

EI-980

LIAM WALSH

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RESIDENCE: DUBLIN

AGE: 31

US RESIDENCE: CHEVY CHASE, MD

WALSH: You just tell me when to start.

LEVINE: Okay, you can start now.

WALSH: Liam Walsh. Um. Went to the states, uh, July the thirtieth, 1966. Left Dublin airport for New York. Picked up the shuttle then from New York to Washington DC. Is that okay?

LEVINE: Okay. Okay, well let's, um, let me just take this. Let's say when you were born and your birth date.

WALSH: Where was I born? Yeah. Wait a second now. So is it on now?

LEVINE: Yes.

WALSH: Yeah. Born 1935 in Dublin, Ireland. Um. Dublin Ireland. Kelmactt county, Dublin Ireland.

LEVINE: Okay, um, and your birth date?

WALSH: The sixth of March 1935.

LEVINE: Yesterday.

WALSH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yesterday was your anniversary.

WALSH: Sixty-three yesterday

LEVINE: Okay, okay. Now maybe, uh, we can start with, um, how long did you live in Dublin?

WALSH: Oh. Left Dublin in 1940... 44 or 45, it was during the war, anyway.

LEVINE: And when you left, why did you leave Dublin?

WALSH: Why did I leave Dublin? Because my father and mother were killed in Dublin, during the war.

LEVINE: Oh.

WALSH: Ah, the British. Sorry, not the British. The Germans bombed Dublin. A place called the North Strand. Ah, in 1945. It was at nighttime. And roughly about 70 to 80 people were killed in the bomb, in the bombing. The Germans thought Dublin was Belfast. That's well known here in Ireland. So if you went to the North Strand in Dublin, you got off the train, we say from Sligo to Dublin, when you get to Dublin you're in the North Strand. You walk about three or four blocks, ah, to the, to the right and it'll take you to the North Strand and you'll see a plaque there of all the names of all the people who were killed there.

LEVINE: Wow. And did you - what were your mother and father's names?

WALSH: My mother's name was Christina and my father's name was Patrick.

LEVINE: And your mother's maiden name?

WALSH: Her maiden name was still Christina.

LEVINE: Christina was?

WALSH: Oh, sorry. Christina was her, um, What was her maiden name? Sorry. Um. I never knew what her Christian name was. I'd have to look up the birth cert.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

WALSH: Eh, but I always remembered the first name: Christina. And the father's name was Patrick.

LEVINE: And. And your last name? Say it again.

WALSH: Walsh.

LEVINE: Walsh.

WALSH: Ah, Some people in Ireland say Welsh.

LEVINE: It is W-A-L-S?

WALSH: H. Is Walsh. W-E-L-S-H. E would be Welsh.

LEVINE: Ah. Okay. We're gonna pause here.

**pause**

Ah, we're resuming here. And, um, you remembered after we turned off the tape that your mother's maiden name was Murphy.

WALSH: Murphy. Christina. Christina Murphy.

LEVINE: Okay, and, um, did you have brothers and sisters?

WALSH: No.

LEVINE: You were an only child?

WALSH: Only child.

LEVINE: An only child. And so you were thirteen when the bombing occurred that killed your mother and father?

WALSH: Yeah, but I wasn't living with them.

LEVINE: Oh. Where-

WALSH: I was at school. With some, eh, with some nuns. What are the nuns called now? The French sisters of charity. They used to wear big coronets (sp?) on their head. You don't see them anymore. They're called the French sisters of charity.

LEVINE: Now how was it that you happened to be living at school?

WALSH: Well, it was kind of a, kind of a boarding school.

LEVINE: In Dublin?

WALSH: In Dublin. In kulmacutt slowern (sp?) county Dublin. We were more or less getting ready for confirmation. You make a confirmation around thirteen years of age, at that time. And, uh, the bombing took place at nighttime, in Dublin. Ahm. From what I was told. I do remember my parents alright. I do remember the airplanes coming over and, uh, at the, where, at the convent we used to go into air raid shelters. I don't know if you have them in America or not.

LEVINE: Yes, we did. Uh-huh.

WALSH: Yeah. Air raid shelters. And there was, probably, ah, late spring, actually. There was very, a lot of snow that year. The snow was hanging off the roof of the houses, it was, it was snow blizzard for a couple of weeks.

LEVINE: Uh-hum.

WALSH: Yes.

LEVINE: So had you been at the school for some years before the bombing?

WALSH: Yeah, I'd say about five years.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WALSH: Yeah about five years and then after my parents were killed, ah, any of the children that, other children's parents were killed there so we, they all sent us down to, ah, skipereen (sp?) county court. Did some one of you say you were from, you were down there? (asking audience) but it was beyond skipereen (sp?), a place called Baltimore.

(Listener says I know that place.)

WALSH: Baltimore. Ah. The school is gone. It's knocked down. And we were there till we were about sixteen.

LEVINE: Hm.

WALSH: Sixteen.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now do you, how do you remember your mother and father? DO you have memories from before you went off to boarding school? How? What was your mother like? How do you remember her?

WALSH: Yeah. Ah. No, not for me. Ah, oh, I remember my father and mother but I only used to see them on the weekends. We used to go home on the weekends. And then come back then either Sunday night or a Monday.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WALSH: And I'll tell you if you were to be back Sunday night, eight o'clock, you were there! If you weren't there you got a good telling off. The nuns were very strict.

LEVINE: Uh-hm. And what was your father doing? What was his-?

WALSH: He had, um, he had a hardware store. And the name of it, I always remembered, it stuck in my mind, was called Keys.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WALSH: Keys. That was the name of the, over the shop door.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WALSH: And that was, it wasn't actually in, um, the North Strand, but it was only about a half a mile away from it. Place called, uh, Talbot street in Dublin, if you know Talbot street.

LEVINE: Oh.

WALSH: But its not there anymore. That's gone.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, I, you were a religious family?

WALSH: Oh yeah! Every one of us were. All the boys and girls at the, at the, the school, we were all Catholics. If we weren't they made us Catholics!

(laughter)

WALSH: We had to learn the, the mass in Latin. And if we didn't know our Latin we got a, a slap in the ass, I'll tell ya, from the nuns. Very strict, they were.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And how do you remember that school? What do you, what do you think about it when you think about being in that boarding school with the French nuns?

WALSH: Well ever since I went to Baltimore, the, the way I always thought about it was, cause we knew the Latin mass off by heart, it was driven into us. And if any of the boys or the girls wet the bed the nuns there would, they used to give us night shirts - not pajamas, now - and then they'd give you a couple of whacks on the

ass there at night and you tighten the, the night shirt around your backside and sister Mary in particular would give you a couple of whacks. They were very strict, they were.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

WALSH: That's one thing I'll always remember about it, though, they were very strict, they were.

LEVINE: Were they caring?

WALSH: They were, yeah. They were very caring. They were more, eh, God be with the, the British, they used to say a lot. But we didn't take much notes of that. At that time Britain was running the country, more or less.

LEVINE: But these were nuns from France?

WALSH: No, the order was founded in France. But they were Irish sisters. Like, you say Sister Mary, Sister Flamina, Sister Carmel (sp?). Ah, there was a whole bunch of them there. Very strict. But very clean, they were. The food was very bad.

(Laughter)

WALSH: I remember one Easter Sunday morning we got an Easter egg, we got an egg for break-, for Easter Sunday. The eggs were so short that we only got a half an egg. I always remember that one.

LEVINE: Well 'cause this was during the wartime.

WALSH: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, everything was rationed. The sugar, sugar was rationed and the bread and, and the tea. And then I went to Baltimore, stayed there till I was about, oh, sixteen, and then I had to find my way around the world and myself.

LEVINE: Well, what happened? Did, did, you graduated? Or you left the school? How did you come to leave the, the um, Catholic, uh, boarding school?

WALSH: Well, um, the government were actually paying to keep us there because we, ah, we had, had no foster children, foster parents. At that time, I suppose, there was no um, you couldn't adopt anybody. I presume that, because none of us

were adopted. We never even heard the word, till words later, when we reached about twenty, we heard this people were being adopted. So, the Irish government or the British government, I know who it was, paid the priests to educate us there. It was a pretty tough school, I must say. Ah, the next stop after Baltimore was Boston. Ah, out to the Atlantic. To America.

LEVINE: So all the children from the school went to Boston?

WALSH: No, no. What I'm saying is, after Baltimore, you couldn't go any farther in Ireland. The next stop was Boston, you had to go out on a boat- you know what I mean? And if you went on the boat your next country was automatically the United States.

Listener: The location. The physical location.

WALSH: Yeah, would have been Boston, was the nearest.

LISTENER: Right

LEVINE: Uh-huh

WALSH: From, from Baltimore county court.

LEVINE: So did the government pay for your passage? Did you? How did you?

WALSH: No, I'm only saying, in Baltimore school. When we left Baltimore we went up into the city. We probably went up to Clark City. What I'm saying is, Baltimore school, you couldn't go any farther in Ireland. It's like, you can't go any further than Florida. If you went from Florida you go into where, ah, Cuba. It's the same in Baltimore County Court. Your next, next destination was, I think, was Boston. They always said it was Boston. But that has nothing to do with the school now. Nothing whatsoever.

LEVINE: So how did you happen to leave, then, County Court?

WALSH: Well, the government couldn't hold you after sixteen years of age, as far as I know. They couldn't keep you after sixteen. So you found, they either got you a job, or, well they actually got everybody a job. Some of them went into the catering, some went into farming,

others went into shoemaking or tailoring. Or, various jobs. Depends on what you were into.

LEVINE: And what about you?

WALSH: I went into catering. I think they sent me into a hotel in Bandon(sp?). You know Bandon county court?

LISTENER: Did they get you jobs because you were orphans?

WALSH: Uh, yeah. They had to.

LISTENER: Because they were responsible for your future?

WALSH: No, they weren't responsible for your future. They were only responsible for, uh, to get you a job.

LISTENER: The next step after you get out of school.

WALSH: Yeah and they when you get out of school the person who's taken you on is responsible for you. Not officially, but they, they said they'll take care of this person till they're 21. I took up a job in Bandon at the Devonshire Arms hotel with Mrs. Heely(sp?) **laughs** The hotel is not there anymore, anyway, that's gone. Burned down, there, two or three times. And so its just a big parking lot now. And from

there, then, I went to England, actually. From there. I think I was at the hotel for about three years. Like I was, kind of a bell-, bellhop. We never used that word, bellhop, here. It was kind of, uh. I helped in the kitchen, I helped in the dining room, I helped in the bar, I helped. I was kind of the door man. I helped clean out the, ah, the billiard room. I helped to feed the chickens. I helped to pick apples in the orchard, and things like that And then from there I went to England.

LEVINE: And why did you decide to leave Ireland and go to England?

WALSH: That's a good question. **Laughs** You'll find most people in Ireland have been to England. But nobody can. I was supposed to make more money, I say that's what it was. Yeah, I'd say it was more or less to make money. And I took up a job in a res-, some fancy restaurant in a place called Worrechshire(sp?). And while I was there for about nine months I bumped into a priest. And I always wanted to be a priest. And he talked me into joining this religious order. Which eventually I did join within three months after I met him. And I must have been in the

religious order for about, oh, about a good five years.

LEVINE: Oh! So you were studying to be a priest?

WALSH: Oh yeah. The religious order was called the Rosminians(sp?). You won't hear of them in your part of America. They are in, uh, Chicago. Chicago and also down in Florida, in Orlando. They're certainly not on the East coast, anyway. They're very big in England, and Wales and Italy. And here in Ireland. And, oh, I left there after about three years. No, sorry, five years.

LEVINE: Any why did you leave that?

WALSH: Well, like most boys and girls, they, they girls always want to be nuns, too and then when you get to a certain age you realize you find out you weren't cut out for that kind of a life. So I packed it in and I went to the Savoy Hotel in London where I trained to be a chef for about four years. Yeah, about four years. And then I packed that in there and I came back to Ireland and I said I'd take up a job as a butler. And I worked various places around

Ireland as a butler, or training to be a butler. Ah, but the last place, anyway, I, ah, the one was at Kildanian (sp?) castle, which is now owned by Sheik Muhammad (sp?), a very, very wealthy Arab from the Middle East. I think he's a member of the government of Dubai.

LISTENER: Exactly.

LEVINE: Hm.

WALSH: I think its of Dubai, anyway. Sheik Muhammad. He's the Minister of Transportation, or something like that. Like, you would have a Secretary of Transportation, its equivalent. He owns it now, anyway.

LEVINE: So you, you, um, trained to be a butler, in Ireland.

WALSH: Oh yeah. Not in England, now. No, I wouldn't train in England because there's too many butlers over there, anyway. In them days, uh, anyone with a title just about had a butler, because people with titles had plenty of money, but today that doesn't, uh, its not the same today, now. A lot of titled people don't have

any money, they can't afford a butler, a lot of them. Ah, but I've been being a butler in other places in Ireland but it would take me too long to tell you 'cause there were so many of them. Butlers don't stay, ah, it's like a chef. They don't stay too long in the same hotel. Maybe ones season or two seasons then they're gone off to another place. Because the more places you go, you pick up, more experience you'll get, from other chefs.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, the training that you had was like an apprentice, kind of the thing? Like an apprenticeship? Is that was the training was like?

WALSH: Eh, we never used that word, an apprentice. You just trained under, you went in as a pantry boy, and then from a pantry boy you just work under the head butler, or the footman, or the valet, or whoever's responsible for you. Ah, but we never used that word. Ah, ah, what's that word you just said?

LEVINE: Apprentice.

WALSH: Apprentice. We never hear of that word. Never did.

LEVINE: But you learned by doing it.

WALSH: Oh yeah.

LEVINE: Under the auspices of someone who was, who was already doing it.

WALSH: Yeah, you do all the dirty work. Like, you clean all the silver and you wash all the cups and saucers and wine glasses, but then if he's pouring wine and, uh, decanting, uh, wine, he shows you how its all done. And how to serve a table and how to address titled people and how to meet people and how to tell a person off in a nice way, without being rude. That's part of being a butler.

LEVINE: Well, what, can you remember what the pointers were on that? How to tell someone off in a nice way?

WALSH: Um, I had a run-in with a very, very wealthy lady. Um, her Grace the Duchess of Westminster (sp?). There girls wouldn't know who I be

talking about. Would you know who the Duchess of Westminster is? (directed at audience)

AUDIENCE: I heard of her, I don't know who she is.

WALSH: Yeah, but she got the job to do up this castle. She was the interior decorator, and being a Duchess she used her title and upped the price. The average price you might charge a half a million pounds, but she charged over a million because she was, she was um, the Duchess of Westminster. And the Duke of Westminster is the, the second wealthiest man in England after the Queen. He practically owns all the real estate in London, or he did in them days. But I gave out to her one day, I said, Look, ah, Her Grace, I had to call her. The salt cellars are, they are all corroded. And she says Why. Because you forgot to tell the, ah, the silversmith to put something inside the salt cellar to stop the salt from corroding. And she says No you're all wrong. I said okay, I'll go in and tell the owner of the castle Muh Rafael. And Muh Rafael says Your Grace, Liam is right. The salt cellar is all green at the bottom. Like, ah, its eating into the silver and there should have been this blue thing in the center

to hold the salt and that'll never get corroded 'cause its hard plastic, very expensive. And so we, we argued over that, and the day she was leaving there was other guests staying there, there was about eight or nine, the Haynes (sp?) were some of the guests, remember I was telling you earlier. And every one of them left seventeen or eighteen pounds, for the staff, and the Duchess only left me one pound. And Muh Rafael (sp?), the owner of the castle, knew what was in that envelope but he said he's make up for it, because I know you had a run-in with Her Grace, the Duchess. I said, That's Right. And that's the reason why she only gave me the pound. And that actually happened, but, she was divorced from the guy or separated or one of the two, but if she married, if she remarried, she'd lose the title automatically, once you remarry. But these sort of people never remarry, 'cause they'll always keep the title. And then you'll take up a job as an interior decorator, why 'cause you're a Duchess, you know everything, or you're supposed to know everyone because you went to finishing school, or and you went to college. So you have the best advice, and up goes the price, then, just because she has the title. But I, ah, I'm sure

she's dead and buried by now. This is going back thirty years now.

LEVINE: Wow. So, so then, after you did. You learned how to be a butler, then what made you decide to go to the United States?

WALSH: Remember I was telling you earlier about the Haynes, what a great country the United States is. I thought about it. As a matter of fact, they wanted to take me there. Even before I met the Haynes, remember I was telling you, ah, I took up a job, really for about eleven months, for MGM, when Susan Hayward was making that movie I Thank A Fool(?). She wanted to take me back to Georgia, a place called Milledgeville, but I never did go with her. She was going to sponsor me. But I, I didn't go. And the Haynes really pushed me onto it. So the next thing, um, I wrote off to some agency in Dublin and I got an answer and they said yes, we're looking for butlers for wealthy people in America.

LEVINE: Now who were the Haynes?

WALSH: As far as I know they were from North or South Carolina. I can't remember which.

LEVINE: And how did you come by, how did you happen to be associated with them?

WALSH: Because I was training to be a butler. Well I was actually the butler, actually, the butler actually died about a year or two before that. The Haynes was one of the guests at the castle. Ahm, they probably came over to buy horses. Uh, we used to get ambassadors there, like, I remember we had the Chilean ambassador to London. He was over many times. They come over to buy horses, but, the guy that owns the castle would have nearly, anything from fifty to twenty people for about ten days over Christmas or over Easter or over, uh, The Guineas. The Irish Guineas. Heard of that, have you? Big horse meetings here in Ireland, they'd be on for a couple of days, and they'd invite these people over and they'd stay in the castle, free of charge. And, there's where I met the Haynes, they probably came over to buy horses, now I don't know if they did or not.

LEVINE: And they convinced you that, you to try the United States?

WALSH: Oh, yeah! Oh, yes. They said I would make a lot of money over there, which I, and which I did. I got what I wanted and I got out. Isn't that the motto over there? Get what you want and then get out.

LISTENER:I don't know.

WALSH: All Americans know that.

LISTENER:I don't know that.

WALSH: **laughs** If you went over there to make a hundred thousand pounds, or dollars, you got that and then you get out.

LISTENER:Well, you probably hear that if you're not an American.

WALSH: Yeah, I'm only giving that as an example. You get some Irish guys that say I'm going over there to make my first million dollars and then get out if they do. And good luck to them if they do.

LISTENER:Oh yes.

LEVINE: So, so the Haynes sponsored you?

WALSH: Oh, no. No. They only kind of recommend that I should go. And, uh, I certainly didn't learn anything in American about butlering (sp?). As a matter of fact, I taught the Americans who I used to live with how to be a butler, how to treat a butler. They hadn't a clue. 'Cause they never had butlers.

LEVINE: So you went through a Dublin agency and they told you there were jobs in America.

WALSH: Oh yeah.

LEVINE: And then what happened? How did you? Do you remember leaving?

WALSH: Oh, I remember leaving and leaving Dublin airport. The thirtieth of July, or the thirty-first, it was one of the two. It was on a Saturday, anyway. Yeah, it was on a Saturday. And, flew Aer-Lingus. Yeah, I flew to New York and the hostess in New York was to keep me on hold, um, someplace in New York airport, they were to put me on a shuttle, 'cause I hadn't a clue. The people who were taking me on in

America paid the airline or the agency so much extra money that when you're changing flights, make sure he gets on this flight, because he's never been in America before.

LISTENER:Were you nervous?

WALSH: No. Because I remember leave the, going out of the airport for about twenty minutes and when I came back the airhostess gave me hell. She got so worried that I got lost. And she says We're responsible for you, till you go on the flight.

LISTENER:Were you excited?

WALSH: I was a little excited, alright.

LISTENER:Sure.

WALSH: But, uh, I wasn't a bit impressed when I went outside. The, uh, the airport had all the New York Police men with all the things hanging off their trousers. They looked so rough.

LISTENER:Guns.

WALSH: Yeah. Compared to the Irish police at the time. They don't carry anything. So all these keys and guns and handcuffs and batons. That kind of scared me. Yeah, I remember that.

LEVINE: Now, did you have a position waiting for you?

WALSH: Oh, yeah. Oh, yes, I had a position in Chevy Chase, Maryland, actually, just over the border from Washington, DC. Oh, they were there to meet me 'cause I had photographs of these people. So when I got off the plane they had photographs of myself. And so, I saw this fat man and this fat lady wobbling down the corridor and I said that must be the couple. So, that's how I got to Montgomery County in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

END SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B

LEVINE: And do you remember your first impressions of the United States? When you, those first few days or maybe even the first night you were there? Anything strike you as different from?

WALSH: I noticed the cars were so big. The automobiles. And the car, the first car I ever got into was a big Lincoln continental. It was just so smooth. I said, when I get a few pound, dollars, together that's that car I'm gonna buy. And I did buy one. I bought a black one about two years later. It was owned by some ambassador, 'cause everytime I washed it it shined up, it shined like a jewel. It was so clean. But it gave up after about a year, the automatic transmission went and I went off and bought another one. But America itself, I thought it was, I don't know. It was, uh, everybody was rushing around. Driving was very fast, I thought, on the streets, much faster than over here. Ah, there was very few cars in Ireland when I was leaving. Very few. But ah, I just thought everyone was in a hurry in America. Ah, Americans just talked a bit funny, too. I certainly didn't like the first winter I was in America.

LEVINE: What happened then?

WALSH: Oh, all the snow they had. That was.

LEVINE: In Chevy Chase?

WALSH: Oh, yes. Oh, we had to have to shovel the snow out of the drive way. I used to enjoy it. And then after about two or three years I started getting a pain in my back and I stopped doing it. So we went out and bought a snow plow. A small one, a little portable one. We had kind of a driveway where it was a lot of gravel, instead of the snow it was gravel you were picking up. With the snow. They were Jewish people. They were alright. They were a bit, um, how do you call it, they were, um. They knew the kind of people I worked for in Ireland. Titled people and castles. Their home, it was a good house, it was about a four bedroom house or maybe five, but they did no entertaining. I was wasting my time there. But I'd often hear them saying, when they'd hear me around, he'd often say to his wife, Oh. We're gonna have, ah, such an ambassador coming for lunch, or dinner. But it wasn't for real. It was just to give me an impression. 'Cause they thought I wasn't happy, 'cause I was used to serving, all I used to do was serve dinner every night and you ... It wasn't silver service, like I was used to doing here in Ireland. I was a bit disappointed there. It was just an ordinary

private house, the guy had plenty money, but didn't have the, um, didn't have um, eh. What do they call it? Didn't have the class. And he went to work everyday and came home every evening and Their work was always in the house. He was a gentleman, like, he wore a suit seven days a week even when he was working. And his work was just kind of walking around the grounds to see was everybody working. Going up to Dublin on a miserable day, going up to the club, like, he didn't want to hang around the house because it was boring, so I'll go up to my private club.

LEVINE: But this is Chevy Chase, now?

WALSH: No, but, no, I'm talking about, that's the kind of people I'm used to working for in Ireland, but when I went to America, it completely was the opposite. They guy never went to the club, he went to work seven days.

LISTENER: It was not as high class.

WALSH: As here in Ireland?

LISTENER: Right.

WALSH: No. Oh, no. Wasn't, not running down on the people, but, ah, I didn't expect it, like. It was just an ordinary private house, its just a new house, not even properly furnished, or anything. There were no antiques or anything like that, not like what you get in the castles here. I was very disappointed with it. But they were good people.

LEVINE: So what made you decide to leave?

WALSH: Oh, then I went to the. I used to go into Washington everyday. Um, I used to drive him in there. See, the man next door to us was a super-rich man, too. He didn't have a butler but he had a chauffeur, and I got he impression after a while just because the man next door who was Earl Forman, used to own the Philadelphia Eagles, at the time. Forman and Worman, the two of them. He has a chauffeur, a big stretch limousine, and the guy I was with Weshler, he didn't have a big limousine, but he had a four-door Lincoln, a big silver one. I got the impression that he wanted to be the same as the guy next door, he has a chauffeur, Why can't I have a chauffeur? That was the

impression I always got. And, anyway, I used to go into town, driving in every morning and picking him up in the evening and sometimes we might go out to Baltimore or up to Philadelphia. He had a lot of flats. He was kind of a landlord. You know you never hear that word in America, landlord?

LISTENER: Oh, yes you do.

WALSH: Oh yeah? I never heard them using that word, a landlord. He just uh, he owned a lot of apartment buildings. And I would take him up there. Newark, New Jersey was another place. Camden was another place. After a while I got fed up driving, 'cause I'm not really a chauffeur. Never was. But I knew how to drive, the American way. It was pretty tough. I, I left. But when I used to go into Washington everyday, after a while, I got to know where the embassy was and that's how I knew about Rose Kennedy looking for a butler, then. If it weren't for the embassy I wouldn't have known that.

LISTENER: What did they say? What was the ad?

WALSH: Oh, there was no ad. There was just, ah, by work of mouth. So, um, I just told them, Yes, I'm interested in the job, but it had to be an Irish man. And Irish butler.

LISTENER:She wanted-?

WALSH: Oh, yeah. She didn't want an Irish-American. There's a big difference between the Irish-American butler and the Irish butler.

LISTENER:Did you have to go through a lot of security to get the job?

WALSH: If I did, I was never asked any questions. They may have done it behind my back. I don't know if they did or not.

LISTENER:Checked you out?

WALSH: Its possible they did, but if they did they didn't tell me. But I was asked no questions because I had a green card, had a social security number, what more? I may have had a few, oh, I had a few references, from Ireland. A resume. What do they call it here? Ah? A CV?

Curriculum? Visa? Vitae? You never hear that in America, do you?

LEVINE: Yeah. It's also called a resume. Right. The same.

WALSH: Yeah, I had some sort of a resume. And the last man I was with in Ireland, Mourefar was his name, Rose Kennedy knew him very well. See, all these rich people they all know one another. And she said, Oh yes, I know who Mourefar is. A big horsey man, he owns a castle somewhere in Ireland, she wasn't sure where. But she met him years ago in England because Rose Kennedy's husband used to be the American Ambassador to English to the court of St. James, to give it its correct title, ah, during the war. Ahm, I presume that was 1945. And she probably met him at one of them functions at the embassy. All these horsey people they all know one another, and then a couple years later the youngest son of the Mourefar(sp?) sent Rose Kennedy an invitation to their wedding. Rose couldn't go, 'cause she was well into her, probably touching ninety, but she gave me the invitation. And I says, yeah, I know who this man is, that's ah. There was Bob Drake, there was another fella,

he was married to a title lady from Lestolle(sp?), Lady Lestolle. Frankie. Frankie the youngest son was getting married, she gave me the invitation but I never went.

LEVINE: So what was the difference between an Irish butler and an Irish-American?

WALSH: Well, an Irish butler was trained. Because, eh, in my days if you didn't know your job you weren't hired. And you had to have, you had to know your job because you were dealing with rich people and people who had class. And also people who used to come to these castles, they all had their own butlers, sometimes they would bring them if Mourefar(sp?) was short of a butler, they would bring their butler to help out. Sometimes, though, not all the time. And the American butler is not really a butler, he's really a house-man. They're usually called house-man. Ah, I have a house-man. You never hear any American say, I have a butler.

LISTENER:What does the butler do?

WALSH: The butler runs the private house. Let it be a castle or a ranch or-

LISTENER: So you oversee?

WALSH: Pardon?

LISTENER: So you oversee?

WALSH: Yeah. No matter what goes wrong, the butler gets the blame.

LISTENER: Do you deal with the people that own the house?

WALSH: Oh, you have to deal with the lady of the house.

LISTENER: You know, intimately? Or physically you have to go to them and-

WALSH: Well, usually she, she would come to you, usually in the morning, say, around ten o'clock. If there was a problem, she wouldn't come to me. She might just say, Liam, our bathroom is leaking, will you take care of it? So.

LISTENER: So the butler takes care of the running of the house?

WALSH: Yeah. Anything goes wrong, like, if the windows need cleaning, you call in the window doctor. The plumbing needs repair, you call in the plumber doctor. This is Beverly Hills, now. I'm just going to start leaving the Kennedy's now. Everything in Beverly Hills was called the doctor. The lawn doctor. The swimming pool doctor. Ahm, the window doctor. The plumber doctor. I left out one or two, though, the guy that comes in once or twice a week to cut the grass, the lawn, well, no, we had a different lawn doctor, that sort of doctor used to come for the fungus. If there was lots of weeds growing; we'd bring in a specialist. He was different to the guy that comes in three days a week to mow the grass. So we had two different lawn doctors, and we had a swimming pool doctor. And then you had the doctor if the car broke down, then you had the car doctor.

LEVINE: Well, before you to Beverley Hills, you... Rose Kennedy hired you. And you stayed there how long?

WALSH: Seven and a half years. In Palm Beach, and then every summer we'd go up to Cape Cod, in Hyannisport. I think I was the only one up in Hyannisport when the Kennedy's used to bring up their own air conditioner. They had a window ... [unclear] up there. None of the homes up there were air conditioned. You just opened the window and let the sea breeze in, but that didn't cool me down. So I used to bring up my own from Palm Springs ... from Palm Beach. I remember having five or six Kennedy children in my room many nights, sleeping on the floor, 'cause my room was the coolest room in the house.

LEVINE: How did you travel from Florida to the Cape?

WALSH: Oh, I had my own car.

LEVINE: You drove?

WALSH: I drove my own car. Sometimes I would take Rose Kennedy in mine, otherwise we'd hire a chauffeur in Florida to drive her car up. All the Kennedy's done the same. If they didn't have enough staff that drove.. that had no car themselves, they would drive the Kennedy cars

up. But if they wanted to bring their own car up then the Kennedy's would hire other drivers who had driven for them before to drive their car up and then they would pay their expenses to come back on an airplane or whatever. But they paid them, like, to drive up there. If you wanted someone to drive your car from New York to Los Angeles... there's companies that do that. The same with the Kennedy's. They probably done it that way. I don't know if they did or not, 'cause I didn't know much about that. I only found out this about this driver from New York to Los Angeles when I went to Los Angeles 'cause people said "did you drive your own car or did you drive somebody else's car?" And I questioned, "drive somebody else's car? No I drove my own." Then I found out you could drive somebody else's. They'd pay you to do it.

LEVINE: Well, when you think back on those Kennedy years, how do you feel... how do you think about that period of your life?

WALSH: Oh, I suppose the first three years it was... I was up in cloud nine, but after about three years of this wore off. You were just one of

the Kennedy's then, while you were working with them. But once you leave the Kennedy's you just forgot about them. They're no different than me and you. [unclear]

LEVINE: Do you remember the circumstances under which you left the Kennedy's and went to Los Angeles?

WALSH: No, I didn't go to Los Angeles immediately. I just left... Well, I just woke up one morning and said I just had enough of these. Enough of the Kennedy's. No I went up to take up a job in New York actually, but not for long. Only for about a week. You're from New York, no?

LEVINE: I live in New York now.

WALSH: [unclear] work for a week there. Which, I'd like to work longer, but I didn't like it. Alexander's the department stores?

LEVINE: Oh, they've now since closed, Alexander's.

WALSH: Yeah, He had an awful lot of them, I believe. Fawkus (sp?) is his name. They were Jewish. We lived in Sutton Place. I think a lot of ambassadors lived there because to get into

that bloody apartment, or condominium or whatever they called it I think I was searched by three or four people every day. There was some very high security... A lot of UN ambassadors were living there, I found out afterwards. [unclear] But the security in this Sutton Place building was very tight. So after a week I just got out. No I went up to Suffolk County, is there a county called that? They had a country house up there and the weekends they used to go up there. I was only with for one weekend. I went down on Monday in Sutton Place and then they said Friday you can drive behind us up to Suffolk County to our country home. They had a big house up there. That Saturday night, and I used to take the day off, Saturday and Sunday, and I found my way back into New York and drove straight down Interstate 95. That goes from Boston, from Maine actually, from Maine down to Florida, Interstate 95. Oh, it took me about ten days to drive to Los Angeles. I took my time, right? It was in March... February or March, one of the two, because there was a lot of snow in the Midwest, and that's the reason why I went the southern route. So when I left the Kennedy's I didn't go straight to Los Angeles,

I went to New York, Alexander's department stores.

LEVINE: What did they say when you left them?

WALSH: Who, the Kennedy's? Oh, they couldn't say a whole lot. They all wanted to know where was I going to? I said I don't really know, I'm just gonna take a holiday for three or four months. I probably told them I was going back to Ireland, so they wouldn't try and contact me or something like that. Seven and a half years is long enough. So I [unclear] is get ahold them when I settle down in Los Angeles, because they owed me some money. Well, it wasn't a whole lot and I had to.. they really want to get ahold of me, which they did after about nine months. And I haven't seen them since. I might have run into Maria Shriver all right. You know who Maria Shriver is? She's married to Schwarzenegger? And I met her in Los Angeles, but she recognized my car. And I just had a chat for a few minutes at a red light.

LEVINE: [unclear - the sound is low]

WALSH: Only time, yeah. Oh, yeah you could have interrupted me on the turn there. Turn it up. Oh, no take your time. Take it over there. Because sometimes that plug gets loose.

LEVINE: Well, we're finishing up here, we have about ten minutes.

WALSH: Well, I'll give you five minutes now.

LEVINE: You'll give me five. OK Why don't we.. So maybe we could just conclude with how you think about your time in the United States, now that you're been back some ten years? What do you think changed (It's going) Well, how do you think you changed during the time that you spent working in the United States?

WALSH: Oh, I became more outspoken because I find Americans very outspoken. Americans will just say whatever they think and just hope for the best. Normally Irish people are very quiet, they're always afraid to make some complaint. Well, of my generation, anyway. I don't know about your generation. You may be outspoken. But I know since I came back from the States

I've been very outspoken. I picked it up from the Americans.

LEVINE: And how do you feel about that change in yourself?

WALSH: Oh, I thought it's good, because it lets people know that you'll stand for no nonsense, and you're looking for your rights.

LEVINE: And so, what... how was it that you decided to come back to Ireland?

WALSH: Oh, I'd say the main reason was too much sun in Los Angeles. Too much sun. There's sun there ten months of the year. It's just.. it used to.. it depressed me more then. Because I wasn't used to it. Even though I was there fifteen years, I still never got used to it. You're going from the cold house out to the hot air, like the houses were always air conditioned. And then you go out into the hot air and then you get into a cold car then because your car was air conditioned. And, I used to catch an awful lot of colds, actually. I think that was part of the reason why I was

catching colds, going hot and cold all the time.

LEVINE: And were you.. did you have regrets about leaving?

WALSH: Oh, no I had a good time in America, no complaints. America was good to me. I can't say anything bad about America. As matter of fact anybody comes in here and runs down America I check them on it. I say look, did you live there? And they say no, And I say I lived there twenty-three years. I know what's going on in America. America's a good country. But one is better off living in Ireland.

LEVINE: Why is that?

WALSH: Well, Irish people I find.. that I met anyway. They get homesick a lot. They get homesick. And even though they're making good money in America they'd still sooner be back in Ireland. But if they [unclear] their family they try and stick it out. Bachelors like myself, now, we wasn't tied down to anything. But I did stick it out for twenty-three years. Because I had no commitments.

LEVINE: When you say you are homesick, what are you homesick for?

WALSH: Well, for me I know it's the weather. I can't say family 'cause my family was gone. And the atmosphere, the easy way of life here in Ireland. I thought America was kinda like a rat race. Everybody was in a hurry and nobody really had time to talk to you like they do in Ireland. Do you find that yourself?

LEVINE: I'd say yeah, I do.

WALSH: And it's a.. you're going into a different culture completely when you go to the States, especially Los Angeles. They're from everywhere around the world there. You meet real people and phony people. You meet more phony people over there than real people. And the phony people are usually, mostly girls aspiring to be actresses or singers and they get this notion in their hear, let's go to LA and become a movie star and when they get there they end up selling their bodies on Sunset Boulevard. Which is true. I've seen it. I don't mean all girls, but most girls anyway.

And guys, but.. I'd say there are more girls into selling their bodies than the guys, because if they're from the Midwest they get this impression, oh let's go to Los Angeles. I met people.. "Could you help me to be.. get into the movie business or into some rock band?" I said, "No, I have connections but I'm not going to tell you."

LEVINE: Well, reflecting on the whole experience of immigrating and.. or emigrating and then coming.. returning back, how do you think about it now? If there's a kind of total experience of.. I mean, it's a big part of your life.

WALSH: Well, I never regretted leaving America. I was glad to come back to Ireland, because this is where I was born. I still haven't regretted one bit. Oh, I often think about America, but I could catch.. go on a plane tomorrow and go back to Los Angeles if I wanted to, that's no problem, but I've no desire. I'm quite happy here in Ireland. Let it be Longford or Mead or Westmead or Cork, once I'm in Ireland I don't mind. That's the reason why I don't travel much now, because I traveled an awful lot.

Since I came back from the States, I think Jerusalem is the only place I've been to.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Did you ever consider becoming an American citizen.

WALSH: No, never. I have been approached in America by many people tell me the reason why. And I says "No, I said look I was born in Ireland and I'm an Irish man and leave it at that". You get Americans who pass remarks. You come over here earning your living. And then when they do pass remarks then I have a talk with them and I say, "Look, I know a lot of Americans in Ireland making their living too, and they're not Irish citizens.

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INTERVIEW ENDS ABRUPTLY