in 1980? I can't remember. He just dropped by to say hello.

WILLIAMS: The plants and everything were here?

SAFLY: Plants were here. These look healthier.

WILLIAMS: They're reproductions.

SAFLY: Are they?

SHAVER: No.

WILLIAMS: Oh, these are the real ones?

SHAVER: They're live.

SAFLY: Well, actually, these look pretty good.

WILLIAMS: But I thought these were replacements.

SHAVER: They may have been brought in from other places in the house.

SAFLY: They might be, but this looks like one that you had that was actually here.

WILLIAMS: Is this where the silver was that Mrs. Daniel requested?

SAFLY: Well, we didn't bother with any of this silver. It was the flatware that was all in these drawers.

WILLIAMS: It was in the buffet?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Did you look in the built-in china cabinet?

SAFLY: Yes, I did.

WILLIAMS: Did you find anything?

SAFLY: Well, I guess you know the story about . . . Are these the Belgian plates? The ones with the gold, hand-painted Belgian scenes were a gift to the Trumans. There's about twelve of them or something? I think we brought those over and then sent some of them back. I'm not sure. This was all full of silver that Mrs. Truman had put Saran wrap on, and it all melted. Good.

WILLIAMS: In the lower compartment.

SAFLY: Right.

WILLIAMS: Was there any thought of removing the presidential china for safekeeping?

SAFLY: No, I don't think so.

SHAVER: We have two sets of presidential china in there.

SAFLY: You have two sets?

SHAVER: The Hayes dessert plate or the cracker plate up there.

SAFLY: Right behind. Yes, that's a very valuable thing. One of their seafood things. People eat off of awful ugly stuff, don't they? Maybe that was good. You probably couldn't see what you were getting.

WILLIAMS: The fish plate?

SAFLY: Uh-huh. I can't remember. Well, anyway . . .

WILLIAMS: Well, you probably know more, or you've probably examined some of

these things more than we have.

SAFLY: Well, probably. I was always told that the Wedgwood that you have sitting on the kitchen table—they were everyday White House dishes. And that the Haviland in the cabinets, I assume the Haviland's there, with the gold rim?

SHAVER: Yeah.

SAFLY: Oh, it's what you have on the dining room table. They were supposed to be the old family dishes.

WILLIAMS: Shall we go into the kitchen?

SAFLY: Sure.

WILLIAMS: And the butler's pantry.

SAFLY: This is quite different because . . . You may have seen pictures—there were probably twenty-five trays of silver, glass, whatever, stacked every which way.

WILLIAMS: Like these over on the east wall?

SAFLY: Yes, but just in terrible disarray and just ready to fall over.

WILLIAMS: I don't know who rearranged it.

SAFLY: I don't know either. It may have been Margaret's idea. It was kind of a cluttered look.

WILLIAMS: How about the phone? You saw the little address pad here by the phone.

SAFLY: There was a pair of galoshes sitting here, as I recall, men's galoshes with the buckles that snap over.

SHAVER: Where they were obvious?

SAFLY: Sitting right there.

SHAVER: So it was right by the table and the phone?

SAFLY: Yes.

SHAVER: What about behind the door?

SAFLY: I don't remember anything.

WILLIAMS: Do you know whose aprons those might be?

SAFLY: No, I don't.

WILLIAMS: So were the dishes that they used kept in the butler's pantry here, or do you know? What dishes did Valeria use?

SAFLY: Oh, she used the Wedgewood, and I think they were kept in here.

WILLIAMS: In the butler's pantry and in the kitchen?

SAFLY: The cabinet. I think she had enough dishes in there, you know, for . . . yeah, everyday. But isn't there more Wedgewood around here?

SHAVER: Yes, there's some in the pantry, the butler's pantry.

SAFLY: Yes. I think the thing that always amazed me was that they must never have bought new pans. There are some old pans there, old Wear-Ever stuff?

WILLIAMS: How did you inventory these things when they were being used on an everyday basis?

SAFLY: Well, it wasn't easy. [laughter] I don't remember. I honestly don't remember. I remember inventorying the dishes, and I do remember Margaret at some point being concerned about some shelf on the top of one of these that was just ready to fall. So we rearranged all the dishes so that

they didn't fall and break.

WILLIAMS: So this is where you were washing dishes in those famous pictures.

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Do you recognize the dishrag? [chuckling]

SAFLY: Yes! I think one thing too, and maybe we've talked about this: Margaret wanted all the spices thrown out.

WILLIAMS: Any reason she gave you?

SAFLY: She thought they looked awful, I guess. I don't know.

WILLIAMS: Were they just regular old metal tins?

SAFLY: Just regular old spices. Yeah, well, some of them were in jars, mostly in jars.

WILLIAMS: Glass jars?

SAFLY: Glass jars.

WILLIAMS: And did you do that?

SAFLY: I think so.

WILLIAMS: Not you in particular, but the library.

SAFLY: Yes. The library did that, right.

WILLIAMS: Was the kitchen more cluttered or have a more lived-in look? Things on the table?

SAFLY: Certainly, and the rug makes a difference. Is that where the air conditioner was?

WILLIAMS: That's where we found it.

SAFLY: Okay. Well, you couldn't have put one over there because of the

refrigerator. Well, that was the only air conditioner, and then there was one in the study and one in Mrs. Truman's bedroom. But it was the only air conditioning in the house.

WILLIAMS: We did use their air conditioning the first summer.

DUNAR: Here's a list like you were talking about earlier. Was that on the refrigerator or was that—

SHAVER: Oh, yes. Did you ever notice anything stuck on the refrigerator?

SAFLY: Oh, yes, Valeria always had notes, yes.

DUNAR: And a list of people?

SHAVER: It had a list of telephone numbers.

DUNAR: Yes, there's a list of phone numbers.

SAFLY: Really?

DUNAR: Yes.

SAFLY: It was probably Valeria who did that to the calendar. She was big on . . .

DUNAR: Marking off the days?

SAFLY: She always marked off the days.

WILLIAMS: That's a popular visitor question.

SAFLY: What?

WILLIAMS: Who marked the days off the calendar?

SAFLY: Well, pretty obviously Mrs. Truman did not do the ones following the 18<sup>th</sup>. I think that's what you should say. [laughter] I want to look up this back staircase.

SHAVER: Let's take a break for a moment.

[End #4113; Begin #4114]

WILLIAMS: The back porch.

SAFLY: I thought these were all three lined up in a row. Isn't that the way they were?

WILLIAMS: The flower boxes? They very well could have been. I think the table has been moved out.

SAFLY: You've done a beautiful job with the geraniums. They're gorgeous! Aren't they lovely? You done good.

SHAVER: That's the old gate-leg table.

SAFLY: Yeah, as I recall, that falls down when you touch it. It's just propped up there?

WILLIAMS: That's probably a reproduction.

SHAVER: The original one was walnut or something.

SAFLY: Well, the other thing I would say is that you have done some trimming with the bushes.

WILLIAMS: That was done just recently.

SAFLY: You know, they were clear up all over here, you couldn't even see out. Which perhaps was part of the plan, so that the Trumans could have some privacy when they sat out here.

WILLIAMS: Did Mrs. Truman sit out here quite a bit when you were around?

SAFLY: They brought her out here for lunch a lot.

SHAVER: Did they have any particular table that they'd eat on? Was it this one or something like it?

SAFLY: Well, she was in a wheelchair, and they would just feed her. I think she was having to be fed. And the grapes. My gosh, you've got grapes growing on the trellis.

WILLIAMS: Yes, they're almost ripe.

SAFLY: I can smell them.

WILLIAMS: Were they here when you were?

SAFLY: Yeah, but they had not been cared for in a long time, and they were in pretty bad shape, and there was a really disgusting dead bird smashed in there. It had died between the vines and the screen, so that every time you looked over there, there was this bird. The poor thing had been flattened. I always thought about that story that Mr. Truman tells about the mother . . . Was it the mother robin or red bird who had her babies in this nest, and the cat got them? Yeah. And if he could have gotten the cat, he would have.

WILLIAMS: While we're out here, you did say you went up into the attic of the carriage house?

SAFLY: I did not do it. Dr. Curtis and Harry Clark climbed up in there. I was terrified. I didn't go.

WILLIAMS: Did you spend any other time in the carriage house?

SAFLY: We looked at the things out there. Yes, we looked at the stoves and the dressers.

WILLIAMS: You didn't find anything particularly noteworthy?

SAFLY: No.

WILLIAMS: Were the Secret Service still occupying part of the garage?

SAFLY: Well, they had equipment in there, yes. I don't remember much about it.

WILLIAMS: And Mrs. Wallace was using the garage?

SAFLY: Yes. Have you moved the shovel that was stuck out there in the yard?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

DUNAR: Just stuck in the middle of the yard?

SAFLY: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: There was a pipe left from the Secret Service—

SAFLY: Bob Lockwood used to mow the yard, and I guess he put it there so he wouldn't run over it.

SHAVER: He put a tilling fork there where the water main ran up.

SAFLY: It was there for years, just a shovel.

DUNAR: Reverend Hobby may have done that.

SAFLY: Very attractive.

WILLIAMS: And Mrs. Wallace was using the garage?

SAFLY: Yes, she was.

WILLIAMS: Where you had your parking difficulties?

SAFLY: We did park out here.

WILLIAMS: Did you ever come in the Truman Road gate?

SAFLY: No, never.

SHAVER: And the back over there was open? There was no gate on it?

SAFLY: Where?

SHAVER: Where you would drive in.

SAFLY: Oh, no, there was nothing. Do you have a gate up there now?

SHAVER: No.

SAFLY: Does anybody ever drive down here?

WILLIAMS: They try sometimes.

SAFLY: What do you do, shoot them? The roses are beautiful.

WILLIAMS: Well, let's try to get up the back staircase.

SAFLY: Okay.

SHAVER: I'll have to get on the other side of the door before we do it, though.

SAFLY: Oh, okay.

SHAVER: We're now opening the back door.

SAFLY: [chuckling] Oh God, I don't believe you guys have all this stuff tagged.  
Here's bug spray from 1941. [laughter]

WILLIAMS: Does the rack on the door here look any different?

SAFLY: Well, no, it was more cluttered. More cluttered. You've cleaned it up a lot.  
I would imagine they don't even make furniture polish. There were a lot of  
rags. There were rags all over here.

WILLIAMS: On the steps?

SAFLY: Yes. And the stuff from the storage room had begun to come down the  
steps. And I do remember right about here was a pinch bottle of Haig &  
Haig.

WILLIAMS: Right, about the step level with the window?

SAFLY: Yeah. I always thought it went down progressively.

WILLIAMS: Did you do anything with the shelf above the steps behind you there?

SAFLY: I don't remember, because I can't remember how we have gotten to it?

You could not walk in here. And in the midst of all this was the ironing board.

SHAVER: A big tab on it.

SAFLY: Interesting. Have you been up here before, Andy?

DUNAR: Yes, I have.

SAFLY: Well, you've moved the radio out. It was shoved up against this piece of furniture. I can sure remember trying to find one of these fans that worked, because it was hot up here.

WILLIAMS: It still gets that way.

SAFLY: Yeah, I imagine so.

WILLIAMS: If I showed you the HABS photo maybe you could see if that was more the way it looked.

SAFLY: Oh, I remember this! They used that for Mrs. Truman, this thing.

WILLIAMS: The hospital table?

SAFLY: Yes. And Margaret's desk. I'll bet those are invitations to Margaret's wedding.

SHAVER: Those that you didn't leave in your trunk?

SAFLY: That's right. [chuckling]

WILLIAMS: Is that this room?

SAFLY: Mm-hmm.

WILLIAMS: Even that looks like you could walk around in it, the photograph.

SAFLY: Well, you could not when we first came up here.

WILLIAMS: So were you the ones who kind of cleared the path?

SAFLY: We cleared a path, yes. What is this? Like a hospital chair? Is it a bathroom thing?

WILLIAMS: It's right there.

SAFLY: Oh, it sure is. Yes, I remember that being around. No, stuff was piled up, but you could not walk through here. And right smack dab in the middle of it was the ironing board, set up, which is now there.

WILLIAMS: Where were the letters that you found?

SAFLY: You know, I don't remember. I wish I could tell, you but I don't. They were just in a box, like that, you know, piled under some stuff.

DUNAR: Is this where most of the letters were?

SAFLY: There were quite a few here, yeah, and more in the attic. Most of the letters were either here or in the attic, yeah.

WILLIAMS: Well, if there is one room in the house that you'd have to say you removed more things from, would this be it?

SAFLY: This would probably be it, yes.

SHAVER: All the books that you boxed up—

SAFLY: We did box some books, yes.

SHAVER: What shelves did they come from, basically?

SAFLY: Back there.

WILLIAMS: On the east wall.

SAFLY: Well, they were kind of semi-boxed anyway. Mrs. Truman had these piles of books that would say "For David," or "For Margaret." We tried to keep the stuff together.

SHAVER: You used your own boxes for that?

SAFLY: Well, I think we did. Their boxes were falling apart. Have you heard this story? Somebody told me that when Madge moved back in, what, 1904 or '05, came back from Colorado with the children after David Wallace, her husband was gone, that this was her sitting room, it was fixed up as a little sitting room where she spent time?

SHAVER: Mrs. Wallace?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: We've heard that. So she would have her own staircase?

SAFLY: Yes.

SHAVER: Kind of a family room away from the Gates.

SAFLY: But, you always think about the widowed daughter that comes home to her parents, and bring the kids and has no means of support. The other thing I remember about here, and I assume they're mostly here, is that there was a lot of Rival Manufacturing gifts in this room.

SHAVER: [chuckling] In their original boxes.

SAFLY: In their original boxes. Including an electric pea sheller. [laughter]

SHAVER: From Henry Talge.

SAFLY: From Henry Talge—well, the founder of Rival Manufacturing. I was insanely jealous. An electric pea sheller. [chuckling]

WILLIAMS: Well, I wonder if Margaret took that? [laughter]

SHAVER: With that paperweight.

SAFLY: Geez, I don't know. Isn't that amazing?

WILLIAMS: I don't think we have it. I could look.

SHAVER: Oh, do you notice that the shelves were built out of the packing crates from the White House?

SAFLY: Right, right. Hasn't somebody interviewed the man that built those shelves? Yeah, they say "Independence" on them. Well, waste not, want not. It was good wood. Pretty amazing. I like that elegant, old liquor set. That's just me personally.

DUNAR: How about that telephone?

SAFLY: It's just a cover, one of those old covers that you put on? And radios. There were radios [enunciating each word] *all over this house*. I've never seen any of them work, but . . .

WILLIAMS: And that's the roll-top desk you said you found a few letters in?

SAFLY: Yes, that Mr. Truman wrote to Margaret. There were a lot of Margaret's childhood things: Toys and some things that we took back. This would be a great house for grandchildren, wouldn't it?

WILLIAMS: Anything else about the storage room?

SAFLY: No. It looks better.

DUNAR: What is that over there, that sort of V-shaped metal?

SAFLY: Oh, if you can believe it, we finally figured that out. That is for holding meat while you carve it. If you're serving a leg of lamb or some giant roast, that holds it while you slice it. Another *incredibly* practical gift.

WILLIAMS: Another Talge? [chuckling]

SAFLY: Obviously used by Mrs. Truman for her meat loaf, which she put in the

White House cookbook. [laughter]

WILLIAMS: Well, in this hallway leading into the dressing room, was it stacked?

SAFLY: Oh, yes, this was stacked, and the sweeper was always in here, as I recall.

WILLIAMS: That pink one right there?

SAFLY: Yeah, well, there were several sweepers.

WILLIAMS: So this was an active storage area.

SAFLY: This was active, and a lot of shoe-polishing equipment, as I recall, and a lot of Mr. Truman's toiletries.

WILLIAMS: In the little closet.

SAFLY: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: Some of his clothing.

SAFLY: Mm-hmm.

WILLIAMS: Was any thought given to removing his clothing?

SAFLY: From this area?

WILLIAMS: Well, from here, or there are some suits in the closet here.

SAFLY: No, no, we didn't do that.

WILLIAMS: We're in the Truman dressing room now.

SHAVER: What was your impression when you first saw this room?

SAFLY: What would anybody's impression be? I think, how plain and how simple, and in some ways it's a strange room because it looks like he just left, earlier today, and that he's coming back. When my father died, my mother got rid of all of his clothes and got everything out. She didn't want to look at it. But Mrs. Truman evidently was totally different. She left it as if he

were going to come back, sit in this rocking chair, put on a pair of shoes, pick out a tie. Clothes back from the cleaners. It's very interesting.

WILLIAMS: And you did inventory this room?

SAFLY: You know, I think we did not. We, probably said "There are seventy-eight ties and fourteen suits." I don't remember that we did. You know, we just did a basic furniture thing. It didn't seem important to count everything.

WILLIAMS: Did you ever know anyone using this room or walking through or . . .

SAFLY: No.

WILLIAMS: It was pretty much closed off?

SAFLY: No, I was looking for a plug one time, which is how we discovered that he had run the extension cord through the hole in the wall. A slight electrical problem, I would think. No, it looks pretty much the same. These pieces of furniture are made from White House restoration wood.

WILLIAMS: The tie and belt rack?

SAFLY: Yes.

SHAVER: The little valet.

SAFLY: It's really nice. It's kind of too bad some of these things can't be where somebody can see them. Do you think this'll ever be opened up?

SHAVER: Don't know.

WILLIAMS: We can show pictures, though. Well, shall we go into the awful blue bathroom?

SAFLY: Into the ugly blue bathroom. Do not fall down the stairs!!

WILLIAMS: Someone has done that before.

SAFLY: I would imagine. Harry Truman, I believe. I can certainly understand it.  
Huh. No, the same bottle of Prell shampoo. This looks pretty much the same. Do we know when they put this in the house?

WILLIAMS: The sink?

SAFLY: Well, this whole bathroom. Has this always been here? This has a '50s look about it, doesn't it?

SHAVER: We've got it pegged sometime when they came back. Don't know whether it was the first or second or third year. This and the bathroom downstairs seem to have been done at the same time.

SAFLY: Just think, Dean and Alice Acheson were the only White House people who've stayed in the house, that were houseguests of the Trumans.

DUNAR: When he fell, did he fall just walking down the stairs? Is that what happened, or do they know?

SAFLY: I would guess so. Didn't she find him halfway in the bathtub? It would be easy to fall, even if you weren't eighty years old.

DUNAR: Sure.

SHAVER: He banged his head on something and broke his ribs on something else.

SAFLY: Yes, had a minor concussion or something.

WILLIAMS: Did anyone use this bathroom when you were around, other than you and Pat? [chuckling]

SHAVER: If looks could kill.

SAFLY: I have on occasion used this bathroom. I tried to be respectful, consider where I was and how fortunate I was. [laughter] It's getting late, and I'm

getting crazy.

WILLIAMS: It wasn't designated the nurses' bathroom or anything like that?

SAFLY: No, I don't think so. I do know that Reverend Hobby was always expected to use the one in the basement.

WILLIAMS: How about the ceiling?

SAFLY: About the same.

WILLIAMS: About to cave in.

SAFLY: Uh-huh. I know, and they wallpapered over wallpaper, right?

SHAVER: That's what it looks like.

WILLIAMS: It used to be red in here, I guess.

SAFLY: I know. This house is just kind of held together with pieces of glue and tape.

DUNAR: Paint.

SAFLY: I think so. It's done an amazing job. Oh, I love this room!

SHAVER: The childhood room.

WILLIAMS: The childhood bedroom.

SAFLY: What?

WILLIAMS: We call it the childhood bedroom.

SAFLY: Of Margaret Truman.

WILLIAMS: Is this where the Dior bottles were?

SAFLY: I think in here on the floor. Yes, that's where they were.

WILLIAMS: Mrs. Truman's clothing I assume was in here.

SAFLY: Yes, and about 6,000 purses and gloves and all kinds of stuff.

SHAVER: The purses were up on the top?

SAFLY: Yeah, purses were up on the top.

WILLIAMS: Did the Secret Service make rounds of the whole house while you were around?

SAFLY: No, not when I was around. This is really a nice chest. I can't remember if we got into that or not. I think we did. This is the one we really wanted in.

WILLIAMS: In the passageway?

SAFLY: Yeah. We finally got into it and found his pass onto the ship that he went overseas on. Where he's got his head shaved up here and a little strip of hair down the . . .

WILLIAMS: From World War I.

SAFLY: From World War I. Oh, gosh, there's Natalie.

WILLIAMS: Was it cluttered like this?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Does it look any different?

SAFLY: There were a lot of telephone books, as I recall, and they're still here. From various cities.

WILLIAMS: That's about it?

SAFLY: Uh-huh. And that goes out to the sleeping porch. A nice picture of Margaret and Natalie.

WILLIAMS: So that is Natalie?

SAFLY: That is Natalie. That's Natalie Ott Wallace.

WILLIAMS: We've been debating on it. On top of the chest of drawers.

SAFLY: That's Frank's wife.

WILLIAMS: Was it broken like that?

SAFLY: Yes. [laughter]

SHAVER: The bridge club on the wall.

SAFLY: Interesting. And the little boys. Oh, you know, there was another story. Have you ever heard the story about Christine Wallace taking a photograph off this bedroom wall?

WILLIAMS: I don't think so. I haven't.

SAFLY: Well, Christine came for Mrs. Truman's funeral. David was here, and Christine was here. And Valeria told us the next day that May brought Christine over to the house and she walked through the house, and Valeria said she took a photograph off of the wall in this bedroom. And I don't remember, I don't think she told me what it was, and I don't remember what it was, that she wanted.

WILLIAMS: And there's a nail sticking out there.

SAFLY: Well, there's one over there, too. And that she took it with her, which I don't suppose is any big deal.

WILLIAMS: I assume that she was in it, or . . . ?

SAFLY: I don't know. No, I don't recall. I think it would have been something of the Trumans.

WILLIAMS: But this bedroom wasn't in use anytime when you were here?

SAFLY: No, it sure wasn't.

WILLIAMS: Was it used for anything? Storage or stuff like this?

SAFLY: No, it just looks like this.

WILLIAMS: Is that the portable TV you mentioned earlier?

SAFLY: No, this was another one. I don't think this one works. Gosh, all this stuff! That *Life* magazine cover photo of Clifton and Margaret is really a nice photograph, before they got married. Beautiful.

WILLIAMS: You're ready? Step down?

SAFLY: Into my rap group here. And here's Mrs. Truman's desk made from White House wood.

WILLIAMS: Was it sitting there?

SAFLY: Yes, it was, exactly like that. I do remember finding David Wallace, her father's obituary—the first time I'd ever seen the obituary—in her desk.

SHAVER: I think there was one drawer with a whole lot of clippings in it.

SAFLY: Yes, there were some death clippings. You remember, that very sentimental obituary of her father's death?

DUNAR: Were there any letters in the desk?

SAFLY: No, I don't recall. There were some photographs of Gates relatives that we took.

SHAVER: Also, all those photographs of the Gateses and Wallaces, the old, old pictures?

SAFLY: Yes, but these were like small snapshots.

WILLIAMS: Anything else you remember removing? The clippings, photos?

SAFLY: No, that's about it. I remember being impressed about how they screwed a pencil sharpener into to this really attractive desk.

WILLIAMS: Attaching a pencil sharpener?

SAFLY: Yes, to the side. And, I remember the leopard. Isn't that off Mr. Truman's county judge desk.

WILLIAMS: I've seen it before.

SAFLY: Well, there's a photograph of him, I think it's in the county court days, with that thing sitting on his desk. And I remember that there were about forty silver trays stacked under here.

WILLIAMS: What happened to them?

SAFLY: I believe we have them at the library. There was a lot of interesting stuff in this little room. In that trunk we found some family Bibles.

WILLIAMS: We can look in the alcove there.

SHAVER: Did you find a lot of things in the file cabinet?

SAFLY: Well, I know there's a lot more stuff in the file cabinet, isn't there?

SHAVER: Yeah, but you made mention of like . . . It seemed like she kind of kept all her communications with the first ladies and—

SAFLY: Well, yeah, there was a condolence letter from Jackie Kennedy in there and, I don't remember who else. This is different. Where is the desk now?

SHAVER: It's at the cave.

SAFLY: It's at the cave?

WILLIAMS: We're in the master bedroom, Margaret's bedroom.

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Another television.

SAFLY: Yes, I understand this was a gift from Margaret?

WILLIAMS: I think so.

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: All the water stains and everything was here?

SAFLY: Yes. I can remember wanting to get into that little cabinet above the fireplace. We never did.

WILLIAMS: Above the fireplace?

SAFLY: Yes, that little locked thing.

SHAVER: When we get in there we'll let you know.

SAFLY: And there was a beautiful photograph . . .

SHAVER: Of the farm home.

SAFLY: Of the farm home.

WILLIAMS: On the mantel.

SHAVER: Was that one that you found? It wasn't here when I got here. Or is that the one you think she may have taken?

SAFLY: I think Margaret took that. It's before they cut the trees. It showed that long line of trees going up to the house, and it's kind of a sepia-colored photograph. It's very nice. Huh. But aside from the desk being gone and . . .

WILLIAMS: The toys were piled up here?

SAFLY: The toys were piled up for the little boys, I guess, when they came to visit. I remember that being a card table. You know, that opens up and makes into a card table.

WILLIAMS: The table in the northwest corner.

SAFLY: Gosh, there's enough furniture in this place for seven or eight normal

families.

WILLIAMS: Did you explore the closet?

SAFLY: Yes, we did. I don't remember what was in it. I do believe there was a fur cape or something that Margaret wanted out of here that we took back to her.

WILLIAMS: Was there more than is in there now? It's pretty empty.

SAFLY: I don't remember too much, except I do remember . . . I think I remember taking a fur cape out of here.

WILLIAMS: What about the junior bartender set?

SAFLY: That was definitely here. [chuckling]

WILLIAMS: Anything else?

SAFLY: Another nice chest, as I recall, from Malaysia—hand-carved.

WILLIAMS: Anything good in there?

SAFLY: No.

WILLIAMS: This room to me seems too big for the amount of furniture that's in it.

SAFLY: You mean it would hold more furniture?

WILLIAMS: It seems like there's an awfully big space right out here by the doorway.

SAFLY: I don't remember anything else.

WILLIAMS: Anything about the alcove else besides the . . . ?

SAFLY: No, I do remember there were family Bibles in that. I think there was a Willock Bible and a Wallace Bible in that cedar chest.

WILLIAMS: Were things stacked up on the floor, like newspaper clippings and books?

SAFLY: Yes, they were. And up here.

WILLIAMS: On top of the cabinet.

SAFLY: And I remember these lovely sculptured hands. Are these Margaret's hands?

WILLIAMS: I don't know. Are they?

SAFLY: I think so. They're very nice.

WILLIAMS: Did you get the idea that the file cabinet had been used recently?

SAFLY: No.

SHAVER: Would you say it was hers or his, by the stuff in it?

SAFLY: Oh, I'd say it was hers.

WILLIAMS: And she had some condolence letters, so she had been using it at least—

SAFLY: There was a letter from Richard Nixon after Mr. Truman's death, and I do remember one from Jackie Kennedy, Jackie Onassis. Sorry, my mind is going.

WILLIAMS: Pardon the suitcases.

SAFLY: That's all right.

WILLIAMS: They're from the attic.

SHAVER: We're taking the grips from the attic. [chuckling]

SAFLY: Now, in this particular closet we found a couple of interesting things: Mrs. Truman's wedding shoes.

WILLIAMS: Underneath the staircase going to the attic.

SAFLY: And an announcement of a Ku Klux Klan meeting that we have at the library. It's like in Oak Grove in 1924 or something like that.

WILLIAMS: You didn't hear that. [chuckling]

SAFLY: Sorry. We've got it at the library.

WILLIAMS: And the ties?

SAFLY: Yes, all the same.

SHAVER: Well, you said there was a lot of '20s stuff, a lot of Truman-Jacobson stuff in there.

SAFLY: Yeah, there was Truman-Jacobson bills and stationery, and they were shoved way, way in the back, yeah.

SHAVER: The loving cup.

DUNAR: Is that all at the library?

SAFLY: And the Battery D loving cup was here, yes. The one the Battery gave him in the '20s.

DUNAR: The Truman-Jacobson records are at the library?

SAFLY: Oh, there weren't any records. There was just stationery and some bills.

WILLIAMS: And there was clothing in here?

SAFLY: I don't remember the clothing, no.

SHAVER: Was it crammed full or did it still had some space in it?

SAFLY: It still had some space.

WILLIAMS: But you got the idea the stuff in the back had been there a long time?

SAFLY: Yes.

DUNAR: How many ties were there the total number in the house, would you say?

SAFLY: Oh, God, I can't imagine.

WILLIAMS: Did you remove any of Mr. Truman's clothing?

SAFLY: We took some formal clothing from upstairs in the attic, things that would

have been worn to formal occasions—inaugural clothes.

SHAVER: The wall sconces. All of the wall sconces, one on the north, one on the west.

WILLIAMS: We're in the guest bedroom now. Was the hat sitting out like that on the chest of drawers?

SAFLY: Yes, it was. I often wore it.

WILLIAMS: Campaigning?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Did you look through the pile of things in the corner, the northwest corner?

SAFLY: No. In fact, I don't remember that stuff. I remember this box full of stuff over here.

WILLIAMS: Behind the door on the southwest.

SAFLY: Yes, and I remember this is furniture that came out of the White House—made from the White House renovation wood. Am I right?

SHAVER: Yes. Oh, who's the company that . . . I can't think of it.

SAFLY: And I do remember that that is that old Independence print that Frank Glenn bought for Truman in Spain.

WILLIAMS: The framed item on the north wall.

SAFLY: He bought it in a flea market in Spain or something?

WILLIAMS: Does it say that on the back?

SAFLY: Yes, it does. Frank Glenn was a rare book dealer in Kansas City, and a friend of Mr. Truman's.

WILLIAMS: We're looking at a copy of the autobiography of Harry S Truman with

news clippings and things in it.

SAFLY: Who does that belong to? Margaret?

SHAVER: We found it in [unintelligible] the Library institute sent out.

SAFLY: Oh, oh, oh. Gosh! When was that published? '80?

SHAVER: It's one of the few contemporary Truman books, it's one of the only contemporary we have in here. Other than the one by Susan [unintelligible].

WILLIAMS: By contemporary, what do you mean?

DUNAR: Post 1970, post Harry.

[End #4114; Begin #4115]

WILLIAMS: We're continuing the oral history interview with Elizabeth Safly that began yesterday, August 15, 1990. We're continuing today, August 16, 1990. The same four participants are here, and we're in the basement of the Truman home now. And before we go back up to the second floor, I was wondering if you, thinking today, thought of anything that you left out yesterday or would like to add?

SAFLY: About the basement?

WILLIAMS: About anything we talked about yesterday.

SAFLY: No, I really don't. The basement amazes me how different it is. I think it was dangerous when we were here before. Seriously. Just so much stuff, and the wiring looked very scary, but it looks okay now. I don't feel like I'm going to blow up any minute.

WILLIAMS: Were the nurses and other helpers using the basement while you were

around?

SHAVER: Was there any laundry being done?

WILLIAMS: Looking at the HABS photos.

SAFLY: I think the lady who did the laundry probably came down here. And sometimes I think Valeria did laundry down here. But I don't think there would have been any other reason for anybody to be down here. I did forget to tell you that at one point, and here again I don't remember if it was before Mrs. Truman died or after, Margaret's trunk was right here in this corner under the stairs. That is under the stairs. She called Dr. Zobrist, and she said her diaries were in that trunk, and she would like us to haul them out for safekeeping, which we did, and there was a lot of damage, a lot of water damage. They're basically the script for her book, *Souvenir*. You know, just sort of a day-by-day run of what she did. And her stamp collection was also water-damaged.

WILLIAMS: So you took the whole trunk and all of its contents.

SAFLY: Yes, I think we unloaded it and took the stuff in batches and then tried to dry it out on the floor someplace in the museum collection, and then got the trunk later because it was really very damp.

WILLIAMS: It was just the bottom of the trunk that had gotten wet?

SAFLY: I don't remember, but I think the water had soaked up through.

WILLIAMS: When you were here, do you ever remember?

SAFLY: I'm not talking about water you can wring out. Just terrible dampness.

WILLIAMS: When you were here, do you ever remember seeing water on the floor?

SAFLY: No, but it seems to me it was a lot damper down here than it is now, the feeling of dampness, so you must have done something.

WILLIAMS: We have air conditioning, for one thing.

SAFLY: Air conditioning helps. Yes, that's true.

SHAVER: I asked you about this once upon a time. Margaret makes some mention in her book about notes, old Grandfather Gates letters that she was reading in the basement. Did you find any other manuscript items in the basement other than in the trunk?

SAFLY: No.

WILLIAMS: You didn't spend much time down here?

SAFLY: No.

WILLIAMS: And you said you didn't actually inventory the basement.

SAFLY: No. Did not.

WILLIAMS: About the inventory in general, you worked in pairs, right? Did you usually have one person looking at objects, describing them, and somebody writing them down?

SAFLY: We did that to start with, and then we discovered that it was so slow doing that, we just stayed together and both worked. I think it was supposed to be kind of a buddy system, you know. I'm not saying that there was . . . I don't think there was concern that one of us was going to take something, but there was . . . you know, just better to have us together. But we discontinued that because it just took too long.

WILLIAMS: So you ended up just working in the same room but separately?

SAFLY: Each of us just worked separately, but we stayed together usually.

WILLIAMS: And then you went back and typed up the inventory?

SAFLY: Right.

WILLIAMS: When you removed things to the library, was there someone there cataloging or listing things as they came in?

SAFLY: No, Pat and I usually did that ourselves on the off-days—on the days we did not come to the house.

WILLIAMS: And there seemed to be quite a volume of things. Did you run out of room over there in the vault, or did you separate things?

SAFLY: I remember Harry Clark being concerned about the vault. He had all that stuff down at one end, and we had no way of fumigating any of that material, but it went in there anyway.

WILLIAMS: All of it together?

SAFLY: Harry put the material in archives boxes. Harry's really the one who organized the manuscripts and brought them to the library.

SHAVER: On a regular basis, did you talk to Dr. Zobrist as things would come up, or did you generally talk to him once a week?

SAFLY: I think we probably talked to him . . . oh, probably once a week. And then some nights we would stop and visit with him when we got back.

WILLIAMS: Did he seem curious about what you were finding?

SAFLY: Oh, I think he was surprised and pleased, although here again who knew what the outcome would be. We didn't know where any of that material would go, where it would end up.

WILLIAMS: But he wasn't there waiting at the door for you to get back with the day's things?

SAFLY: No, he was not, no. [laughter]

DUNAR: At what point were the letters catalogued and organized in archival boxes and so forth? Right away when you brought them, or would you have to get clearance from Margaret first?

SAFLY: No, because we were just keeping them for safekeeping. I think Harry was trying to work on them as he could. And I believe that was before Mrs. Truman died. Well, yeah, it would have had to have been. When was *Dear Bess* published, '83? I can't remember when the letters were opened in the research room.

DUNAR: That sounds right.

SAFLY: The spring of '82 maybe?

WILLIAMS: Did Margaret have to give her approval for the opening of that?

SAFLY: Well, it was her material, and it couldn't be opened until she had signed it over.

WILLIAMS: So she, in effect, donated a lot of the material to the government.

SAFLY: Yes, she did.

DUNAR: Did she ever look at any of the letters or anything like that?

SAFLY: I don't believe so, not when I was around. She must have gotten an incredible surprise when Dr. Ferrell published all that material. [laughter] You'd have to get that story from Dr. Ferrell, because I believe he offered to be a co-editor with Mrs. Daniel and publish the "Dear Bess" letters. But

Dr. Ferrell would have to tell you that, because I'm not sure what happened.

WILLIAMS: So it just goes to show again that she didn't really seem all that interested in what you were taking out?

SAFLY: Well, I don't know about that. I felt like she was too moved by seeing some of her father's things. I think it bothered her.

WILLIAMS: Or was she maybe convinced that there really wasn't anything left.

SAFLY: Oh, well, I think she believed that wholeheartedly that we hadn't, you know. But it was pretty astounding. I don't remember what the total amount of letters, just the letters that he wrote to her are, but it's, what, twelve hundred or something [1322, an exact number later supplied by Safly]?

DUNAR: Yes. [tape turned off]

SAFLY: Do you all ever throw out anything?

WILLIAMS: Very little. Paper clips.

SAFLY: I don't know, it seems like some of these plastic flowers would be a good place to start.

WILLIAMS: Why didn't you take them? [laughter]

SAFLY: Well, I think on one occasion I did jerk some off of the dining room table. They were pretty ugly.

WILLIAMS: We were in the bedroom.

SAFLY: Right, when I conked out.

WILLIAMS: I don't know if there's anything else in this room that we needed to talk about. You talked about the curtains.

SAFLY: New curtains that were made by Sermon and Anderson Interior Decorators.  
The little engraving of Independence given to Harry S Truman by Frank Glenn.

WILLIAMS: That's catalogue number 19097.

SAFLY: Frank Glenn wrote on the back: "Purchased by me in Madrid, Spain, in what is called the . . ." something, something. The something market. March '57. Frank Glenn. I think that's interesting that he found this in Madrid. Other than that, I'm sorry, I really don't. The only other thing I remember about this room is that Valeria told me that when the family came that Clifton always slept in this room.

WILLIAMS: By himself?

SAFLY: Well, now, I didn't ask that.

WILLIAMS: Well, you said Clifton?

SAFLY: Well, that's what I understood. Clifton, period.

WILLIAMS: Well, do you know where the family slept? During the funeral, with all the grandsons here?

SAFLY: I don't know about that. I don't know.

WILLIAMS: That's quite a crowd.

SAFLY: Yeah. Well, there would be enough beds though, wouldn't there? Margaret, Clifton, two boys there, two boys downstairs?

WILLIAMS: That's it.

SAFLY: That's it. Still leaving another bed.

WILLIAMS: And Aunt May's house if they needed it.

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Anything in the closet over here?

SAFLY: I think this closet's always been pretty empty. Yes. See, there isn't much here. Although I'd say that's a gentleman's dressing gown, wouldn't you?

WILLIAMS: Some photographs or something on the floor.

SAFLY: I don't remember. Sorry.

SHAVER: Did you find any shopping bags of correspondence in this room? I remember seeing on one of your inventories there was like a bag, a Harzfeld's bag full of letters that were tucked behind the door.

SAFLY: Yes, I think there were some of Mrs. Truman's letters, mostly post-presidential period.

SHAVER: The little that's left here kind of suggests the recent '50s, '60s.

SAFLY: I don't know if this means that she used to come in here and write letters. I don't know what that means.

WILLIAMS: These are letters to her? I guess they wouldn't be from her.

SAFLY: Oh, to her, yes, and notes from various friends.

SHAVER: A Christmas card from Mrs. Brooks tucked over there, and other bits and pieces here.

SAFLY: Yes, that's interesting.

WILLIAMS: It does look like they had a writing table over by the window.

SAFLY: Well, they used this card table.

WILLIAMS: Right.

SAFLY: And there were some business-type things in here, tax business, as I recall.

But that's all I can remember.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Any idea why this luggage tag is on Mrs. Truman's luggage from a William McMichael? Do you know who that is?

SAFLY: No, I probably have already asked myself that. I don't know.

WILLIAMS: I thought that was kind of strange.

SAFLY: How strange. Maybe he's the guy at this hotel or something? I don't know. I thought there was some pretty strange luggage up there.

WILLIAMS: Here's some of it.

SAFLY: Yes! I always wondered, do you think these were probably trunks that they took like on official visits or state trips or something when they had to have a lot of clothes?

SHAVER: Well, they have customs stickers on them, so he must have gone overseas with them or something. On the side.

SAFLY: Well, it just makes me wonder.

WILLIAMS: They do look official, almost like diplomatic boxes. Or Army green.

SAFLY: This looks like something you take aboard the *Augusta*. Although these say "Honorable Harry S Truman, Independence, Missouri."

WILLIAMS: That they were for their European trips.

SAFLY: A possibility. My, they're ugly, aren't they. Is that the tour person?  
[overheard from the first floor below]

WILLIAMS: Yes. You can see the alcove better today.

SAFLY: Yes, I remember that little silver-like trunk, and there's Margaret's hands again. Aren't they lovely! And where was this child's table and chair? Is

that from the attic?

SHAVER: Up in the attic.

SAFLY: I remember that. Very interesting.

WILLIAMS: Did you look in this bookcase in the corner?

SAFLY: Yes, we did.

WILLIAMS: Nothing strike you that could have been Mr. Truman's?

SAFLY: No, there was Madge Wallace's cookbook that dated way back, which we took. Because there were things marked, I think both by Madge Gates Wallace and by Bess Truman. That's the only thing of any significance I remember out of that particular cabinet.

WILLIAMS: Did this seem to be Mrs. Truman's cabinet?

SAFLY: Oh, no, I don't think so. You mean by the collection of stuff?

WILLIAMS: Right.

SAFLY: No, I don't think so. No. I can't see Mrs. Truman collecting these ugly Hawaiian things. Although, you know, they went to Hawaii with Ed Pauley.

SHAVER: I think that's stuff that Ed Pauley had sent. He'd sent a number of gifts.

SAFLY: They went to Ed Pauley's island, in March of . . . ?

WILLIAMS: Of '53.

SAFLY: Fifty-three, yes, in that spring.

DUNAR: And didn't they go again a couple of years later?

SAFLY: I don't know, maybe they did. Well, Pauley did have his own island, didn't he?

WILLIAMS: Coconut Island, with the coconut cabinet. Anything else in the alcove?

SAFLY: No.

WILLIAMS: I thought it was interesting there was a copy of *Mr. President* in there that Mr. Truman had inscribed to Frank and Natalie. Did you notice that? Way down at the bottom.

SAFLY: No, because the library is filled with . . . We have *many* books that Mr. Truman inscribed to various people, and somehow they never got them.

WILLIAMS: I thought that was unusual.

SAFLY: I think sometimes Miss Conway forgot to send them. Because we have a lot of books that he's inscribed, "To my dear friend so and so," and then they'd just sit there and never get mailed. Obviously this person was at some time waiting to get this book.

WILLIAMS: Well, this one is July '52, I think, in the White House he'd written to Frank and Natalie. So apparently it didn't get sent out.

SHAVER: It's one of the numbered series.

WILLIAMS: They were probably offended for not getting it.

SAFLY: Oh, it's one of the numbered ones?

SHAVER: We should probably retreat.

WILLIAMS: That's true. Well, shall we go up to the attic? I know you've been dying to get up there.

SAFLY: I have. Let's go.

WILLIAMS: Anything in this closet, going up?

SAFLY: No. That's where they kept sheets. It was a linen closet, sheets and towels.

WILLIAMS: No goodies stashed away?

SAFLY: No. [sound of footsteps climbing stairs]

WILLIAMS: Did you ever see this attic fan in use?

SAFLY: Oh, yes, we used it a lot. It kept us alive in the summer. We really did.

WILLIAMS: You'd open up the doors and just crank it on?

SAFLY: You turn it on down at the bottom of the stairs.

WILLIAMS: What was up here at the top of the stairs?

SAFLY: The Christmas decorations.

WILLIAMS: Just piled around?

SAFLY: Yes, piled here.

WILLIAMS: Anything else?

SAFLY: No, I think that was pretty much it. Where are they?

WILLIAMS: I think they've been taken to the cave.

SAFLY: Oh, really?

WILLIAMS: We have a Christmas collection out there in one of the cabinets.

SAFLY: Interesting.

SHAVER: You folks got some of those decorations too, didn't you?

SAFLY: We may have. I don't remember.

SHAVER: Pat seemed to think that you had some older ones.

SAFLY: We may have. I do remember this floor. That goes throughout the attic, doesn't it?

WILLIAMS: Mm-hmm. Did they seem to be mostly like dime-store decorations?

SAFLY: No, I think typical decorations that are three generations old or something. I

don't really remember looking at them that closely. Sorry. If I had only known. Oh, this is pretty exciting.

DUNAR: What's this hook for?

SAFLY: I think that's to hook the door, hold the fan door back, yes. This is obviously a homemade deal with this fan. But I want to tell you, it works good.

WILLIAMS: Did the fellow you interviewed install the fan, or was he just here for the walls?

DUNAR: No, he just did the walls. They didn't want any . . . I'm not sure.

SAFLY: I think that fan's been there a long time, don't you?

WILLIAMS: Well, this is the lower attic. You will be surprised.

SAFLY: The lower attic? I certainly am. Why, this was the hat corner. Hats. Hats by the dozen. LBJ hats.

WILLIAMS: Whose hats were they?

SAFLY: Oh, Mr. Truman's hats, yeah. In boxes, cardboard, leather, you name it. Very interesting.

WILLIAMS: Anything in the closets?

SAFLY: Most, I would say, of the formal wear of both Mr. and Mrs. Truman that we took back to the Truman Library was found in these closets. You know, tuxedos, suits of his dating back to the senate. White. Those white Palm Beach suits or whatever you call them, and a lot of shoes, two-tone shoes, spats, all kinds of wonderful stuff. Several fur coats that you see on Mrs. Truman in photographs, a black Persian lamb that she wore quite a bit, I

think during the senate days.

WILLIAMS: What about up above in the cabinet?

SAFLY: It seems to me like shoes and hats.

WILLIAMS: More hats.

SAFLY: More hats. Everybody must . . . in the world sent Truman hats, as I recall.

WILLIAMS: Did you remove any?

SAFLY: Yes, we did, quite a few. I can't tell you the number. Well, since we took formal wear, morning coats, we took top hats or formal hats to match.

WILLIAMS: Anything over here on the shelves on the west wall?

SAFLY: Well, it does seem to me there was something in that corner that was interesting, but I'll be darned if I can remember what it was.

DUNAR: Liz, how did you decide what clothing to take? Did you talk to Dr. Zobrist or did you make the judgment?

SAFLY: Well, I think we did. We were trying to take things that we had seen the Trumans wearing in photographs, and it seemed like a good idea, because then you had some way of tying clothes to events. We would know her inaugural gown and the suit and whatever she wore to the inaugural ceremony.

DUNAR: Did the museum staff get involved at all in making suggestions or asking that you find particular items?

SAFLY: No, we didn't have any museum staff at that point. It was only Pat. We didn't have a curator. We just did it.

SHAVER: Did you find items in pockets of the suits or pants?

SAFLY: No, I don't ever remember finding anything in the pockets.

SHAVER: Like cards or money?

SAFLY: No. Is this pale furniture from Key West?

SHAVER: I don't know if it's from Key West or not.

SAFLY: I don't know why I have that idea. Maybe it's off the *Williamsburg*.

SHAVER: We see it in the film *Person to Person*. It's what they were sitting in when they were in the study. That's all I know about it.

SAFLY: This blond stuff? I had forgotten it was in *Person to Person*.

WILLIAMS: Were there things piled up in the window areas?

SAFLY: Yes. I don't remember what window, but I remember one window there was a beautiful pale-green Wedgewood vase. There were a lot of gifts of state up here, a lot of silver, several Steuben items.

WILLIAMS: What about the floor?

SAFLY: This is very cleaned-up. It was very crowded.

WILLIAMS: Where did you do your vacuuming?

SAFLY: Well, I will show you. There were feathers and stuff all over. However, right over here, and you'll have to say where that is, right in here someplace is where the raccoon had punched holes in this case of brandied peaches and turned them all over, so the sticky stuff had been tracked all over. Then, as he ate the pigeons, of course, the feathers had stuck to the juice and your feet stuck to the floor.

WILLIAMS: So in the upper attic.

SHAVER: The upper attic, where the trunks . . . west of the trunks.

WILLIAMS: Kind of along the north edge.

SAFLY: Yes. The one with the rounded top, that's George Gates's trunk? Right.

WILLIAMS: Did you look through all of the trunks and suitcases and boxes?

SAFLY: Yes. Yes, I did. You've done a lot of cleaning up up here. You know what I remember over in this corner? These packing boxes were filled with framed photographs of dignitaries from other countries. It looked like they'd just taken them off the wall in the White House and packed them in this thing.

WILLIAMS: This is by the west window.

SAFLY: Yeah, we took most of those, but there's a lot of . . .

SHAVER: Crate T-9C.

SAFLY: Mr. Truman's World War I stuff, but there was also over here someplace a gob of rocks.

SHAVER: It's right over here.

SAFLY: Okay, well, it was over here. Yes! A strange collection of things, like somebody had removed these from a house, some old house that burned or something? See, I want to connect something really romantic with this collection of stuff. I thought maybe he brought this stuff from France.

SHAVER: Who knows? [chuckling]

SAFLY: Who knows? I don't know.

WILLIAMS: Were these windows up here just piled up like this?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Were you ever around when Reverend Hobby put up the storm windows?

SAFLY: Yes, I was, in the fall.

WILLIAMS: Did he store them up here?

SAFLY: I don't believe so. I think some were in the garage or the carriage house and some were in the basement, as I recall. Those windows are heavy. Are they still in the house? I assume they are. The storm windows?

SHAVER: Yes.

SAFLY: Yeah, those old homemade jobbies that you hang on hooks and fasten.

WILLIAMS: Could you walk up to this window to open it?

SAFLY: No, you would have had to climb over some stuff to get here. I do remember that Arm and Hammer wooden soda box.

WILLIAMS: How about this basket of talcum powder?

SAFLY: I remember that, yes. I have no idea what the origins of that are.

SHAVER: I remember in one of the accounts that a grandson wrote about finding soap, Truman and Jacobsen, little bars of men's soap. Did you ever encounter any of that stuff?

SAFLY: Really? No. No, I don't ever remember. No, I don't remember that. I sure don't. Isn't it interesting that every time they took down molding or whatever they saved it? You never know when you might need a board.

WILLIAMS: The ceiling boards were pretty much intact then?

SAFLY: No. No, they were falling down, falling down on us, all the time. There was a broken window here. One of these was broken out. I can't remember which one—it might have been where the pigeon came in? Or maybe there was more than one. Well, no, that looks like there's a pattern

here, doesn't it? There was one or more of these broken out when we came up here.

WILLIAMS: And did you do anything to change it, cover it?

SAFLY: No, I think we told Bob [Lockwood] about it. Then, of course, the pigeons would come right in. They were nesting up here.

WILLIAMS: Visit?

SAFLY: Visit. Yes, they'd look at you through the window. Because they had been used to walking in and doing whatever. And I've forgotten how hot it is in this place. Isn't it awful? Deadly. There were a lot of clothes hanging from hooks, and I remember that there was a black dress of Margaret's. It was crepe, really, it had been a lovely dress. It was hanging right in here someplace from a hook, and the raccoon had eaten up as far as he could get. It was okay on the top, but then there was just one piece that sort of hung here, and then the rest was all eaten.

WILLIAMS: This was in the south side of the upper attic.

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: You mentioned several times the rain poured in on you.

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Was that all over or in one particular area?

SAFLY: Actually, it just seemed like it was everywhere, but I'm sure it wasn't. We just worked where it didn't come in. And, of course, these boards were falling down all the time, and then about forty pounds of dirt and dust would come down on top of you from, I'm exaggerating. But stuff was

all falling down. And of course, you could see through, you know, to the outside in a lot of places. So, um, and these little tiny . . .

[End #4115; Begin #4116]

SAFLY: I think there's a photograph of Madge and the kids, they look like they might be teenagers, sitting on that piece of furniture that we have. Have you ever seen it? I think it's that piece of furniture.

WILLIAMS: Which piece?

SAFLY: Well, it's that Eastlake walnut settee. Maybe it's a sofa.

WILLIAMS: You mean a love seat? By the west window.

SAFLY: Well, it's a little big for a love seat, Jim.

WILLIAMS: I don't know. What was your impression of this area of the attic?

SAFLY: I thought it was amazing this house was still standing because it looked pretty bad. I would say the other thing is that I couldn't believe that they had saved all this stuff for so long, that they'd kept it all.

WILLIAMS: Did you get an idea one area was for one generation, and then . . . ? Was it separated that way?

SAFLY: No. No, not really, except—I think I told you this last night—I felt that that was Mr. Truman's corner over there, his World War I corner.

WILLIAMS: To the south of the west window.

SAFLY: That was a blank space, and they put the stuff there, and nobody had ever come back and moved any of it. There was World War I . . . you know, his artillery firing maps and his little notebooks of pay records that he kept.

DUNAR: People in the battery.

SAFLY: People in the battery. He kept track of the horses. You've seen that, where he talks about when the various horses had had their shots and all that.

DUNAR: Maps of the route that they followed.

WILLIAMS: And in this south part of the attic you didn't have any strong impressions? It looks like we moved some furniture.

SAFLY: No, this was mostly furniture, and I guess it's pretty obvious that we removed Margaret's half-eaten dress. But I don't have any big memories. There was a lot of stuff piled up in here.

DUNAR: What were the oldest things that you found up here? Was there kind of a time that it was cleared out before, maybe before Bess's mother died or anything?

SAFLY: No. Wherever the trunk is, that was sitting right here, and I don't know which one that is. I don't know much about clothes, but I think these are . . . they date back to the Civil War. There's at least one man's frock coat in there, and there are handmade baby clothes, and I'd say they go back easily to the 1860s. I'd say that was the oldest stuff.

WILLIAMS: You said that the twin beds that were in the Gates bedroom were up here being stored.

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Where were they? Down . . . ?

SAFLY: We got them as far as we could get them and just piled them along that wall, just stood them up against this wall.

WILLIAMS: Along the north wall in the lower attic.

SAFLY: Right. Mattresses, box springs, we just put them here.

WILLIAMS: In the hat area.

SAFLY: In the hat area. The hats stopped about here, I'd say.

WILLIAMS: Do you recall what were in these cabinets?

SAFLY: No, I don't. Sorry, I sure don't. More clothes, maybe?

DUNAR: Were the gifts of state in one area, or were they just all over?

SAFLY: No.

WILLIAMS: What about around the chimney area here? Could you walk through this area?

SAFLY: Well, you could climb. For whatever it's worth, this seemed to be a camera area. That little corner, there were a lot of cameras.

WILLIAMS: In the northeast corner.

SAFLY: Yes. And of course the place is full of radios. Somebody gave him a CBS or NBC microphone, one of those old-time great, huge, silver jobbies, and that was there with a plaque on it. Of course, you've probably seen it.

WILLIAMS: In the cabinet?

SAFLY: Well, yes, in one of those shelves. I do remember that there was a . . . down at the end of this cabinet, whichever way we're facing—

WILLIAMS: East.

SAFLY: There was a huge, blue box with a sterling silver punch bowl, which we now have, and I think there's like thirty-six sterling cups. It was a gift of the Japanese government.

DUNAR: Were there any toys or anything up here from when Bess was little that

dated back that far?

SAFLY: No, I don't remember anything of hers. There were some toys of Margaret's in the basement. Boy, what is that back there? Is that where they're out working?

SHAVER: Yeah, it's a little passageway that we had cut to install the alarms and things.

SAFLY: Oh, I see. Very interesting.

SHAVER: Remains of raccoons and birds still abound.

SAFLY: Really?

SHAVER: Yes.

SAFLY: Raccoons?

SHAVER: Well, evidence that they were there. [chuckling]

SAFLY: Yes, I'm sure there were.

WILLIAMS: How about this little bar set here by the chimney? Did you investigate it?

SAFLY: Yes.

WILLIAMS: It's kind of booby-trapped. [chuckling]

SAFLY: Booby-trapped? In what way? Oh, this thing that folds out? Yeah.

WILLIAMS: Yes. It's rather fragile.

SAFLY: I don't remember the story. This came from the *Williamsburg*? Key West? I don't remember. It's one of those places. There is a story about this. It folds out.

WILLIAMS: And there are glasses with the presidential seal.

SAFLY: Yeah, right.

WILLIAMS: Liquor? Was there liquor up here?

SAFLY: Yes, there was.

WILLIAMS: This is where the moonshine or the white lightning—

SAFLY: The Prohibition, the clear stuff.

SHAVER: Milton Kronheim.

SAFLY: Is he the one who gave that? I don't remember that. Yes, piled up against this rise here where all the luggage was, were cases and cases of vermouth, cases of booze. I don't remember what particularly.

WILLIAMS: Did you have a systematic way to do the inventory up here? Did you start in one area?

SAFLY: Oh, I think we were really just getting started up here and actually listing things when Mrs. Truman died.

WILLIAMS: So did you go through first and look at everything and then go back and start writing it down?

SAFLY: Well, pretty much. You know, selfishly. I really believe things were in danger here, and so we did take quite a few clothes, Mr. Truman's World War I letters and stuff out of the attic, and then came back later. But as you'll see, you can't spend too much time up here, unless you want to die or pass out or something. And today's good, you know, compared to how it was then—hot.

WILLIAMS: Do you have any idea of the volume of material that was removed up here?

SAFLY: No, I don't. I'm sorry. I have no idea. But I'd say that most of the clothes came, whatever clothes we have, came from up here.

WILLIAMS: More than from the storage room, for instance?

SAFLY: Oh, there weren't very many clothes in the storage room.

WILLIAMS: More material, in general?

SAFLY: Yes. Yes, I think so.

WILLIAMS: You took more from the attic than the storage room.

SAFLY: I think so. But it was spread out over such a period of time. I wish I could, but I don't have any idea the amount.

WILLIAMS: Did you ever go up through the hatch?

SAFLY: No, I never did. Didn't the grandsons do that at one point? Isn't there a story?

WILLIAMS: I don't know. I wouldn't be surprised. [chuckling]

SAFLY: I thought Clifton wrote about getting in trouble for going up there. What is up there?

WILLIAMS: The roof.

SAFLY: What is that little thing up there?

WILLIAMS: The fan, you mean?

SAFLY: Yes.

SHAVER: It's an attic fan that they put in.

SAFLY: You all put that in, though.

WILLIAMS: Yeah.

SAFLY: I don't remember what was there before. Just a door that you pushed up?

SHAVER: Just a flat, heavy door. It's still tucked over here in a corner somewhere.

SAFLY: Oh. That was so that you could get up and look at the roof, I guess?

WILLIAMS: And for ventilation.

SAFLY: Amazing.

WILLIAMS: A little bit. A little bit.

SAFLY: Now, we were told that you know there was a fire here in 1885? Is that right? I'd have to look it up. But this black stuff was a remainder of the fire. I don't know if that's true. It looks kind of charred, but I don't know if it's true.

SHAVER: There's quite a bit of charred wood up above the kitchen, which we have another trap door which you can see.

SAFLY: Yes, so actually there was quite a bit of damage done, I'd say.

SHAVER: Enough to burn some wood in half.

SAFLY: Yeah.

DUNAR: What was your best source of information about things like that? May Wallace or Margaret, or . . . ?

SAFLY: I think we just thought that it looked like it had been on fire at one time. I don't think we knew any of that until the park service got here, until you all started. Because I'm sorry to say I don't think we'd ever traced back, done a title search or whatever it is you would do. We told everybody George Porterfield Gates built this house, but obviously there was an existing structure sitting here when he bought the property, because now we know that. And they added, what, in 1885 to the house—after the fire.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SAFLY: Giving out false information. What did you do with all the wallpaper?

SHAVER: It was some of the first stuff to go.

SAFLY: See, there were rolls and rolls of wallpaper up on top of that.

WILLIAMS: On top of the attic fan?

SAFLY: Yes. Well, I kind of miss that.

WILLIAMS: Did anyone ever come up here?

SAFLY: Sorry?

WILLIAMS: By the time you were here, there wasn't much activity up here from the staff?

SAFLY: No, this was just another place that Reverend Hobby would come and say, "Mrs. Truman and I said we were always going to get up here and clean this place up!"

WILLIAMS: Too late.

SAFLY: He said that about this place and the storeroom.

WILLIAMS: I realize it's hot up here.

SAFLY: It's okay.

WILLIAMS: Do you have any other impressions or distinct memories?

SAFLY: No, I really don't. I remember that. What is that, an ancient sunlamp?

SHAVER: I think we have a few ancient sunlamps out at the cave.

SAFLY: I think that's the sunlamps that Margaret and I used to fry ourselves under in trying to look beautiful. No, I actually don't. It's much, much cleaner. I certainly remember that. I do remember lots of bottles of booze around in some of these closets, around various places. It's probably all gone now.

WILLIAMS: Was the attic the last place you were working? You had made your way up

to the attic?

SAFLY: I suppose so. We were definitely in the attic in '81 because we carted Mr. Truman's World War I letters over to the library. I think we were probably getting very curious and decided to take a look in the attic.

SHAVER: Was his footlocker up here at that time?

SAFLY: Yes.

SHAVER: Do you know when or how it—

SAFLY: There was *a* footlocker.

SHAVER: *A* footlocker?

SAFLY: I think there's another footlocker that Rufus Burrus brought over from the house. Mrs. Truman gave it to him.

SHAVER: That was it.

DUNAR: After you found the first letters, and realized there might be more, did you take a quick look ahead to try to find them to make sure?

SAFLY: Yes.

DUNAR: Yeah? Did you discover most of them then, or did you discover others later when you went through?

SAFLY: Oh, it just seemed like we went through a period of several weeks where we found them everywhere we looked. A few here, a couple here, you know. It was actually only those senate letters that I told you about last night that were in the Harzfeld's box in the storeroom and the World War I letters that were at all organized. It seemed the others she just scattered, dropped off wherever she finished reading.

WILLIAMS: Are there letters or materials from earlier generations, the Wallaces or Gates family?

SAFLY: I believe there are some things, yes, but they're not yet in our custody.

WILLIAMS: I see.

SAFLY: You might want to ask Dr. Zobrist about that.

SHAVER: Did you encounter these along the way, any of these older manuscript materials?

SAFLY: Yes.

SHAVER: And if so, where?

SAFLY: Oh, I'd say the older manuscript material was all here in the attic. You're talking about letters and things?

SHAVER: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Stuck away in the trunks or just . . .

SAFLY: Here and there.

WILLIAMS: No central place for them?

SAFLY: No. No organization to it, no.

WILLIAMS: And you didn't get any idea that one part of the attic was filled up and then one part . . .

SAFLY: No, I think you got the definite idea that as you came in here—the same way you felt in the storeroom—that it was more difficult to make it up the stairs, and so a lot of things just got put up here, and maybe Reverend Hobby shoved them in the door and the door was shut. There was a huge pile of stuff coming down the storeroom stairs. We're talking about very

old people. You know, Reverend Hobby was old, even when he was working here.

WILLIAMS: Did you say that you saw the water running down the steps from the attic?

SAFLY: I have seen rain come in that big thing up there and run down the steps.

WILLIAMS: In trickles?

SAFLY: In trickles. Not buckets, but in trickles. More than you would want coming in your house, I'd say. Personally, I have that much coming in my old house. More than is healthy, shall we say. I cannot remember that they ever put out pans or anything. Nobody seemed to worry about it very much. I guess it had rained in for so long. What is the plastic for, may I ask? Does that keep gunk from falling on your head?

SHAVER: Basically the same thing, just to kind of catch some of the moisture and a lot of the old slate dust which you were talking about.

SAFLY: I see.

SHAVER: Because even now today there's still slate dust falling down.

SAFLY: Now I assume that that's where there were so many places where this sheetrock or whatever it is had fallen off.

SHAVER: This flat, metal roof up here is a different kind of roof altogether.

SAFLY: Yes.

SHAVER: That's where the problem was, with the metal roof. It had essentially completely failed.

SAFLY: Oh.

SHAVER: That was the first thing we did was put a new metal roof on.

SAFLY: Usually they last a long time. Well, it had lasted a long time.

SHAVER: It had lasted. From what the folks who did the restoration said, it was the original metal roof on the top part.

SAFLY: Well, you can't argue with a hundred and some years, can you?

SHAVER: I guess it had 1886 stamped on one corner.

SAFLY: I believe it.

WILLIAMS: Do we have any more questions? Well, if not, I'd like to thank you on behalf of the National Park Service.

SAFLY: Well, thank you, on behalf of me. Thanks for showing me the house again. You guys have done a great job. [tape turned off] You asked me about the letter, the anniversary letter. As I recall, the anniversary letter was in this desk, but it was not sitting on top. But she said something crazy about the Christmas 1945 letter, too, one time, and I can't remember what that was, that it was in a different place. And I don't think that there's probably even evidence that he mailed that. He may have just been letting off steam.

WILLIAMS: That's the one about, "When I came . . .?"

SAFLY: Well, Margaret implies that after she received that letter her mother had not wanted to be the president's wife, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, but then changed her attitude and became more supportive and so on. I'm just saying she might not have even gotten it. Hey, this doesn't rattle anymore when you walk down the stairs. I'm impressed!

WILLIAMS: The posts used to rattle?

SAFLY: Yes, in fact this used to rattle. This whole thing shook so much we took it

off because I was afraid . . . or we were afraid we'd break it.

WILLIAMS: The stairs still squeak.

SAFLY: It's a very interesting thing, though, isn't it? Nothing like it.

WILLIAMS: Did you look down inside the post?

SAFLY: No. What's in there?

WILLIAMS: I don't think anything is. Somebody had told us that in these old houses that's where you're supposed to keep your deed. So we looked, and I don't think we found any.

SHAVER: The Gates fortune might be in there. [chuckling]

SAFLY: What David Wallace is waiting for, right?

SHAVER: That's right.

SAFLY: The Waggoner Gates Milling Company?

WILLIAMS: Back on the first floor.

SAFLY: I think I'm about finished. I can't think of anything else.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Well, thank you again.

SAFLY: Thank you again.

END OF INTERVIEW